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

The October 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)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Theresa Childers, National Park Service (NPS)
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS)
Dan Olson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Ann Timberman, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Erich Ferchau, Development Community At-large

Others in the Audience:
Marcella Fremgen
Jim Mendonca
Pat Magee, WSCU
David Baumgarten, Gunnison County Attorney
Tom Grant, Wet Meadows Restoration-Resilience Project Coordinator
Allison Vendramel, USFWS
Gale Funco, USFS

Staff Members Present:
Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant
Aleshia Rummel, Gunnison Conservation District, Wildlife Biologist

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Houck called the October 17, 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 September 19, 2018 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Wenum and seconded by Navy to accept the September 19, 2018 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Timberman brought Allison Vendramel, who works for the USFWS in the Grand Junction office, to the meeting. Houck asked that they send a letter to the BOCC to request that she replace Brennan's position as an alternate for USFWS. Timberman requested that Vendramel take over all sub-committee positions also. They will decide if they need to put the request on the next agenda.

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Houck is working on getting a joint letter in regards to filling the USFWS position with the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Region, including the State and other Counties, and will present it to the Committee when it is ready for review.

Olson has requested that soil survey staff come to the Upper Gunnison Basin and improve some of the correlation between their ecological site description and soils and tighten up some of the boundaries of the Mountain Swale ecological site description. They will be spending time on it this summer and continuing to improve the inventory data they have.

Houck reported that the County Coalition did some outreach to other sage-grouse communities and they had good representation when making comments on the five year status review. Timberman reported that they have not heard from Delta County, Mesa County or San Juan County, Utah. She has heard from Dolores County, Gunnison County, San Miguel County and Tom Grant.

Vasquez reported that they are looking at getting a draft Forest Service Plan for internal review done by the end of the month. In the spring they will have the draft EIS and Forest Service Plan ready for public comment. They look at the Range Wide Conductivity Analysis and they are using the CCA, which has a lot of conservation measures in it, really based off the range wide conservation plan. They like to incorporate those measures in the Forest Plan. There are going to be a lot opportunities to make changes and approve things before it is finalized. As they continue to progress he will give updates to the Committee. Houck asked for clarification on the outcome of the plan. Vasquez explained that the Forest Plan is an overarching document that guides how they manage the National Forest. It gives them direction that they need to comply with. It will have standards, guidelines, objectives, management approaches, desired conditions and those are things that they will look at whenever they do any projects and that they meet the Forest Service Plan standards. Further discussion followed on the Forest Service Plan.

LITIGATION UPDATE

Houck reported that he will send a link to the Committee for the decision document. Baumgarten explained that at the Federal District Court level they have lost the litigation. Further discussion followed on the decision and impacts the listing has had.

SAGE-GROUSE MURAL UPDATE

Magee reported that they have an owner, Terry Marlo, who owns High Mountain liquors and the Bookworm wall near the Bank of the West and the Bistro, interested in allowing the endangered species mural on one of her walls. They may be able to use the wall at the bank or on the wall of the Bistro and would like the name of the business to be advertised. The artist is working on a draft of the mural now.

WAUNITA WATCHABLE WILDLIFE SITE PLANNING

Houck explained that his challenge at the last meeting was to come up with an actionable way to evaluate the site. Wenum reported that they have separated into two groups to look at the commercial use and scheduling of the trailer, general visits to the site. The two groups are commercial users who get access to the trailers and private entities who show up. He feels it is has worked really well. They have been able to monitor the birds and the viewers on all the open days, monitoring the birds and humans, and offering any recommendations for improvement. The site is currently open from April 1st to May 15th. One area that hasn't been looked at is having the sub-committee convene to go over the site. Magee and Wenum have come up with a plan to reduce the 2019 overall viewing timeframe to April 5th to May 5th. That will put it at the peak of lek opportunity, the viewing opportunity should be reasonable. Wenum suggests staying with the two days a week closure for 2019. For 2020 to 2022, he recommends that they would stay with the shorter time frame and that they would work with Sisk-a-dee to continue the commercial use permit that would be issued each year, a formal agreement to arrange for volunteers and provide end of the season counts to improve for future years. They would also like to start condensing the activities so all the commercial use and private use have to go through Sisk-a-dee to utilize the site and use the trailer. The public would have to also go through them. They could arrange for transportation to the site and put

everyone in the trailer for viewing. During the 2020-2022 timeframe they could look at an additional day of closure. The other thing they would like to see is expanded monitoring of the Monsoon Gulch side of the site. Discussion followed. Houck suggested that between now and the next committee meeting that the subcommittee get together.

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.

Houck doesn't believe they will need the November meeting, unless something comes up.

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

ADJOURN: The October 17, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

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