

Major Technology Project—Sage-Grouse Restoration

Sage-Grouse Research and Demonstration Projects

68-9327-2-03

Multiple projects are underway to evaluate and communicate effectiveness of 2002 Farm Bill programs in restoring and enhancing habitat for Sage-Grouse.



The purpose of the Sage-Grouse Restoration Project is the evaluation and documentation of effects of 2002 Farm Bill conservation technologies and strategies on sage-grouse and other sagebrush-steppe wildlife. Information gained will be used to assist private landowners and the NRCS, soil conservation districts, and State wildlife agency field staff in the planning and implementation of habitat projects and practices on private lands to benefit sage-grouse and other sagebrush-steppe obligate species.

The information gained from the multi-State experiments will also assist local sage-grouse working groups in complying with the conservation plan reporting requirements set forth in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts (PECE) When Making Listing Decisions. More than 60 local working groups have been organized throughout the current sage-grouse range. The efforts of these groups were cited by the USFWS in their 2005 decision denying the petition to list greater sage-grouse as an endangered species.

Three projects are underway through a cooperative agreement with Utah State University Extension to address critical information needs regarding the management of both greater and Gunnison sage-grouse species.

- **Grazing Sagebrush with Sheep to Enhance Greater Sage-Grouse Brood-rearing Habitat** is being conducted by Utah State University on Parker Mountain in Garfield, Sevier, Piute, and Wayne Counties of Utah to determine if sheep grazing can be used to enhance sagebrush habitat for greater sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligate species while maintaining animal performance.
- **Development of a Sagebrush Habitat Improvement Guide for the Gunnison Sage-grouse by Evaluating Recently and Historically Treated Areas within the Gunnison Basin** is being conducted by Colorado State University at numerous locations within the Gunnison Basin of western Colorado. This work will evaluate the habitat conditions within recently and historically treated sagebrush areas in the Gunnison Basin and relate those findings to the habitat requirements of sage-grouse as outlined in the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan.
- **Greater Sage-Grouse Use of Restored Sagebrush Areas in Rich County Utah** is being conducted by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDRW) in Rich County in northeastern Utah. The UDWR will evaluate methods to assess habitat use by greater sage-grouse in areas where sagebrush cover has been to benefit the species. More information about SGRP and these projects can be found on the Web site: <http://www.sgrp.usu.edu>.