GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 19, 2018

The December 19, 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,
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates
Theresa Childers, National Park Service (NPS)
Dan Olson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Ann Timberman, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Tim Kugler, Recreation At-Large
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large

Non-Voting Members
Mike Babler, Public At-Large Alternate

Others in the Audience:
Marcella Fremgen
Pat Magee, WSCU
Sam Liebl, WSCU
Brandon Miller, USFWS
Tom Grant, Wet Meadows Restoration-Resilience Project Coordinator

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 December 19, 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 October 17, 2018 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Navy and seconded by Childers to accept the October 17, 2018 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF USFWS ALTERNATE MEMBER

Timberman sent a letter to the BOCC to approve Allison Vendramelas the alternate USFWS member. Houck gave overview of the process and how it's decided.

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I & E FUNDING REQUEST, CHEATGRASS DISCUSSION

Magee explained that a group of local natural resource and wildlife professionals all got together to figure out what good they could do in the community and they came back to cheatgrass. They had monthly discussions on the issues around local cheatgrass invasions. They have done multiple activities. They did a community event last year and community clean up. They collected native seeds last year. This year, in October, they had a multi-agency work day in the Centennial area to treat cheatgrass. They have been interested in education and outreach for cheatgrass. They started the idea of doing some larger efforts with locals and getting the history of cheatgrass in Gunnison County. They are looking at different ways to tell the story of cheatgrass in a compelling way. They have put a grant into the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Noxious Weed program. The grant contains a request for on the ground cheatgrass control projects and communication strategies.

Liebl explained the process that they went through for the grant. They are looking for more grant funding through other locations too and funding from the committee would be really helpful. Liebl gave the background on cheatgrass and why he has been working on it.

Committee determined that they have $6,000 in the I & E fund. Navy explained that they can use all the money or determine a smaller amount. Peterson wanted to see a large scale treatment plan.

Houck reported that they will add a presentation to the next meeting agenda where they can give more details on the plan and budget, including matching contributions. Liebl is hoping that they will be able to get media products done within the next year.

Moved: by Navy and seconded by Childers that they ratify the expenditure of $500 from the I & E Committee to the project, an informational campaign about cheatgrass. The motion passed unanimously.

MURAL UPDATE

Magee gave update on the mural. The artist came back with a second draft that they liked better. There are a few things they are hoping to have changed. It doesn't seem like the artist is interested in doing what the community wants. It looks like they may need to start at square one. Discussion followed on whether a mural would be beneficial and whether they should continue. Magee will go back to the drawing board and figure out what else they can do. There was discussion about a contest for local artists to contribute.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS

Wenum reported that they have started the annual helicopter work and ground based capture for deer and elk radio collar deployment yesterday and it will probably continue for two more days. There will be a two to three week break and then they will do more capture work. They are trying to maintain 90 does and 60 fawns. It varies each year. They are expanding and trying to complete a circle around the Gunnison Basin to monitor the elk.

Timberman reported that they are continuing the comments for the SSA. They received a lot of helpful comments, questions and concerns. Houck explained that it helps to have all agencies reach out to each other with all the information they each have. Timberman reported that they will have a public forum meeting. Their hard deadline draft recovery plan is December of 2019. Houck reported that they need comment periods that allow them to gather their resources and prioritize it.

Kugler reported that they started to build the trail system at Signal Peak. They will have a human use closure in the springtime for two months for the sage-grouse. They also put in for a construction grant through CPW. $10,000 would go towards weed management and native seeds to put down after they build the trails.

Olson reported that the Farm Bill has passed. The biggest change with be the restructuring of their stewardship program.

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LITIGATION UPDATE

Houck explained that when it first came out on the listing they gave clear instructions to their attorney to prepare for an appeal. After discussion with their partners they have decided that they will not appeal the decision.

WAUNITA WATCHABLE WILDLIFE SITE PLANNING

Wenum gave the update. The sub-committee had a meeting and came up with some recommendations. They tried to project out three years of site openings and closings. The days the site is closed to the public could vary annually. They talked about signage, the opportunity for everyone to use the trailer, and not allow the public to pass through on closed days. As a State Wildlife Area, regulation changes to reflect the proposed closure days do require approval by CPW's Commission. The subcommittee will make a recommendation to the Committee and the Committee will submit a request with CPW to change the regulations in an Issue Paper. CPW's Commission will make the final decision. The decision would not be effective for 2019 because it takes time for the enactment to go into effect, so it would be effective in 2020. Further discussion followed.

Moved; by Peterson and seconded by Navy that the committee support CPW in drafting an issue paper to Parks and Wildlife Commission that incorporates the recommendations from the Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site Sub-Committee.

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.

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
04-17-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
05-15-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
06-19-18	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: The December 19, 2018 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 11:44 AM.

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant

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