GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday, April 15, 2015
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 March 18, 2015 Meeting Minutes
4.	10:15	●	Committee Member Comments/Reports
5.	10:30	●	Litigation Update
6.	10:40	●	BLM Resource Management Plan Amendment EIS -status report
7.	10:50	●	Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site
8.	11:30	●	Gunnison sage-grouse Brochures
9.	11:55	●	Future Meetings
10.	12:00	●	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
APRIL 15, 2015

The April 15, 2015 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:
Regular Members:
Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates (HCCA)
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
David Wiens, At-large Recreation Community
Eric Ferchau, At Large, Development Community
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

Alternate Members:
Nathan Seward, Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife (CPW) Alternate
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County Alternate
Polly Oberosler, Recreation Community At-Large-Alternate
Russell Japuntich, (BLM)

Others in the Audience:
Pat Magee, WSCU
Charlie Pelizza (Acting USFWS Colorado Field Supervisor)

No phone conferencing available.

Staff Members Present:
Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator
Michelle Spain, Administrative Assistant
Others present as listed in text.

10:03:23 AM **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Stahlnecker called the April 15, 2015 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.

10:03:13 AM **PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMED:** Stahlnecker verified that proper legal public notice had occurred.

10:03:17 AM **AGENDA APPROVAL:** One modification to the agenda. March 2015 meeting minutes were rescheduled to the May meeting. Some of the Committee members were unable to access these on the website.

10:03:10 AM **APPROVAL of March 18, 2015 MEETING MINUTES:** Rescheduled to May 20, 2015 meeting.

10:04:52 AM **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

Japuntich indicated that the current temporary acting BLM Gunnison Field Office Manager Justin Abernathy. Justin is from Utah. He will be in this position for the next 60 days.

Laurie reported that at Poncha Pass there are 11 documented birds and they have seen six. Concern was expressed that a private individual was spotted in this area. He was on the highway and not on the closed road viewing grouse on the lek. Seward reported on lekking activity in the Gunnison Basin. First count period recorded 684 males and 184 females. This is already above last year's high male count. Lekking activity started earlier. Very encouraging. Wildlife photographer Bob Gress was introduced. Mr. Gress and Seward went to a private lek up Ohio Creek to provide Mr. Gress with a photography opportunity. Seward counted 81 males at this lek. They were able to get some great photos

Japuntich reported that the BLM State Director, Ruth Welch and staff, had visited the same private lek last week.

Japuntich also reported that the BLM "sheep allotment" EIS process is underway. It does include several allotments in Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. Initial public scoping is being accomplished.

Cochran asked about any road closure issues. Japuntich indicated that the issues are small now. The antler collection season is pretty much over.

10:11:19 AM **LITIGTION UPDATE**

Cochran presented his update. The Gunnison County BoCC approved intervention in the three lawsuits that have been filed to date. So far, all but one claimant has agreed not to object to intervention in the respective cases by Gunnison County and the Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association. One motion to intervene will be filed shortly. Two of the claims (State of Colorado and Center for Biological Diversity/Western Watersheds Project (CBD/WWP) have been amended. Motions to intervene in those cases have therefore been delayed. The State and the County plans were discussed. It is likely that the Court will combine all of the cases into a single proceeding.

Houck stated that they are unsure how this will all work.

Cochran stated that the Federal Government should have their answer to the pro-listing (as endangered) lawsuits by May 12, 2015, though the amended CDB/WWP complaint will require and extension of that date.

10:16:31 AM **BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS**

Espy unable to attend. Japuntich commenced his review. The final record of decision is scheduled for February 2017. Draft chapters 2, 3, 4 will be out for Cooperating Agency review by May, 2015. Looks like full review draft will be available by July, 2015. Content was discussed.

Navy questioned the long timing. Japuntich indicated the 90 day comment periods were making it long. This really is going faster than most EIS's. Upcoming meetings discussed.

10:21:54 AM **WAUNITA WATCHABLE WILDLIFE SITE**

Seward started this discussion. Times for viewing were brought up, using the indicators in the report. A draft report prepared by Magee and Seward was distributed and discussed. Times and various days for counting were reviewed.

Magee discussed the high number levels for the males. Average is 38.3.

