**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE**
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
**February 15, 2017**

The February 15, 2017 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstocks Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin #D, Gunnison, CO, 81230

**Committee Members Present:**
Voting Members:
Jonathan Houck, Chairperson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
J. Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Greg Peterson, Secretary, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Liz With, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Theresa Childers, National Park Service Wildlife Biologist (NPS)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service, (USFS)
Ann Timberman, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Erich Ferchau, At-large, Development Community

**Others in the Audience:**
Ken Davis, NRCS District Conservationist
Hannah Wigginton, NRCS Engineer Tech
Russ Japuntich, CCA

**Staff Members Present:**
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant
Brooke Vasquez, Gunnison Conservation District, Wildlife Biologist

Others present as listed in text.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Houck called the February 15, 2017 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:00 A.M.

**DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:** Houck confirmed that a quorum was present.

**PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMED:** Houck verified that proper legal public notice had occurred.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** Agenda approved as presented.

**APPROVAL of November 16, 2016 and December 21, 2016 MEETING MINUTES: Moved:** by With and seconded by Childers to accept the November 16, 2016 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously. **Moved:** by Navy and seconded by Caloger to accept the December 21, 2016 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously, With abstains since she was not there.

**BLM ALTERNATE MEMBER**

**Houck reported that Kathy Broadhead has been nominated as the alternate member by the BLM. It has been placed on the net consent agenda for the Board of County Commissioners for them to approve.**

**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

With introduced Hannah Wigginton, who's joining NRCS as their engineer tech.

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Childers reported that Kim Hartwig will join them in April as Ken Stalhnecker's replacement. She is working part time until they can get her housing.

Timberman reported that Glenn will be leaving March 2017. They have two new employees, Aimee Crittendon and Allison Jehly. Allison will be working more with the Sage-grouse projects and Aimee in the energy related area. Houck wanted to know who would be taking over the work Glenn was doing on Sage-grouse. Timberman reported that Marc Brennan will take the lead on the projects and activities, with Aimee and Allison helping out.

Wenum reported that they have been doing the big game baiting operation this winter due to the weather conditions. They have been largely successful in meeting objectives in terms of being adaptive and flexible to the situation. They were generally successful in drawing the majority of the animals from the hazard areas. In some areas it has not worked as well as they had hoped. Saw a spike in road kill in mid-January but has seen some decrease since then. They are scaling their efforts back to the West of town because it has opened up and there are hillsides bare of snow. Animals have easy access to forage. They are continue through this week in the East but will look at scaling back there soon. They did their aerial classification flights but scaled back due to weather conditions. They were able to fly Unit are 54, not 55, but they did a ground based inventory there. They flew areas 551, 66 and 67 and observed grouse that are present and mobile. Wenum reported they have marked animals in the County, both deer and elk, and are updating their system regarding the survival rate. The survival rate is in the norm right now and on par so far.

Houck gave coalition update and reported that he has been working with other Counties and connecting with new people and moving forward with the work that's been going on to protect the Sage-grouse. The County Coalition is in a holding pattern until the legal pieces are decided.

With reported that the SGI tour is set for the third week of June. It will be a three day tour with travel days on both sides, focusing on habitization work and landscape conservation, permanent conservation efforts and other tools used in the Gunnison Basin.

Peterson reported that in December at the Stockgrowers's annual meeting they had the discussion in trying to help put together a coordinated habitat improvement project. Peterson met with Seward and they brainstormed what that project might entail and came up with having a cheat grass patrol project. Peterson spoke with Waters to see if they had any interest and he said there was some interest and would get back to him after their staff meeting. They would like to do it as soon as they can coordinate it.

**CONSERVATION POSTER UPDATE**

Seward not in attendance to do update.

**INVESTMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Houck reported that Jim Cochran has been working on the investment action plan but unable to make it today. Houck reported that a lot of the goals and targets in the action plan for the Gunnison Sage-grouse have been met. Cochran will have more information at the next committee meeting about updates and new actions for the investment action plan.

**HABITAT PRIORITIZATION TOOL UPDATE**

Houck stated they have a technical subcommittee and there have been some meetings. M. Vasquez stated that the full technical subcommittee has not met yet. They are working directly with Mike Pelletier, assisting him in getting the information he needs to update the habitat prioritization tool. They will then take it to the full technical subcommittee and then the strategic committee for approval of the updates. They are incorporating the most recent lek data and occupied habitat polygon into the tool. They are also working on adding the addresses in the County and Taylor Park soils information. Mike Pelletier is updating the

model on how the tool shows broodering habitat. Looking at also adding winter habitat mapping and if it's possible since it varies so much.

**PROJECT MANAGER FOR RESILIENCY PROJECT**

M. Vasquez reported that TNC is pulling back from their lead role and there has been an effort to bring on the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District ("Upper Gunnison) and have them take on the role of TNC and keep things going. As part of that effort it was brought up to try and hire a Coordinator and have that person work with Upper Gunnison. They are developing a job description and brought to the Upper Gunnison's board. Their board was supportive and voted to approve that position and have a one year contract position to make sure it works and then to look at it and see if it will be a permanent position if successful. They are trying to get someone local who can do the position. The board requested that the person hired also work for Upper Gunnison. Navy reported that the project is September 6-10, 2017 this year, it is on the Wild land Restoration Volunteer website if anybody wants to sign up. M. Vasquez is working on an agreement in getting the Forest Service and volunteers here to help.

**GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE LEK ACCESS APPLICATIONS**

M. Vasquez stated that it seems like it has always been where Seward and Pat Magee review the apps and then make recommendations. Suggests that there be a Lek Access Application Subcommittee. Would like to entertain a motion to make a change to that process. Committee decided they will address the process in the next meeting in March. They will look at the two applications they have now and make the decision today with current process.

M. Vasquez went through the two applications that were turned in and gave update on both. Magee and Seward would be open to accepting the application of Spendelow if they get further information. It looks like they would need a follow up with the applicant before they decided to allow him access to the lek. Houck didn't feel like there is a sense of urgency due to the application just being turned it and that they will process the application in a timely manner once the questions are answered. Timbermann noted they should updated the application so there are more specific questions. Further discussion followed regarding the applications. Houck suggested that we wait until the next meeting when Seward and Magee can be at the meeting and give more clarification. Houck also recommended that they figure out how to beef up the application process and make it more direction. They will make a decision on the two applications in March and will work on figuring out a process for accepting the applications.

**SEASONAL ROAD CLOSURES**

Japuntich reported they are on board for the seasonal road closures. There will be some changes where they will be getting out to the public that there are area closures not just point closures. There will be better maps made with the area closures.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 03-15-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 04-19-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 05-17-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 06-21-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 07-19-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 08-16-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |

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| 09-20-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 10-18-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 11-15-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |
| 12-20-17 | 10-12 | Regular Meeting | Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room |

**ADJOURN:** The February 15, 2017 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:07 A.M.

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Jonathan Houck, Chairperson

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

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