GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 18, 2012

The July 18, 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)
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
Russell Japuntich, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alternate
Brian St. George, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (arrived at 12:15pm)
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS) Alternate
Patty Gelatt, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Regular
Chris Bove, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regular
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County Alternate
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large Regular
Eric Ferchau, At Large, Development Community
David Wiens, At-large Recreation Community

Non-Voting:
Liz With, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 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 July 18, 2012 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:03 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: No modifications to the agenda were requested. The agenda was approved as circulated.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER: The new regular member for NRCS, Chris Bove, was introduced to the Committee. The Committee introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 28, 2012 MEETING MINUTES: **Moved** by Peterson to accept the June 28, 2012 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Laurie. Motion carried.

AUDIENCE:

- Nate Seward, CPW
- Al Pfister, KC Harvey Environmental, LLC
- Samantha Staley, BLM
- Doug Washburn, GCSA
- Allen Moores (attended at 11:45)
- Mike Pelletier, Gunnison County GIS Manager (attended at 12pm)

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS:

USFWS: Gelatt informed the Committee that there will be a meeting on August 22, 2012 in Montrose. This meeting will be similar to the meeting in Gunnison, Mike Thabault and Susan Linner will be attending. The Committee discussed that a few members should attend the meeting to contribute.

CPW; CLARIFICATION TO JUNE 14, 2012 MEETING MINIUTES: Cochran asked the Committee to review an email provided in the packet materials from Nathan Seward regarding the June 14, 2012 meeting minutes. The Committee discussed Seward's clarification to what he said at the June 14th meeting. **Moved** by Peterson, seconded by Laurie to insert the clarification to the June 14, 2012 minutes in today's meeting minutes. Motion passed. Jim reminded the Committee that there is a meeting minutes policy. Mr. Seward's clarification to the June 14, 2012 meeting minutes is as follows:

> *Nathan Seward with CPW questioned the USFWS comments about the Gunnison Basin population not being stable and that we need to secure the Gunnison Basin population before investing resources in other outlying populations. He informed the USFWS that the RCP population goal for the Gunnison Basin is 3,000 birds. He stated that since 1997 the Gunnison Basin population has averaged 3,600 birds, above the RCP population goal, even while experiencing times of severe drought and harsh winter conditions. According to the population viability analysis (PVA) performed for the RCP, a population of 3,000 birds in the Gunnison Basin has <1% chance of extinction in the next 50 years. Seward feels that the Gunnison Basin population is stable and has fluctuated as predicted in the RCP PVA.*

HANG GLIDING UPDATE: Wiens informed the Committee he was contacted by Matt Brown regarding hang gliding access. Wiens informed the Committee that in the future they anticipate bringing a proposal to the Committee. BLM will consider advice from the Committee.

CPW; GUNNISON DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN: Cochran informed the Committee that the press release regarding the Gunnison Deer Management Plan is provided in the packet materials. There are upcoming public meetings, one is in Gunnison on July 26th and the other is in Lake City on August 6th.

CPW; CCAA: Seward informed the Committee that once a Certificate of Inclusion is completed, within 1 yr of it being signed, CPW needs to remeasure the vegetation monitoring work on that property to stay in compliance with the terms of the CCAA between CPW and the USFWS. Monitoring consists of vegetation transects and range health assessments. Seward informed the Committee there are several draft CIs currently being reviewed by the USFWS and some landowners with baseline reports/data paid by CPW still waiting to begin the CI process. Seward mentioned that CPW is still interested in working with landowners that may want to participate in the CCAA by developing a Certificate of Inclusion for their property. The Committee had a discussion regarding the pros and cons of having a Certificate of Inclusion.

