GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2015

The October 21, 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:
Voting Members:
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates (HCCA)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
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)
Nathan Seward, Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife (CPW) Alternate

Non-voting Members:
Polly Oberosler, Recreation Community At-Large-Alternate

Others in the Audience:
Lori Armstrong (BLM) (by phone)

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

CALL TO ORDER: Secretary Peterson called the October 21, 2015 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:05 A.M.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM: Peterson confirmed that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMED: Peterson 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 September 16, 2015 meeting minutes**:** **Moved by** Houck and seconded by Vasquez to accept the September 16, 2015 meeting minutes as distributed. Motion carried unanimously, with Navy abstaining from vote (not present at the September meeting).

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS

- **Caloger** said he had attended a meeting which raised the issue of the local feral cat population. Feral cats have been picked up, spayed /neutered and turned loose again. He questioned if feral cats are detrimental to the Gunnison sage-grouse population. Seward explained that the Gunnison Valley Animal Welfare League in conjunction with several veterinarians had worked with the feral cats. He noted that a feral cat venturing into Sage-grouse habitat would themselves be in danger from predators. There was a brief discussion of possible solutions to feral cat populations.

- **Cochran** said he and Houck had conducted a tour/site visit with Ann Timberman, USFWS, to observe Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat in the Gunnison Basin. He also noted that the County will be installing seasonal "no parking" signs along CR 887 near the Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site.

LITIGATION UPDATE;

- **Cochran** explained that the lawsuit is moving forward. The Administrative Record contains over 150,000 pages. The County has a November 2015 deadline to determine if the record is complete. The State Attorney General's office has allowed Gunnison County to access software which makes searching the Record easier. Peterson asked if there was anything missing; Cochran said not so far, but the Record is still being researched.

BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS

- Armstrong said the BLM is reviewing the Cooperating Agency and internal BLM comments and working on a revised draft. There will be a meeting with Cooperating Agencies in Montrose in December. The agencies should receive a revised draft by mid-November, 2015. The deadline for the complete plan has been postponed to March 2016. There will then be a mandatory 90-day review period.

WAUNITA WATCHABLE WILDLIFE SITE

- Cochran and several Subcommittee members met with Sheriff Besecker and DWM Nick Gallowich to discuss traffic enforcement issues associated with the Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site on October 9, 2015. They primarily discussed enforcing the new parking restrictions. Besecker agreed to provide increased law enforcement presence during the lekking season. An onsite meeting is scheduled next week with Public Works Director, Marlene Crosby. They will discuss sign locations. The Subcommittee will determine the wording for the signs. Public Works will have the signs made. The signage is the first thing to be dealt with at the site. Sis-ka-dee will accommodate the 2016 reservations that have been made for the viewing site, but will use a five day on two day off schedule in 2017.

WEED MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION WITH THE GUNNISON BASIN WEED COMMISSION

- Cochran said he met with the Gunnison Basin Weed Commission on October 8, 2015; John Scott was also present. They discussed cheatgrass issues including the detrimental effects cheatgrass has on Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat. The Strategic Committee agreed to appoint Matt Vasquez to attend the Weed Commission quarterly meetings, and investigate whether or not there is a formal seat available on the Commission. There was brief discussion on using a bacteria to combat the spread of cheatgrass. This is a very new technique that is being investigated.

CONSERVATION POSTER

- Seward discussed the poster. He said it could possibly dove-tail with the weed efforts. Photographer Bob Gress was here in April 2015. He has taken photographs of the Gunnison sage-grouse. Gress will allow the County to use his photos of Gunnison sage-grouse for the poster, at no charge. His company, Birds in Focus, will want an artist's credit for the photos. Stewart said the cost of producing 4000 posters would be approximately $3,100. He added there might be money available from several agencies, including CPW to help with the cost. He asked if the Committee wanted to pursue producing of the poster. There was a brief discussion and it was noted that Seward would report back to the Committee concerning the poster, the photographs and verbiage to be used at the November 2015 meeting.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROGRAM TRANSITION

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- Cochran said he will be retiring at the end of the year. He will continue on with County on a consulting basis. He will not be doing the land use reviews or supporting the Strategic Committee. The County is exploring the possibility of engaging a wildlife biologist on a contract basis to perform the land use reviews and support the Strategic Committee. As this evolves the Committee will be updated.

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
11-18-15	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

ADJOURN: **MOVED** by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The October 21, 2015 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committed adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

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Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:
/S/ Beth Baker
Community Development Administrative Services Manger
Gunnison County Community Development

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