

Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) Community Restoration in Utah - 50 Years of Lessons Learned

Danny Summers and Jason Vernon

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Ephraim, UT, USA

The Great Basin Research Center is a product of a very long and productive cooperative program between the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the U.S. Forest Shrub Sciences Laboratory that began in the 1950's. When this unique cooperative program began, it was widely recognized that millions of acres of depleted western ranges need rehabilitation; however, no one had the plant materials, equipment or the knowledge to accomplish this daunting but important task. Today, range rehabilitation is a well established and economically important science that benefits both private and public lands. Plant development research continues to be conducted on improving existing habitat through plant selection and development. This research will improve the quality of forage on rangelands and provide quality habitat for wildlife. Long term research is being done to better understand plant community associations and responses on Utah's rangelands. It is vital to understand successional processes and competitive influences of species that are used in habitat restoration projects. This research provides valuable information (successes and failures) given the unique goals and objectives for each rehabilitation project.