

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2011**

The January 20, 2011 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was held in the Commissioners' Meeting Room in the Courthouse at 200 E. Virginia, Gunnison CO 81230.

Voting Members Present:

Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)
John Scott, Vice-Chairperson, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)
Greg Peterson, Secretary, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
Sue Navy, High Country Citizens' Alliance (HCCA)
J Wenum, Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW)
Brian St. George, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
Erich Ferchau, At-Large, Development Community
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Al Pfister, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Paula Swenson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) (Arrived 10:31 am and left at 12:00 noon)
Phil Chamberland, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) (served as voting member until 10:31 am and again after 12:00 noon)

Non-voting Members Present:

Liz With, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)
Allen Roper, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)

Staff Members Present:

Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator
Ruth Dukeman, Administrative Assistant III

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Stahlnecker called the January 20, 2011 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:07 am.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM: Stahlnecker confirmed that a quorum was present

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

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

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2010 MEETING MINUTES: Modifications to the November 17, 2010 minutes were discussed and agreed upon. **Moved** by Scott, seconded by Navy to accept the November 17, 2010 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

DESIGNATION OF PUBLIC PLACE FOR POSTING NOTICES: Cochran explained that designation of the public place for posting notices was an annual task. Historically, information was posted on the bulletin board outside the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room, upstairs in the courthouse located at 200 East Virginia Ave. Gunnison, Colorado. **Moved** by Laurie, seconded by Scott to designate the bulletin board outside the Board of County Commissioners meeting room as the Designated Public Posting Place. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS:

BLM: A Hartman's Rocks Recreation Area Open House was scheduled to be held at the BLM Office on 01/20/2011 from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm. It was hoped that discussions would include the human impacts on the area. A meeting was to be scheduled for the Range Program Review with an invitation extended to the Stockgrowers'. The purpose was to discuss how the recommendations from the review are being implemented. Sage-grouse issues would be included in these discussions. An invitation for Committee member participation was extended.

Saguache BOCC: Outreach efforts for the Sand Dunes North Roundtable were scheduled at the Moffat School. The next regular meeting was scheduled for January 27, 2011 at 9:00 am at the Joyful Journeys Hot Springs Conference Center.

ELECTRONIC PACKETS: Cochran explained the electronic packet process. File size may be the only limiting factor. It was decided that information could be posted to an FTP site to avoid email file size restrictions. Paper packets will still be provided for those who request them.

TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: Scott explained that there was a need to change the membership of the Technical Subcommittee. **Moved** by Scott, seconded by Navy to remove Dave Kinetader (has relocated) and to add Gay Austin to the membership of the Technical Subcommittee.

BLM GEOTHERMAL LEASE NOMINATION EA – STATUS UPDATE: St. George explained that plan comments were being reviewed. The process for future reviews, comments and the information for a programmatic EA for the San Luis Valley was discussed. The timelines and process for decisions were presented with the final decision document to be prepared in March 2011, with a potential lease sale date in May of 2011.

USFS GEOTHERMAL LEASE NOMINATION EA – STATUS UPDATE: Vasquez advised the process was moving forward with a decision possible in early February.

RANGEWIDE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT: Scott provided an update from the meeting. Discussion that took place about the role of the Rangewide Plan Steering Committee and the opportunities for National Fish and Wildlife Fund (NFWF) grant funding were reported. The grant review process, potentially eligible projects and the desire for funds to be allocated to projects representing different geographic areas was desired. Identification of priorities, agency conversations about working with new information was highlighted at the meeting. The annual Rangewide Conservation Plan meeting is scheduled for March 2011.

The discussion moved to mammalian predator control in the San Miguel Basin. The habitat in the area and that corvids may be added to the control efforts in the future were discussed.

TECHNICAL/ACTION ITEM #8 SUBCOMMITTEE'S MEETING REPORT: Scott explained efforts related to the Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) process and that there was a desire to update the Priority Regions document. Gunnison County Geographic Services Coordinator Mike Pelletier proposed a project related to different layers of data (with a requested deadline of January 31, 2011 to submit information) with presentation to Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission. The CCA was discussed, including a desire to meld efforts with private landowners. Navy requested review of the Action Plan timelines to assure tasks are being completed and the document updated to reflect the correct information. A summary/update of tasks accomplished was requested, with this topic being included on a future agenda.

