GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 20, 2017

The December 20, 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)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Kathy Broadhead, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alternate
David Wiens, Recreation At-Large

Others in the Audience:
Jim Cochran
Dan Olson, NRCS District Conservationist
Mike Babler, Public-At-Large, Alternate
Nate Seward, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate
Pat Magee, WSCU
Rick Besecker, Gunnison County Sherriff's office
Mike Babler, Public At-Large, Alternate
Jim Mendonca

Staff Members Present:
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Houck called the December 20, 2017 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:03 A.M.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM: Houck confirmed that there was a quorum.

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

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL of September 20, 2017 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Navy and seconded by Peterson to accept the September 20, 2017 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEMBER NOMINATIONS

Houck encouraged everyone to reapply for the board. Everyone is expiring in February of 2018 and the deadline is January 15, 2018 for letters to be sent to BOCC. Everyone on the board is on a two year term.

WAUNITA WATCHABLE WILDLIFE SITE DISCUSSION

Houck reported that there are varying points of view on best management policies and that they want to address a way to enforce the area. The question is what the Sherriff can do to help with enforcement. Besecker stated that his officers need to be educated on the sensitivity of the project and the impact that may not be apparent. He also needs hard facts on the intrusion in the area. Wenum reported there is a

statute that protects the wildlife against harassment and that it is pretty broad in what harassment is and is much tougher to apply the criteria to the site. Wenum stated that his office can give an educational presentation to the officers. Besecker said he would like to set that up. Peterson wanted to know if the Sheriff has the option to enforce the harassment and Besecker said they can. McGee reported that the site opens April 1 through May 15. They are present there until May 10. There are two consecutive days that the site will be closed during the week while open. Navy wanted to know if they are going to set up a schedule for enforcement. Houck stated that that's what they are going to try and work towards. Houck stated that it is more about people not being educated about the birds and the harmful effects that disturbing them has on the birds and the environment and that some enforcement would help the public start to understand. Besecker stated that they would not be able to be there every day but would do their hardest to get out there and help with the enforcement. Peterson stated that there needs to be a schedule to try and focus on the days it should be closed during the season, if not they are dropping the ball. He believes those are the days to monitor, the days the site is closed, and when violators should get tickets. Mendonca gave input of what he sees out at the site and that no one should be allowed there in March at all. Caloger wanted to know if it was a policy of the Sherriff's office to patrol every county road. Besecker reported that it's impossible to do that without the proper staffing and even then they need to prioritize. Suggestion from Babler that the Department of Interior be contacted to see if they can help with coverage and enforcement. Wenum reported that the BLM could possibly help too. Peterson wanted to know if they can get the signage up for closures too. Houck said he would talk to Public Works to get that started.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS

Wenum reported that CPW will be introducing a Financial Sustainability bill to the legislature in late January to address funding needs. The herd management plan for elk for Unit 54 is in the works and should go to the commission in January and be approved in March and be in use by fall of 2018.

Wenum reported that the CPW just completed the helicopter capture for deer survivor project that has been going on for 10 years now. They still have a few fawns and does to catch and will do that by ground by local capture. They have been delayed in the ability to get collars for the elk so the capture work will not occur until the end of February.

Wenum reported on the antler shed collection changes that will be happening in the near future. It will go to the commission again in January. If approved it will be in effect this year. As currently proposed there are three options; a) drop all antler collection regulations that are in place, b) antler collection closure period from January 1 through April 30 c) possibility of getting permits for the month of May. Wenum is not sure where it is going to go, has a lot of input. Wenum thinks they will go with having the closure period. It could have an effect on the local area if they drop all of the regulations. Houck stated that they should give a perspective from this group to the committee making the decisions. **Motioned by:** Navy, seconded by Broadhead to authorize Peterson to put together a letter from the Strategic Committee that states the committee supports what's there now, what's worked to this point and encourage them to get public input before they make the decision to change the regulations. It will be done by January 5, 2018. Passed unanimously, Wenum to abstain.

Seward reported that they have had interest from a photographer, Frank Commisor from Durango, who applied last year. Houck and Seward will do a conference call with Timbermann regarding input on the applications.

Broadhead reported that they will be working on the Signal Peak draft proposal this winter.

Cochran reported that they have been working on the Habitat Prioritization Tool update for over two years now. It has become more difficult than when they originally developed the tool. They have updated the soils layer and it is up to date. They are using CPW local latest polygon to try to incorporate what is actually there. They will be recommending that the lek layer be more current. Need to update the technical subcommittee group members. They need more input. There will be another meeting in January. Houck reported that during the January 2018 meeting they will include a discussion on all of the subcommittees and who will be on each.

Wenum reported that the Forest Service is in the process of updating their Grand Mesa, Uncompaghre and Gunnison National Forest plan. They are on a three year tract to get it done, with a lot of public input in the process. Houck will also add this to the January meeting agenda.

ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Cochran reported that the Action Plan was originally supposed to be a private lands investment action plan, looking at the satellite population but not omitting the Gunnison Basin population. The concept is about three years old and it was initiated to update the range wide conservation plan and provide an investment road map. They wanted to make sure what they invested in was going to have a positive conservation result. Cochran stated they should continue to invest positively no matter the listing status down the road. They are working with the BLM regarding the range wide plan amendment process. They are developing a plan for Gunnison Sage-grouse on the ground projects. The plan is to accomplish it in two phases, the first phase of developing areas to recommend for conservation and the second phase to go out and work with private land owners and public land managers to implement the phase one plan.

COUNTY COALITION AND COUNTY LITIGATION UPDATE

Houck reported that the legal process is slow and they are in the briefing schedule. They continue to argue that there are some procedural errors on the science end and that it was not viewed in its full capacity and that there are some gaps there.

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
01-17-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
02-21-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
03-21-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
04-18-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
05-16-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
06-20-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: The December 20, 2017 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:04 P.M. Motioned from Peterson, Caloger seconded.

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

DRAFT