GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 16, 2018

The May 16, 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)
Greg Peterson, Secretary, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
Nathan Seward, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Dan Olson, NRCS District Conservationist
Ann Timberman, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Elijah Waters, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Non-voting Members:
Kathy Brodhead, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alternate

Others in the Audience:
Pat Magee, WSCU
Mike Pelletier, County GIS
Jim Cochran, Wildlife Biologist
Suzie Parker, United States Forest Service (USFS)
Jim Mendonca
John Scott

Staff Members Present:
Brooke Vasquez, Gunnison Conservation District, Wildlife Biologist
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant
David Baumgarten, County Attorney
Rachel Magruder, County Paralegal

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Houck called the May 16, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:03 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 March 28, 2018 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Navy and seconded by Waters to accept the March 28, 2018 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Navy wanted the Board to decide when they want to give the Guerreris the Stewardship award. Houck stated that they usually do it at the meeting or on a field trip. Discussion followed on how to get them here.

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Navy requested that it be done in the June meeting. Houck and Peterson will get them to the next meeting. They will present the award on June 20th.

Timberman stated that the Partnership and Wildlife program, with Fish and Wildlife has filled the Southwest vacancy by Brandon Miller and he will be starting in June. Houck suggested that she bring him to the August meeting if there is one.

Waters reported that there were seven gates cut, a couple at the same locations. Gates were cut at Airport Road, Haystack Gulch, Navajo Gate, Signal Peak and Six Mile Lane. That is higher than normal and probably due to there being no snow and easy access. They put some cameras up to try and catch the people doing it, but were unsuccessful. They haven't seen any shed hunters.

Olson reported that they have received calls for irrigation improvement projects. He suggested that they work on figuring out how to get more people who want to do sage-grouse improvement projects.

Houck reported that he has been working with Cochran on the Collaborative Action Plan. Houck will be outreaching to the County Coalition group. They will be working with them to figure out what opportunities there are. Cochran stated that they should look at involving the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee and that they could put something together by August for the group to see. Cochran gave an overview of the Action Plan. Timberman hopes that when the plan is completed there will be a variety of people that want to do it and agencies will be more willing to help fund it.

LEK COUNT UPDATE

Seward reported that they almost have all of the data sheets and stated that there may be a slight decline in sage-grouse numbers this year. The high male bird count is at 600, while in 2017 it was 758 and in 2016 and 2015 they were in the 900s. Sage grouse populations naturally cycle, in 2001-2002 the counts dropped to a high 500 and in 2006 it was over 1,000. Seward believes it will bounce back and isn't too concerned right now. The counts aren't final. The female count is around 200 and last year it was 230. They are seeing a good amount of females which is good for the bounce back. He will have the final count by the next meeting in June.

LITIGATION UPDATE

Baumgarten reported that there are two sets of litigation, one saying that the bird should be listed and the other that it shouldn't be listed. He stated that Gunnison County's position is that it shouldn't be listed and that it should be handled at the local and state levels.

The input process is done and the judge is currently reviewing it.

I&E FUNDING REQUEST

Houck reported that in the last Sage-grouse Committee meeting the Board was looking at fund requests. The Gunnison Basin Wet Meadow Restoration office is requesting $526 to pay for half of the printing costs of the Wet meadow Restoration brochure. Moved: by Navy, seconded by Olson to approve giving Wet Meadow Restoration project $526 from the I&E Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

The Executive Committee also approves the funding, approved by Houck and Peterson.

HABITAT PRIORITIZATION TOOL UPDATE

Seward reported that the subcommittee met April 23, 2018 and went through all of the revisions, examples showing the different revisions and improvements that were made and discussed the changes. Everyone seems to be satisfied with the changes. They officially accepted the Tool as presented and to take it to the committee for review and acceptance.

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Houck suggested that today the Board looks at the changes and that they decide at the next agenda whether it should be accepted. Cochran suggested it be put on the agenda as "Formal Adoption of the Habitat Prioritization Tool Update" so that the public will know what is going on. Cochran gave an overview of all the changes that have been updated in the Tool.

Timberman requested that they be able to sit down and go over the tool. They will go over it at the next meeting. Seward requested that they also have the formal adoption by the next meeting.

Scott wanted to know how often they do updates and suggested that they put a time frame on it. Cochran suggested that the Committee adopt a formal update policy. Pelletier stated that the easy stuff can be updated every year and that the harder updates be done with the policy update.

Next month they will have the Formal Adoption of the Habitat Prioritization Tool Update meeting and an agenda item for beginning the formation of a policy update for the Tool.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mendonca gave update on what has been going on at the Waunita lek in 2018. He reported that vehicles are up but that the birds are still at zero on the traditional lek. There were 170 cars on the lek. This year was the highest trailer use he has ever seen. On April 14, 2018 there were 12 vehicles on site, the highest he saw. Mendonca reported that the birds moved north and on the high days, March 28 and 29, there were 12 birds. They are going directly to the East Ridge. There is hardly any activity on the West side.

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.

06-20-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
07-18-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
08-15-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
09-19-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: MOVED by Caloger to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The May 16, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 11:51 AM.

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

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