



**By the Numbers**  
**Utah Partners for Conservation and Development**

- Number of dollars committed by UPCD partners for projects since 2003: **\$25 million**
- Number of acres treated to date: **500,000**
- Ratio of non-federal monies to BLM funds: **as high as 7:1**
- Number of acres to be treated in 2008: **81,780**

In Utah, a consortium of agencies, other groups, and individuals have formed the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD). Seven Federal agencies, eight State agencies, many private landowners, a university extension service, and non-profit organizations—such as the Mule Deer Foundation—are planning to restore sagebrush habitat in focus areas selected for their wildlife value, particularly focusing on sage-grouse. The partners have committed more than \$25 million to restore 500,000 acres of public and private land. The State of Utah has committed \$4 million to this effort.

of Utah's watersheds. The majority of those improved acres required vegetation manipulation and reseeding using seed mixtures developed for each site. Initial habitat assessments, project coordination, and NEPA analysis were accomplished with BLM funding. Actual on-the-ground project construction and follow-up monitoring assessments have been accomplished with a variety of partners including (but not limited to) the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Utah State University Extension, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Sportsmen

*Meeting both our energy and land health goals requires integrated, landscape-scale habitat protections and resource management. Our initiative combines investments in habitat protection with policy improvements that will protect 800 species, including the sage-grouse.*

Secretary Dirk Kempthorne  
 February 5, 2007

- What are the goals of Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative?**
- Increased water quality and quantity
  - Quality habitats and maximum biodiversity
  - Sustainable working farms and ranches
  - Social-economic uses and opportunities

**What has Utah already done toward this effort?**  
 BLM funding is leading the way for on-the-ground restoration efforts on an unprecedented scale. Since 2003, Utah BLM, in cooperation with the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, has conducted treatment projects on approximately 500,000 acres of watersheds on the public lands across the State. The aim is to improve the health and functionality

**What is the Healthy Lands Initiative?**

The Healthy Lands Initiative represents a new concept for meeting emerging challenges in managing natural resources for continued multiple use with flexible, landscape-level approaches.

The Initiative will enable and encourage local BLM managers to set priorities across a broader scale and mitigate impacts to an array of resources in ways not previously available to them.

The President's 2008 budget requests a substantial increase of \$15 million in funding for the BLM to begin implementing the Initiative in six specific geographic areas to demonstrate the new approach. Projects will be located in Wyoming (\$4.5 million), New Mexico (\$3.5 million), Utah (\$2.0 million), Oregon/Idaho/Nevada (\$1.9 million), southern Idaho (\$1.8 million) and Colorado (\$1.3 million).



for Fish and Wildlife and numerous private landowners and livestock grazing permittees. Vegetation restoration methods included the removal of encroaching juniper through hand-cutting or mechanical treatments such as bull hog or brush saws, Dixie harrow treatments, green stripping to reduce fire hazard, and various other methods depending on the physical and biological characteristics of each individual site and the recommendations of local restoration experts. Investments by all partners involved in this statewide initiative total approximately \$25 million. The improved habitat on State, Federal, and private lands exceeds 500,000 acres.

The Vernal Field Office has been busy implementing juniper encroachment projects. These projects consist of hand-cutting junipers in some areas to reduce competition with sagebrush and maintain healthy sagebrush habitat. If left untreated, the area would eventually become dominated by juniper and the sagebrush and other understory plants

would be eliminated. These “lop-and-scatter” projects are often completed with a combination of both UPCD funding and the BLM’s Hazardous Fuel Reduction money.

### What have been the results of the treatments thus far?

Results include: increased water quality and quantity; decreased silt deposition in streams and reservoirs; a return to healthy rangeland conditions with a mix of desired species; protection of at-risk natural sites; and improved habitat to support mule deer, sage-grouse, and other wildlife populations, as well as wild horses. These, coupled with the reduction of forage competition between livestock and wildlife, are just some of the benefits of the treatments.

Another major benefit is reduction of the risk to species such as Gunnison’s and greater sage-grouse and pygmy rabbit—which are dependent on sagebrush habitat—as well as a host of endemic plants that occupy the sage-steppe

ecosystem, from becoming listed under the Endangered Species Act.

### Funding Plans

With the proposed funding, partners in Utah would be able to implement 60 projects to restore over 80,000 acres on a landscape scale across the state. These projects would benefit wildlife and water quality and reduce the chances of catastrophic wildfires. The following are additional examples of how this funding would make a difference in Utah:

**Seed warehouse:** The seed warehouse that services the entire state has exceeded its capacity. Expanding the size of this warehouse would not only increase storage capacity, but would help native seed producers increase their native plant production capacity. As these seeds are used in on-the-ground restoration projects, this is a critical component in the process. Increased storage capacity would provide for greater quantity and quality in implementing restoration projects.

**Equipment:** Increased funding would allow partner agencies to acquire equipment and techniques necessary to carry out projects for habitat restoration and enhancement.

**Monitoring:** Project monitoring is essential to ensuring that restoration is providing the intended benefits. The implementation of pre- and post-treatment monitoring would continue to be a high priority.

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