GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday, September 17, 2014
PLACE: Planning Commission Meeting Room, Blackstock Government Center

1.	10:00am	● Call Regular Meeting to Order; Determination of Quorum; Verify Public Notice of Meeting
2.	10:05	● Agenda Approval
3.	10:10	● Approval of August 20, 2014 Meeting Minutes
4.	10:15	● Committee Member Comments/Reports
5.	10:30	● Gunnison Sage-grouse ESA Listing Decision Extension -update on activities
6.	10:45	● BLM Resource Management Plan Amendment EIS
7.	11:00	● Signal Peak Recreation Area Planning Update
8.	11:05	● Riparian Restoration and Resilience Project Update
9.	11:15	● Gunnison County Landfill Depredation Permit Application
10.	11:25	● Future Meetings
11.	11:30am	● Adjourn

NOTE: This agenda is subject to change, including the addition of items up to 24 hours in advance or the deletion of items at any time. All times are approximate. Regular Meetings, Public Hearings, and Special Meetings are recorded and **ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY ITEM**. Work Sessions are not recorded and formal action cannot be taken. Two or more Gunnison County Commissioners may attend this meeting. For further information, contact the County Administration at 641-0248. If special accommodations are necessary per ADA, contact 641-0248 or TTY 641-3061 prior to the meeting.

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GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATIGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2014

The September 17, 2014, Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin # D, Gunnison, Co. 81230

Committee Members Present:
Voting:
Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)
J Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
David Wiens, At-large Recreation Community
Chris Bove, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Eric Ferchau, At Large, Development Community
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
John Toolen, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Alternate
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County Alternate (by phone)

Non-voting:
Nathan Seward, Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife (CPW) Alternate
Susan Linner, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (by phone)

Staff Members Present:
Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator
Michelle Spain, Administrative Assistant

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Stahlnecker called the September 17, 2014 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:00 A.M.

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.

10:01:06 AM **APPROVAL of the August 20, 2014 Meeting Minutes:**

Corrections from Sue Navy were read and so made to the minutes. Peterson requested a correction on page 4, so corrected. Vasquez requested the following edit to page 3. An important part is the need to list, and if Sage Grouse is listed what does that mean for that position (RMBO/NRCS Sage-grouse biologist). Will that position continue to exist? Vasquez was concerned about the funding. Bove noted that there are 72 applications that have been submitted for that position. Page 3, Flat Top added. Corrections completed.

Moved by Houck and seconded by Peterson to accept the August 20, 2014 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

10:11:06 AM **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

- Several members attended the WildEarth Guardians meeting. Discussion on differences on science and number of birds. Land Use Changes and the approval of these applications were discussed. 450 of these were approved but most were not located in important Sage-grouse areas.

- Vasquez questioned their take on the local conservation efforts. Where did they get this information and what other items were discussed?

- Houck indicated that there is a lack of communication with this Committee. The location of many of these permits are out of important Sage-grouse areas. WildEarth is having these meetings in locations where the Sage-grouse is not impacting the area.

- St. George voiced that the details were not explained. The burying of power lines, stock feeding being changed, all of these are known as good practices. How do we implement these? They had no concrete recommendations. Litigation is the first course of action with this organization. Meeting schedules were discussed concerning WildEarth Guardians. It was clear that if this bird is not listed litigation will follow.

- Houck indicated that out of these 450 permits WildEarth wanted permits declined. This group would not listen to how this process is arrived at to get to yes.

- Cochran indicated that Mr. Molar had been invited to Strategic Committee meetings and he had declined. We have another group (The Nature Conservancy) working in this area that is doing excellent things for the bird.

- Caloger asked Houck if the raven population were decreased could that be helpful. If this were accomplished and still no cooperation came from this group could we file an abuse of process?

- Houck indicated that this would be a decision for the attorney.

- Wenum reviewed other discrepancies on this meeting. Wenum indicated that the relocation of birds will continue. 30 total at this time for 2014. Mike Phillips has left the agency. Tony Apa will take over Phillips data. Mindy Rice will also be helping with this effort. Staff shortages at CPW will continue through December. Wenum is unsure if the Phillip's position will be replaced.

- St. George has accepted a position with BLM in Denver beginning October 20, 2014. They will try to find a temporary replacement.

- Vasquez indicated that the USFS will be hiring 2 staff people. Suzanne Parker, and Sarah Miller. Both will be helpful in the wildlife area. Wenum asked whether they have specific areas they will be monitoring. Suzanne will be involved with GIS and GPS and vegetation monitoring techniques. Sarah is new to this organization and will be learning as we go.

- Cochran indicated that Reclamation Permit amendments were approved by the BoCC in the Land Use Resolution (LUR). Reclamation Permit requirements have been modified: outside the sage grouse occupied habitat 10,000 sq. feet is the threshold; Pre-application Conferences are required for all site disturbing activities in GuSG occupied habitat; Tier 1 Habitat will require a Reclamation Permit for any type of disturbance; Tier 2 will require an evaluation and recommendation will follow. The intent is to work with property owners early in their planning process.

