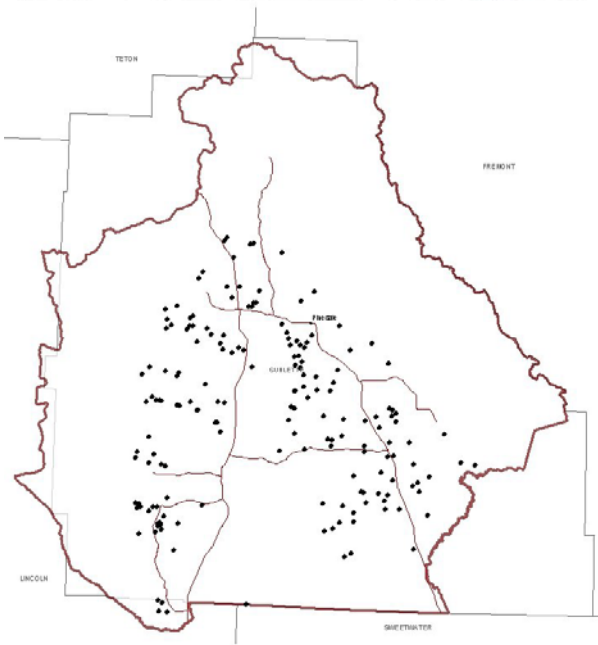


Local Planning Area

The Upper Green River Basin planning area is generally located southwest of Pinedale, WY, between the Wind River and Wyoming mountain ranges.



Dots indicate Sage-Grouse strutting grounds (leks)



Photo by Mark Gocke

Working Group Members

Bob Barrett	Sportsperson
Lisa Solberg	Bureau of Land Management
Aimee Davison	Industry
Suzy Michnevich	Local Government
Chris Sullivan	Agriculture
Dean Clause	WY Game & Fish Dept.
Jim Bousman	Agriculture
John Dahlke	Conservation
Ruben Vasquez	Natural Resource Cons.
	Service
Cally McKee	Industry
Mark Gocke	Facilitator

For more information contact a working group member or:

Wyoming Game & Fish Department

PO Box 4584

Jackson, WY 83001

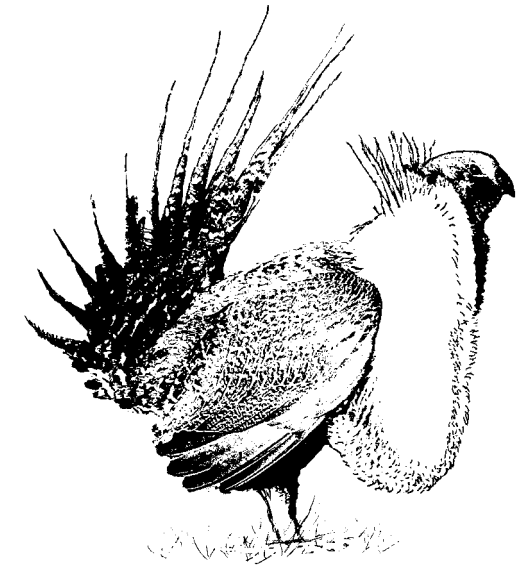
(307) 733-2321

Website: <http://gf.state.wy.us>

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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4040 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 130
Arlington, VA 22203

Upper Green River Basin Sage-Grouse Working Group



Original photograph by Greg Bergquist

Local Conservation Planning



March 2005

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Upper Green River Basin Sage-Grouse Working Group is to use the statewide plan as a guideline to develop and implement strategies that will improve or maintain sage-grouse populations and habitats.

Local Working Group Purpose

The purpose of Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups (LWGs) is to develop and facilitate implementation of local conservation plans for the benefit of sage-grouse and whenever feasible, other species that use sagebrush habitats. The plans will identify management practices and the financial and personnel means to accomplish these practices, within an explicit time frame, for the purpose of improving sage-grouse numbers and sagebrush communities, thereby precluding the need for listing sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act.

Group Structure

- The Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan (June 2004) provides guidance to local working groups for several distinct geographic areas of Wyoming.
- The Upper Green River Basin LWG is one of eight groups dealing with sage-grouse conservation at the local level in Wyoming.
- The Upper Green River Basin LWG is comprised of 10 members representing local interests such as agriculture, conservation, industry, sportsmen, and federal, state and local governments.

Responsibilities

- Identify and prioritize issues affecting sage-grouse in their area.
- Identify actions that address problems affecting sage-grouse in their area.
- Develop an action plan geared toward addressing these problems with an emphasis on benefiting as many species as possible within a multiple-use context.
- Identify priority areas for implementation of conservation actions.
- Identify funding (amounts/sources) and personnel resources necessary to implement conservation actions.
- Recommend at least one project to private, state or federal land managers.
- Develop an implementation schedule of actions.
- Identify agencies and managers responsible for implementing conservation actions.
- Provide annual written updates of progress to the Wyoming Game & Fish Commission and other affected agencies.
- Conduct public information efforts that will both inform the public of the LWG's goals, efforts, accomplishments and build support for those actions.

Sage-Grouse Ecology

Sage-grouse are a large upland game bird considered a "landscape species," annually using large areas of sagebrush. Sage-grouse are common throughout Wyoming because sage-grouse habitat remains relatively intact compared to other states.

Sagebrush and sagebrush/grassland communities are essential for sage-grouse survival. Suitable habitat consists of plant communities dominated by sagebrush and a diverse native grass and forb understory. The composition of shrubs, grasses

and forbs varies with the subspecies of sagebrush, the condition of the habitat at any given location, and range site potential. Seasonal habitats must occur in a patchwork or mosaic across the landscape. Their spatial arrangement, the amount of each seasonal habitat, and the vegetative condition determine the landscape's potential for sage-grouse. This arrangement is an important factor in determining if a population is migratory or non-migratory in nature. Both quantity and quality of the sagebrush environment determines suitability for and productivity of sage-grouse.

There are at least 112 strutting grounds known as leks within the Upper Green River Valley planning area. Each spring, sage-grouse gather on these leks to strut and perform their unique mating ritual.

This lek activity occurs during early morning hours from mid-March to mid-May. After strutting and mating occurs, females begin building nests in nearby sagebrush, usually within 3 miles of the lek. Chicks hatch in late-May and early-June and stay with the hens for most of their first year. By late-summer, hens move their broods to wet meadows and riparian areas along perennial streams without substantial tree cover.

Sagebrush makes up the bulk of the diet for sage-grouse, and insects are a vital food source for young chicks during brood rearing.

Most sage-grouse within the planning area occupy the same habitat year-round (resident populations). In order to find food and shelter, some groups of birds at higher elevations must seek out areas of sagebrush not covered by winter snowpack requiring movements of up to 15 miles or more (migratory populations).

Sage-grouse hunting in Wyoming is a traditional recreation activity in modern times and was one means of human subsistence historically.