GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 2018

The June 20, 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)
J. Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Elijah Waters, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Tim Kugler, Recreation-At-Large
Theresa Childers, National Park Service (NPS)

Non-voting Members:
Kathy Brodhead, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alternate
Nathan Seward, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate
Mike Babler, Public At-Large. Alternate

Others in the Audience:
Jim Cochran, Wildlife Biologist
Burt and Sandy Guerreri
Jim Mendonca
John Scott
Tom Grant

Staff Members Present:
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Houck called the June 20, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:33 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 May 16, 2018 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Navy and seconded by Waters to accept the May 16, 2018 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Waters reported that he signed the Signal Peak decision and it should be out today. He recommended that everyone look at the E&A regarding use of the area. The decision is very close to the Alternative B proposal. It increases protections for Sage-grouse at the active lek to close it during the same periods as the normal gate closures. The entire area is closed to motorized use from January 1 through April 30.

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Wenum reported that tomorrow evening they have a public meeting on the Elk 43 Management program at the Fairgrounds 6:30-8:00 p.m. This week they will be announcing in the newspaper a voluntary closure from noon to 7 p.m. on the Tomichi Creek State wildlife area for fishing. They have temperature loggers in that area because of some work they are doing with Trout Unlimited and they have seen that with the low flows and higher temperatures they are seeing spikes in the water going above 70 degrees. If it is above 65 degrees the trout start to stress and the odds of mortality go way up so they are asking people to back off during the noon to 7 p.m. timeframe. The last time they did it was in 2012.

Kugler reported that their paid trail crew is in their third week this year and have cleared section 17.2 of the Colorado trail. They worked up Little Mill Creek clearing trees. They are happy to help wherever needed. Houck stated that the Strategic Committee is willing to help too.

Seward reported that the Climate working group is working on the Zeedyk trail. They are getting the word out about how they are working on restoring wet meadows, retaining moisture and sealing up the gullies on the landscape to improve the sage-grouse and wildlife habitat.

Grant reported that they are working all over the place this year for the Wetland Restoration project. They have also been meeting with private landowners, visiting and doing site visits with new owners. Last Friday they did a tour with restoration experts in the Ohio Creek area. They have one new owner that attended the tour and they went out with a different owner later in the day. They are hoping to improve the habitat for sage-grouse in that area.

Childers reported that they were approved for the grant for the Park Service. Starting 2020 they will get a total of $90,000 over three years to do work on the North Rim.

LEK COUNT UPDATE

Seward reported that their final lek count showed that the population did drop this year. The high male count was 627 in 2018, compared to 2017 at 758. The new 2018 population count based off the high male count is 3,075. The high female count was 234 for 2018, compared to 254 in 2017. He's a little concerned with the drop due to the weather in 2016. Hopefully the Spring of 2019 is better. The slight decrease was seen throughout the entire population. Peterson requested information on the East Ridge of the Waunita lek. Seward reported that they did see birds on the East side but does not have the numbers today, believes there are approximately 8 to 9 males. Peterson requested that Seward put the numbers together by the August meeting so they can have a discussion on deciding where they are with the site.

Mendonca stated that the site was closed 12 days and there were only four vehicles onsite. The sheriff showed up for five days. Peterson reported that he did see a lot more presence from the sheriff's office and that it seems to have helped.

FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE HABITAT PRIORITIZATION TOOL UPDATES AND FORMATION OF UPDATED POLICY

Scott and Cochran gave a presentation on the habitat prioritization tool updates and the major changes to the tool. Page 13 of the handout shows the summary of the updates. Discussion followed on the updates.

Moved: by Peterson, seconded by Navy to adopt the updated Habitat Prioritization Tool and the update policy within the current document. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE ACTION ON I&E SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Navy presented the Stewardship Award to Burt and Sandy Guerreri.

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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.

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
10-17-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
11-21-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
12-19-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: MOVED by Waters, seconded by Houck to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The June 20, 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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