

December 22, 2009

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WILD TURKEYS RELEASED IN CARBON COUNTY

PRICE, UTAH—Twenty four wild turkeys soared into a sub-alpine sky on December 18 when a partnership of private and governmental entities put their heads together to improve the wildlife resource in Carbon County.

Five gobblers and 19 hens quickly gained altitude once their transport cartons were opened. Wings beat furiously to propel the massive birds into towering aspens and conifers in Pace Canyon, adjacent to the Dugout Canyon Mine.

Vicky Miller, Dugout Canyon Mine environmental engineer got the wheels spinning for the release, contacting the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Division of Wildlife Resources, and landowners adjacent to the mine.

Pace Canyon owned by the Thayn Trust was selected for the release, because the streamside habitat included a variety of forage and cover, necessary for survival and reproduction.

Stan Baker, regional biologist with the National Wild Turkey Federation, says wild turkeys cover a variety of elevation ranges and habitat types in Utah. Because winter food availability varies both within and between years, wild turkeys must have a diversity of habitat types and/or dependable sources for food. Consistent sources of grasses, seeds, and berries are used by wild turkeys during most winters. Food sources are more abundant during summer and grasshoppers and other insects provide an important source of protein for wild turkeys, especially for hens and young poults.

For several weeks, the Thayn Trust and Ms. Miller plan to supplement their natural diet with dried corn, strewn along the canyon road where they were released, just to ease the stress from their transition.

Baker said the release is just part of the federation's objective to place wild turkeys in all suitable habitat in Utah. He indicated that the federation was excited to join hands with industry in general and the Dugout Canyon Mine in particular to expand the range of wild turkeys throughout the state.

