



October 17, 2011

Cherry Creek Ski Area, LLC

Re: Amendment to *Wildlife Study Proposed Cherry Peak Ski Area, The Ski Area*

The following is an amendment to the original report entitled *Wildlife Study Proposed Cherry Peak Ski Area, The Ski Area*. In a letter dated September 28, 2011, attached, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) requested that the Cherry Creek proposal include an impact analysis for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (sharp-tailed grouse, *Tympanuchus phasianellus*). Sharp-tailed grouse are listed as a Utah sensitive species and may be hunted by permit in Box Elder and Cache Counties. While crucial habitat is not mapped as present within the proposed ski area, crucial habitat is mapped approximately 0.5 mi to the west of the proposed ski area, Figure 1. The UDWR noted that the adjacent Richmond Wildlife Management Area (RWMA) provides habitat for the sharp-tailed grouse and the UDWR suggested in their letter that leks (communal mating grounds) may be present within the RWMA.

Sharp-tailed Grouse

Sharp-tailed grouse have relatively small home ranges that are typically situated around a communal mating ground called a lek (Giesen and Connelly 1993). Sharp-tailed grouse males have strong site fidelity for lek sites and all breeding activities (i.e., mating, nesting, brooding) generally occur within 1.2 mi (a range of less than 330 ft to greater than 1.9 mi) of a lek. Lek sites are generally found on ridge tops, knolls, and benches in grass and/or shrub vegetation communities. In Utah, many leks are within sagebrush or perennial grass vegetation communities.

In the winter, grouse may move distances greater than 3.1 mi in search of food resources. However, in the winter most grouse remain within 1.3 mi of leks (Giesen and Connelly 1993). Winter habitats are also typically within 140 ft of mountain shrub or riparian vegetation communities. Seasonal migrations between winter and breeding areas ranged from 1.6 mi to 2.6 mi.

If active lek sites are present within an approximate distance of 1.2 mi of the proposed ski area, sharp-tailed grouse breeding habitat may be impacted. Additionally, riparian areas along Cherry Creek may be used as habitat, especially in the winter. The proposed project may fragment or disrupt sharp-tailed grouse habitats, including breeding habitats, especially if active lek sites are adjacent to the proposed ski area.

In 2002, the Utah Strategic Management Plan for Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse (2002) identified conservation strategies. Outlined below are strategies that should be considered in the proposed development of the Cherry Creek Ski Area if sharp-tailed grouse leks and habitat is present:

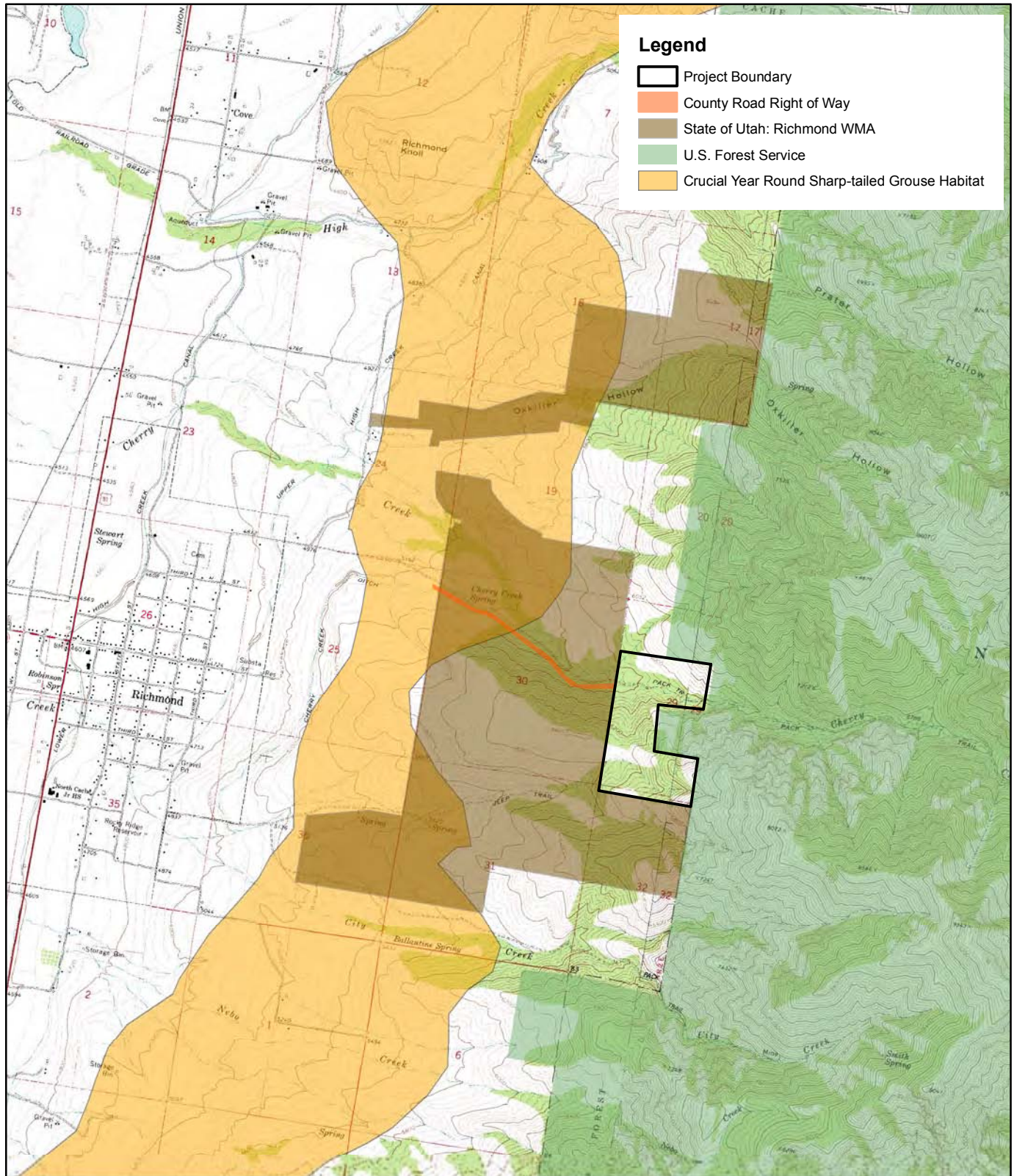
- Avoid physically disturbing breeding activity from March through June within 0.8 miles of an active lek. Disruptive activities include loud noises and recreation.
- Do not form physical barriers between lek sites that are isolated by more than 25 mi.

- Avoid construction of any transmission lines, telephone poles, fences, or other structures suitable as roost sites for predators (i.e., raptors) within 400 yards of an active lek.
- Increase public education about sharp-tailed grouse and their status in the state of Utah.
- Do not allow the invasion or spread of noxious weeds.
- Avoid the use of pesticides during breeding and brood rearing seasons (mid-May through mid-July).

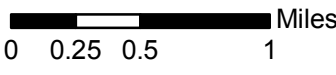
References

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. 2002. Strategic Management Plan for Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. Salt Lake City, Utah.

Giesen, K. M., and J. W. Connelly. 1993. Guidelines for management of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitats. *Wildl. Soc. Bull.* 21:325-333.



- Legend**
-  Project Boundary
 -  County Road Right of Way
 -  State of Utah: Richmond WMA
 -  U.S. Forest Service
 -  Crucial Year Round Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat



**Proposed Cherry Creek Ski Area
Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat
with Richmond Wildlife Management Area**

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