

Uintah Basin Adaptive Resource Management (UBARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group

The Uintah Basin Adaptive Resource Management (UBARM) Sage-grouse Local Working Group (LWG) is facilitated by Lorien Belton. It is closely tied to the Uintah Basin Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD), often coordinating meeting scheduling between the two groups.



Description of Area and General Population Information

The Uintah Basin sage-grouse group covers parts of Duchesne, Uintah, and Daggett counties. A large population with multiple leks inhabits the Diamond Mountain area north of Vernal. This area has mixed landownership, including private, state, and federal lands, and is used primarily for agricultural purposes. The Diamond Mountain population is one of the few populations in Utah that is robust enough to support a limited sport hunt in the fall. Additional sage-grouse populations occur south and west of Vernal in areas including Forest Service land on Anthro Mountain, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land further south. The southern populations in particular are in areas that have been highly impacted by oil and gas development. Some populations also occur farther south into the Book Cliffs. Populations on Seep Ridge, Deadman Bench, Little Mountain, Anthro Mountain, and Diamond Mountain have been the subject of research studies over the course of multiple years.

The 2017 joint tour with UPCD and UBARM visited wet meadow restoration sites on Forest Service land. Photo by Lorien Belton.

Table 4. Meetings and Tours held by UBARM LWG during 2017.

Meetings and Tours	Date	Location	# attending	Comments
Meeting	March 21, 2017	Vernal	16	Population research, wet meadow hydrology, partner updates
Field Tour	June 27, 2017	Cart Creek Watershed	13	Riparian and wet area restoration (joint tour with UBPCD)
Meeting	September 19, 2017	Vernal	12	BLM secretarial order and planning updates, state sage-grouse plan update feedback

Meeting	December 5, 2017	Vernal	14	Population research updates, partner updates
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Project and Research Highlights

The group has been very focused on the incoming data from the GPS collared birds, particularly in the northeastern areas. Seasonal bird movements and corridors have been of particular interest for project evaluation and planning on an anecdotal level. Observing the birds' use of previously treated areas is exciting for the group, and provides a source of ideas and feedback about new project areas.

The group also provided robust early comments on the state plan revision, the relationship of state and federal plan implementation challenges, implementation and interpretation of the original "opportunity areas" concept and map, and interpretation of the current plan's key objectives.

Upcoming Year Work Plan

The group is interested in revising the local sage-grouse plan in the coming year. As many group members are also highly engaged in the Watershed Restoration Initiative project planning process, there will no doubt be significant effort to propose projects that reflect what the group has learned from the multi-agency sage-grouse tracking efforts on Goslin Mountain, Three Corners, and other areas where increasingly more is known about seasonal habitat usage and bird movements.