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To: Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee Members

From: Shannon Frias, Administrative Assistant III

Date: May 12, 2022

Included in your packet for the Wildlife Conservation Strategic Committee Meeting:

May 18, 2022 Agenda

Draft of April 20 2022 Minutes

GUSG Action Plan

GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday, May 18, 2022

PLACE: Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room, Courthouse, 200 E. Virginia OR via Zoom meeting, Meeting ID: 839 2537 0162 (see Teleconference Information below)

1. 9:00am
 - Call Regular Meeting to Order; Determination of Quorum; Verify Public Notice of Meeting
 - Agenda Approval
 - Approval of April 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes

2. 9:05
 - Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan Final Revisions

3. 9:15
 - Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Community Grant Program Update

4. 9:25
 - Committee Member Comments/Reports

5. 10:45
 - Public Comments

6. 10:50
 - Future Meeting

7. 10:55
 - Adjourn

NOTE: This agenda is subject to change, including the addition of items up to 24 hours in advance or the deletion of items at any time. All times are approximate. Regular Meetings, Public Hearings, and Special Meetings are recorded and **ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY ITEM**. Work Sessions are not recorded and formal action cannot be taken. Two or more Gunnison County Commissioners may attend this meeting. For further information, contact the County Administration at 641-0248. If special accommodations are necessary per ADA, contact 641-0248 or TTY 641-3061 prior to the meeting.

Teleconference Information:

Zoom meeting, Meeting ID: 839 2537 0162

Passcode: 303835

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fus06web.zoom.us%2Fj%2F83925370162%3Fpwd%3DRGpSOC9YWnhMcnBzQjdDS09DZTFmZz09&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ce1ee7976b1064b95a20908da2d308bcb%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637871983769977212%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikl1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=hiCEmp%2FqsglCeqZjmJ00X26VTrfV9xHx3IUZID%2BWi58%3D&reserved=0>

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GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 20, 2022

The April 20, 2022 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. The meeting was also available on Zoom.

Committee Members Present:

Voting Members:

Nathan Seward, Chairperson, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Liz Smith, Vice-Chairperson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Theresa Childers, National Park Service (NPS)
Amber Wilson, Saguache County
Tim Kugler, Recreation At-Large
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers Association
Whit Blair, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Matt Vasquez, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Dan Olson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Non-Voting Members

Darren Long, USFS
Steffanie Chain, Public At-Large
Jessica Frey, NPS

Others in the Audience:

Jessica Young, Western Colorado University (WCU)
Marcella Tarantino, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
John Scott, Scott Resource Management Services
Diego La Plata, City of Gunnison Mayor

Staff Members Present:

Aleshia Rummel, Gunnison Conservation District, Wildlife Biologist

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Seward called the April 20, 2022 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:05 A.M.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM: Seward confirmed that a quorum was present.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 23, 2022 MEETING MINUTES: **Moved:** by Peterson and seconded by Smith to approve the March 23, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS

Caloger thought the presentation by Dr. Pete Coates on corvids on the first day at the Gunnison Sage-grouse Summit was thought-provoking. Coate's work indicated that corvids have significant impacts to greater sage-grouse survival through nest depredation and chick predation. Caloger and Coates had a conversation about USFWS protections for corvids. There are three types of USFWS "take" permits that could be used for corvid control. The easiest level of permit to obtain is most restrictive as to what control measures can be taken, and the most challenging take permit to obtain could potentially be a Basin-wide permit to reduce corvid populations. These permits could potentially cover landowners who wanted to do

some corvid control methods during lekking and brood-rearing periods in a targeted location approach. Caloger suggested that ravens that were removed from the population via the take permit could be sent to a Fort Collins lab to see if they had sage-grouse DNA from depredation. Caloger acknowledged this would likely be controversial and potentially would require careful timing when applying for a take permit to avoid an injunction. Caloger pointed to the lack of data on raven populations in Gunnison other than Christmas Bird Counts. Seward reported that Dr. Pat Magee did corvid point counts at the City, landfill, and several private ranches about five years ago, and the landfill did have the highest counts for ravens. However, we do not have research for Gunnison sage-grouse that ravens are depredating nests and killing chicks, which Seward believed may be important for USFWS to issue a basin-wide take permit during nesting and brood-rearing. Peterson thought that human subsidies have helped raven populations increase in the last few decades, but he also thought that in the past there was a lot of predator poisonings that decreased raven populations as well. Seward said that the Rangewide Conservation Plan outlines a threshold where if sage-grouse populations are lower than the threshold, it may warrant predator control. Blair said he is working with APHIS, the San Miguel Working Group, the Crawford Working Group, and Gunnison BLM (Kathy Brodhead) to explore predator control and raven control, starting with monitoring this year and management next year. Long said he was supportive of private landowners applying for take permits for corvids that are interfering with calving operations currently, and in the long run potentially looking into additional opportunities for larger-scale control. Long mentioned another researcher (Jonathan Dinkins), who frequently works with local communities. Blair said that is who they are working with on their monitoring plan. Olson suggested including more formal protocols for corvid monitoring in lek count monitoring since lots of people are already on the ground and available.

Seward reported that the early lek count period was the best start to lek counts since 2017 (where 78 male and 20 females were counted in the early count period). In the last week of March 2022, 89 males and 12 females were counted during the early count period on the same subset of leks. Seward is optimistic about high male counts for this year. In 2020, the high male count was 629 males, leading to a population estimate of 3,086 birds. In 2017 the high male count was 758 males, leading to a population estimate of 3,700 birds. Peterson asked about other satellite populations, and Crawford's high male count was 7 for the first count period and 5 during the second count period. Magee counted more than 100 birds at the Waunita Watchable Wildlife Site. Seward counted at Ohio Creek at the largest private land lek and they had 101 birds (91 males, 19 females). Seward was wondering if the cicada hatch last summer and July monsoons may have helped.

Smith reported that she attended the Gunnison Basin Weed Commission Meeting (which will be changing their name to something more like "Ecological Services"). The County HR did post the job for the cheatgrass and sagebrush habitat restoration coordinator, and it will be in the paper this week. Smith will attend the state's Noxious Weed Advisory Committee next week on the Front Range. Smith is working with BOCC to complete an out-of-cycle appointment for the education seat on the Strategic Committee, and is hoping to have the regular and alternate appointed by the next meeting or the one after.

Olson reported that the Gunnison Conservation District held their Local Work Group (LWG) meeting last night at their Annual Meeting. The LWG survey uses input from local landowners and land managers to prioritize resources and funding for different projects. Olson encouraged the Strategic Committee to participate in the LWG survey, which Rummel can distribute.

Vasquez reported that Dayle Funka is the new District Ranger. USFS has a few options for who will be regular and alternate members to the Strategic Committee (between Funka, Long, and Vasquez), and will present the options to Funka. They will send a letter to BOCC.

Blair reported that he had received many of letters of support and was planning on submitting the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Sage Grant application soon.

Wilson reported that two people have come in to propose developments in the Poncha Pass area, and Wilson has referred them to Seward. USFWS did not designate critical habitat for the Poncha Pass area, so the review process will be slightly different given those implications. Seward will follow up with Blair and Wilson to check the implications of non-critical habitat designations.

GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE SUMMIT SUMMARY

Young reported that she was very pleased with the attendance and dissemination of information at the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Summit. After the beginning, the technology worked well for a blended (in person and virtual) Summit. They are meeting with CSU to see the media products on Friday, and will have a debrief for the Summit with session leaders on Friday to discuss where and when to have the next Summit. There were 304 registrants (129 paid registrations, 125 Western students, 16 landowners, and several miscellaneous) plus walk-ins. They think they will break even on costs.

