

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
May 17, 2017**

The May 17, 2017 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstocks Government Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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)  
Liz With, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large  
Elijah Waters, BLM  
David Wiens, Recreation At-Large  
Theresa Childers, National Park Service Wildlife Biologist (NPS)  
Ann Timberman, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Erich Ferchau, At-large, Development Community

Non-voting Members:

Mike Babler, Public-At-Large, Alternate

**Others in the Audience:**

Pat Magee, WSCU  
Jim Mendonca  
Bridgett Clayton, BLM (by phone)  
Rachel Sobatto, Gunnison County Community Development Planner

**Staff Members Present:**

Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant  
Brooke Vasquez, Gunnison Conservation District, Wildlife Biologist

Others present as listed in text.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Houck called the May 17, 2017 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:05 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, moved by Peterson, seconded by Wenum.

**APPROVAL of FEBRUARY 15, 2017 and MARCH 15, 2017 MEETING MINUTES:** Moved: by Wenum and seconded by With to accept the February 15, 2017 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously. Moved: by With and seconded by Wenum to accept the March 15, 2017 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously, with members who were not there abstaining.

**RATIFY DECISION ON LEK ACCESS APPLICATIONS**

Wenum explained that in the March 15, 2017 minutes they accepted Spendelow's access application and will advise Commisor to reapply next year. Moved by Wenum and seconded by Waters to ratify the decision made March 15, 2017 to grant Spendelow access and have Commisor reapply next year. Moved to have a policy review to the access lek application and decision making process. Motion passed with Peterson

voting against ratifying the decision made in March 15, 2017 and the rest of the Board voting for. The motion passes. Peterson explained that he didn't believe that either should have been granted access because of the way the policy is written now.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

Childers reported that their numbers were down from last year in the lek reports.

Wenum reported that Seward hasn't received all the numbers for the lek counts. Wenum requested that the lek numbers update be on the agenda for the next meeting.

With reported the SGI tour will be June 13-15. They have a crew of around 100 people already signed up. They got a new District Conservationist, Dan Olson, hired for Gunnison and he should start around June 12, 2017. NRCS will be switching to a new undersecretary to report to. SGI has decided to highlight Greg Peterson for all of his sage-grouse work on his property and the grouse community as a whole.

Peterson reported that they, him and Waters, have decided to do a brush mowing on private/public overlap project.

Ferchau reported they just finished a conservation easement up on Ohio Creek on 600 acres.

Wenum reported that the Habitat Protection Program, RFP, was put on hold this year. There were a variety of issues, legislative, financial bill has taken a lot of energy and effort and did not pass. RFP is a no go for this year but they are discussing next year. Houck reported that one thing that is becoming evident is the statewide issue is the financial recovery of the Front Range has been so strong that it has put blinders up that it is not as robust in all the other areas in the State.

### **COUNTY COALITION UPDATE**

Houck reported that there are a lot of questions for funding and it has been really hard because no one is able to do anything right now. They are looking for opportunities for settlement and they haven't let go of the litigation side. Briefing will begin soon. They continue to work on the effort and the community will be the best frontline to protect the sage grouse.

Houck requested that Timberman be added to the next agenda to discuss what programs and provisions the service has to assist in conservation, not only conservation easements but also habitat improvements.

Timberman reported that Gina Glenne left. The federal hire freeze has been lifted but they may not be able to hire someone new until next year.

### **SIGNAL PEAK TRAIL PROPOSAL UPDATE**

Wiens reported that they have Tim Cooper who ran the youth crew last year. Waters reported that they had a public meeting that had approximately 150 people there. There is a comment period for scoping until May 22, 2017. They offered four cooperating agencies, Gunnison County, CPW, the City of Gunnison and Western State. They are still finalizing the cooperating agency agreements. They get four or five comments a day regarding Signal Peak Trails, which mostly consist of issues regarding access, facility development, density of trails, winter and summer big game, sage grouse and trail uses. The trails are planned to not be motorized and comments wondering why. They are going to be presenting a summary of issues to the cooperating agencies ahead of time and will meet with them to go through those issues. There is not a time line right now. Summer is a busy time and doesn't expect to meet until sometime in July. Believes there is a lot more common ground than people realize. Further discussion followed.

### **ROAD CLOSURES**

Wiens reported that the road closures in Hartman Rocks were followed as far as he can tell.

Wenum explained that during antler hunting the gates were closed through May 15 and no access yet. The season is normally January 1 through March 14 in the Gunnison Basin on public lands and March 15 through May 15 they can collect antlers after 10 am until sunset to shift away from the leks. There is a movement in Colorado to try and find a more consistent approach to antler collection and there is enough attention and may go somewhere soon, not sure of time frame yet.

Waters reported there was only one damaged gate, but otherwise there were no other issues.

### **BLM RMP UPDATE**

Clayton gave update on the BLM RMP. She reported that the draft was issued last August and they are at the tail end of going through all of the comments. Due to what they are seeing in the comments and change in administration they are thinking about a new tact for the plan, most effective for new atmosphere. Will probably see more emphasis on the efforts that are going on, investment action plan etc. and are hoping to get a meeting together sometime in June to talk about some of the changes and channel all efforts in the right direction.

### **HPT UPDATE**

With reported that John Scott is coming in and has started working with everyone. They have decided to adopt a plan to mirror the actual hydrology of the site.

### **INVESTMENT ACTION PLAN**

Houck gave update that there are still areas recognized for planning. The plan has paused right now. Jim Cochran will be leading the plan. Deb Freeman had to pull out of the project due to conflicts and they had to hire a new project lead. Their hope is to reinvigorate the plan. There will be more information at the next meeting. Houck requested the Action Plan also be on the next agenda.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mendonca gave report on the Waunita Watchable site. The rolling stock numbers stayed steady, 10 in March, 135 in April and 18 in May. The site went in on March 27, 2017 and came out on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. The County pulled its signs the same days. There were no birds the entire season on the traditional lek site. The birds moved off the traditional lek site.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:** Future meetings will occur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month in the Planning Commission meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, CO 81230, unless changed for a specific reason.

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

**ADJOURN:** The May 17, 2017 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 11:57 A.M.

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant