Sharp-tailed Grouse Restoration

Colville Tribes Restore Habitat for Sharp-tailed Grouse

Annual Report 2001 - 2002

January 2003

DOE/BP-00006927-4

This Document should be cited as follows:

Berger, Matthew, "Sharp-tailed Grouse Restoration; Colville Tribes Restore Habitat for Sharp-tailed Grouse", 2001-2002 Annual Report, Project No. 200103000, 6 electronic pages, (BPA Report DOE/BP-00006927-4)

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This report was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Department of Energy, as part of BPA's program to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The views in this report are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of BPA.

Sharp-tailed Grouse Restoration

Project No. 2001-030-00

Contract No. 6927

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

2002 ANNUAL REPORT

January – December 2002

SHARP-TAILED GROUSE PROJECT Account # 3197

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Prepared for

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Bonneville Power Administration**

January 2003

JANUARY

The Project Manager met with the WDFW, WSU, and STOI concerning the Sharp-tailed Grouse Project. Currently no one has been named the lead in that project but the Hellsgate Project Manager has proceeded to set up the project and meet with the participants.

FEBRUARY

The Project Biologist met with the WDFW, WSU, and STOI concerning the Sharp-tailed Grouse Project. He has proceeded to set up the project and meet with the participants.

MARCH and APRIL

We have had two meetings concerning this project, one in Spokane and one in Davenport, Washington. At each meeting representatives from the STOI, WDFW, WSU and CDA Tribe participated with CCT conducting the meeting.

The project manager spent the last part of March and most of the month of April doing sharp-tailed grouse lek counts. Counts were done on known leks and other areas were surveyed for new leks. The leks monitored each year produced about the same number of birds as last year except for those leks affected by last year's fires. Those counts went down. Seven historic leks on the Westside had no birds in attendance this year. One new lek was found above Grand Coulee Dam on Tribal lands and will be called the "Coulee Dam Lek". The Westside of the Reservation was surveyed for possible leks with no success. The project manager tried to visit each lek at least twice with a week between visits to get an accurate count of each lek. The project manager checked 30 of the 36 historic/known leks on the Reservation. Cemetery Ridge, Grouse Hill, Townsend, Biles Coleman, Anderson and Tower leks were not surveyed this year.

Next year we hope to radio collar males and females to survey actual habitat selection and use on the Reservation. We hope to radio collar at least 100 birds. The STOI plan to help with labor on monitoring marked birds and habitat data collection.

MAY

Continued bird count survey for sharp-tailed grouse on known lek areas.

Update on Genetic work by Mike Schroeder. . Mike Schroeder also checked leks and in May took blood samples from 4 leks on the Reservation for genetic work. More genetic sampling is needed so an additional \$5,000 dollars will be spent out of the Sharp-tailed grouse contract for this baseline data.

Bids on radios and monitoring equipment.

Draft HEP grouse model for review.

Completed counts of all leks for this year.

JUNE

The Project Manager attended scheduled meetings on Columbia River Mitigation and attended a grouse symposium held in Bicknell, UT. At the symposium side meetings were conducted with representatives from various agencies and universities to address sharp-tailed grouse populations and habitats. The University of Idaho wants to join the team and do contracted work under the STG contract.

JULY

Representatives from the STOI, WDFW, WSU and Couer d'Alene Tribe participated with CCT at the Western States Sharp-tailed and Sage Grouse Symposium in Bicknell, UT. At the Symposium we talked with the leaders in sharp-tailed grouse conservation and restoration efforts across the west. Side meetings with Kerry Reese, Jack Connelly and others were conducted to address the sharp-tailed grouse in Washington State.

AUGUST

Prepare SOW and budget for BPA funding for this project. Meet with WSU representatives on SOW and PVA analysis.

SEPTEMBER

The grouse team intends to conduct trapping work on established leks attaching radio collars on resident males and follow them throughout the winter months. We hope to collar about thirty birds. The Mike Schroeder and other experts in the grouse field feel that augmentation is the only way to preserve this species over time. We hope to get out-of-state birds and release them on known leks within the next few years if the genetic results are suitable for this methodology. Next year we hope to radio collar both males and females (100 birds total) to survey actual habitat selection and use on the Reservation and surrounding areas over an 18-month period. This will be the main task of the graduate student hired for the project. The STOI plan to help with labor on monitoring marked birds and habitat data collection. The project will buy the radios and equipment this year in preparation for the next breeding season.

OCTOBER

He also presented the Sharp-tailed Grouse Team with an update on the BPA/CCT STG Project #21034 and to discuss changes in the SOW and budget for the next FY on October 16, 2002.

NOVEMBER

BPA approves project and a STG biologist was hired for three months to conduct SOW.

Also Wildlife Area Manager was assigned to the project.

DECEMBER

Trapping leks and radio collaring males.

Monitoring of marked bird movement patterns and habitat selection.

Accomplishments this year:

- Formed Grouse Team headed by Doctor Mike Schroeder and includes CCT, STOI, Cd'AT, and WDFW.
- Literature review of work on STG in the Region and what needs to be done.
- Intensive search for new sharp-tailed grouse breeding grounds.
- Breeding count surveys conducted at known leks.
- Genetic testing from blood taken from birds at various leks.
- Draft STG Model in progress by Mike Schroeder and Paul Ashley