COORDINATOR POSITION UPDATE AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECAP

Vasquez reported that on April 11 the Technical Subcommittee met and finalized the Coordinator position Scope of Work. That position is being asked to do a lot, and so the Subcommittee added language to emphasize the partnership and support the position will have. Blair also went through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Sage Grant proposal from USFWS and got feedback on line items to include in the budget, and requested letters of support for the grant.

Smith reported that the contract position has been posted on the Gunnison County website (<https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/bids.aspx?bidID=68>). Smith thought the Technical Subcommittee did a good job outlining which skills were required versus preferred, and what to expect for a reasonable candidate pool.

Smith reported that the next steps will be to begin reviewing applications within 30 days of the original posting date and will continue to accept and review applications until the position is filled. Smith has been working with the County Attorney's office to put together an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for financial stakeholders, and will send that IGA draft out for the financial stakeholders to check language as presented (not to sign). Please check the language by Friday next week (April 29). Smith will also discuss, primarily with financial contributors, how to form a hiring committee to represent all decision makers but also stay a reasonable and effective size hiring committee. The County HR department is happy to provide a training about the hiring process and legal guidance such as questions that can and cannot be asked during an interview.

CARCASS REMOVAL UPDATE

Being proactive with carcass removal is important for CPW to reduce raven subsidies and thereby reduce impacts to Gunnison sage-grouse nests and broods, but removing carcasses will also be important to reduce subsidies for potential wolf populations in the next few years. Seward is proposing to the BOCC that they approve extending the reduced cost of landfill fees for agricultural carcass waste instead of just reduced costs for roadkill carcasses. CPW has a dump trailer that can be used for hauling away carcasses, and they have technician time. They do not have an estimate for the number of carcasses per year, so Seward would like to initially offer free carcass removal to landowners with CCAAs in place with CPW paying a reduced rate at the landfill. If it is a manageable number of carcasses, they would like to extend the discount for more agricultural producers. Marlene Crosby has been in contact with Seward and they plan to get this topic on the next BOCC agenda, and Smith will support that discussion item. Seward reached out to Eric McPhail at CSU-Extension to try to get an educated number of carcasses per year (McPhail estimated 18,000 cows and calves in the Gunnison area, with 1.5-2.5% mortality, so about 350 carcasses per year). Peterson thought that number could be high because some cows will die on federal allotments and not be recoverable during summer. Seward estimated maybe 10-15 horses per year from ranchers and about 15 per year from hobby horse owners.

Peterson asked what the current fee was for wildlife carcasses (Seward thought it was \$1.50 per carcass, but it would be helpful to have a rate for per pound as well). Smith explained to La Plata that this discussion was also related to raven subsidies in the City of Gunnison's waste including businesses and residents. The City has had discussions about bear-proof trashcans (which could also reduce raven subsidies in addition to racoons, bears, and potentially wolves), which may not be realistic for all of the City residents given the cost. Seward suggested that a phased in approach to reducing conflict via implementing more bear-proof trashcans could be a more manageable approach for one neighborhood in the City at a time.

La Plata said the City does have a bear-proof trashcan program in place. The cost of each can is about \$250-\$280. The City asks residents to keep their trash indoors until trash pickup day, which does not seem to be the way people operate usually. Cost seems to be prohibitive for most people to participate. They City did order a new trash truck that is compatible with bear-proof trashcans. Commercial entities tend to use private waste disposal services, so the City might not have much sway over businesses aside from education. The City did have MEM students conduct a bear conflict study including mapping conflicts within the City. La Plata, Smith, and Rummel will investigate submitting a grant (CPW has up to \$1 million available through the Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Community Grant Program which accepts applications for \$50,000 to \$500,000 for communities interested in reducing conflict by purchasing bear-proof trashcans, due May 6). Peterson said we could ratify an application after submitted if needed. La Plata asked when raven depredation was a bigger concern, and Seward said during hyperphagia for bears (spring and fall) and nesting and brood-rearing for sage-grouse (summer). La Plata will share the bear-conflict study with the Strategic Committee.

Seward asked about City ordinances. La Plata thought there was an ordinance about setting out trash the night before. The Committee thought it would be good to understand the City of CB's ordinances as well.

Kugler asked for education to businesses (and pointed out Safeway often has a significant number of corvids at their dumpsters). City Council meets April 26, so La Plata will look into what it would take to approve a grant application and will have that as an agenda item for the City. La Plata will find out the number of trash cans the City already has.

GUNNISON COUNTY SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN DISCUSSION AND UPDATES

The link seems to not work well so several members were not able to review the Action Plan revisions. Rummel will send the link via email for the edited copy and a clean copy (Smith will provide links). Peterson thought the Action Plan just needs to be finalized so we can move on to some more pertinent things like grant applications, etc. Seward asked Strategic Committee members to come to the next meeting with any final revisions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Future meetings will occur in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room and by Zoom online meetings, unless changed for a specific reason.

05-18-22	9-11	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
06-15-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
07-20-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
08-17-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
09-21-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
10-19-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
11-16-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
12-21-22	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: The April 20, 2022 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Minutes Prepared By: Aleshia Rummel, Gunnison Conservation District

GUNNISON COUNTY SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN



Prepared by the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Gunnison County October 20, 2009

Revised by the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee in May 2022

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Introduction

This Conservation Action Plan is the result of the efforts of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to ensure that adequate work is being conducted to conserve the Gunnison Sage-grouse. By creating a Conservation Action Plan, the scope of the work can be narrowed to specific needs identified in the plan, helping to guide the group in its efforts. The actions in this plan are based on two different criteria.

1. The first is that every action addresses one or more of the ten objectives listed in the Strategic Plan. If it doesn't meet one of the objectives, it is unlikely that it fits into the role of the Strategic Committee.
2. The second criteria for actions included in this plan relate to the five listing factors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since ultimately, most of the decisions related to listing are based on these five factors, emphasis should be placed on the actions that can help answer and address these questions. This will demonstrate this committee's efforts for the conservation of the sage-grouse in the Gunnison Basin. This Conservation Action Plan will help to continue to conserve the Gunnison Sage-

grouse and demonstrate the willingness of the Gunnison County community to preserve and protect Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat.

It is the committee's duty to rank and prioritize the actions based on available time and resources. Doing this will give the committee focus and a goal to work towards. Some of these action items may take longer than others and it should be understood that the suggested timelines listed are provided only as estimates from which to set initial goals for completion of actions. The ultimate success of this Conservation Action Plan depends on the availability of resources to enable timely completion of tasks. We recognize that delays and/or bottlenecks may be inevitable. Regular evaluation of Action Item progress and results is important to properly manage these efforts and focus the project implementation team on key issues.

It is the intent that the Conservation Action Plan work in conjunction with the USFWS Recovery Implementation Strategy as numerous needed actions overlap.

Responsibility

Gunnison County is responsible for facilitating the implementation of this Conservation Action Plan with assistance from the appropriate stakeholders in the form of financial and physical resources, program oversight, guidance and direction. Successful implementation is limited to the degree that it complies with existing regulations (i.e. federal/state/local laws, etc...).

Including Stakeholders

One of the key elements of having a successful Action Plan is to include all stakeholders involved. The Strategic Plan identifies and defines stakeholder groups. Identifying stakeholders is the first step for working on this Conservation Action Plan. By including all interested parties, well thought out decisions will be made and all interests will have the opportunity to be heard. The involvement of stakeholders cannot be a passive invitation to participate, but a responsibility of the County to provide assurance that stakeholder participation is comprehensive and dedicated. Prior to implementing this Conservation Action Plan, the Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator must create a database of stakeholders' contact information. The database will ensure a complete list of stakeholders for participation in meetings related to action items of interest to them.

