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SAGE GROUSE RESTORATION PROJECTS ANNOUNCED

NRCS State Conservationist Sylvia Gillen recently announced that three proposals were selected to receive a total of \$200,000 in funding through the Sage-Grouse Restoration Project, a cooperative agreement with Utah State University Extension to help evaluate the effects of Farm Bill conservation practices on private lands on sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife. Gillen said "the projects selected for funding will address critical information needs regarding the management and conservation of both greater and Gunnison-sage grouse species. The information obtained from these projects will be reported on the Sage-grouse Restoration Project web site to assist local sage-grouse working groups implementing their sage-grouse conservation plans."

Over 60 local working groups have been organized throughout the current sage-grouse range. There are 12 groups active in Utah. The efforts of these groups were cited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in their 2005 decision denying the petition to list greater sage-grouse as an endangered species.

Seven proposals were received from California, Colorado, and Utah. The proposals selected for funding were:

1. "Grazing Sagebrush with Sheep to Enhance Greater Sage-grouse Brood-rearing Habitat." This project will be 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.
- 2.) "Development of a Sagebrush Habitat Improvement Guide for the Gunnison Sage-grouse by Evaluating Recently and Historically Treated Areas within the Gunnison Basin." This project will be 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 Rangeland Conservation Plan.
- 3.) "Greater Sage-grouse Use of Restored Sagebrush Areas in Rich County Utah." This project will be conducted by the UDWR 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:

www.sgrp.usu.edu.

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