GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 17, 2018

The January 17, 2018 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:
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
Eric Ferchau, Development Community At-large
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
Ann Timberman, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
David Wiens, Recreation At-Large
Theresa Childers, National Park Service (NPS)

Non-voting Members:
Nathan Seward, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate
Mike Babler, Public At-Large. Alternate

Others in the Audience:
Jim Cochran
Dan Olson, NRCS District Conservationist
Pat Magee, WSCU
Cathie Pagano, Gunnison County Community Development Director

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

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Houck called the January 17, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:01 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 December 20, 2017 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Peterson and seconded by Navy to accept the December 20, 2017 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

SSA MEETING AND 4D RULE STATUS

Timberman reported that the 4d rule is no longer being worked on, there were too many questions and issues. They are working on the Species Status Assessment (SSA) and held an expert review meeting to go over it. They are focusing on biological information, what they know and what they don't. The next step is to come out with a draft and then the final. They hope to have the recovery plan finalized by October of 2018. Discussion followed on how the SSA is being utilized.

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COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS

Wenum reported that CPW needs to update the Elk Management Plan for unit 54, which includes Flat Top Mountain, Ohio Creek Valley and north of the reservoir out to Currecanti Creek. They are looking at combining unit 54 with units 63 and 53 in the elk management plan. Originally this was supposed to go in front of the BOCC in January and be approved by March so they could make adjustments to the population and license numbers for this fall. CPW would like the Strategic Committee involved to help address sage-grouse concerns. CPW would like to give a presentation regarding the management plan at the February meeting and would like to move the meeting date to a week earlier, February 14, 2018. Houck stated that it would be good to give the presentation to the BOCC also and would like to see public comments as well. Wenum would like to have the Strategic Committee Meeting before the BOCC meeting. Discussion followed about when to schedule the next meeting. The next meeting will be changed to February 14, 2018.

Houck reported that he talked to Marlene Crosby at Public Works about signage at the Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site and that she will get back to him with options.

Houck went over the process for Committee member nominations, deadlines etc. Peterson stated that it's concerning that Saguache County hasn't really been involved. Houck stated that it was mostly due to funding and availability of resources.

Houck stated that he would be happy to provide the legal briefs to anyone if they would like them.

Houck reported that he and Seward spoke with Timberman regarding the lek access application and protocol for photographers. Timberman had no concerns and approved the process. Seward stated that the Committee will need to review the applications at the February meeting and see if they would want to consider this year's applicant(s). The lek access application and protocol have been approved.

FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE

M. Vasquez gave out the most recent US Forest Service newsletter and gave an update on the Forest Plan Revision. The Forest Plan guides them in forest management at a 15 year time scale. The current one is older than that, the second oldest in the Nation. There is a need to update the plan. They are operating under the 2012 planning rule that provides the policy and requirements to develop their new forest plan. They are incorporating new science and knowledge and part of that process is getting public input to find out what's working well and what isn't. They have had eight public meetings and received hundreds of comments and are still getting more. The public can go online to submit comments. They have published 19 assessments for comment review. The assessments are drafts and their intent is to take public comments and update the assessments with anything they have missed. The next step in the process is the NEPA phase, developing the plan and objectives and receiving public input. Then they will publish a draft of environmental impact statement for public input and review. They are trying to complete the revision within three years and are currently in the beginning of year two. They would like to have a final plan completed by 2020. Discussion followed.

SHED ANTLER REGULATIONS OUTCOME

Houck reported that the letter the Strategic Committee drafted and finalized was sent to the Wildlife Commission and they were appreciative of getting it. Wenum reported that the final result was that protections were increased and aligned to include concerns in the Gunnison Basin. The closure on all public lands West of I-25 will be January 1st through April 30th with total prohibition on the collection of antlers, horns, and other wildlife parts. In the Gunnison Basin, there will be an additional closure that will prohibit collection from May 1st through May 15th, from sunset to 10 am. The effective date is March 1, 2018.

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COUNTY PERMITS- HOW HAS THE SAGE-GROUSE LISTING AFFECTED THE PROCESS

Ferchau stated that he requested this discussion because he wanted a better understanding of the County sage-grouse review process. Pagano explained that the process hasn't really changed dramatically. Any time any development permit is required it is recommended that the applicant have a pre-application meeting before applying for the permit. It will then go in front of the wildlife biologist for review. The process has been cleaned up and permits are being issued following a sage-grouse review. Discussion followed about the process, site visits, education of realtors and public, costs, etc. Peterson would like to know what would happen to someone if they don't get ahold of USFWS after they get their building permits, what does the USFWS do when someone does contact them, and would USFWS honor the County sage-grouse review? Houck will talk to Timberman and add the process and steps the USFWS takes to ensure people are talking to them after they get their building permits to the next agenda.

STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Navy reported that the Committee did not give a stewardship award last year and that she would like the Committee to continue giving stewardship awards. In the past, Committee members nominate deserving people and typically one or two are chosen for consideration. Houck requested that Navy put together the criteria and the Committee can work on it at the next meeting.

SAGE-GROUSE MURAL

Magee reported that there is an artist, Rodger Pete, who would like to do a sage-grouse mural in Gunnison, free of charge. He's been doing murals all over the country with different species and would like to move forward with the Gunnison Basin species. Pete needs help with finding a wall to put it on. Magee said he went out and took photographs of some walls that may work. Pete is interested in doing a few different big murals and some small ones all around town. It wouldn't cost the community anything. Houck stated that everyone will need to be on board on approving the murals. The artist is requesting a five year commitment to allow his murals to stay on the walls. Houck will meet with Magee to get more information on what is involved and add it to the next agenda.

COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

At the next meeting, Houck would like to have everyone discuss how to use the subcommittees, when to use the subcommittees, and appoint members to the subcommittees. Childers said that she will work on getting someone on the I&E Subcommittee from NPS. The appointees do not have to be on the Committee and can be designated by the current chair of each of the subcommittees. The subcommittees can make recommendations, but the Committee has to make the final decision. Houck will work with B. Vasquez to send out the bylaws and then talk to each of the chairs of the subcommittees to move forward with who is involved and who their replacements will be, if needed. Cochran reported that they can reorganize everything all at once after everyone is appointed to the Strategic Committee by the BOCC.

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
02-14-18	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

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ADJOURN: MOVED by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The January 17, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:43 P.M.

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant III

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