Commented [GU1]: Add LWG History?

Conservation Action Plan Prioritization Process

Prioritization of Action Items can assume a variety of criteria and assumptions. In the initial year of the Action Plan, the goal of the committee was to make progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan mission.

Consequently, prioritization ranking was more a function of feasibility and likelihood of success rather than the overall impact of the results. In the beginning it is more important to raise awareness, assemble an organizational structure and experience success. We anticipate that future prioritization efforts will concentrate more on the consequence of the actions.

In order to prioritize action items, the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee completed an exercise where each action item was evaluated on three criteria:

1. **Feasibility:** Whether or not the completion of the Action Item could be done in the 12- to 36- month time period for the plan.
2. **Resources:** Whether or not the resources needed to complete the Action Item are available or realistically obtainable.
3. **Sponsorship:** Those who would be responsible for completing the action item have the time and resources available to be successful.

Each of these criteria were ranked on a scale of three levels;

High: Highly likely that the action item would succeed.

Medium: May succeed but would depend on the scope and/or resources.

Low: Not likely to succeed or not likely to obtain necessary resources.

The members of the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee each ranked every Action Item. High, medium, and low scores were tallied and priorities were determined based on these tallies. Action Items in this Plan are listed in order of the priority rankings completed by the Strategic Committee. It is important to point out that even though an Action Item may have received a lower ranking through this prioritization exercise, it does not mean the Action Item is not important. Some of the items that are needed the most to work toward conserving the grouse are also the least feasible, need the most resources, and will need the most sponsorship to complete. If a person, team or agency takes sponsorship and works hard to complete a lower ranked item, it may move to the top of the priority list to complete.

Implementation Schedule & Ongoing Planning Process

To achieve manageable results, Action Items are defined with the intent of being completed within 12-36 months. Should the scope of a particular Action Item grow beyond this timeframe, that Action Item should be re-evaluated. The items have been prioritized and timelines will be placed on the items to ensure the work continues to completion. Availability of necessary resources will influence scheduling of Action Items. Other scheduling considerations include the seasonality of the work, the life cycle of the sage-grouse and relationships among the individual Action Items.

Action Item Project Teams, when applicable, will provide the County with regular updates of their progress. Every 10 years the Strategic Committee should review Action Items, update the schedule, and address issues with the progress of Action Items. The Ongoing Planning Process (See page 25) is needed to ensure that current and future Action Items are relevant and reflect the priorities of ongoing conservation efforts. On an annual basis, the County will review and approve the results of the annual planning process.

Commented [GU2]: This is currently not correct.

Summary

The Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan is considered a living document and must undergo continual review and revision to be effective. While the plan is the responsibility of Gunnison County, the success of the plan depends on the mobilization and commitment of the community at large. Involvement and compromise across stakeholders is necessary to achieve balanced results in light of the broader needs and interests of our community. In the end, we will meet the objectives set forth in the Strategic Plan.

Action Item Format

In defining Action Items, the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee utilized the following consistent format to ensure that clearly-defined goals, objectives, and strategies for success would ultimately result from the process of drafting a Conservation Action Plan. Action Items included in the remainder of this document follow the same format and include the same categories defined in the table below. The level of detail contained in the Action Item categories varies based on availability of information. Representations within the Action Items (scope of work, responsibility, results, schedule, etc.) are not a commitment or obligation and must be further defined.

Action Item Number & Title

Objective: (What objective the Action Item supports)

Action Description:	Provides an overview of the action item including the scope of the work required, the context of its origination and the significance that its completion will have on the preservation efforts.
Action Activity: (Clear Direction)	An overview of the steps required to successfully implement the Action Item.
Responsibility: (Passion)	Identifies the one or two entities (people, organizations, etc.) who the Strategic Committee believes should lead the effort to complete the Action Items. This person(s) represents the driving force behind the Action Item.
Measurable Results: (Intended Consequence)	On what standard will this Action Item be evaluated? There should be very clear, measurable results identified prior to starting any Action Item.
Stakeholders: (Ownership/Buy-in)	Stakeholder groups have been defined in the Strategic Plan and every Action Item should establish which of those stakeholders have an interest in this Action Item.
Schedule / Target End Date: (Schedule)	What is the intended start and end date for the Action Item? Identify any known interdependencies among Action Items or involving other community activity that may influence scheduling.
Resource Requirements / Source:	Identify how long it will take to implement the Action Item, how much money will be required (whether direct expenditures or a value for internal resources) and estimated man-hours to complete the work.
Obstacles / Threats: (Managed Success)	In any project, there are forces that support the successful completion of the work and there are opposing forces. The idea is to anticipate the reasons why this project will not be successful so that these issues can be managed prior to or during the project.
Ranking / Priority	How important is this Action Item on its own merits and how does it compare across the other Action Items? Often times it is necessary for one task to be completed before something else can be started. These interdependencies are important to identify. Rankings were determined by the Strategic Committee and are shown for both 2009 and 2022.
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	What are the corresponding Priority Actions and associated Activity from the USFWS Recovery Implementation Strategy (version 1, 2020) for the Gunnison Basin subpopulation?

Current Status and Ongoing Actions	What work remains to be done, as of 2022, related to this conservation activity?
Accomplishments by 2022	What work has been completed by 2022? This section lists available resources related to this conservation activity.

Action Item #1: Grazing Research

Objective: Research

Action Description:	Help with the coordination of the Grazing Research Project
Action Activity:	Have the Strategic Committee participate and offer facilitation of the development and implementation of the recent state species conservation trust fund project
Responsibility:	Strategic Committee, Stockgrowers
Measurable Results:	Grazing management practices that benefit sage-grouse needs and reduce controversy of grazing issues
Stakeholders:	Private landowners, public land management agencies, wildlife management agencies, technical/financial assistance agencies (NRCS)
Schedule / Target End Date:	5 – 6 years
Resource Requirements / Source:	Currently funded at \$300,000 per year
Obstacles / Threats:	Continued funding Cooperation of landowners / managers Adequate resources to scope a project that will yield actionable results Impacts of research and technical needs of a study of this scope
Ranking / Priority	High (2009) Low (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	1.06, 1.08, 5.04, 6.02, 6.03, 6.07, 6.09
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Completed initial baseline monitoring, possibility of reoccurrence every 5 years
Accomplishments by 2022	Mary I. Williams and Ann L. Hild. 2012. Characteristics of Gunnison Sage-grouse Habitat in Dry Mountain Loam and Mountain Loam Ecological Sites in the Gunnison Basin. Final Report to Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Action Item #2: Create Organization Structure for Action Plan Implementation

Objective: Communication & Coordination

Action Description:	There has been much discussion about who to go to for information on issues dealing with Gunnison Sage-grouse. Efforts to successfully complete many Action Items within the Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan will depend heavily on coordination of the expertise of the Working Group and Strategic Committee. The purpose of this Action Item is to facilitate cooperation and coordination of the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee with the Local Working Group's Habitat, Information and Education, and Technical sub-committees. This will streamline efforts that are ongoing in the Gunnison Basin regarding Gunnison Sage-grouse conservation.
Action Activity:	<p>The Strategic Committee will work with the standing sub- committees of the Local Working Group that are in place to streamline basin-wide efforts to conserve Gunnison Sage-grouse. Specifically, the working relationship between the LWG sub-committees and the Strategic Committee should be clearly defined and communicated by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening direct lines of communication between the Strategic Committee and the LWG subcommittees 2. Establishing common goals and objectives for completing Action Items 3. Appointing representative(s) from the Strategic Committee who will provide a direct line of support for completion of appropriate <p>Action Items and who will communicate with the Strategic Committee on a regular basis about progress being made on Action Items undertaken by members of the LWG sub-committees.</p>
Responsibility:	Strategic Committee
Measurable Results:	Policy and procedure that will allow for cooperation and coordination with Local Working Group standing sub-committees
Stakeholders:	All
Schedule / Target End Date:	Put together a sub-committee within Q1 Implement process Q2
Resource Requirements / Source:	Time: 160 hours Money: in-kind time commitment People power: 20 people, 2-4 hour meetings

