



**GUNNISON
COUNTY**

**Gunnison County, CO
Community Development Office**

221 N. Wisconsin St. Ste. D, Gunnison, CO 81230 Phone:
(970) 641-0360

Website: www.gunnisoncounty.org

Email: rricord@gunnisoncounty.org

To: Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee Members

From: Misty Castillo

Date: May 7, 2025

**Included in your packet for the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse
Strategic Committee Meeting:**

May 21st Agenda

April 16th Draft Minutes

GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

PLACE: Planning Commission Meeting Room, Blackstock Government Center OR via Zoom meeting, Meeting ID: 859 9849 7601 (see Teleconference Information below)

1. 10:00am
 - Call Regular Meeting to Order; Determination of Quorum; Verify Public Notice of Meeting
 - Approval of April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes
 - Agenda Approval for May 21, 2025 agenda
2. 10:15am
 - Committee Member Reports/Updates
2. 10:30am
 - HPT Update Presentation and Discussion
4. 12:00pm
 - Public Comments
5. 12:05
 - Future Meeting
6. 12:10
 - Adjourn

NOTE: This agenda is subject to change, including the addition of items up to 24 hours in advance or the deletion of items at any time. All times are approximate. Regular Meetings, Public Hearings, and Special Meetings are recorded and **ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY ITEM**. Work Sessions are not recorded and formal action cannot be taken. Two or more Gunnison County Commissioners may attend this meeting. For further information, contact the County Administration at 641-0248. If special accommodations are necessary per ADA, contact 641-0248 or TTY 641-3061 prior to the meeting.

Topic: Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee

Time: 10:00 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Every month on the Third Wed, until Dec 17, 2025, 10 occurrence(s)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly: [https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/meeting/tZApde2upz8jGNMaYbBDHpBuBMmm8Gs3YgJQ/ics?icsToken=DGZ0lioIl85m5wUu8wAALAAAALtnJX1fp7nWI-bgIR7Yrs40cen9OR2cgdKCG3FNcQmWn-qURisB8-AQfzdCvM78l4oNdG1lp9czYytuUDAwMDAwMQ&meetingMasterEventId=iRakBkJDTGGH4DonS6cJBA](https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/join/84424694927?pwd=34Dj2PPHgy1aMAghpjDz6SZFE68xZj.1)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/j/84424694927?pwd=34Dj2PPHgy1aMAghpjDz6SZFE68xZj.1>

Meeting ID: 844 2469 4927

Passcode: 693807

One tap mobile

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+12532158782,,84424694927#,,,,*693807# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

● +1 719 359 4580 US

● +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)
- +1 669 444 9171 US
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 205 0468 US
- +1 689 278 1000 US
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 305 224 1968 US
- +1 309 205 3325 US
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 360 209 5623 US
- +1 386 347 5053 US
- +1 507 473 4847 US
- +1 564 217 2000 US
- +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
- +1 646 931 3860 US

Meeting ID: 844 2469 4927

Passcode: 693807

Find your local number: <https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/j/kczu4lQpy>

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 16 2025**

The April 16, 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:

Liz Smith, Vice-Chairperson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Sue Navy, High County Conservation Advocates (HCCA)
Matthew Vasquez, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Pat Magee, Research and Education At-Large (Western Colorado University, WCU)
Peter Caloger, Public At-Large
Sarah Elzay, Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator
Andy Stokes, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Jessica Frey, National Park Service (NPS)

Non-Voting Members

Jon Hare, HCCA
Nathan Darnall, USFWS

Others in the Audience:

Miranda Middleton, CPW
John Scott, Private Consultant
Amanda Aulenbach, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD)
Ari Yamaguchi, UGRWCD
Aleshia Rummel, NPS
Matt Holloran, BLM

Staff Members Present:

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

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Griffin called the April 16, 2025, meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:06 AM.

