GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday, October 15, 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 September 17, 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 -status report
7.	11:00	●	Signal Peak Recreation Area Planning Subcommittee -status report -recommendations
8.	11:15	●	Riparian Restoration and Resilience Project Update
9.	11:20	●	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.

GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2014

The October 15, 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)
Nathan Seward, Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife (CPW)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates (HCCA)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Brian St. George, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
David Wiens, At-large Recreation Community
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Liz With, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
John Toolen, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Linda Joseph, Saguache County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) (by teleconference)

Non-voting:
J Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Susan Linner, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (by teleconference)

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

Others present as listed in text.

10:01:19 AM **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Stahlnecker called the October 15, 2014 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:01 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.

On the phone: Linda Joseph, Susan Linner, and Jenny Nehring

APPROVAL of September 17, 2014 MEETING MINUTES: **Moved by** Houck, and seconded by St. George to accept the September 17, 2014 meeting minutes with corrections. Motion carried.

10:05:09 AM **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

- St. George reported that this was his final meeting since he is relocating. There will be a temporary Gunnison Field Office manager. This will be someone internally from BLM assigned for this temporary position. No name has been formally released at this time.

- Stahlnecker reported that the park superintendent position has been filled by Bruce Nobel. Currently he is the superintendent in the Oklahoma City area. He may sit on this committee but they are not sure at what capacity.
- Liz With reported on various projects on reseeding. Gunnison Conservation District did get the plug ponds pond project in Kezar Basin completed this season. They hope to reseed this fall and start some thistle treatment. Field tours with WSCU and CSU have occurred. With is hoping to have the drift fencing up also by the end of this fall. The (sage-grouse) biologist position is opened and will not be filled until later in November of this year.
- Cochran explained plug and pond structures. They are machine-built non-rock structures to address down cutting and or eroding. Cochran may be able to bring some pictures of this area in for review.
- With indicated that there have been some chemical treatments in this area previously. They have a good seeding budget and hope to reestablish some of the native plants back to the area.
- Caloger asked if the new Park Service superintendent had any prairie chicken experience. Stahlnecker responded that he was unaware of his qualifications in this area.
- Nate Seward reported that CPW did make their goal of 30 trap and transplant birds. Most of these birds were juveniles. He was unsure of what the breakdown of males vs females was. All birds were fitted with transmitters. All went to the San Miguel Basin.
- Wenum reported on a new vacancy in his office. Terrestrial biologist Brandon Diamond has transferred to the Unit 54 District Wildlife Manager (DWM) position. The vacant position will possibly be opened up for a lateral transfer. This position will be vacant for a hopefully short period of time.
- Houck indicated they are working on the final submittal letter from the State of Colorado. They are trying to make sure there is a clear understanding of the Land Use Resolution.
- Cochran also indicated the old data and new data are being revised and re-explained. Threat assessment, strategy, and meetings will be addressed. They tried to keep this as brief as possible except for the conservation measures. This should be submitted today or tomorrow.
- Seward indicated that this is a State submittal. He indicated it was concise and easy to understand. Hopefully this will be submitted later today.
- Houck stated that the County Coalition will meet next week. Lots of positive reports here. Putting in place protective measures for the long term is the goal.
- Vasquez reported that the USFS is treating some areas for cheat grass. Weed treatments are occurring in the Almont Triangle and Flat Top area. They were able to get a grant from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for weed treatments. The new Gunnison area visitor maps are out.

10:19:33 AM **GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE ESA LISTING DECISION EXTENSION- update on activities;**

- Houck commenced his review. This extension period has allowed this committee to work on more productive measures. What is unfortunate is we keep moving forward but we are running out of time.
- Cochran stated that the Parks & Wildlife final submittal is important.
- Susan Linner responded that the critical habitat rule is in their Washington D.C. office. The listing rule is still in the regional office for review. Linner indicated that any major changes will be hard to incorporate at this time. Hopefully it is nothing that they are not aware of.
- Navy asked if there was any further discussions with any other groups National or Front Range. Houck responded that it has been very difficult to get the federal agencies to recognize that local government can play a large role in this type of management. Details on how applications are reviewed were explained to these various groups.

COUNTY COALITION REPORT

- **No report**

10:25:38 AM **BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS**

- Leigh Espy reviewed the time line from July, 2014. Dove Creek had the largest turn out for the public meetings. 70 separate comment letters have been received. Midway in drafting the scoping report. The target date for this report to be completed is around Thanksgiving. 18 cooperating agencies have been signed on. 4 state agencies, 6 federal agencies are joining in BLM in this effort. Three cooperating agency meetings have been held. 10 person BLM team is now in place. The team is now drafting Chapter one (1), and working on Chapters two (2) and three (3). She will be traveling to Washington next week to inform their headquarters office on the status of the project. The State submittal will assist on this effort. Questions for committee requested. None asked.
- Cochran indicated that this is an ongoing process and we will get regular updates.