Obstacles / Threats:	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interests to be involved and rewarded
Ranking / Priority	High (2009) Not applicable (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	N/A
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Completed
Accomplishments by 2022	Ongoing organizational structures as evident with formation of Strategic Committee's Technical and various subcommittees

Action Item #3: Use of the Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Trust

Objective: Habitat Conservation

Action Description:	The Gunnison Sage-Grouse Conservation Trust was created in 1999 to mitigate impacts to the Gunnison Sage-grouse caused by the Gunnison County Landfill. Beginning in 2005 the Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Trust has been used to fund a part of the sage-grouse component of the County Wildlife Conservation Program, including spring (lekking) road closure expenditures, some BLM road closure expenditures and program operating expenses. Funding partnerships have declined from eleven organizations contributing \$44,000 in 2006 to two organizations contributing \$20,000 in 2009. Gunnison County, Gunnison County Electric Association and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. are the only entities currently contributing cash funding to the County sage-grouse conservation effort. This necessitates an increased level of contribution from the Conservation Trust to continue the sage-grouse component of the County's Wildlife Conservation Program.
Action Activity:	Continue the Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Program to preserve habitat. Evaluate the level of sage-grouse habitat related work conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Program on an annual basis and adjust the level of funding from the Conservation Trust appropriately.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County
Measurable Results:	<p>Review, analysis and appropriate mitigation of all Gunnison County Land Use Change (Building, OWTS, Access, Reclamation, Minor and Major Impact) permit applications within Gunnison Sage-grouse Occupied Habitat.</p> <p>Staff support to Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee.</p> <p>Administration of County sage-grouse conservation activities (road closures, permit conditions, mapping, County property CI's, LUR, County sage-grouse website)</p> <p>Other habitat conservation efforts such as participation in developing the Ranchland Initiative Land Use Process; pursuing a Candidate Conservation Agreement option on Federal lands.</p>
Stakeholders:	Private landowners, public land management agencies, wildlife management agencies, local governments, and the business community

Schedule / Target End Date:	1 year and annually thereafter
Resource Requirements / Source:	Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation and other County staff
Obstacles / Threats:	Fund limitations
Ranking / Priority	High (2009) Low (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	8.01 and 3.05
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing. The Strategic Committee is exploring the use of the fund for a cheatgrass treatment and sagebrush restoration coordinator (see Action Item #10).
Accomplishments by 2022	Hiring of GUSG County Coordinator; sage-grouse reviews for >1,050 land use change, OWTS, and building permit applications; Funding of GUSG festivals and research summits. Funded several small-scale habitat improvement projects.

Action Item #4: Community Awareness

Objective: Information & Education

<p>Action Description:</p>	<p>Many people who live in and visit Gunnison County are not yet “on board” with or are unaware of the movement to protect the Gunnison Sage-grouse. The community has some members who really don’t care whether the species survives, others who wish to ensure the proliferation of the species, and those who are unaware of the species and the issues surrounding it. The purpose of this Action Item is to raise the awareness level of all people in the County and to encourage their active participation in the efforts to protect the species. In doing so, activities and channels of communication will need to address a wide variety of interests and people in the county.</p>
<p>Action Activity:</p>	<p>There may be some benefit to a sequential order of these Action Activities. However, they can be implemented on a stand-alone basis. Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize a Sage-grouse Awareness week to facilitate public education, awareness and fundraising in support of ongoing local efforts to preserve the Gunnison Sage-grouse.• Create and maintain an up-to-date database of stakeholders in sage-grouse related issues (i.e. antler hunters, recreation groups, contractors, realtors, etc.) and personally notify them of meetings where topics of interest to them are in the agenda to be discussed. This will foster increased public and stakeholder involvement in and awareness of GUSG issues and conservation efforts.• Create and publish links on Gunnison County’s website that will facilitate new residents’ understanding of wildlife issues in Gunnison County. For example, create a link to directing applicants for building permits, OWTS permits, etc. to information about the process and objective behind the CPW & Gunnison County’s Wildlife Conservation Coordinator’s goals with respect to protecting the Gunnison Sage-grouse. Links could consist of information about wildlife friendly fences, noxious weeds management, proper grazing practices, pet control, bear-proof garbage containers, etc. Expand the availability of these materials beyond the GUSG local working group, CPW, and CSU Extension to include motels, title companies, realtors, attorneys, etc.• Develop and implement age-appropriate sage-grouse, Endangered Species Act (ESA), and

	<p>conservation education programs in elementary, middle and high school science programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sage Chicken” menu items at local restaurants that result in a monetary donation to “Save the Grouse” foundation. The existence of the menu items will promote discussion about the sensitivity. • Design Gunnison Sage-grouse bumper stickers and other related items. • Integrate messaging into existing Celebrations. Incorporate GUSG messages into existing celebrations such as Cattlemen’s Days, July 4th, High School and WCU functions, Night of Lights, etc. • In conjunction with the road and recreation closures, identify areas of lesser concern to the seasonal activity of sage-grouse (Centennial Wildlife area, Cimarron, etc.) and create areas of opportunity (road “openings”). The objective is to encourage and direct outdoor recreation activity during sensitive times (i.e. lek season) so as to minimize the impact on sage grouse, while creating a positive, pro-recreation message to those who may not be focused on the Gunnison Sage-grouse concerns. • Create and publicize a website that gives research-based information about the identification, biology and control of plants listed on the Gunnison County Noxious Weed List and other commonly occurring and problematic weeds in Gunnison County. This will allow improved public access to information about weeds, their effects on habitat and science-based approaches to their control on private lands. In addition to general information about invasive plants and their control, the website will also include information specific to sage-grouse habitat: weeds most problematic in GUSG habitat, when to implement control measures in GUSG habitat, etc. Identify what businesses (or other points of contact) can be solicited for information dissemination and establish those relationships. • Establish sponsors (local businesses, organizations, schools, etc.) of geographic subsets of GUSG habitat areas. Sponsor activity will include: highway signage, distribution of information, trail signage, habitat restoration, GUSG population challenges, neighborhood mailings, road closure monitoring, volunteer work, fund raising for projects in their area, billboard space, etc. • Organize a mural painting contest. Have artists submit drawings for potential murals and award
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	winners by painting their mural on prominent buildings in Gunnison and/or rural Gunnison (such as barns).
Responsibility:	Community leaders
Measurable Results:	Event and meeting attendance Website hits Implement fundraising through restaurants Sponsorship of all areas of geographic concern Local, regional, and national exposure to the issues with a consistent message of support rather than controversy
Stakeholders:	All
Schedule / Target End Date:	Establish Activity Champions within Q1 Champions will establish clear goals and timeline for implementation and completion of each activity during Q2 Q3 begin implementation of activities
Resource Requirements / Source:	Time: Ongoing Money: Year 1 - \$50,000, future years will generate money People power: Significant volunteer hours
Obstacles / Threats:	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interest to be involved and rewarded
Ranking / Priority	High to Medium (2009) High to Medium (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	2.02, 2.08, 3.11, and 3.14
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing. Development of a conservation poster is currently in progress (December 2021). Gunnison Trails collaborates with other stakeholders to distribute information about season sage-grouse related road and trail closures.
Accomplishments by 2022	GUSG festivals and summits, bumper stickers and t-shirts, creation of the STOR crew, flowchart detailing sage-grouse building permit review process available on the Gunnison County Community and Economic Development Department website