SUMMIT #3 AND FESTIVAL PLANNING:

I&E SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Cochran presented information related to the revised Summit agenda. It is close to being final, with additional speakers being confirmed. Pfister reported that confirmation of Rick Knight was pending. The Festival Committee notes were included in the packet materials as an update to their efforts. Dave Wiens will be coordinating a Walk/Run as part of the event with the funding from that event going back to the Gunnison Trails organization for benefit of the Gunnison Sage-grouse. Participation by Roland McCook was desired with the role that he would be able to provide to the Festival still unknown. The Public Land User Panel discussion format and purpose was discussed. It was decided that St. George should provide additional insight into potential participants and what the goals of this panel would be. Wenum has discussed the potential for a web cam with others in DOW. The position that would be responsible for this task is currently vacant but may be filled in the coming weeks. More details will be provided at a later date.

BUDGET: Cochran explained that there was commitment for the presentations and a need to confirm funding sources. A Challenge Grant application was submitted to the City of Gunnison and a separate application was submitted to the Landfill Mitigation Committee for the needed funds. Support from the Committee was requested. The logistics related to the event and the proposed registration costs of regular registration of \$50.00 and \$25.00 for students were further discussed. A day/drop-in rate was proposed for those who may want to participate for a single-day or just for a session. Peterson was willing to make a donation of locally raised beef hamburger to be used for the Tuesday lunch for the event.

Moved by Peterson, second by Laurie for full participant, regular registration be \$50.00 and full participant student registration be \$25.00. Discussion followed. Caloger recommended local discounts or registration be by donation to encourage participation and engagement. Ferchau recommended free registration and the meal tickets have a cost. There was a desire to include the meals to assure participation. If funding was available, then scholarships could be offered. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Pfister, seconded by Scott that all other levels of registration fees be determined by the Information and Education (I&E) Subcommittee. Motion carried unanimously.

EVENT LODGING PROPOSALS: A recommendation from the I&E subcommittee was for the Super 8 - Gunnison (rate of \$55.00) and the Quality Inn – Gunnison (rate of \$50.00) to serve as the lodging facilities for the event. Information about these facilities would be included on the website. **Moved** by St. George, second by Navy for the Super 8 - Gunnison and Quality Inn – Gunnison to serve as the recommended lodging facilities for the events.

SELECT LOGO CONTEST WINNER: Two logos from the same artist were proposed. The logo was selected with a request that the artist be contacted to see if the bird could be enlarged. The artist, Nathan Seward, was present and agreed to the request.

LUNCH: The meeting recessed from 12:09 pm until 12:29 pm.

CCA REPORT/DISCUSSION: BLM Consultant John Toolen presented information related to the process. A report from a recent Technical Subcommittee meeting was reviewed. St. George advised that there was a need for sideboards and setting expectations about the goals related to a final product. The BLM is looking to the Rangewide Plan as a starting point and identifying other activities that will help preserve the species. Pfister asked about the costs associated with the participation in the process. Understanding budgetary requirements, staff time was proposed to be agency contributions to the program. There was a desire to have a single consolidated plan, versus each agency having a different public message. Peterson requested details to share with the Stockgrowers' as soon possible. The timeline related to the program was reviewed with the next Technical Sub-Committee Meeting scheduled for February 8, 2011 from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, upstairs meeting room at the Fred R. Field Western Heritage Center. Specific expectations about habitat conditions, goals and desired outcomes from this process were further discussed. There was a desire expressed to have a level of participation with landowners to increase the number of certificates of participation and to help guide efforts.

GRAZING RESEARCH PROJECT: Mary Williams, Robbie LeValley, Mike Phillips, Jim Gammonley, Nathan Seward, Liz With and Tony Maldarella (grazing permittee) were present for discussion. LeValley introduced the topic. Williams explained the methodologies related to the 2010 habitat study, data collected from the field season, the sites used, defining the characteristics of the different sites with different forb heights and species make-up. The effects of weather patterns and elevation were highlighted. Comparisons, measurements and differences in heights were discussed. A final report will be completed near the end of February that will also include recommendations for the future of the project. Peterson expressed his appreciation for the work and explained that he would like to see other data sets from other years and hoped that the funds and time would allow the program to continue. The need for additional base line data, use of other previously collected data sets, inclusion of nest/chick survival information and the desire for project continuation was discussed. The Research Team made a preliminary recommendation that the habitat assessment study continue in 2011. Appreciation was expressed to the Research Team.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

January 27, 2011 – Board of County Commissioners/Planning Commission – Sage-grouse topic

February 8, 2011 1:00 pm- 5:00 pm Technical Sub-Committee Meeting at the Fred R. Field Heritage Center – upstairs meeting room

February 9, 2011 10:00 am -2:00 pm, Regular Meeting (CCA, Action Plan Accountability Update, Summit)

March 17, 2011 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Regular Meeting (Grazing Research Project)

ADJOURN: The January 20, 2011 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Certification of Approval:

Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:

Ruth Dukeman, Administrative Assistant III