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

AGENDA APPROVAL: Moved: by Navy and seconded by Caloger to approve the April 16, 2025, agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Smith and seconded by Navy to approve the March 19, 2025, meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS / REPORTS

Smith sent the Gunnison Basin Sage Grouse Strategic Committee letter to congressman Jeff Herd. She is also continuing to have biweekly meetings with Sarah Elzay regarding her role.

Stokes, BLM seasonal road closures have passed the halfway mark. Working on better physical signage for these closures.

Caloger, has been in contact with a person from the development sector. He talked to them about the HPT update. This person may be interested in filling the development at-large seat on the committee.

Navy, still working on putting together several habitat projects for this year.

Elzay, new grant application submitted for the eastern part of Gunnison. Last Friday, a cheatgrass workshop was held. The cheatgrass pull day is on May 31st. Emma has three cheatmaps mapping events scheduled for May 17th (Hartman Rocks), June 7th (Almont Triangle), and a wet meadow event in July (TBD). Cheatgrass subcommittee was held on April 15th. During this meeting mapping layers for a new cheatgrass treatment prioritization map was discussed. Aerial spraying will be a primary focus for the next cheatgrass subcommittee meeting. Shared Google Drive is available for all cheatgrass subcommittee meeting materials. Few other grants in the work.

Vasquez, lek counts on USFS are going well. USFS still unable to hire seasonals. USFS Fire can hire some seasonals. Working on getting an internship program with Western started. There will be 10 to 12 interns from Colorado Mesa University. These interns will be working throughout the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests. GMUG is down 31 employees, which is 15% of total work force for permanent employees.

Stokes, BLM hiring two wildlife interns. Also hiring an AIMs crew and fire interns. Hiring is still frozen for BLM.

Frey, NPS can hire seasonals. Also counting sage grouse leks. Fire management plan being developed. Grazing management plan is also being worked on. It is in the internal review process. Water/wastewater treatment project is undergoing cultural resources survey.

Darnall, the last two Gunnison sage grouse working group meetings have been completed. No further updates on the Bill funding.

Middleton, lek count season has been going on for a couple of weeks. Count numbers appear to be higher than last year's count data. The approved photographer and videographer have both been taken to leks to get grouse footage. Both have agreed to share their photos/videos once finalized. Raven attractants at leks have been observed, counters should record any raven observations on count reports.

Ari, UGRWCD wet meadow sites project are planned for the field season. These are mostly old project sites. UGRWCD hired two techs, will be starting May 12. "Thinking Like Water" film screening this Friday.

Griffin, a new conservation easement was established along HWY 114. This easement is partially within Gunnison sage grouse critical habitat.

Rummel, discussed different layers for the HPT update including roads, soils, and lek statuses. Other possible changes include increasing the negative value for irrigated meadows to better reflect the habitat value of these areas and assigning a higher point value to historical leks. Rummel also discussed changing the 0.6-mile lek buffer to a 1.0-mile buffer. This change would impact about 50 parcels, in terms of parcels going from tier 2 to tier 1. Several of these effected parcels were on public land or already had established conservation easements. During the next strategic committee meeting there will be an in-depth presentation on the proposed update.

Scott, expressed concerns about potential legal ramifications and the need for stakeholder buy-in, emphasizing the importance of community considerations. Smith brought up the potential for unintended consequences from environmental groups if the new update is implemented. Smith will discuss these issues further with the Gunnison County attorney. The group discussed these topics further.

Mowery, asked about the renewal of the USFWS Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs). These CCAAs will be transitioning to a new form of agreement called Conservation Benefit Agreements (CBAs). Griffin, CPW and USFWS are slowly working out the details for the transition of the CCAAs to CBAs. This shift in CCAAs to CBAs for Gunnison sage grouse will be the first in the United

States. This means there will be a lot of discussion on what may need to change in the certificate of inclusions for the landowners enrolled in these agreements. CPW has some funding to help facilitate this transition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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.

06-18-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	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	Regular Meeting	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
11-19-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
12-17-25	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: The April 16, 2025, meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 12:06 PM.

Minutes Prepared By: Ben Prior, Gunnison Conservation District

DRAFT