Action Item #5: Campaign for the Continuation of the Land Preservation Fund

Objective: Grants & Fundraising

Action Description:	<p>Ensure the continuation of the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Fund, which was authorized by voters in 1997 for 15 years, and in 2012, for a period of 20 years, ending Dec. 31, 2033. A portion of sales tax from towns and the county goes to the Land Preservation Fund. Landowners and/or their representatives can ask for funding through this for matching funds to carry out land preservation projects, such as conservation easements.</p> <p>Promote and educate the public about the 2032 renewal of the Land Preservation Fund.</p>
Action Activity:	Promote and educate the public about the need to renew the Land Preservation Fund in 2032.
Responsibility:	Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board
Measurable Results:	Majority vote in Nov. 2032 election
Stakeholders:	Conservation groups, landowners, public of Gunnison County
Schedule / Target End Date:	November election 2032
Resource Requirements / Source:	<p>Money: for press releases, advertisements</p> <p>Time: for contacting stakeholders, creating advertisements, social media presence</p>
Obstacles / Threats:	Poor economy, lack of interest, unaware public of incentives of program, competing community needs.
Ranking / Priority	<p>High to Medium (2009)</p> <p>High (in 2032)</p>
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	3.11
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Continuing to fund conservation projects benefitting the GUSG. Funding is in place currently.
Accomplishments by 2022	<p>Successful re-authorization of GVLBP in 2012 with 81% of vote.</p> <p>Approx. 44,000 acres GUSG habitat conserved by YE 2021</p>

Action Item #6: Mapping of Invasive Plant Control Efforts

Objective: Habitat Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	Increased coordination of invasive plant control efforts on public and private land
Action Activity:	The creation of a centralized weed database (or expanded use of an existing database) that documents occurrence and scheduled/completed treatments of target weed species will allow federal, state and local land management agencies/ departments to coordinate effectively to control invasive plant species that negatively impact wildlife habitat. This process has already been started by the County GIS department but this committee would help facilitate the entry and coordination across the different responsible parties. This GIS-based database should be accessible to weed managers from multiple agencies to allow frequent updates. Help with the facilitation of additional weed surveys may also be needed to ensure the final product will help determine the priorities for treatment. Coordination of treatment for noxious weeds, and especially cheatgrass, has become a significant concern in 2021. See Action Item #10 for related efforts.
Responsibility:	Lead role is divided between the technical (County GIS) and the field work as completed by the cheatgrass treatment and sagebrush restoration coordinator as outlined in Action Item #10 (formerly fieldwork was the responsibility of the Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator - GCWCC).
Measurable Results:	Completion of GIS-based database, establishment of protocol and training of personnel for reporting/submission of invasive plant occurrences and control measures. Published literature to educate public land users about species of concern. Annual compilation of multi-agency, basin-wide accomplishments and efforts to control invasive plants in GUSG habitat. Raised awareness of public land users measured by follow-up to handouts that identify local species of concern.
Stakeholders:	The Gunnison County GIS department would be responsible for the creation and maintenance of this database, and all other land management agency and private land agency personnel involved in invasive plant species control would be contributors of data and information. Public land management agencies, wildlife management agencies, local government, public land users, willing private landowners

Schedule / Target End Date:	1 year to plan and implement the database and define the on- going input and reporting process. System refinement, data entry and reporting will be an ongoing task.
Resource Requirements / Source:	Time: one year Money: \$ 100,000 People power: 1 FTE
Obstacles / Threats:	Resource availability, effective coordination across Stakeholders.
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) High (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	2.01 – 2.10
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing – currently exploring creation of cheatgrass treatment and sagebrush restoration coordinator funded partially by Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Trust funds (landfill mitigation funds), as outlined in Action Item #10. This position may help with mapping efforts for cheatgrass and potentially for other noxious weeds.
Accomplishments by 2022	Support of Gunnison Basin Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance efforts (cheatgrass pull days, landowner education, research). Use of EDDMapS – West app and Conservation Efforts Database to record noxious weed occurrence.

Action Item #7: Programmatic Environmental Assessments for Habitat Projects

Objective: Habitat Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) for sage-grouse habitat improvement projects
Action Activity:	BLM and Park Service working together to develop a programmatic EA for habitat improvement projects across the Gunnison Basin on public lands. If the U.S. Forest Service can also work with these agencies it would be very beneficial. Will cover a broad array of treatment types to allow for maximum flexibility in project planning. Would provide basin wide strategies for improvement and tie the actions to the range wide and local conservation plans and address cumulative impacts over the life of the EA.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County coordination of BLM and National Park Service, possibly U.S. Forest Service
Measurable Results:	Completed EA
Stakeholders:	Public land management agencies, Strategic Committee
Schedule / Target End Date:	3 years
Resource Requirements / Source:	Employee time
Obstacles / Threats:	Making the EA a priority for agencies when there are already several other priorities in the next several years
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) High (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	3.01
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing
Accomplishments by 2022	Development of Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA). [RRP] Zeedyk Structure and Weed Control Programmatic BA (BLM, USFS, NPS)

Action Item #8: Manage Priority Areas

Objective: Habitat, Regulation & Incentives, Information & Education

<p>Action Description:</p>	<p>Assess the Basin-wide landscape from key perspectives to enable effective management of Gunnison sage-grouse habitat and its influencing factors. The impact of a changing population of people and their use of the landscape can be significant relative to a healthy grouse population and a healthy and productive community.</p> <p>Finding a balance that enables both a healthy community and bird population depends on a comprehensive understanding of the following factors: sage-grouse activity, habitat health and the influence of other listing factors, landowner priorities, public use and recreation and the economic drivers of the area. Assessment of these factors and the creation of management tools will result in a policy backed plan that identifies management areas and priority for Gunnison sage-grouse.</p>
<p>Action Activity:</p>	<p>A series of "sub-projects" will be implemented in parallel to assess the landscape. Based on a compilation of the results, the final project will develop a detailed strategy for the conservation of the Gunnison sage-grouse. This action item will result in the coordination and completion of the various "sub-projects". The "sub-projects" include the creation and analysis of data about the landscape:</p> <p>AI-8A: Assess Sage-grouse Population Dynamics AI-8B: Assess Habitat and Listing Factors</p> <p>AI-8C: Assess Landowner Values and Priority AI-8D: Assess Public Use and Recreation</p> <p>AI-8E: Assess New and Existing Economic Drivers</p> <p>AI-8F: Overlay Layers 1-5 and define management tools and priority areas.</p> <p>This Action Item and the corresponding layers of assessment should be considered an ongoing process of data collection and analysis and policy review.</p>
<p>Responsibility:</p>	<p>Gunnison County (facilitating the coordination of efforts, the availability of resources and the overall guidance and scope management to ensure timely and compatible results from each sub-project)</p>
<p>Measurable Results:</p>	<p>Designated standards for landscape definition (i.e. geo- graphic boundaries, parcel owner, section/range, etc.)</p> <p>Integrated database with mapping</p> <p>Communication mechanism across sub-projects</p>

	Resource commitment Stakeholder buy-in and participation
Stakeholders:	Local Government and those stakeholders who are responsible for the respective sub-projects
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	Meeting space Administrative resources Technical resources
Obstacles / Threats:	Scope management is critical as there will be a tendency to try to accomplish too much. This should be viewed as a process of refinement.
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) Medium (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	1.02, 1.05, 2.01, 3.09, 3.15, 10.06, and 11.02
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing
Accomplishments by 2022	Completed Habitat Prioritization Tool for County land use decision support (Tier 1 and Tier 2 criteria)