Magee stated that the birds have changed their location from prior years. Viewers are still able to see the birds from the viewing site even though they are farther away. This does cause less stress on the population. The counts they are getting are conservative. They have counted 29 combined male & females at this time.

The count locations have been divided into the traditional area, north meadow and the East Ridge. Japuntich brought up the up and down counts in this area. He asked if this consistent with the other leks. Human disturbance was discussed.

Laurie asked if vehicles were going beyond this area to look at the birds. Magee responded that yes there have been a few. Magee sent out some educational information regarding this and they have had a good response.

Navy asked if they should wait for the proposed number to be arrived at or initiate changes now.

Magee responded that this was discussed as far as eliminating days. Magee indicated that since the birds are far enough away that this may not be an issue.

Closing off of roads and the other issues involved with this practice was discussed by Houck.

Magee indicated that the birds may have solved this problem by relocating to a more secure area. The traditional lek in the middle of the meadow may not be the primary area anymore.

Navy indicted that the birders may look to other sites if no birds are seen in listed approved areas. Seward indicated that CPW will not look to install another turn off.

Cochran indicated that this was what Seward and Magee have compiled for this meeting. This will be brought up at another meeting. Providing a controlled outlet for lek viewing was the intent when the Waunita site was identified an approved. Moving the location may not be the answer. Birders know the importance of this time. This site was never meant to be a photographer's site. It is a watchable wildlife site. The three year average was discussed.

10:45:03 AM **GUNNISON SAGE- GROUSE BROCHURES**

The brochures were passed out and the committee reviewed the contents for corrections. Name changes, phone number changes, website changes were discussed.

Navy indicated that this could be updated and taken to the printers for immediate update and preparation for printing. Brochure supplies are low and this needs to be completed soon.

Seward indicated that the some of the images were inferior. He passed out some posters and images of Mr. Gress' work.

Navy will make the necessary corrections that were reviewed.

Houck wanted the edits to be made and then reviewed by this committee prior to printing.

Mr. Gress discussed how the Nature Center did their posters and brochures. He indicated that he would donate his pictures and help arrange the brochures.

Cochran indicated that the changes will be made and then sent to all members prior to the next meeting.

Funds were discussed for this.

Magee brought up the summit and the festival and the possible differences.

Laurie asked about funding and where can we get the money for this update.

Citizen in the audience asked about the partners and additional funding available with these organizations.

Wiens verified the balance of $1,730.00 was in the Gunnison Trails account, leftover from the last Festival

Vasquez discussed the history of the bird and other species and how sagebrush supports these birds.

Mr. Gress discussed the layout and costs of the posters.

Pelizza asked about access to the PDF files for this and who will do the layout and editing. Gress needs the basic text and he could assist with this.

Brochure will be revised/completed first.

Funding for the festival was discussed.

Sources of funding was discussed.

11:12:52 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.

Cochran indicated that we have been doing many reviews on parcels at this time. The Habitat Prioritization Tool is being used extensively by Gunnison County. The occupied habitat polygon was discussed. Lek status affects scores. The Tool needs to be updated using current data. Vasquez will convene a meeting of the Technical Subcommittee to discuss updating the Habitat Prioritization Tool.

Japuntich noted that reclaimed roads need to be updated in the Tool.

Various measures used to update were discussed.

Wiens asked if the restoration is being tracked.

Seward indicated that the official lek status is updated by CPW annually. Lek polygons are updated by CPW periodically. Three consecutive years need to be the basis for the tool.

Cochran would like to have this tool under review by June 1st. Vazquez will send out an email to set an initial meeting. Shooting for a time at the end of May 2015.

Pelizza indicated that they have a recommended selection for the Colorado Field Supervisor. FWS has published a vacancy announcement for a Gunnison sage-grouse biologist position. A draft 4d rule to be published in early May. It is in their review process now. New notice of intent to sue has also been received, from the Colorado Cattleman's Association and Colorado Farm Bureau and two other groups.

Navy asked how long the comment period for the draft 4d rule was. Pelizza answered 30 days.

Date	Time	Notes	Building and location
05-20-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

06-17-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
07-15-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
08-19-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
09-16-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
10-21-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
11-18-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
12-16-15	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

11:30:00 AM **ADJOURN: MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The April 15, 2015 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committed adjourned at 11:30 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