10:43:28 AM **GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE ESA LISTING DECISION EXTENSION- update on activities;**

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- Cochran commenced his review**.** Gunnison County has been working with CPW to develop a "final" comment document to be submitted by the State of Colorado. November 12th is still the USFWS listing decision deadline.

- Houck asked Linner if the 4(d) rule was still on hold. Linner responded yes and nothing would be determined prior to the November 12th date.

- Peterson asked about the current status of the process. Linner responded that the decision document is currently under official review by the solicitor's office, then headed to the Regional Director for sign off, for submittal to Washington.

10:46:49 AM **COUNTY COALITION REPORT**

- Not on agenda

10:47:31 AM **BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS**

- Cochran commenced his review. Two cooperating agency teleconferences last week. Time frame to respond this Friday is not realistic. It is not possible to gather the social & economic information for 11 counties, review it and provide a diligent response in the time frame allowed. Short time frames are realistic but impossible ones will hamper the relationship with BLM. We are currently trying to work this out.

- Houck voiced concern also.

- Vasquez stated the draft conservation measures need to be reviewed and with the short time frame is hard to do a good review. The regional office will work with the Gunnison office to meet the review deadlines.

- Cochran is concerned that this will set the stage for future responses.

- Houck asked St. George what will be the best way to address this issue.

- St. George responded that Lori Armstrong is this area's line officer. Use one person to direct questions and do not allow all members to call in. Even though Lee is the project manager Lori is the contact person who will be able to assist on this project.

- Wenum indicated that CPW's main concerns are the time frames and participants. Lee wanted to work with only the people listed in the document.

- St. George responded, work with the project team manager first. If the concerns are not addressed then seek other recourses. Lori can assist here.

- Vasquez noted that the USFS will be revising the Forest Plan in the future and will be incorporating sage-grouse conservation measures and would like to be able to work with the BLM on this. Forest intervention will commence 2016.

- St. George wanted to confirm that Lee was on the list for agendas. This was confirmed by Cochran.

11:01:42 AM **SIGNAL PEAK RECREATION AREA PLANNING UPDATE**

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- Houck commenced his report. He will get the subcommittee together in the next few weeks to formalize the recommendations. The layout and proposed routes on the ground need to be listed. Trail design needs clarifications. Studying of the impacts with WSCU will be pursued. A comprehensive signage plan will be explored. Grazing, big game, and seasonal closures will also be reviewed. The subcommittee will be reviewing this draft proposal soon.

- Peterson indicated that keep in mind that the recreation aspect should not impact the grazing standards. This needs to be brought back to Sage Grouse issues.

- Cochran indicated that this is all tied together but keep it on the Sage Grouse line.

- Houck indicated that this is a perfect time to plan and not just react. Recreation has been in this area for a long time. Planning is important to protect the bird.

11:10:42 AM **RIPARIAN RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE PROJECT UPDATE**

- Cochran commenced the review. Many good projects have been accomplished this year.

- St. George responded that this year has been tremendously successful. The structures look great and are doing the job that they were intended to do. Still learning how to supply the workforce and product to complete these structures. $90K is being earmarked for this program for the next fiscal year.

- Seward reported that they have completed 45 structures this year in Chance Gulch.
  Close to a mile and half has been worked on in this area. The Nature Conservancy being here is a huge help for these projects.

- Vasquez also reported that the structures installed by USFS have been very successful. On Flattop 20 structures have been completed. In some of these remote areas local rock was collected for the structures. They are experimenting with new methods. These will be reviewed. The cooperation of other entities made this project such a success. Classes from WSCU also helped. Maintenance on last year's structures was also completed.

- St. George indicated that BLM is already looking at expanding this program. They are looking at the road issues. Water harvesting off the roads is being studied.

- Seward thanked NPS for the use of the dump truck. 32 loads of rock were used for the Chance Gulch project. There has been a tremendous improvement in this meadow over the last 3 years.

- Cochran noted that the Gunnison Conservation District did get some funding for cross fencing and other riparian related projects. The volunteer base is building and has proven to be very effective. We are building capacity in the basin that can design these projects as well.

11:30:02 AM **PREDATOR CONTROL INVESTIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE- PEPORT**

- Cochran will arrange a meeting to review the landfill. Marlene Crosby indicated that staff from the Fish & Wildlife migratory bird permit office wants to come to Gunnison to review options at the Gunnison County landfill. The depredation permit for the landfill has not been issued yet. It may be issued next year.

- Caloger indicated that the one name that keeps coming up is Dr. William Boarmann. He has been contacted but there is virtually no information on raven management at landfills out there. Maybe our review will help on this issue. Are there chemicals that can be used to make the food less palatable?

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FUTURE MEETINGS: Future meetings will occur on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Planning Commission meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, Co. 81230, unless changed for a specific reason. Meetings were reviewed.

Date	Time	Notes	Building and location
10/15/14	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
11/19/14	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
12/17/14	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: **MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The September 17, 2014 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committed adjourned at 11:36 A.M.

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Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:

/S/ Michelle Spain
Administrative Assistant
Gunnison County Community Development Department

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