GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 16, 2012

The May 16, 2012 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was held in the Commissioners' Meeting Room in the Courthouse at 200 E. Virginia, Gunnison CO 81230.

Committee Members Present:
Voting:
Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)
J Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County Alternate
Sue Navy, High Country Citizens' Alliance (HCCA)
Phil Chamberland, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
David Wiens, At-large Recreation Community
Liz With, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Alternate
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS) Alternate
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
Dan Reinkensmeyer, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Alternate
Brian St. George, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Non-voting:
Russell Japuntich, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alternate
Kathy Griffin, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Alternate
Lee Spann, Public At-Large Alternate

Staff Members Present:
Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator
Bobbie Lucero, Administrative Assistant III

Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Stahlnecker called the May 16, 2012 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:00 am.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMED: Stahlnecker verified that proper legal public notice had occurred.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Cochran informed the Committee that he received a phone call from Corey Wong with the Forest Supervisor's office in Delta. Cochran informed that there is a disagreement within the agencies, and therefore there is nothing to present to the Committee today. Agenda Item #8 was removed from the agenda. Cochran informed that the Forest

Service will not be going further with their sage-grouse land acquisition discussions until the disagreement is resolved. Agenda stands as modified.

APPROVAL of April 19, 2012 MEETING MINUTES: Vasquez pointed out one change to the April 19, 2012 minutes. On page 2 change Deer Creek to Beaver Creek and Lost Canyon. **Moved** by Chamberland to accept the April 19, 2012 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Navy. Motion carried.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

- Ramon Reed, Planning Commission Chair
- Charlie Sharp, – USFWS
- Susan Linner, USFWS

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS and REPORTS:

USFS: Vasquez announced there is a Remote Sensing Proposal Kick-off meeting on May 23rd. The meeting will discuss Virtual Point Cloud Technology that can measure vegetation heights from aerial photos. The USFS proposal is one of six that have been accepted.

BLM: Japuntich announced that the BLM gates are open, including the gate south of the power line at Hartman's. Wiens informed the Committee that the signs they put up were effective. Japuntich opined that the public was much more compliant with road closures this year than in previous years.

FEATHER COLLECTION: Cochran passed out an email from Nathan Seward. The email informed the Committee about protocols for feather collection.

NRCS: With announced that a gentleman from Arkansas is going to fill John Scott's position. He is anticipated to be in Gunnison on July 2nd.

USFWS: Reinkensmeyer announced that he has submitted his resignation to the USFWS. He does not have updated information on when the USFWS is publishing the Proposed Rule.

HANG GLIDING ACCESS – REQUEST FROM THE PUBLIC: Matt Brown and Eric Kay with the Crested Butte Soaring Society were present for the discussion.

Brown informed the Committee that there is a hang gliding site at Big Mesa that has been used around 35 years, and the site is only 2-3 acres. He informed the Committee that hang gliders would like to gain access to this hang gliding site during the road closure season, and that they would stay north of the power line. Brown mentioned that they are willing to look at alternate access routes. He commented that the hang gliders would only be at the site when the weather is favorable.

Japuntich commented that the road to get to this hang gliding site goes through 2 active leks, and the reason access was denied in the past was due to this. Brown informed the Committee

that there are only 15 hang gliders in Gunnison, and they are fully insured. Brown informed the Committee that this is an afternoon sport, and they would not go up if the roads are wet/muddy.

The Committee discussed parameters and conditions of allowing the hang gliders access for recreational purposes. The Committee discussed the possibility of the need for emergency access for medical attention.

Cochran suggested placing this discussion on a future agenda. Wiens offered to continue this discussion with BLM and Brown to keep this discussion rolling. The Committee concurred to have Wiens take the lead on this subject, and bring an update to the Committee.

RANGEWIDE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE: The Committee reviewed the draft agenda items identified at the last meeting. St. George added to the draft agenda: weed species, habitat and habitat guidelines. The Committee wants to draft a letter to send to the Steering Committee and ask Griffin to deliver the message. The Committee discussed keeping the agenda specific to Predator Control and inviting all of the working groups. The Committee agreed to discuss setting the meeting before July. The Committee will draft a letter to be addressed to the Director of CPW and send invitations to working group chairpersons if a meeting is scheduled.

JUNE MEETING PLANNING – REQUEST FROM USFWS: Susan Linner with the USFWS Regional office was present for this discussion. Linner informed the Committee that the Proposed Rule has been place on hold in Washington, DC. The Regional Director for the USFWS would like to set up a meeting on June 15, 2012 with the Strategic Committee to communicate what can be done or what is not being done to improve the status of the species. Linner informed the Committee that they might conduct a "road trip" after the Proposed Rule is released and meet with representatives. Linner asked that the various agencies inform their agency heads that the USFWS Regional Director will be coming. Linner informed the Committee that if the Secretary of Interior comes to this meeting, Linner will send out invitations. Cochran informed Linner of the preliminary agenda he thinks would benefit the discussion:

Preliminary Agenda List:

- CCAA
- CCA
- Conservation Easements
- Post Listing - Habitat Conservation Plan
- Habitat Prioritization Tool

Linner gave clarification on the upcoming meeting. Linner commented that it depends on who is attending the meeting from the Department of the Interior. USFWS wants to be sure that everything that can be done for the Gunnison Sage-grouse is being done and to amend all plans as necessary to accomplish this. The USFWS wants to find out what can be done, and what is being done to affect the listing of the species. Linner will compile all of the Committee's comments into a preliminary agenda, and will work with Cochran to set up this meeting with the Regional Director.

CCA: Samantha Staley was present for the discussion. Staley and St. George gave a quick overview on the CCA. The Committee reviewed the Fatal Flaws addressed at the last meeting:

Fatal Flaws:	Comments	Further Work
Define Agency authorities to enter into a CCA	Addressed in the Authorities section of the CCA	Participating agency review of individual authority section; Participating agency through review to ensure conformance with existing authorities/plans and policies
Reference to disturbance caps needs more definition as to: who, when, how, why, etc.	Made minor additions to clarify that triggers include new agency policy, and must meet full agreement by the implementing agencies to this CCA	
Triggers for adaptive management	Should be address by Adaptive Management section in the CCA	
Offsite mitigation	Section now clearly identifies conformance with BLM policy and defines off-site mitigation.	Strategic Committee – agreement to take on the task of developing offsite mitigation system to be ready to implement approximately one year from date of signed CCA

Staley and St. George informed the Committee that BLM will not be holding a formal public comment period; instead they will request comments targeted toward the key stakeholders and specific constituencies for strategic comments and feedback.

MOVED by St. George and seconded by Peterson, that the Committee support the Draft CCA as ready for final review by each member's constituencies. (There will be a cover sheet with the draft CCA explaining this.) Committee members need to provide comments back to Staley by June 15th. Cochran will send the Final Draft to the Committee by May 17th. June 28th comments will be addressed in summary form and the CCA Final Document will be provided. Anticipate signing the Final CCA document by July 2012. Motion passed.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Date	*Time*	*Notes*
June 15, 2012	tbd	Meeting with Regional Director USFWS (tentative)
June 28, 2012	10-2	Regular Meeting
July 19, 2012	10-2	Regular Meeting

ADJOURN: **MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The May 16, 2012 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 2:14 pm.

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL:

_____

Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:

Bobbie Lucero, Administrative Assistant III