

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
September 21, 2016**

The September 21, 2016 Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin #D, Gunnison, CO, 81230

**Committee Members Present:**

Voting Members:

Jonathan Houck, Chairperson, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)  
J. Wenum, Vice-Chairperson, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)  
Greg Peterson, Secretary, Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association (GCSA)  
Liz With, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Theresa Childers, National Park Service Wildlife Biologist (NPS)  
Matt Vasquez, United States Forest Service, (USFS)  
Elijah Waters, Bureau of Land Management, (BLM)  
Gina Glenne, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Alternate (arrived at 10:15 a.m.)  
Sue Navy, High Country Conservation Advocates (HCCA)

**Others in the Audience:**

Sam Newman, WSCU Master Program  
Jim Mendonca  
Kim Hartwig- NPS, Interim replacement for Stahlnecker  
John Messner  
Pat Magee  
Daniel Snyder

**Staff Members Present:**

Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant  
Brooke Vasquez, Gunnison Conservation District, Wildlife Biologist

Others present as listed in text.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Houck called the September 21, 2016 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:01 A.M.

**DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:** Houck confirmed that a quorum was present.

**PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMED:** Houck verified that proper legal public notice had occurred.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** Agenda approved as presented.

**APPROVAL of August 17, 2016 MEETING MINUTES: Moved:** by Waters and seconded by Childers to accept the August 17, 2016 meeting minutes as amended and request for clarifying language. Motion carried unanimously, with Peterson and Navy abstaining due to not being present in that meeting.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ REPORTS**

M. Vasquez gave update that their group completed 91 rock structures on flat top in August and early September. They had a really good volunteer week and did a lot of work. Spent a lot of time adding on to existing structures and building new structures. It has been a good year, with a lot of work getting done. Navy stated that the funding is very unsure for next year and they are concerned it may not be able to happen next year and thinks that as a committee it would be good to look into it and make sure it does

happen again. With stated that the NRCS has money and technical assistance devoted from Farm Bill programs. If they know of projects that are going to happen the NRCS needs at least a year lead to start the application but that they can look at receiving funding that way. Discussion followed regarding application process and deadlines.

With reported that she received a promotion in the NRCS State office. For the near future she will stay on this board.

Wenum reported that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife habitat protection program, that they do annually, uses outside funding sources and that process of evaluation for projects involves some properties in the Gunnison Basin that will be seeking funding for conservation easements. There is a larger effort in the Basin that has been approved to move on to the next stage of the process and he believes they stand a chance to move to the next stage. They are working on updating their elk management plan for Unit 66 and 67 and the issues and concerns in the area. Hoping to have the plan ready for Commission approval by January. Then they will need to update the Elk DAU plans for the Northern portion of the Basin, 54, 55 and 51, and are hoping to start in February or March. Mindy Rice left CPW and there is a researcher who is going to pick up where Mindy left off and will hopefully finish the data analysis and complete the project that she started.

Childers reported that the National Park Service is going to start doing a small project at the park this October and will be putting in some structures. Kim Hartwig will be done on October 13, 2016 and during the interim they will be advertising the position.

Glenn gave update that the Fish and Wildlife Service is continuing to move forward on the status assessment of the Gunnison Sage Grouse analysis. The species status assessment is meant to be the scientific underpinnings of the species and will use that document to set up a recovery program.

#### **LITIGATION UPDATE**

Houck reported that the teams continue to meet and they are making sure the record is complete. The timeline is unclear right now. Glenn reported that they are trying to get on a six to seven month schedule.

#### **COUNTY COALITION UPDATE**

Houck gave update that they are looking for funding and they are doing outreach to landowners about conservation opportunities on the West side. Right now they are trying to find out who would be interested in more private land updates. They will be getting back together towards the middle or end of October. The other piece is that all the other Counties, trying to find ways to help the smaller communities to cooperatively find someone to contract out and help them.

#### **UPDATE ON GUNNISON TRAILS SIGNAL PEAK PLAN**

Houck stated that they are attempting to put the Signal Peak subcommittee together before this meeting. Wiens is currently having ongoing conversations and wants to have a few more before the subcommittee actually meets again. They want to do as much leg work as they can before they bring a recommendation before the Strategic Committee and then those recommendations will be sent on to the BOCC. The Strategic Committee needs to determine what level of input they want to put on the project. Discussion followed on what they think would work best.

#### **WAUNITA LEK UPDATE**

Magee gave presentation with Daniel Snyder. The program is a partnership. Sisk-a-dee and Western work with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Gunnison County. CPW manages the site. They also manage all the commercial uses of the site and people interested in viewing the location. They have an educational component including presentations. This year they had some new things, starting in 2014 started to see a pretty significant shift in the distribution of the grouse from their traditional leking site in the North in the

meadow, as well as to the East on the ridge. That's something they have been concerned about and monitoring and because of that they now have three different sub-leks. They are trying to indicate where the birds are. The birds can take one step and be out of view so there is a challenge there. The County put in no parking signs along the road. They instituted no viewing days, closing the site for a couple of days and ended up having 11 closed days for a 42 day season. Snyder gave a further detailed report on the area.

Mendonca reported that every day in April someone was parked at the site. Gave update on what he saw at the site.

### **BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT EIS STATUS REPORT**

Waters stated they are trying to figure out how everyone wants to do the comments- committee or just individually. The deadline for public comments has been extended to January 9, 2016. Waters stated that the staff could come in and do a presentation in the November meeting and then guide the comments from the Committee that way. Houck reported the County is currently reviewing the report.

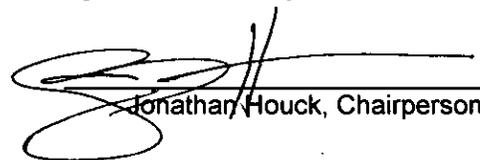
### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:** Future meetings will occur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month in the Planning Commission meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, CO 81230, unless changed for a specific reason.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Building and location</b>
10-19-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
11-16-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
12-21-16	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
01-18-17	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
02-15-17	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
03-15-17	10-2	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room

**ADJOURN: MOVED** by Navy, seconded by With to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The September 21, 2016 meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 11:55 A.M.

  
Jonathan Houck, Chairperson

  
Greg Peterson, Secretary

Minutes Prepared By: Rebecca Ricord, Administrative Assistant