Action Item #8A: Assess Sage-Grouse Activity

Objective: Research / Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	Determine the population dynamics of Gunnison sage-grouse and assess the health of the population in the area. Considering the five listing factors, determine what can be done to improve the conditions for Gunnison Sage-grouse and the likelihood that the improvements will have a material impact on the bird population.
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Gather data to represent the sage-grouse population dynamics during the various life stages (breeding/ lek activity, nesting, brood rearing, winter survival). Submit results to the central data collection and reporting resources. This Action Item will require some level of assumption about winter range activity given the schedule of the initial effort.
Responsibility:	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Measurable Results:	Within a standard geographic area, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bird counts (male, female, youth, adult) both current and historical• Primary lek site(s) as well as other life stages• Predator activity• Range of mobility• Mortality rate and source of mortality• Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)
Stakeholders:	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	Monitoring equipment Trapping and monitoring personnel Volunteer observation and data collection
Obstacles / Threats:	Accuracy of data and ability to monitor activity with limited resources
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) Medium (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	4.01 – 4.06, 9.01, 12.01, and 12.03
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing

Accomplishments by 2022	<p>Annual CPW Lek Count Reports</p> <p>Efficacy of Translocation (In review)</p> <p>A.D. Apa et al. 2021. Seasonal habitat suitability models for a threatened species: The Gunnison sage-grouse. <i>Wildlife Research</i></p> <p>Davis AJ, Phillips ML, Doherty PF Jr. Nest Success of Gunnison Sage-Grouse in Colorado, USA. <i>Plos one</i>. 2015;10(8):e0136310</p> <p>Aldridge, C.L., D.J. Saher, T.M. Childers, K.E. Stahlnecker, and Z.H. Bowen. 2012. Crucial nesting habitat for Gunnison sage-grouse: a spatially explicit hierarchical approach. <i>Journal of Wildlife Management</i> 76:391-406</p> <p>Thomas R. Stanley, Cameron L. Aldridge, D. Joanne Saher, Theresa M. Childers "Daily nest survival rates of Gunnison Sage-Grouse (<i>Centrocercus minimus</i>): assessing local- and landscape-scale drivers," <i>The Wilson Journal of Ornithology</i>, 127(1), 59-71</p>
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Action Item #8B: Assess Habitat & Listing Factors

Objective: Habitat, Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	Assess the type and health of the habitat in the area, including what is natural and what is directly influenced by human activity. Considering the five listing factors, define what can be done to improve the conditions for Gunnison Sage-grouse and the likelihood that the improvements will have a material impact on the bird population. In conjunction with the habitat assessment for Gunnison Sage-grouse, we want to determine the habitat quality for their predators and the degree to which it affects the GUSG proliferation?
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Gather data to represent the quality and condition of the habitat as it pertains to the life cycle of the Gunnison Sage-grouse. Submit results to the central data collection and reporting resources.
Responsibility:	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Measurable Results:	<p>Within a standard geographic area, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sagebrush cover (height, maturity, status) • Desired food sources • Competing vegetation (noxious weeds, hay meadow, trees, willows, etc.) • Quality and quantity of riparian areas • Predator cover and/or perches • Annual variability, seasonal variability • Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)
Stakeholders:	NRCS, BLM, USFS, NPS, private landowners
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	<p>Expertise in habitat identification and health</p> <p>Landowner participation in data collection</p>
Obstacles / Threats:	Accuracy of data and ability to monitor activity with limited resources
Ranking / Priority	<p>Medium (2009)</p> <p>Medium (2022)</p>
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	1.02, 1.04, 1.05, 2.02, 3.05, 5.02 - 5.04, 5.06, 6.02, 6.03, 6.05, 6.06, 7.01, 7.02, 7.03, and 9.02
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing

Accomplishments by 2022	<p>Habitat Prioritization Tool</p> <p>P. Magee. 2014. Common Raven Use of Human Subsidized Resources in the Gunnison Basin. Final Report to Colorado Parks and Wildlife.</p> <p>Conservation Efforts Database is being developed to capture Gunnison sage-grouse habitat improvement work.</p> <p>Wet meadow restoration resiliency building partnership</p> <p>USFS prescribed fire monitoring (2010, 2013)</p>
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Action Item #8C: Assess Landowner Values & Priorities

Objective: Regulation & Incentives

Action Description:	Decisions made by local, state, and national governing entities have an impact on landowners, both public and private. These decisions impose limitations on the landowners with the intent of creating a better overall environment for the Gunnison sage-grouse. It is critical to understand the real and perceived value considerations from the landowner's perspective to ensure a cooperative and productive relationship with the landowners. This assessment will result in protection of the rights of the landowner as well as identify ideas and opportunities for "win-win" solutions (land exchanges, easements, habitat mitigation/ improvement, etc.) that benefit the Gunnison sage-grouse.
Action Activity:	Create a set of assumptions about private landowner concerns relative to sage-grouse. Form a task force consisting of individuals who represent private landowners. Validate assumptions about what a landowner values in terms of the use of their property versus the relative impact on the Gunnison sage-grouse. Define parameters that allow private landowners to protect their rights to use their land and, at the same time, optimize the overall impact on Gunnison sage-grouse habitat (minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts).
Responsibility:	Colorado Parks and Wildlife, public and private landowners
Measurable Results:	Parameters (Value Measures) to use during any decision-making process to enable "win-win" solutions among the sage-grouse and landowner interest. In other words, enable the landowner to maximize the value of their land (i.e., achieve their desired results with property improvements such as house, road, or driveway, septic, etc. and/or large-scale development efforts) with the least possible impact (and perhaps a net improvement) on the Gunnison sage-grouse and its habitat. Document current use and potential use (based on adjoining or area density/use) Increased number of CCAA applications Land management plan by property owner
Stakeholders:	Public and private landowners, business community (contractors, realtors, lawyers, etc. who deal with private landowner interests), City and County government, wildlife management agencies

Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	Funding for initial landowner contract, work sessions and information gathering County leadership and stakeholder participation
Obstacles / Threats:	Not obtaining a comprehensive understanding of landowner priorities. It will require a dedicated effort to educate the individual landowners and assess their feedback.
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) Medium (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	2.02, 3.05, 3.07 – 3.09, 3.11, 3.14, 6.02, 6.03, 6.07, 6.09, and 10.03
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing
Accomplishments by 2022	CCA participation Wet Meadow Restoration and Resiliency Building Project Conservation Easement funding/support County Planning Department Q/A and permit review

Action Item #8D: Assess Public Use & Recreation

Objective: Habitat, Regulation & Incentives

Action Description:	Public use on private and public lands has a direct impact on the Gunnison Sage-grouse, especially during certain stages in the grouse life cycle. This action will result in clarification of the form and impact of public use/recreation that influences the landscape. There are opportunities to encourage or direct activities to alternative areas during certain times of the year. There may also be the need to restrict certain types of activity within a given area.
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Assemble subject matter experts representing public use/recreation interests and identify when, how often and the scope of impact to Gunnison Sage-grouse. Generate ideas for managing the use of public lands. These efforts may coincide with other sub-projects.
Responsibility:	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Measurable Results:	Within a standard geographic area, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of use / recreation activity • Form of use (motorized / non-motorized) • Season of use • Coverage (general use or route specific) • Habitat and/or sage-grouse impact • Annual variability, seasonal variability • Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)
Stakeholders:	NRCS, BLM, USFS, NPS, private landowners, business community, recreation groups
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	Public participation Work session and facilitation resources Mailings and phone interviews
Obstacles / Threats:	Ability to assemble representatives of the many different uses of the landscape. It will be more difficult to establish meaningful alternatives that are acceptable to the users of the land.
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) Medium (2022)

Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	2.09, 8.02 - 8.06, 11.01 - 11.03, 12.06
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing
Accomplishments by 2022	<p>New shed antler regulations specific to Gunnison Basin. Trail closures for both Hartman Rocks and Signal Peak from March 15 – May 15.</p> <p>Motorized vehicle road closures throughout the Gunnison Basin from March 15 – May 15.</p> <p>Guidance in the CCA related to trail and road construction, rerouting, and decommissioning in Tier 1 and Tier 2 habitat.</p>

Action Item #8E: Assess Economic Drivers

Objective: Regulation & Incentives

Action Description:	<p>What is the highest and best use for the property? Given today's economic drivers and the potential for economic growth in the basin, characterize the potential for future economic application in the respective landscape.</p> <p>Presently, most of the landscape is influenced by ranching and/or development. The purpose of this action is to address new and expanded uses, such as solar or wind energy creation, geothermal research and production, forestry, oil, gas, mining, extensions of tourism or WCU, etc.</p>
Action Activity:	<p>Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Gather data to represent the condition of the economic drivers during the various seasons.</p> <p>Submit results to the central data collection and reporting resources.</p>
Responsibility:	Community leaders
Measurable Results:	<p>Within a standard geographic area, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current economic use • Potential (and likely) economic use • Secondary impacts of economic change • Annual variability, seasonal variability • Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)
Stakeholders:	All
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	<p>Public participation</p> <p>Work session and facilitation resources</p> <p>Mailings and phone interviews</p>
Obstacles / Threats:	Lack of vision and anticipation of the expansion of the economic base in the area
Ranking / Priority	<p>Medium (2009)</p> <p>Medium (2022)</p>
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	3.08, 3.09, 3.11, 11.01, 11.03
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing

Accomplishments by 2022	Gunnison County's Land Use Resolution Flow chart of land use permitting process available on Gunnison County's Community and Economic Development Department website Cell phone tower review
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Action Item #8F: Management Tools & Priority Areas

Objective: Habitat, Regulation & Incentives

<p>Action Description:</p>	<p>Given the various components of analysis, compile results and formulate management tools. Based on the group's ability to manage and identify top priorities, define the best methods that create a win-win scenario for the sage-grouse, the respective landowner and the community at large.</p> <p>Develop a detailed habitat conservation strategy that identifies key sage-grouse habitats within areas that are at high risk of being impacted. Develop and implement tools that allow for the protection of these high-quality habitats. This action item requires synthesis of available habitat data, habitat use data, threats potential, etc.</p> <p>Landscape Strategy: Develop and implement tools that allow for the protection of high-quality habitats within areas that are at high risk of being impacted. For example, the prioritization of land for development and wildlife values is needed.</p> <p>Facilitate/coordinate the effort to prioritize the key Gunnison sage-grouse leks and seasonal habitats on public and private lands in each of the Conservation Priority Regions in the Gunnison Basin. In doing so, the community will have the needed assurances that decisions made regarding private lands will be consistent and equitable.</p>
<p>Action Activity:</p>	<p>Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Provide findings to central data collection and reporting resources. This Action Item will require some level of assumption about winter range activity given the schedule of the initial effort.</p>
<p>Responsibility:</p>	<p>Gunnison County</p>
<p>Measurable Results:</p>	<p>By geographic area, define the landscape in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory or Governmental processes that facilitate the painless protection of these habitats. • Revise City of Gunnison 3-mile Development Plan • Funding opportunities • Authorities and incentives that allow for and encourage protection of key habitats (e.g. land exchanges, mitigation formulas, etc.) • Sage-grouse population objectives • Priority within each area • Development / Preservation efforts • Habitat improvement initiatives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted activity (trade, sale, CCAAs, etc.). • Public information that describes the benefits of participating in habitat protection actions. • Community involvement / sponsorship
Stakeholders:	Must consider all stakeholders in this strategy development
Schedule / Target End Date:	6-12 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe). This Action Item is more dependent on the completion of "Sub-projects" 8A through 8E.
Resource Requirements / Source:	Report writing and administrative resources Work sessions to gather information and formulate plans
Obstacles / Threats:	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interests to be involved and rewarded. While this is an ongoing process, the initial synchronization of effort may result in incomplete data which in turn limits the ability to create a good strategy. Allowing more time to complete this sub-project may be necessary.
Ranking / Priority	Medium (2009) Medium (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	3.08, 3.09, 3.11, 11.01, 11.03
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing
Accomplishments by 2022	Draft report of priority private parcels within 0.6 mile buffer of GUSG leks, N. Seward CPW Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Priority Regions within the Gunnison Basin. 2005. GBLWG

Action Item #8G: Management Tools & Priority Areas (Habitat Conservation Plan)

Objective: Habitat, Regulation & Incentives, Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	<p>Given the growth and expansion of the City of Gunnison, develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the 3-Mile Radius/Development Plan Area.</p> <p>Congress intended the HCP program to function not only to authorize incidental take, but also as a process to integrate non-Federal development and land-use activities with conservation goals, resolve conflicts between protection of listed species and economic activities on non-Federal lands, and create a climate of partnership and cooperation.</p> <p>Facilitate/coordinate the effort to prioritize the key Gunnison Sage-grouse leks and seasonal habitats on public and private lands in the 3-Mile Area and develop a detailed HCP that identifies key sage-grouse habitats within areas that are at high risk of being impacted.</p> <p>Provide the opportunity to obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for proposed development that is consistent with the overall future plans for the development and expansion of Gunnison. In doing so, the community will have the needed assurances that decisions made regarding private lands will be consistent and equitable.</p> <p>This action item requires synthesis of available habitat data, habitat use data, threats potential, etc.</p>
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Provide findings to central data collection and reporting resources.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County, City of Gunnison, BLM, CPW
Measurable Results:	<p>Within the 3-Mile Radius/Development Plan Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory or Governmental processes that facilitate for planned development • Revise City of Gunnison 3-mile Development Plan • Funding opportunities • Authorities and incentives that allow for and encourage protection of key habitats (e.g. land exchanges, mitigation potentials, etc.) • Development assurances for private landowners • Targeted activity (trade, sale, etc.) • Public information that describes the benefits of participating in the Incidental Take Permit (ITP) • Community involvement/sponsorship
Stakeholders:	Must consider all stakeholders in this strategy development

