

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 19, 2025**

The February 19, 2025 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin #D, Gunnison, CO, 81230. The meeting was also available on Zoom.

Committee Members Present:

Voting Members:

Nathan Seward, Chairperson, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Liz Smith, Vice-Chairperson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates (HCCA)
Paul Mowery, Gunnison County Stockgrowers
Matthew Vasquez, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Pat Magee, Research and Education At-Large (Western Colorado University, WCU)
Jessica Frey, National Park Service (NPS)
Andy Stokes, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Tim Kugler, Recreation At-Large (Gunnison Trails)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Angela Trnka, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Sarah Elzay, Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator

Non-Voting Members

Brandon Diamond, CPW
Miranda Middleton, CPW
Kathy Griffin, CPW

Others in the Audience:

John Scott, Private Consultant
Nathan Darnall, USFWS
Jon Hare, High Country Conservation Advocates
Jared Dunn, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Steffanie Chain, Public at Large Alternate
Brandon Miller, USFWS
Cole Brittain, USFWS
Matt Holleran, BLM
Sandy Guerrieri, Private Landowner
Amanda Aulenbach, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD)
Ari Yamaguchi, UGRWCD

Staff Members Present:

Misty Castillo, Gunnison County Community and Economic Development Department
Ben Prior, Gunnison Conservation District
Others present as listed in text.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Seward called the February 19, 2025, meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:20 AM.

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

AGENDA APPROVAL: Moved: by Navy and seconded by Caloger to approve the February 19, 2025, agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF Moved: by Navy and seconded by Caloger to approve December 18, 2024 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Smith and seconded by Peter to approve the November meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson nomination:

Navy nominates Cathy Griffin, seconded by Smith. Nomination carried unanimously. Cathy Griffin appointed as new chairperson.

Vice chair nomination:

Navy nominates Liz Smith, seconded by Magee. Nomination carried unanimously.

Secretary nomination:

Smith nominates Liz With, seconded by Magee, Nomination carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS / REPORTS

Trnka, Conservation Benefit Agreements (CBAs) will be discussed at the Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS) meeting later in the afternoon. A federal employee might not be the best choice for the Raven Subcommittee chair due to optics. Trnka is open to being a subcommittee member, just not the chair. Middleton is interested in being chair, but as she is new, the group will revisit the chairperson topic in a month or two. Seward, Stokes, and Middleton will discuss this subcommittee further to bring Middleton up to speed.

Magee, Sarah Elzay is the new cheatgrass coordinator. She is housed at Western Colorado University. Her position is funded through various sources including Gunnison County. She will lead the Cheatgrass Subcommittee.

Seward, shares that Alicia Rummel, a former National Park Service employee, will be hired as CPW's Lek Count Coordinator for the Gunnison Basin and Crawford areas, with paperwork expected to be completed by mid-March.

Griffin, please put in good word to landowners regarding access for counting leks on private property. Some landowners are not allowing CPW to count leks due to the wolf reintroduction. Very important to be able to continue counts on all leks.

Darnall, funds frozen for some USFWS grants. Miller, Pinecrest and Pinon Mesa projects are on hold.

LEK PHOTO APPLICATION REVIEW

Seward, two lek photography applications submitted this year. Matt Williams applied and is currently writing a book on threatened/endangered bird species in the west. He has written several books on threatened/endangered bird species. The other application is from Steven Smith, who is focusing on Gunnison sage grouse video footage.

Seward, has reached out to private land owner for access for lek photography. That landowner has given the green light for lek access for photographers. Two photographers per year, four photo days total. Lek

photo application includes photo and video. Magee and Middleton will be able to help guide this year's photographers.

A subset of videos and photos are available for public after photos/videos are taken. Diamond, if a video containing footage for Gunnison sage grouse leks is published there should be a public viewing in Gunnison to help promote the bird. Magee, photo/video lek application should be revised for next year.

Peter, need to make sure applicants know that video should be made available for a Gunnison public viewing

Approval of both lek photography applications: Moved by Navy, seconded by Magee. Approved unanimously by committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sandy Guerrieri is one of the landowners with a sizable lek on her property. She counts almost every day during lek season. She records every count, and her data is available for use. Today, 23 grouse were seen on the lek. She is always open to take people out to count the lek with her. Griffin, all data collected from Sandy is put into CPW data base. This year, the first grouse seen was on the 2nd week of January. Snowpack on lek is around 6 inches.

Caloger, asked how the population has varied on Sandy's private land lek. Sandy, population does vary and follows trend seen in greater sage grouse populations. Population seems to be influenced mostly by winters (snowpack amount, winter length, etc). Scott, corn/grain was used extensively on this ranch before Sandy and her husband, Burt, became owners. The ravens were attracted to corn/grain and limited grouse activity. Sandy and Burt do not use grain/corn so ravens aren't there as often and more grouse have been observed.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Future meetings will occur in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room and by Zoom online meetings, unless changed for a specific reason.

04-16-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
05-21-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
06-18-25	10-12	Canceled	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
07-17-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
08-20-25	10-12	Canceled	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
09-17-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
10-15-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: The February 19, 2024, meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Minutes Prepared By: Ben Prior, Gunnison Conservation District