Gunnison Sage-grouse Lek Access Process
Spring 2013

The following process is available for non-commercial and commercial users wishing to access Gunnison Sage-grouse leks in the Gunnison Basin for the purpose of photography, audio recording, or other activities. This process is intended to assist with education and research opportunities that contribute to Gunnsion Sage-grouse conservation efforts. No more than two applications will be selected in any one year, with the realization that any or all lek access has the potential to be curtailed based on Sage-grouse conservation needs or due to outside influences, such as weather, landowner permission, agency discretion, lack of bird attendance, etc.

The Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee – Technical Subcommittee will review applications and provide recommended applications to the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee (Committee) for final approval and coordination with appropriate agencies and landowners to facilitate these types of opportunities. The application must be submitted by February 1, 2013, for consideration in the 2013 lek season. Applicants must provide two professional references, identify the proposed project, and the relevance of the project to Gunnison Sage-grouse conservation. Successful applicants are required to submit a one page summary of their activities within 30 days of the project visit and must contribute products to the committee, including copies of all photographs, video, or audio recordings of the grouse. These will be made available to the local conservation community and to the general public for projects promoting grouse conservation.

An existing database of Gunnison Sage-grouse photographs and other media is available for public use (as long as the original artists are credited). Any proposed project that could be accomplished by using existing media will not be considered.

Lek access will be recommended by the Committee after reviewing submitted applications in late February. Human activity on leks during the mating season may potentially cause disturbance to the grouse and therefore only projects that will contribute significantly to the conservation of Gunnison Sage-grouse by users that are willing to follow lek viewing protocols will be recommended for access. Successful applicants will be accompanied in their blind by a viewing guide to help monitor the proposed activity and its possible impact to the grouse. It is illegal to harass wildlife and violators may be cited by the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife. The program involves the cooperation of willing landowners and specific requirements of the users may change depending on the agreement made with a landowner. Landowners cooperate with the committee to establish specific rules and to communicate with users. The viewing guides are the onsite decision maker and communicator with the landowner during the access opportunity. No dogs are allowed on the lek or in the user's vehicle.

User access will be limited to only one or two days, within a two to three day window at the discretion of the viewing guide, and specific agreements in place with landowners, to minimize disturbances to the birds. Further, users are required to follow specific rules developed by the committee and the landowners. Users must arrive the afternoon before the project initiation date and meet with the viewing guide to determine access routes and other specifications relevant to a site including distance the blind will be placed away from the lek center. Users are required to arrive at the lek at least 2 hours before sunrise and they must not leave the lek until all grouse have departed for the day. Users must supply their own blinds. There will only be one person in the blind with the viewing guide. Successful applicants will be expected to walk at least one-half mile to the blind location from their vehicle. They

Gunnison Sage-grouse Lek Access Application
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Application deadline: **February 1, 2013**

Name:
Street Address:
City: State: Zip code:
Phone: Cellphone:
E-mail address:

Request Type (please circle): Photography, Video, Audio recording, Other (specify:)

Applicant type (please circle): commercial user non-commercial user

Project Name:

Project Goals:

Significance of project to Gunnison Sage-grouse conservation:

Justify why you need original photographs, audio recordings or other products? (Note that we have many of these resources available for public use, contact CDOW at 970-641-7060):

Applicant Credentials:

Previous experience (please include as attachments examples of work):

Explain your approach for reducing impacts on Gunnison Sage-grouse when you are on or near the lek:

Note that a protocol was developed for lek activities including the number of days you will be allowed to access the lek. Indicate dates you are available:

Indicate your willingness to share the products you secure with the Gunnison community:

Explain any special needs that you might require:

STATE OF COLORADO

Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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For Wildlife-
For People

Gunnison Sage-grouse Lek Access/Viewing Protocol

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and Sisk-a-dee, a local Gunnison sage-grouse advocacy group, volunteered to monitor applicants requesting access to a Gunnison sage-grouse lek (strutting grounds) for conservation purposes through the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee lek access process. Applicants interested in gaining access to a lek for educational or commercial purposes may contact Jim Cochran, Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator, at (970) 641-7604 or through the County website: http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/sage_grouse.html.

The CDOW and Sisk-a-dee will supervise successful applicants and work with private landowners willing to grant access to assure grouse are not impacted during courtship displays. All individuals conducting activities near a Gunnison sage-grouse lek need to comply with the Lek Access/Viewing Protocol to reduce potential disturbance.

Please keep in mind that Gunnison sage-grouse are sensitive to human disturbances. Continued human disturbance could result in grouse abandoning the lek or low attendance. To ensure the future of grouse and to avoid adverse impacts, applicants should adhere to the following recommendations:

Viewing Etiquette:

- Lek access opportunities are available from 1 April to 15 May
- A user will have two consecutive days of lek access and no additional opportunities in one season
- A user will be able to reschedule for weather if the guide is available
- A minimum of five rest days between lek access visits on one lek is required
- Arrive at lek at least two hours before sunrise with guide; guide will escort user to the lek and remain in blind with user
- No pets, especially dogs, are allowed near the lek or in vehicles
- Remain as quiet as possible on approach to lek and when on the lek; no radios, cell phones, horn honking, car door slamming or other noises should occur
- Head lamps may be used to access lek and blind, once in blind equipment should be set up and lights turned off
- Access is by foot only; no mechanized vehicles should approach closer than 0.6 mile to the lek
- Blind should be placed an adequate distance away from birds to avoid adversely impacting breeding behavior; use of high-powered binoculars, spotting scopes, and zoom lenses is recommended

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, James B. Martin, Executive Director
WILDLIFE COMMISSION, Tim Glenn, Chair • Robert Streeter, Vice Chair • Mark Smith, Secretary
Members, David R. Brougham • Dennis Buechler • Dorothea Farris • Allan Jones • John Singletary • Dean Wingfield
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