

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
February 15, 2012**

The February 15, 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:**

Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, National Park Service (NPS)  
John Scott, Vice-Chairperson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Elinor Laurie, Saguache County Alternate  
Sue Navy, High Country Citizens' Alliance (HCCA)  
Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)  
Phil Chamberland, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)  
Hap Channell, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Alternate  
Brian St. George, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
J Wenum, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (DOPW)  
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS) Alternate  
Dan Reinkensmeyer, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Alternate (via conference call)  
Peter Caloger, Public At-large (via conference call)  
Lee Spann, Public At-large Alternate  
Eric Ferchau, At-large, Development Community  
David Wiens, At-large, Recreation Community

**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 February 15, 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:** No modifications to the agenda were requested. The agenda was approved as circulated.

**APPROVAL of January 18, 2012 MEETING MINUTES:** Moved by Scott to accept the January 18, 2012 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Navy. Ferchau abstained because he was not present for the meeting. Motion carried.

**APPOINTMENTS:** The following appointments were made by the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners for the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee:

- John Scott, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Liz With, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Alternate
- John Murphy, United States Forest Service (USFS)
- Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service (USFS), Alternate
- Ken Stahlnecker, National Park Service (NPS)
- Connie Rudd, National Park Service, Alternate
- J Wenum, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
- Kathy Griffin, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alternate
- Sue Navy, High Country Citizens' Alliance (HCCA)
- Matt Reed, High Country Citizens Alliance,(HCCA), Alternate
- Greg Peterson, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)
- Allen Roper, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA), Alternate
- Phil Chamberland, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
- Hap Channell, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), Alternate
- Brian St. George, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Russell Japuntich, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alternate
- Dan Reinkensmeyer, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Alternate
- Peter Caloger, Public At-large
- Lee Spann, Public At-large, Alternate
- Eric Ferchau, At-large, Development Community
- David Wiens, At-large Recreation Community
- Vacant: At-large Development Community, Alternate

The following appointments were made by the Saguache County Board of County Commissioners for the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee:

- Linda Joseph, Saguache County Board of County Commissioners (Saguache BOCC)
- Elinor Laurie, Saguache County, Alternate

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Ken Stahlnecker, Chairperson, by acclamation  
J Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, by acclamation  
Greg Peterson, Secretary, by acclamation

**Subcommittees:** The following appointments were made to subcommittees:

- **Standing Subcommittees**
  - **Executive Subcommittee:**
    - Ken Stahlnecker, NPS, Chair
    - J Wenum, CPW
    - Greg Peterson, GCSA
  - **Technical Subcommittee:**

- Brian St. George, Chair
  - Liz With, NRCS
  - Russ Japuntich, BLM
  - Matt Vasquez, USFS
  - Pat Magee, Western State College/Sisk-a-dee
  - Nathan Seward, DOW
  - Theresa Childers, NPS
  - Tara de Valois, BLM
  - Gay Austin, BLM
  - Brandon Diamond, DOW
  - Dan Reinkensmeyer, USFWS
  - Vicki Spencer, GCEA
- **Information and Education (I&E) Subcommittee:**
    - Sue Navy, HCCA, Chair
    - Pat Magee, Western State College/Sisk-a-dee
    - Sonja Eslit, USFS
    - Kristi Murphy, BLM
    - Chris Parmeter, DOW
    - Kerry Spetter, BLM
    - Dave Wiens, Recreation Community At-large
    - Erich Ferchau, Development Community At-large/City of Gunnison
    - Lauren Buchholz, CPW
    - Ellen Petrick, NPS
- **Project Based (ad-hoc) Subcommittees:**
    - **Grazing Management Research Subcommittee:**
      - Greg Peterson, GCSA, Chair
      - Brian St. George, BLM
      - J Wenum, CPW
      - Ken Stahlnecker, NPS
      - Dan Reinkensmeyer, USFWS
      - Elinor Laurie, Saguache County
      - Matt Vasquez, USFS
      - Lee Spann, Public At-large
    - **Action Plan Item 8 Subcommittee:**
      - Dan Reinkensmeyer, USFWS, Chair
      - Ken Stahlnecker, NPS
      - Phil Chamberland, Gunnison County BoCC
      - Brian St. George, BLM
      - John Scott, NRCS
      - Joanne Williams, Gunnison County Community Development Department
      - Ramon Reed, Gunnison County Planning Commission

- Dave Wiens, Recreation Community At-large
- **Action Plan Subcommittee:**
  - Erich Ferchau, Development Community At-large
  - Russ Japuntich, BLM
  - Phil Chamberland, Gunnison County BOCC
  - Peter Caloger, Public At-large
  - Dave Wiens, Recreation Community At-large

**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS and REPORTS:**

**CPW:** Wenum informed the Committee that he has not heard of any progress regarding the CPW response to the predator control letter. Wenum informed the Committee of an upcoming Noise Monitoring project during the lek season this spring. This project is to gather baseline data for noise levels for leks and determine if there is a difference and what the response may be to this difference. They are trying to determine what the ambient noise levels are. In the beginning of the project they will assess more natural sounds and potentially in the future progress to man-made noises.