REPORT - NRCS CONSERVATION EASEMENT MEETING: Cochran informed the Committee about a meeting convened by NRCS regarding their conservation easement program in Colorado. The meeting allowed Cochran to discuss the Targeted Conservation Project Proposal that the Committee and Gunnison Conservation District submitted to NRCS in April 2012. Cochran informed the Committee that at the meeting they discussed suggestions on how to prioritize conservation easement money in Colorado. He informed the Committee that, in his opinion, NRCS Sage-grouse Initiative monies are not being allocated reasonably to Colorado. He explained the monies are being distributed to the "Greater Sage-Grouse", with the majority of the money going to Wyoming. There may be another meeting in Denver in the coming months.

RANGEWIDE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE: Cochran informed the Committee that CPW is possibly going to defer action regarding the Steering Committee letter until after the proposed rule in September. The Committee discussed that they would appreciate a formal response regarding pertinent issues, not just the listing. The Committee discussed that it would be best to address the issues now, because this information will help with preparation if the bird is listed or not. Gelatt commented to not wait for the recovery plan to come out. **Moved** by Peterson, seconded by Ferchau to send a follow-up letter to Colorado Parks and Wildlife asking for a formal response to the previous letter the Committee sent regarding the Rangewide Plan. Motion passed.

USFWS RANGEWIDE PROJECT SCREENING: Cochran explained to the Committee that this agenda item was a discussion that came up at the last meeting. Gelatt explained project screens are a tool for Federal agencies to use once a species is listed. They are set up to help streamline the Section 7 Consultation process. This will help determine if the project will have effect on the species. Gelatt explained the benefits of the screening process. There was discussion that BLM and the USFS have been using a screen for Lynx and they have been helpful. Gelatt informed the Committee that USFWS is waiting to see what happens with the CCA before they continue with developing screens for the Gunnison Sage-grouse. The Committee discussed that they will still have to write a Biological Assessment (BA) to ensure that they are consistent.

LETTER TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OUTSIDE THE UPPER GUNNISON BASIN: The Committee discussed writing a letter to the local governments outside of the Gunnison Basin expressing the Committee's concerns about the sage-grouse being listed and the outcome if the bird is listed. The Committee discussed contacting leads of working groups and expressing the benefits of having a county representative at the upcoming USFWS meeting. The Committee agreed to proceed with a letter to other counties within the range of the Gunnison Sage-grouse

mentioning the benefits of regulations for the sage-grouse and include in the letter that the Committee would like to be on a future agenda.

PARKS and WILDLIFE COMMISSION MEETING – AUGUST: Cochran informed the Committee that this will be a 2 day meeting, and will be held in Gunnison. He informed the Committee that there have been appointments to the new Commission, and it would be beneficial to attend this meeting because if the bird is listed, the Committee may have to address the Commission in the future. Wiens informed the Committee that he has been asked to give a bike tour to some of the commission members, and he invited the Committee members to attend.

PREDATOR CONTROL MEETING PLANNING: Caloger presented to the Committee a bibliography that he brought to the meeting. The Committee discussed the objective of the meeting is to research if predation is a significant factor in the survival of the sage-grouse. The Committee discussed that this meeting needs to be held to discuss if we need to proceed or not on predation control. **Moved** by Ferchau, seconded by Peterson to set up a subcommittee to address predator control in the Gunnison Basin. Motion carried. Chairperson Stahlnecker appointed Caloger (chair), Ferchau, Vasquez, Bove, Spann, Allen Moores, and Pat Magee to the Predator Control Issue Subcommittee.

CONSERVATION BANKING: Al Pfister gave a presentation on conservation banking. The Committee discussed conservation banking. Pfister recommended that if a landowner would like to pursue conservation banking it would be beneficial to have a peer review performed on the banking instrument to see if it is applicable.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Date	*Time*	*Notes*
August 23, 2012	10-2	Regular Meeting
September 19, 2012	10-2	Regular Meeting

ADJOURN: **MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The July 18, 2012 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 2:57 pm.

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL:

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Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson

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Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:

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Bobbie Lucero, Administrative Assistant III