

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
November 12, 2008**

The November 12, 2008 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was held in the Commissioner's Meeting Room in the Courthouse at 200 E. Virginia, Gunnison CO 81230.

**Regular Members Present:**

Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)  
John Scott, Vice-Chairperson, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)  
Erich Ferchau, At-Large, Development Community  
Sue Navy, High Country Citizens' Alliance (HCCA)  
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers Association (GCSA)  
Al Pfister, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Paula Swenson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC)  
Gary Hausler, Public At-Large  
Kenny McDaniel, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
J Wenum, Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW)  
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County  
Mike Jackson, United States Forest Service (USFS)

**Alternate Members Present**

Vicki Spencer, Public At-Large  
Russell Japuntich, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
Amy Seglund, Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW)

**Staff Members Present:**

Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Coordinator  
Ruth Dukeman, Administrative Assistant III

Others present as listed in text.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Stahlnecker called the November 12, 2008 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:00 am.

**PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMED:** Stahlnecker verified that proper legal public notice had occurred.

**DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:** Stahlnecker confirmed that a quorum was present.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** No modifications to the agenda were requested. The agenda was approved as distributed.

**VISITORS – Colorado Division of Wildlife Staff Discussion of Grazing Management Research Proposal:** Robbie LeValley, (CSU Extension), joined the meeting via teleconference for this topic. Present for discussion were: Jim Gammonley (DOW), Mike Phillips (DOW), Gary Skiba (DOW), Scott Wait (DOW), Nathan Seward (DOW), Tom Spezze (DOW), Liz With (NRCS), Sandy Hayes (BLM), and Representative Kathleen Curry.

LeValley began the discussion with a review of the concepts that make up the grazing portion of the proposal. She specifically highlighted the project scale and treatment types.

Gammonley summarized addition of assessment on the effects of grazing of the Sage-grouse to the proposal. Using a PowerPoint presentation he emphasized the importance of the research design to be sure the questions being asked are clearly defined.

He provided three examples:

1. Compare habitat conditions under different grazing systems to GUSG habitat guidelines.
2. Compare habitat conditions and chick growth rates under different grazing systems using imprinted chicks.
3. Demographic responses to grazing treatments (nest success, chick survival).

Spezze recommended beginning this project with the end in mind. Good results would allow for changes in management practices and to also remember that management is not just a single focus and that in addition to livestock, elk are also a part of the picture.

Evaluation of the number of treatment areas was discussed. It was noted that there is a great deal of data already available about high intensity and no grazing. Information about the Deseret model and other research is needed. Additional data collection in reference to grazing treatments and the effects of the treatments on the grouse would be extremely beneficial.

Navy inquired about the number of birds that would be handled and the potential effects this could have on populations as proposed in several of the examples. Ferchau asked if a captive breeding program would be an option. Gammonley stated that a captive breeding program was in the preliminary phase of development, but it could take more time and work before the results would be known. The use of the Greater Sage-grouse species to help project success was proposed by Gammonley. Many on the Committee were open to consideration of the Greater Sage-grouse to increase the potential for sample size. Pfister reminded everyone that much of the previous information base is from Greater Sage-grouse research.

On behalf of McDaniel (who left the meeting), Japuntich asked if the budget being requested could be justified to the public for the importance of the data being collected. These questions led to a presentation from Representative Curry providing details as to the funding process and timetable. She advised that with the current economic concerns the competition for funding would be great. She further explained as the sponsor of the bill she has requested a placeholder for \$500,000 to be allocated to this project, and requested the priority of this project be high on the list. She further explained that there are no guarantees and asked if there would be any other potential sources of funding to contribute. Swenson offered to review the Gunnison County Landfill Mitigation Fund budget to see if any funds would be available.

After discussion, the general consensus was that the importance of the data being collected could help answer many unknown questions and may influence management decisions about grazing lands in the future. The budget concerns for implementation of example 3 that includes radio-marking birds may need to be evaluated, as the cost for that component of the proposal was not fully considered or included in the projected budget.

Project details were discussed. What level of certainty will be acceptable and how the resulting data could be used was covered. It was agreed that all three proposed components would contribute to the information needed.

After input supporting the project design concept from Scott, Hausler, Pfister, Dawson, Navy and others, Stahlnecker requested that the Subcommittee be active in continued efforts to develop and refine project details. A future meeting schedule will be determined and that email correspondence will be necessary. The Division of Wildlife offered to continue to provide contributions toward a final budget proposal and to assist with project development.

**BREAK:** The meeting recessed for lunch at 12:39 pm and returned to session at 1:00 pm.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS:** Scott announced that the Strategic Plan was ready for review. He will be circulating the draft document via email to the Committee and asked that this topic to be added to an agenda to determine future actions for review, public comment and distribution.

Wenum commented that observations indicate a slower big game harvest during the recent hunting seasons. The warm, dry weather and animal distribution may be a contributing factor.

Japuntich reported that the BLM fiscal year water reports were recently completed and data shows a total of 116% for the year. Only three months were above average. All other months were below average.

**APPROVAL OF October 14, 2008 MEETING MINUTES:** The October 14, 2008 minutes were approved with no additional modifications needed.