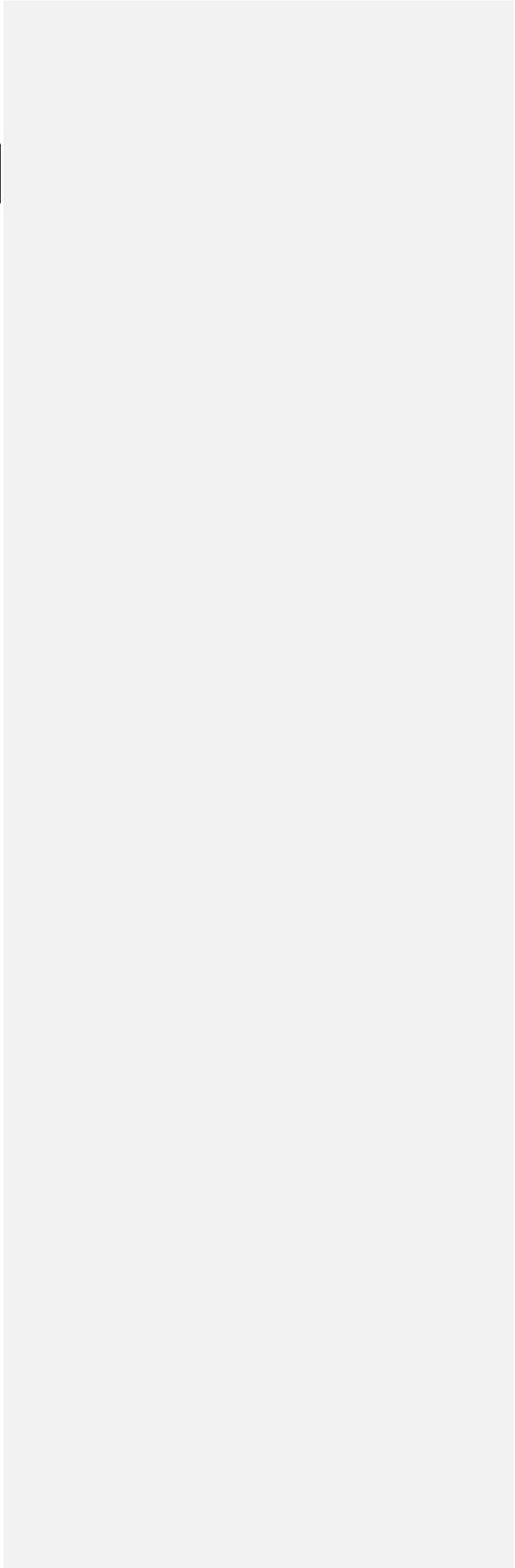
Schedule / Target End Date:	12 – 24 months to completion of the HCP
Resource Requirements / Source:	Report writing and administrative resources Work sessions to gather information and formulate plans GIS resources (Habitat Prioritization Tool)
Obstacles / Threats:	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interests to be involved and rewarded. Funding for this effort could cost a considerable amount. Allowing more time to complete this sub-project may be necessary.
Ranking / Priority	High (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	3.09
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Proposed as an Action Item
Accomplishments by 2022	No progress

Action Item #9: Wet Meadow Restoration

Objective: Habitat, Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	Wet Meadow Restoration and Resiliency Building Project in the Gunnison Basin
Action Activity:	Wet meadow restoration includes the use of Zeedyk rock work, low-tech process-based restoration techniques, and other related methods. These tools are used to slow the flow of water in perennial and ephemeral systems, retain moisture into the soil, and increase wetland vegetation cover in wet meadow areas. Stream reaches have been prioritized by The Nature Conservancy based on their proximity to sage-grouse habitat, and other factors.
Responsibility:	Lead role is hosted as a staff position with the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD). Funding and projects will be coordinated with natural resource managers in various public land management agencies, private landowner assistance agencies, and willing private landowners
Measurable Results:	Number of grants applied for and received, money spent on restoration, wet meadow restoration structures, acres of wetland restored, acres of sage-grouse brood-rearing habitat restored, change in wetland vegetation cover and species composition, soil moisture, and amount of sediment or soil retained
Stakeholders:	UGRWCD, public land management agencies, wildlife management agencies, volunteer organizations (e.g. HCCA), willing private landowners
Schedule / Target End Date:	Ongoing
Resource Requirements / Source:	Money: \$100,000 annually for projects throughout the Gunnison Basin People power: 1 FTE plus seasonal employees
Obstacles / Threats:	Resource availability, including time for coordinator. Effective coordination across Stakeholders. Long term funding.
Ranking / Priority	High (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	1.01 - 1.08
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing. UGRWCD has a 1 FTE employee hired to coordinate wet meadow restoration actions across Gunnison sage-grouse range in the Gunnison Basin.
Accomplishments by 2022	9 years of wet meadow restoration work in the Gunnison Basin, including >5,150 acres of sage-

	grouse brood rearing habitat restored, and >2,100 structures installed.
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Action Item #10: Coordination of Cheatgrass Mitigation and Habitat Restoration

Objective: Habitat, Monitoring & Reporting

Action Description:	Increased coordination of invasive plant control efforts and restoration of sagebrush ecosystems on public and private land. Treatments will specifically target cheatgrass. Treatments may include chemical herbicide applications, mechanical hand-pulling, outcompeting with native species seeding efforts, or other similar treatments.
Action Activity:	Given the increasing prevalence of cheatgrass and other noxious weeds throughout the GUSG range, hiring a cheatgrass treatment and sagebrush restoration coordinator to facilitate grant writing, on the ground treatments, and coordination across land ownership is critical. The coordinator will work to map cheatgrass infestations to more effectively prioritize treatment areas, and therefore this Action Item #10 is closely tied with Action Item #6. The coordinator may assist with mapping efforts, or securing funding for mapping efforts. In addition, the coordinator will be responsible for creating monitoring methods, and carrying out monitoring protocols to determine how effective treatments were. The coordinator would be responsible for understanding federal regulations for pesticide use and methods of application, and for planning appropriate treatments for each land ownership. Additionally, the coordinator will reach out to private landowners and work with willing private landowners. The coordinator will work with landowners (private and public) on preventing the further spread of cheatgrass. The coordinator will be involved with seed collections, reseeding, and related efforts for an integrated pest management approach. The coordinator will also be involved with public education and outreach events related to cheatgrass and sagebrush restoration.
Responsibility:	Multiple stakeholders and land management agencies
Measurable Results:	Hiring a cheatgrass and habitat restoration coordinator is a measurable result. Once hired, the success of the coordinator could be measured via grant applications submitted and received, money spent on treatments, and acres treated and monitored. A coordinator may also be involved in more integrated pest management approaches, and could also track acres restored via reseeding and other efforts. Treatments and habitat restoration projects must be recorded in the USFWS's Conservation Efforts Database.

Stakeholders:	Land management agencies and private land agency personnel involved in invasive plant species control would contribute data, priorities, and some resources for a coordinated effort. Funding for hiring a cheatgrass and habitat restoration coordinator could initially come from all land management agencies, and could be supplemented later by additional grant applications. Specific stakeholders include public land management agencies, wildlife management agencies, local government, public land users, willing private land owners.
Schedule / Target End Date:	Hire a treatment coordinator by mid-2022 or earlier. That position should be funded for a minimum of 2 years until further grants can be secured for the position.
Resource Requirements / Source:	Time: two years minimum Money: \$ 100,000/12 months People power: 1 FTE annually
Obstacles / Threats:	Resource availability, effective coordination across Stakeholders. Long term funding for the coordinator capacity, and locating an organization/ agency willing to host the coordinator as an employee or handle the grants.
Ranking / Priority	High (2022)
Corresponding USFWS RIS Priority Actions and Activities	2.01 - 2.10
Current Status and Ongoing Actions	Ongoing – currently exploring possibility of Cheatgrass Coordinator position funded partially by Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Trust funds (landfill mitigation; see Action Item #3). Gathering agency support and reaching out to other potential funding entities (power companies, CDOT, etc.)
Accomplishments by 2022	Support of Gunnison Basin Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance efforts. Letters of support for funding the position. Technical Subcommittee drafted and announced a Scope of Work for the position as a contract through Gunnison County.

Acronyms

BLM – Bureau of Land Management
CCA – Candidate Conservation Agreements
CCAA – Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances
CDOT – Colorado Department of Transportation
CI – Certificate of Inclusion
CPW – Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CSU – Colorado State University
EA – Environmental Assessment
ESA – Endangered Species Act
FTE – Full Time Equivalent
GIS – Geographic Information Systems
GUSG – Gunnison sage-grouse
GVLPB – Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board
HCCA – High County Conservation Advocates
HCP – Habitat Conservation Plan
HPT – Habitat Prioritization Tool
ITP – Incidental Take Permit
LUR – Land Use Resolution
LWG – Local Work Group
NPS – National Park Service
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
OWTS – On-site wastewater treatment system
SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UGRWCD – Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
USFS – United States Forest Service
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WCU – Western Colorado University

