

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2016**

The March 16, 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
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
Polly Oberosler, Recreation Community At-large, Alternate
Gina Glenne, USFWS, Alternate

Non-voting Members:

Nathan Seward, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate
Don Sabrowski, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA), Alternate
Mike Babler, Public-At-Large, Alternate

Others in the Audience:

Russ Japuntich, BLM
Lori Armstrong, BLM (by phone)
Pat Magee, WSCU
John Scott, Public
Mike Jackson, CPW
Marcella Fremgen, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (by phone)

Staff Members Present:

Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Biologist (by phone)
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Stahlnecker called the March 16, 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 presented.

APPROVAL of February 17, 2016 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Wenum and seconded by Houck to accept the February 17, 2016 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

Mike Babler as the alternate for Public At-large and Don Sabrowski as the alternate for Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The new executive committee will take effect at next meeting.

Stahlnecker will be leaving to go to Alaska in May of 2016. He will be here through the end of May. Houck stated that the new role of Chair during Cochran's transition will have to take on more responsibility for setting and coordinating the agenda, making sure all items are submitted, and making sure communications with the Committee stay strong, working with County staff and keeping everyone on task. Cochran stated that will be a new model for the Chair for the next couple of years. Peterson stated that he thinks it makes sense for Houck to be Chair. **Moved:** by Peterson that Houck be nominated and elected by acclamation, seconded by Navy. Passed unanimously.

Discussion then turned to the remaining officer seats: Vice-Chairperson: Wenum, Secretary: Peterson. **Moved:** by Navy for J. Wenum to continue as Vice-chair, seconded by Houck. **Moved:** by Navy seconded by Wenum that Peterson continue as Secretary. Both were elected by acclamation of the Committee.

DESIGNATION OF MEETING POSTING PLACE

Moved: by Houck that posting places continue to be outside the Community Development Office, on the posting board, downstairs of the Blackstock Government Center and at the Courthouse and that the Committee will still meet on the second floor of the Blackstock Government Center, seconded by Peterson. Motion passed.

SUBCOMMITTEE REAUTHORIZATIONS, DESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The Committee reviewed the current Subcommittees and decided the following:

Technical Subcommittee:

Remove Russ Japuntich and add Katherine Broadhead for BLM; Add Apple Snider as the USFWS member and keep Gina Glenne and Mark Brennan as alternates for the USFWS. **Moved:** by Houck and seconded by Peterson to reauthorize the Technical Subcommittee and accept the changes to the members. Motion passed.

Information and Education (I&E) Subcommittee

Remove Ellen Petrick for NPS, they will get a replacement later. Add Apple Snider and Gina Glenne and Mark Brennan as alternates for USFWS. **Moved:** by Peterson and seconded by Houck to reauthorize the Technical Subcommittee and accept the changes to the members.

Predator Control Investigation Subcommittee

Remove Tom Spezze (no longer a Committee member); appoint Mike Babler. **Moved:** by Peterson, seconded by Houck to reauthorize the Predator Control Investigation Subcommittee and accept the changes to members. Motion passed.

Grazing Management Research Subcommittee

The Committee decided that it did not need to be reauthorized.

Action Plan Item 8 Subcommittee

The Committee decided that it did not need to be reauthorized.

Action Plan Subcommittee

The Committee decided that it did not need to be reauthorized.

Signal Peak Recreation Area Planning Subcommittee

Add Tony Maldarella, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association, Don Sabrowski (Stockgrowers' Association), Kristi Murphy (BLM) and Mark Brennan (USFWS). Remove Russ Japuntich and add Katherine Broadhead (BLM) **Moved:** by Houck and seconded by Peterson to reauthorize the Signal Peak Recreation Area Planning Subcommittee and accept the changes to the members. Motion passed.

Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site Subcommittee

Add Nate Seward (CPW) and Mark Brennan (USFWS). **Moved:** by Houck and seconded by Peterson to reauthorize the Technical Subcommittee and accept the changes to the members. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS

Japuntich reported that Katherine Broadhead will be the new BLM Field Office Wildlife Biologist starting May 15, 2016.

Wenum gave an update on the Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site. CPW authorized a special permit for the site for coordination of the site, commercial use and site patrolling during the closed periods. They still need to make a sign for the area letting the public know that the site is closed two days a week. It will be closed two rolling days a week this year because of prior booking commitments. It will not necessarily be consecutive days or the same days. Next year the closure days will be consistent. Wenum reported that members of the Subcommittee met with the Gunnison County Sheriff in early December and he gave a verbal commitment to increase law enforcement presence in the area this spring. Cochran said he will remind the Sheriff that he did make the commitment.

Cochran noted that Gunnison County Public Works said the road closure signs were up by March 1, 2016, per Marlene Crosby.