10:32:24 AM **SIGNAL PEAK RECREATION AREA PLANNING UPDATE**

- Houck indicated that he will have a report/update by next meeting. An email will be sent to all members. Maps have been given to the subcommittee showing the areas and the proposed closed areas. The goal is to have the formal recommendation to the Committee by next meeting. The recommendations will be sage-grouse specific. Jim Loveless is the recreation planner for BLM and the point person for their process.
- Cochran asked about the hiring of a consultant. Wiens responded that no consultant had been hired at this time.
- St. George responded that BLM is the regulatory agency on the ground. BLM envisions moving forward on the recreation management area plan. This Committee will be the lead on the trails in this area. St. George indicated that the current planning is very important. The subcommittee reports have been very helpful. This Signal Peak area has a long history of a variety of uses, with wildlife, recreation, grazing being just a few.
- Seward asked if there will be a BLM wildlife biologist for this. St. George indicated that there will be a gap of time before this position will be filled. Staffing was discussed.
- Wiens responded that wildlife is an important area of discussion and will be addressed by the subcommittee.

10:43:54 AM **RIPARIAN RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE PROJECT UPDATE**

- Cochran indicated that it was a good summer and cooperation was great. New techniques were used and now can be measured.
- With said private compliance and help was very good.
- Navy asked about the spring run-off damage to existing structures.
- Vasquez responded that various structures were repaired and re-anchored. The volunteers were able to get the maintenance work completed. Some of the smaller structures were moved by the flow. They have now been re-anchored and should operate well.
- Cochran indicated that all agencies were able to work together on this project. These items are not install and walk away. Review and possible maintenance is required on an annual basis. Colorado Mountain College, Carbondale, will bring a class over on 10-24-2014 to review and participate in collaborative conservation on the ground.
- Seward discussed future projects and funding for these areas. Crawford is a current area for treatment. Poncha Pass is another area. This work is expanding and growing.
- With indicated that funding is available and being routed through the Nature Conservancy. There is $75k in funding for this type of program.
- Navy asked various questions on funding.
- Seward did submit a proposal for $50K for a conservation biologist for this southwest area.
- Vasquez reviewed the funding available with USFS but not much is there. He will pursue some grant funding.

- St. George reviewed the BLM funding. The funding process is really through the Washington office. Climate change and climate adaptation have been a major issue. Knocking on doors and really getting this issue in the offices has been very beneficial.
- Vasquez also wants to approach his superiors on this type of program. He indicated that they are starting a blog.
- Linner indicated that this will be for their review soon.

11:00:16 AM **PREDATOR CONTROL INVESTIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE- REPORT**

- Cochran commenced his review. He had requested that members of this Committee be included in the meeting with the USFWS Migratory Bird Office folks. They asked that the meeting be limited to staff.
- Raven populations are a threat to the grouse but how much of a threat has not been determined. Caloger posed a question to Linner. He asked that a depredation permit be issued for this raven population during nesting season. Caloger asked if she would be able to proceed with a study of how this might occur. Linner responded that if the Committee states that this appropriate she would like a Committee vote on this. USFWS Migratory Birds Office people need to be contacted.
- Stahlnecker responded that this would be a question to bring up at a future meeting and maybe wait for Pat Magee's report. Cochran could ask at his next meeting on what type of permit this would be. Meeting for tomorrow will be concerning all aspects of the depredation permit. This meeting will be with the Gunnison County Public Works Department and the USFWS. Cochran will participate.
- Navy asked if there are other food based products that can be used. Caloger indicated that FAA was contacted and they are concerned that sea gulls could damage planes. Cochran will put this discussion on a future meeting agenda.
- With discussed funding for the District Technician position. Marlene Crosby indicated that funding is no longer available from the County. Caloger indicated that there may be a potential to reach out to other states and organizations for funding to help in this area.
- Seward indicated that Ken Morgan is the CPW private lands coordinator and he may be able to assist with this request.
- Vasquez discussed the treatment of weeds and how the various organizations could work together for this. HPP money has some funding stipulations. HPP funding is primarily for on-the-ground projects.
- Cochran stated that the landfill mitigation fund expires this year. The BOCC will be reviewing this and determining if it should be continued.
- With requested that a letter be drafted requesting renewal of this to be on the next agenda.

11:25:20 AM **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.

Date	Time	Notes	Building and location
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

11:26:10 AM **ADJOURN: MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The September 15, 2014 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committed adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

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Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson
11:26

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:

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