**Moved** by Swenson to accept the October 14, 2008 meeting minutes as circulated, seconded by Laurie. Motion carried.

**SUBCOMMITTEE POLICY:** The current policy was reviewed. Spencer shared an experience on a recent sub-committee where both the Regular and Alternate At-Large Members were appointed. She expressed the disappointment she felt when she was told as an Alternate Member, her participation in the sub-committee would not include voting privileges. She detailed the events and proposed modification to the current policy to be considered to avoid these types of situations in the future. She also recommended sharing the Committee policies with new members. Pat Magee, Local Working Group Member shared his perspective. He felt communications were not effective during the same sub-committee proceedings. He stated that the structure of a biological system affects the way the process works and its effectiveness. He further related how this analogy could be applied to policies and organizations.

Membership, recruitment, methods of making appointments and voting privileges were discussed. Many ideas were proposed including: 1.) Development of a list of interested parties to contact when sub-committees would be formed to extend an invitation to participate; 2.) eliminating subcommittees entirely; 3.) eliminating the voting process, and attempt to bring the group to a consensus by discussion; 4.) to charge subcommittees with the task of bringing back reports from subcommittee proceedings versus making recommendations; 5.) when

subcommittees are formed very clear directives from the Committee need to be given, to include specific outcomes expected.

After extensive debate Hausler **Moved** to amend the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee Policy on Subcommittees adopted with amendments by the Committee on 3/29/06 and amended on 11/14/07 to add the following two paragraphs:

6. Subcommittees shall include input from outside sources to provide the necessary knowledge as required.
7. A Subcommittee will attempt to reach consensus on the assigned issue, if consensus is not possible, a vote will be taken with a majority and minority report given to the Strategic Committee.

The motion was seconded by Peterson. Discussion of the motion was requested by Chairperson Stahlnecker.

Navy stated if a motion passed by the Committee that was contrary to standing procedures, the motion would stand, unless a point of order per Roberts Rules of Order was called (for example having both the Regular Member and an Alternate join a sub-committee as preferred by the Committee). Ferchau suggested adding specific directives from the Committee to the subcommittee, and to allow dissenting views to be presented by members of the group or any other person present at the subcommittee meeting. Peterson provided additional insight into the background for the current policy of only a single member from an entity being present to avoid a single group having more representation than any other group.

Hausler amended the original motion by as a result of friendly amendments suggested by Ferchau:

Altering paragraph number six to read: The Sub-committees shall include input from outside sources as necessary to provide the necessary knowledge from interested stake holders as required.

Amend paragraph 1 as currently written as follows: Sub-committees shall be formed to address a specific issue or issues as determined necessary by the Committee as a whole, by majority vote.

The amendment was seconded by Peterson.

Specific wording of paragraph six and the word shall was discussed. It was concluded that consensus preferred the word may over shall. The motion was further revised to read: The Sub-committees may include input from outside sources as necessary to provide the necessary knowledge from interested stake holders as required.

Further revision of the amendment to paragraph 7 was: A Sub-committee will attempt to reach consensus on the assigned issue, if consensus is not possible, a vote will be taken with a majority and minority report given to the Strategic Committee, which will reflect all views.

The additional revisions were seconded by Peterson.

The definition of Membership and the historical context that the Committee was assigned from the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners when the Strategic Committee was formed was reviewed. After further deliberation Swenson offered to present the concern of the At-large membership representation of a Regular and Alternate member to the Board of County Commissioners.

Hausler restated his motion for the amendments to the Policy on Subcommittees as:

1. Sub-committees shall be formed to address a specific issue or issues as determined necessary by the Committee as a whole, by majority vote.
2. Appointment to a subcommittee shall be made by the Chair with concurrence by the Committee as a whole. Regular or alternate committee members, not both, from any entity may be appointed to sub-committees. In the event of dissension and/or lack of consensus regarding an appointment, nominations from the Committee will be accepted. A majority vote shall determine the appointments.
3. Subcommittees that are project based will expire at the completion of the project. It shall be incumbent upon the Committee to define "completion" at the time the subcommittee is formed.
4. Non-project based (continuing) subcommittees and project based subcommittees extending beyond the beginning of the calendar year shall be re-authorized at the first meeting of the Committee each calendar year.
5. The Committee shall conduct a review of all subcommittees and subcommittee membership at the first meeting of the Committee each calendar year.
6. Subcommittees may include input from outside sources to provide necessary knowledge from interested stakeholders as needed.
7. Subcommittees will attempt to reach consensus on the assigned issue. If consensus is not possible, a vote will be taken with a majority and a minority report given to the Strategic Committee, which will reflect all views presented.

The restated motion was seconded by Peterson.

Motion carried unanimously.

A formal apology and recognition of her efforts by Stahlnecker on behalf of the entire Committee was given to Spencer.

**SCHEDULING EVENING MEETINGS – COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:** This topic was deferred to a future meeting.

**SHED ANTLER ISSUE UPDATE:** Cochran reminded the Committee that the Citizens Issue Paper was included for consideration by the Wildlife Commission on the agenda November 13, 2008 at 1:00 pm. He further reminded the group if approved, interested parties should plan to present in Denver in January.

Wenum reminded the group of the website (<http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeCommission/>) with an audio link to the meeting allowing meeting discussions to be heard if desired.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

10:00 am – 2:00pm December 10 - Regular Meeting

Further discussion on the topic of meeting dates and times will be scheduled for a future agenda item. Peterson specifically mentioned the desire to have additional press coverage. Stahlnecker asked Committee members to review their schedules and be prepared to discuss alternative meetings times.

**ADJOURN: MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting seconded by Scott. Motion carried unanimously. The November 12, 2008 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 2:20 pm.

**Certification of Approval:**

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Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:

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Ruth Dukeman, Administrative Assistant III