

SWARM Report on Strategies

The following strategies and their action steps were identified by the SWARM local working as having been initiated or completed during 2007.

A. Strategies and Actions

1. Strategy: Improve age distribution of sagebrush-steppe communities by 2016.

1.1. Action: Identify and prioritize target areas needing improvement.

1.2. Action: Coordinate associations among agencies and landowners to fund implementation of projects and monitoring.

1.3. Action: Monitor the response of sage-grouse to changing habitat conditions.

1.4. Action: Implement treatments to change age class distribution of sagebrush.

1.5. Action: Assist agencies in assessing wildfires in focus areas and restoration needs for sagebrush seed in mixes.

Partners: UDWR, BLM, USU EXT, USFS, local county residents

Threats Addressed: Fire and vegetation management, communication among parties, invasive/alien vegetation species

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Lack of key habitat-type connectivity, poor condition of surrounding communities, degradation of winter habitat quality, loss of breeding habitat quality, loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, loss of riparian area quality, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution

2. Strategy: Improve water availability in brood-rearing habitat by 2016.

2.1. Action: Survey and evaluate current water sources and needs.

2.2. Action: Partner with watershed specialists to identify new water sources.

2.6 Action: Restore and improve wildlife access to water.

2.7 Action: Improve riparian conditions.

Partners: UDWR, BLM, NRCS, interest groups

Threats Addressed: Invasive/alien vegetation species, concentrated wildlife and/or livestock use

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, loss of riparian area quality, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution

3. Strategy: Improve wildlife and livestock distribution in winter and brood-rearing habitat throughout the next ten years.

3.1. Action: Identify and prioritize target areas needing improvement.

3.2. Action: Implement habitat improvements and direct management actions to improve distribution.

Partners: UDWR, BLM, FS, USU EXT, SITLA, NRCS

Threats Addressed: Concentrated wildlife and/or livestock use

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Degradation of winter habitat quality, loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution

4. Strategy: Increase participation of local public and private landowners with SWARM over

the next ten years.

4.1. **Action:** *Develop partnerships with landowners and interest groups to increase visibility of sage-grouse management.*

4.1.1. **Action step:** *Develop fact sheet to distribute to special interest groups concerning sage-grouse natural history and threats to populations.*

4.1.2. **Action step:** *Identify regional groups and their contact person to promote cooperation from these groups.*

4.3. **Action:** *Host open houses, field tours, and presentations.*

4.4. **Action:** *Distribute annual reports to local management agencies, county commissioners, and other interested parties.*

4.5. **Action:** *Develop incentives for landowners and interest groups.*

4.5.1. **Action step:** *Host educational field trips and provide interpretive areas.*

Partners: USU EXT, NRCS, RC&D, Farm Bureau

Threats Addressed: Lack of communication among public parties, alternative land uses (mining, wind power, water development), development of roads or utilities, recreational use

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Lack of key habitat type connectivity, poor condition of surrounding communities, degradation of winter habitat quality, loss of breeding habitat quality, loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, loss of riparian area quality, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution

5. **Strategy:** *Locate and monitor new active lek sites over the next ten years.*

5.3. **Action:** *Survey landowners and land users to determine sage-grouse distributions.*

5.4. **Action:** *Investigate possible new lek sites based on local reports.*

5.5. **Action:** *Survey for new lek sites during lek counts and survey historic sites for new activity.*

Partners: UDWR, USFS, BLM, USU EXT, interest groups

Threats Addressed: Enhanced native and domestic predators, recreational use, concentrated wildlife and/or livestock use, fire and vegetation management, development of roads or utilities, alternative land uses (mining, wind power, water development), dramatic weather events

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Loss of breeding quality (leks and nesting) habitat

6. **Strategy:** *Maintain or increase sage-grouse populations through direct management.*

6.2. **Action:** *Work with enforcement agencies to prevent illegal harvest of sage-grouse.*

6.3. **Action:** *Monitor the presence of West Nile Virus or other diseases in sage-grouse populations.*

Partners: UDWR, USU EXT, BLM, SITLA

Threats Addressed: Diseases and parasites

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Loss of breeding quality (leks and nesting) habitat, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution

7. **Strategy:** *Manage unwanted plant species in sage-brush steppe habitat by 2016.*

7.1. **Action:** *Remove juniper and pinyon pines from brood-rearing habitat.*

7.2. **Action:** *Reduce abundance of unwanted and/or invasive plant species.*

7.2.1. **Action step:** *Re-seed area after land disturbances such as mechanical treatments,*

fire, and human development.

7.2.2. **Action step:** *Utilize dedicated hunters to help with re-seeding and rehabilitation efforts.*

7.3. **Action:** *Evaluate and utilize chemical applications where appropriate to restore habitat dominated by cheatgrass and/or noxious weeds.*

Partners: UDWR, BLM, USFS, USU EXT, interest groups

Threats Addressed: Invasive/alien vegetation species, fire and vegetation management

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution, lack of key habitat type connectivity, poor condition of surrounding communities, degradation of winter habitat quality, loss of breeding quality (leks and nesting) habitat

8. **Strategy:** Minimize impacts of new land developments and/or recreational uses on sage-grouse populations during the next ten years.

8.1. **Action:** *Provide consultations and recommendations for new land developments and/or recreational uses.*

8.2. **Action:** *Regularly discuss new developments and alternative land uses to management agencies at local working group meetings.*

8.5. **Action:** *Provide input into management plans for federal, state, and local agencies.*

Partners: USU EXT, UDWR, SITLA, NRCS, USFS, BLM, interest groups

Threats Addressed: Alternative land uses (mining, wind power, water development), development of roads or utilities, lack of communication among public parties, recreational uses

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Reduction of population size, lack of key habitat type connectivity, poor condition of surrounding communities, reduction of population distribution, loss of breeding quality (leks and nesting) habitat, loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, loss of riparian area quality

9. **Strategy:** Take steps to reduce the negative impact of dramatic weather events during the next ten years.

9.2. **Action:** *Manage for diverse and healthy habitat that will withstand effects of drought or other long-term weather events.*

Partners: UDWR, BLM, USFS, SITLA

Threats Addressed: Dramatic weather events

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: degradation of winter habitat quality, loss of breeding habitat quality, loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, loss of riparian area quality, reduction of population size, reduction of population distribution

10. **Strategy:** Reduce threat of predators on sage-grouse over ten-year period.

10.3. **Action:** *Support current predator management efforts by other groups or agencies in the focus areas.*

10.4. **Action:** *Determine predator community composition and depredation rate.*

Partners: UDWR, USU EXT, WS

Threats Addressed: Enhanced native and domestic predators

Aspects of Sage-grouse Ecology Addressed: Loss of breeding quality (leks and nesting) habitat, loss of brood-rearing habitat quality, reduction of population size, reduction of

population distribution