

## **Southwest Desert Adaptive Resource Management (SWARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group**

The Southwest Desert Adaptive Resource Management sage-grouse LWG (SWARM) consists of community members from Beaver and Iron Counties and is facilitated by Nicki Frey. The LWG meets every other month to discuss issues and concerns with grouse management and conservation in our region. The Governor's Task Force has recommended the development of two SGMAs in the LWG conservation area; Hamlin Valley and Bald Hills.

### **Project and Research Highlights**

SWARM had a productive 2017. We commented on over a dozen WRI projects, providing ideas to improve projects, guiding project methods to increase the benefits to sage-grouse, and providing written support for these projects. We also participated in a BLM review to determine departure from soil condition classifications in Hamlin Valley. We provided ground truthing to the model that will direct habitat treatments in the next decade. We also initiated a new GPS telemetry study in Hamlin Valley to determine the extent of the connectivity between Utah and Nevada. We will use a resource selection function model created by Mr. Rhett Boswell, UDWR, to determine how sage-grouse use treated areas. We also deployed 10 transmitters in Dog Valley, to the north of Panguitch, to continue our analysis of how grouse are distributed in the Panguitch SGMA and if they are connected to the Bald Hills SGMA. We employed college students to assist in trapping in Dog Valley. For both of these studies, we are focusing on hens and recruitment success.

In the late summer, SWARM joined the WRI Southern Region's tour to look at watershed restoration programs. We learned about streambank restoration, explored a newly establish beaver dam and the beaver dam analog that controls the water level of the beaver dam, and were even able to release Boreal toad into the new beaver pond. Over 70 people attended this field trip.

In December, Dr. Frey provided the group with a research update, including the completed thesis of Erica Hansen. Ms. Hansen has published her thesis about sage-grouse response to disturbance, including transmission lines and fire, to the USU Digital Commons. Additionally, her work on the transmission lines has been published in the *Human-Wildlife Interactions* journal. Also in December, CCARM hosted the BLM's presentation of the IMs. This presentation is also posted online.