Dear Editor,

The Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee would like to offer its support for the renewal of the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Fund. We believe that the Land Preservation Fund plays an important role in achieving the Strategic Committee's Organizational Guidelines (2005), whose primary goal is, "to implement steps which will aid in the preservation of the Gunnison sage-grouse."

The Land Preservation Fund has provided funding for the conservation of over 16,000 acres of Gunnison County ranchland and open space, a significant portion of which convey the additional benefit of conserving Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. We believe that the continued existence of this Fund will enhance our efforts to maintain sustainable populations of the County's signature bird for the long-term.

It is vital that the Land Preservation Fund continue to supply local match funds in order to secure project funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, for example. This source of local support is indispensable in the competitive arena, both statewide and nationally.

We ask the voters in Gunnison County to support the renewal of the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Fund by voting *Yes* on ballot measure 1A.

Sincerely,

Ken Stahlnecker
Chair, Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee

As Adopted by BOCC 9/6/05
And amended by BOCC on 4/18/06
And amended by BOCC on 12/4/07
And amended by BOCC on 2/17/09
And amended by BOCC on 6/14/11

GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
GUNNISON COUNTY, COLORADO
ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

Section 1: Organization

This organization is the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee for the County of Gunnison, Colorado. This Committee is created by the Board of County Commissioners to work with the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator to implement programs and steps which will aid in the preservation of the Gunnison Sage-grouse.

This organization is being referred to herein as "the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee".

The Gunnison Board of County Commissioners is referred to herein as "the Board".

Actions of the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee shall be governed by the Action Plan and Goals adopted by the Board and attached to these Organizational Procedures and Guidelines as Exhibit A.

Section II: Duration

The creation of the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee will be reviewed annually by the Board and will be reappointed until such time it is determined that the need no longer exists.

Section III: Purpose

The purpose of the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee is to work with the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator in implementing the following action steps.

1) To work with the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator in an advisory capacity in developing a Strategic Plan for the recovery of the Gunnison Sage-grouse.
2) To implement programs and strategies which will aid in the preservation of the Gunnison Sage-grouse. This will involve coordination with the Sage-grouse Mitigation Committee, the Sage-grouse Working Group, the Bureau of Land Management, U. S. Forest Service, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Range Wide Conservation Committee and private land owners.

3) To assist in the review of the Gunnison County Land Use Resolution to advise as to what revisions need to be made to further protect Sage-grouse Habitat.
4) To work with the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator in assisting Gunnison County in negotiating multiple Certificate of Inclusions with the DOW's CCAA for all appropriate County property.
5) To assist the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator in negotiating uniformity of requirements that are consistent and predictable among the various regulatory agencies.
6) To assist the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator to ensure there is a coordinated review process of permits and projects which will occur on federal property.
7) To assist the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator in implementing a communications and education program which will provide accurate and current information regarding the potential listing of the Gunnison Sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act.

Section IV: Membership and Responsibilities

1) The Sage-grouse Strategic Committee shall be comprised of thirteen regular members. Twelve members shall be appointed by the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners and one member shall be appointed by the Saguache County Board of County Commissioners. Applicants to the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee will be drawn from: three at large of which one shall represent the public at-large, one shall represent the development community and one shall represent the recreation community; one appointed by the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners to represent Gunnison County; one appointed by the Saguache County Board of County Commissioners to represent Saguache County; one nominated by High Country Citizens' Alliance; one nominated by the Bureau of Land Management; one nominated by the Gunnison County Stockgrowers; one nominated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife service; one nominated by the Division of Wildlife; one nominated by Natural Resources Conservation Service; one nominated by the Forest Service; and one nominated by the National Park Service. The Wildlife Conservation Coordinator shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of the committee. The Gunnison County Board of Commissioners shall appoint one alternate for each at-large position. The other nominating entities shall recommend one member and one alternate for a two-year term. The alternates may only vote on issues before the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee if the member is absent.
2) Each nominating entity shall empower their nominee to represent their organization or agency and to make decisions and recommendations on behalf of their agency.
3) Members appointed must have the authority to the maximum extent feasible to vote on issues before the Sage-grouse Strategic Committee without having to seek counsel from the appointing entity.
4) The Sage-grouse Strategic Committee will work with the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator to develop a Strategic Plan which will aid in the habitat conservation of the Gunnison Sage-grouse with a goal of establishing a sustainable population.

EXHIBIT A

Gunnison County
Gunnison Sage-grouse
ACTION PLAN AND GOALS

It is the policy of Gunnison County that the following goals and action steps be adopted and implemented in regards to the potential listing of the Gunnison Sage-grouse as an endangered species.

The first goal of Gunnison County is to implement steps which will aid in the preservation of the Gunnison Sage-grouse. In order to accomplish this goal the following actions steps will be implemented:

1) The Board recognizes and understands that the original intent of the Sage-grouse Mitigation Fund was to mitigate the effect of the Landfill on the Sage-grouse. However, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has taken the position that only projects implemented on non federal land can be counted towards this mitigation. The Board has taken the position that the preservation and improvement of habitat irrespective of location is more important than specific mitigation of the effects of the landfill. Therefore the Board directs the Sage-grouse Mitigation Committee to implement the work plan in the Organizational Procedures and Guidelines in terms of looking at funding of quality projects irrespective of location.

2) The Board has decided a complete review of the LUR needs to be conducted to determine what revisions need to be made to further protect Sage-grouse Habitat. Further the Board directs staff to move forward with the process to develop a special area as part of the LUR, in particular researching the potential for the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan. This approach may result in the establishment of special rules for sub areas of the County where Sage-grouse habitat exist. The Board has determined that the "Gunnison Sage-Grouse Conservation Priority Regions in the Gunnison Basin" which was developed by the Gunnison Basin Working Group Research Sub-Committee, would be a reasonable starting place.

3) Negotiate multiple Certificates of Inclusions with the DOW's CCAA for all appropriate County property.

The second goal of Gunnison County is to minimize disruption to current activities. In order to accomplish this goal the following action steps will be implemented:

1) Work with the regulatory agencies to develop uniformity of requirements that are consistent and predictable.

2) Convene a meeting of the Sage-grouse Working Group to discuss formalizing the membership, adding additional members for broader representation, developing procedures and discussing flexibility in the local plan.

3) Work with the BLM, Forest Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to insure a coordinated review process for review of permits and projects.

4) Work with the BLM, Forest Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to insure that all grazing permits which will expire in the next 18 to 24 months are reviewed and renewed in a timely manner.

5) Schedule a meeting with the US Fish and Wildlife service to discuss the renewal of permits and obtain clear information on the implication of the proposed listing as well as the process for review. In particular a clear understanding of the regulations is desired.

The third goal of Gunnison County is to further collaboration and communication and in particular to develop mechanisms to effectively deal with rumors and misinformation. In that

regard the Board adopts the following action steps:

1) Work with the BLM's public relations department to develop press releases which contain factual information.

2) Develop a sub page on the County's WEB site to respond to the most frequently asked questions with links to the DOW, BLM, Forest Service, NRC and HCCA.

The fourth goal of Gunnison County is to implement an effective strategy and programs which will which will preclude the need to list the Gunnison Sage-grouse or at a minimum demonstrate the willingness of the Gunnison Community to preserve and protect habitat which will lessen the impact if listing does occur.

In order to accomplish the above goals and strategies the Board of County Commissioners will create the position of Sage-grouse Coordinator which will have the primary responsibility to implement the identified programs.