GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 17, 2016

The February 17, 2016 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:
Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)
J. Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Greg Peterson, Secretary, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA) (Arrived at 10:20 a.m.)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Eric Ferchau, At Large, Development Community (arrived at 10:15 a.m.)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Ann Timberman, USFWS
Liz With, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Polly Oberosler, Recreation Community At-large, Alternate
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County Alternate (by phone)
Elijah Waters, BLM

Non-voting Members:
Nathan Seward, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate

Others in the Audience:
Ron Copenhaver, GCEA, Engineering Tech (by phone)
Brian Muth, GCEA, Engineering Tech (by phone)
Lori Armstrong, BLM
Pat Magee, WSCU

Staff Members Present:
Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Biologist
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Stahlnecker called the February 17, 2016 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: Agenda approved as circulated.

APPROVAL of DECEMBER 16, 2015 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Navy and seconded by With to accept the December 16, 2015 meeting minutes as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.

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10:02:16 AM **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

Waters reported that the new wildlife biologist will not be accepting the job with the BLM. They are hoping that they will find someone soon.

Wenum reported that tomorrow evening from 5:30-7:00 they will have a video conference Sportsman's Roundtable at their office in regards to the Southwest region and anyone is welcome to come.

Houck reported that the County Coalition is planning on doing a full meeting with all of the counties towards the end of this month, or the first week of March, to bring everyone up to speed as to where everything is. There will be follow-up conservation easement meeting for the broader conservation easement community. The Coalition meeting is intended give each county information on what they can do so they don't have to reinvent the wheel. A couple of the counties have brought on new commissioners in 2015 so we want to keep them all up to date and make sure they understand what's going on. Houck reported that the committee members are still invited to the next meeting in Montrose and that he will let everyone know when it is, as soon as it is scheduled. Navy wanted to know if everyone in the coalition has been invited to the Summit and Magee said that as long as they were on the list that he received they were invited.

With reported that all Gunnison sage-grouse habitat is now considered a Grassland of Special Significance (GSSP) by NRCS. If anyone is interested in conservation easements there is now a 3.33% cash match and they have extended the application deadline to March 9, 2016. Houck reported that NRCS has been giving landowners more information and opportunity to look for funds and the new designation and what NRCS has done has started to bridge that gap and help them find the landowners that really are interested in protecting important grouse habitat, but need more information. Cochran reported that Gunnison Basin continues to be the most active area for conservation easements. There have been applications for 6 properties, comprising over 7,000 acres, within the January 15, 2016 deadline. Discussion followed regarding funding and how to get more money for closing costs etc. for conservation easements. With reported that the farm bill expires in 2018 and they will be working on a new one next year. We will need to ask for new funds in the next couple of years.

10:19:33 AM **CR 887 (WAUNITA LEK) NO PARKING SIGNAGE**

Cochran discussed the signs that were in the packet that Marlene Crosby with Public Works has put together. The signs cost about $700 and have a matte black backing. Gunnison County is requesting assistance in paying for the signs. Houck reported they are a little more expensive because of the way they needed to be put together for reflection, etc. Timberman reported that she will look into possible funding from her agency, and possibly look into providing the poles for the signs.

10:25:16 AM **LITIGATION UPDATE**

Cochran reported that two entities filed formal motions regarding the Administrative Record. One filed on the grouse listing Administrative Record and one filed on the Significant Portion of the Range Administrative Record. The judge has to rule on the grouse motion. The judge decided that regarding the Significant Portion of the Range Administrative Record, she would wait until the case in Arizona has been settled before deciding what to do as far as the Colorado motion. As of now all on hold until the grouse motion is ruled on and the case in Arizona is settled. The whole schedule has been pushed back until completion of the Administrative Record.

10:28:29 AM **BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS STATUS REPORT**

Armstrong reported that they are currently receiving comments back from the Washington office. They have not reviewed all of them yet. Armstrong gave status of where they are with meetings and comments that they have been receiving. They hope to have the draft out to the public for comments by early April. Discussion followed.

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10:36:15 AM **LEK ACCESS APPLICATION(S)**

Cochran reported that they have received one application from Gary Kramer (included in packet) proposing to take photographs for the book he is writing about gamebirds. It would be the first book on gamebirds of North America to have all of the pictures and writing done by one author. He is a retired Fish and Wildlife Service employee. Discussion followed regarding Kramer's application.

Moved: by Houck, seconded by Peterson to have Cochran contact Kramer and have a discussion about what his goals, audience, message etc. are for the book and to allow Cochran to make the final decision based on the criteria set forth by the Strategic Committee's desired outcomes for the lek access program. Motion passed unanimously.

Seward reported that he will have two photographers accessing a lek this season for additional photographs for the poster project.

11:00:40 AM **MAPPING OF GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE SEASONAL HABITAT USE IN THE GUNNISON BASIN**

Mindy Rice, spatial ecologist researcher with CPW, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the mapping of the Gunnison Sage-grouse seasonal habitat use in the Gunnison Basin. They (Tony Apa and Mindy Rice) used all the information they could find to do special models for the Gunnison Basin area. They weren't a part of the initial project so there are some things they don't know. At this phase over the last year they have had meetings with the County and local CPW staff regarding the models and variables that have resulted in the final models presented.

12:19:05 PM **2016 GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE SUMMIT UPDATE**

Pat Magee gave update on the upcoming summit, March 9-11, 2016. Everything is coming along. The registration fee is $55. They are still working on a budget, which is close to $16,000. Magee reported that they have been receiving funding from different entities. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of more funding.

Moved: by Navy, seconded by Peterson for the committee to give $750 to the Summit from the I&E account. Motion passed unanimously.

12:34:21 PM **CONSERVATION POSTER REVIEW**

Seward reported that not much progress has been made regarding the text for the poster. Seward has been working on arranging travel for the photographers to come to the lek mid-April. Seward is concerned that the departments who have offered funding for the posters may want the money they have offered to be spent during this this budget fiscal year, instead of waiting until the next fiscal year, and that there should be a middle man who can hold onto that money. Cochran stated that the County (I&E committee) can be the middle man by taking the money and then disbursing it. Seward will start working on the text so he can start getting it out to everyone for review.

12:40:18 PM **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COORDINATOR UPDATE**

Cochran gave update. They are working with the Gunnison Conservation District putting together a contract for a wildlife biologist to do land use reviews and work with the Strategic Committee. Cochran hopes that by the next meeting they will be able to begin the transition.

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12:42:02 PM **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
03-16-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
04-20-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
05-18-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
06-15-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
07-20-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
08-17-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
09-21-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
10-19-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
11-16-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
12-21-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: **MOVED** by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The February 17, 2016 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

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Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

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