**USFWS:** Reinkensmeyer informed the Committee that the predator control letter draft is still under review. The Committee will be receiving a response within a few weeks. The Proposed Rule will be delayed, because the USFWS Director will be traveling to Denver in March to meet with State officials to discuss the listing.

**RECREATION:** Weins handed out a draft informational document to Committee members. Weins would like to get some good concise information out to the public on where they can go to avoid leks and avoid or minimize impacts to sage-grouse in the spring. Weins would like to develop something that is small enough to fit in your pocket that contains concise and accurate information. Cochran informed the Committee that the Festival Committee is going to develop a nice insert for the paper, but for this purpose, Weins wants something that the public can fold up and put it in their pockets.

**I & E FUNDS:** Navy informed the Committee that \$7,055 will be transferred into a County account today. The Committee discussed that they need to decide how to authorize expenditures. Cochran commented that these are now County funds and expenditures have to be approved by the BOCC. The Committee can either do a warrants and transfers process or an application process. After discussion the Committee decided to authorize expenditures accordingly:

- If the expense is less than \$500: The expenditure will go through the warrants and transfer process for the BOCC to approve (Voucher goes to Jim and Sue for approval)
- If the expense is more than \$500: The proposed expenditure will be reviewed by the Executive Committee for approval. Will need a majority of the Executive Committee to approve. Then the request goes through the warrants and transfer process. If not approved by the Executive Committee, the proposed expenditure goes to the full Committee for review and approval/denial.

**Moved** by Peterson and seconded by Elinor to approve the vouchering process described above. Motion passed.

**GRAZING RESEARCH MANAGEMENT:** Peterson informed the Committee that if there is a need for further baseline habitat assessment for grazing the grazing research project a request must be transmitted to the legislature soon. He sent an email to the research team asking for their opinion of what they recommended. He would like to send an invitation to the research team asking if they want to move forward. He doesn't want to lose all the past research/effort. The Committee agreed to reauthorize the Grazing Research Subcommittee. Stahlnecker agreed that it would be beneficial to have the research team meet with the Committee. Peterson will communicate with the research team that the Committee would like to meet with them in the near future.

**LEK ACCESS:** Cochran informed the Committee that they did not receive any applications. Private land owners can allow access as long as they are not harassing wildlife.

**ACTION PLAN:** Ferchau commented that his last recommendation to the Committee was to assign all Action Plan items to members to achieve. The Committee discussed that they need to prioritize what is in the Action Plan first. The Committee agreed to reauthorize the Action Plan Item #8 subcommittee. The Committee reviewed the Wildlife Conservation Coordinator Work Plan provided in the packet. The Committee agreed that this prioritization list is correct. There was discussion that the Action Plan is not laid out by priority.

**CANDIDATE CONSERVATION AGREEMENT:** Samantha Staley was present for this discussion. Staley said that they are on track with good progress being made. A 1<sup>st</sup> Draft is nearing completion. Staley noted that at the last meeting the Committee recommended using the following habitat priority tiers:

1. >18 Non-motorized recreation and grazing
2. >15 Motorized recreation and development

Staley informed the Committee that the recommended tiers did not work well. Instead of 3 tiers, BLM has decided to proceed with only two tiers (<15; >15). Staley informed the Committee that the Grazing team will meet again before the review. St. George noted that he would like to send a "white paper" on the CCA to the USFWS/State of Colorado meeting. The Committee agreed that this would be a good idea.

#### **HABITAT PRIORITIZATION TOOL:**

Neal Starkebaum, Joanne Williams, Allen Moores, and Mike Pelletier were present for discussion. Pelletier and Cochran gave the presentation on the Prioritization Tool. The Committee reviewed the map Cochran handed out at the meeting. The Committee considered how to use this tool without revealing lek locations. Cochran discussed the prioritization tool and spreadsheet he provided. Peterson commented he wants to find a way to ensure that good habitat has incentives to private land owners to keep it good habitat. Peterson also commented that how this tool is used needs to be practical. There was a discussion on why private landowners may not want to enter into the CCAA.

The committee discussed sending a letter or hosting a meeting to discuss what suitable incentives may be for landowners. Peterson commented he would like to see this tool remain operable, viable, and non-regulated.

This topic will be discussed further at the next meeting with the goal of providing recommendations to the Gunnison County BoCC on how the Prioritization Tool should be used by Gunnison County.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Notes</i>
March 15, 2012	10-2	Regular Meeting
April 14, 2012		Sage-grouse Festival (tentative)
April 19, 2012	10-2	Regular Meeting

**ADJOURN:** **MOVED** by Stahlnecker to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The February 15, 2012 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 2:17 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