Cochran reported that he approved Gary Kramer for lek access for photography based upon his responses to additional questions. Mr. Kramer will allow the Committee to review the content of the Gunnison sage-grouse chapter of his book, to ensure a consistent, legal conservation message is conveyed. Pat McGee will be Mr. Kramer's guide.

Wenum reported that CPW is in the process of going through their big game modeling population estimates and license recommendation development for this year. They will have an open house on Tuesday, March 29, 2016 4:30- 7 p.m. at their office to go over those.

Navy reported that she sold 10 sage-grouse shirts at the Summit and wanted to thank Pat's Screen Printing for making them.

Japuntich reported that the County and BLM road closures are in effect and to make sure that if people want access through the closures for property access or other reasons, to go to the BLM office or Gunnison County Public Works to sign up.

Seward reported that he hired Mike Jackson back as his Lek Count Coordinator this spring. Official counts start April 1st and will continue until the 10th of May. They are always looking for new volunteers to help with counts. Please call him or Mike if you are interested or if you know of anyone who is interested in helping this week so they can put together a schedule.

Houck reported that BOCC approved a seasonal closure of Gold Basin road as a resource protection measure. On behalf of Gunnison County he spoke at the Western Governors' Association Endangered Species Initiative Workshop on March 9 in Denver about the role of local government in working towards positive conservation opportunities for species in general and the importance of the government being able to have a broader role in those efforts. The County Coalition will be having a meeting at the end of this month in Montrose so people are aware of the opportunities and procedures available for conservation easements. The Coalition meeting to get the information together for the larger conservation easement community meeting will be March 31, 2016 1:00-4:00 p.m., also in Montrose.

Stahlnecker will look into how they will be working to refill his position with the National Park Service. In the meantime the NPS alternate on the Committee is Bruce Noble. He hopes that someone from the NPS will be able to attend the Committee meetings regularly.

LITIGATION UPDATE

Cochran gave this update. There are still two unresolved motions regarding the Administrative Record. The case is on hold until these are resolved.

BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS STATUS REPORT

Armstrong stated that they have been waiting for their Washington office and Solicitor's comments, which have now been received. They have responded to all of the Washington office comments and are working on responses to the Solicitor's comments. They are not on their current schedule and are delayed. A briefing for the Director may occur in early May. If it does happen then it will be two weeks later that the draft would be out for public comments (at the end of May).

CONSERVATION POSTER UPDATE

Seward noted that he has started some of the poster text and is trying to summarize all the information he has. He has a good start on the introduction, basic biology and ecology of the bird. He is trying to flesh it out into the different seasonal habitats and how the bird goes through the different life stages throughout the year and make it flow. He wants to make it all about habitat, habitat protection and restoration/improvement. He is not comfortable circulating it yet. He would like to get some additional editing done from his co-workers. He submitted an application to Colorado Chapter of the Wildlife Society for a small education grant and they just learned yesterday that they will be awarded the \$500 educational grant that they requested. This helps with the budget. Originally 2,500 posters could be purchased. Now they can purchase 4,000 posters. The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies has contributed \$100 towards the poster. The grants reduce the amount needed from the I&E Committee. He has not heard back from the Fish and Wildlife Service as to whether they will be able to support the poster financially. Glenna stated that they are on board to support the editing and are still trying to see if they can help financially. The photographers are coming mid-April to get more photographs of the grouse on a lek. Seward noted that they are still going to make the poster double sided and then give the schools two posters so they can hang them with each side showing.

GUNNISON BASIN RESTORATION-RESILIENCE PROJECT: ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF RIPARIAN RESTORATION ON ANTHROPOD ABUNDANCE, DIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

Samantha Rowland, WSCU MEM student gave a presentation on her project.

MEASURING RIPARIAN RESPONSE TIME TO RESTORATION IN THE GUNNISON VALLEY

James Cooper gave a presentation on his project.

2016 GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE SUMMIT FINAL THOUGHTS

Discussion followed regarding the Summit last week. Everyone agreed that it was very well done. Magee gave an update on the Summit and how it went.

SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEMS CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

Magee reported that he was able to attend this conference in February and that it was interesting and a great opportunity. He took home how impressive the effort that is going on to preserve the sagebrush ecosystem really is. He gave an update on each of the sessions he attended.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COORDINATOR UPDATE

Cochran reported that they are still working on the contract and are hoping to get it finalized and approved by both entities soon. Right now Gunnison County has 10 Gunnison sage-grouse Pre-application Conference requests waiting for the snow to melt to do onsite assessments.

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.

Discussion followed about not needing April meeting. Next meeting will be in May.

Date	Time	Notes	Building and location
05-18-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
06-15-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
07-20-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
08-17-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
09-21-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
10-19-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
11-16-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
12-21-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: **MOVED** by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The March 16, 2016 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:53 P.M.


Jonathar Houck, Chairperson


Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

