

Subject: 7-1-11 eBlast from NRCS



July 1, 2011

ADDITIONAL GRP FUNDING GOES TO SAGE-GROUSE WORK IN UTAH

This week the USDA NRCS announced the availability of \$2.3 million in additional funding through the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) to conserve sage-grouse habitat in Utah. The announcement



by Ag Secretary Vilsack included \$5.5 million for Idaho and \$10.4 million for Wyoming. NRCS Programs Specialist Chet Fitzgerald said the GRP funds will be distributed among seven projects in Rich, Box Elder and San Juan counties. Most of the projects will be 10-to-20 year rental agreements with ranchers to apply a prescribed grazing plan that includes the rotation and timing of livestock grazing. Two projects will involve the purchase of easements that will protect grouse from development and fragmentation pressures in developing areas of Northern Utah.

NRCS State Biologist Casey Burns said sage-grouse numbers have generally declined across the west, due to development, weed and juniper encroachment, wildfire, fence collisions and improper range management. Many of the threats to sage-grouse are also threats to sustainable ranching operations and to game species. Sage-grouse populations in some areas in recent years have started to stabilize or recover due to coordinated efforts to reduce these threats.

News coverage of the announcement included a story in the *Salt Lake Tribune* at <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/money/52107974-79/grouse-sage-program-utah.html.csp>. And, a Thursday afternoon radio news report on public radio's KUER during their local newscast on All Things Considered.

Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah



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