

**GUNNISON  
COUNTY**

**Gunnison County, CO Community  
Development Office**

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**To:** Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee Members

**From:** Misty Castillo

**Date:** 02/12/2026

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

February 18 Agenda

January 21 Draft Minutes


**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2026**

**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 January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes
  - Agenda Approval for February 18, 2026 Agenda
  
2. 10:15am
  - Committee Member Reports/Updates
  
2. 10:30am
  - Discuss Committee Organization/Action Plan/RIS Workshop
  
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 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)**

**Every month on the Third Wed, 36 occurrence(s)**

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

**Monthly: [https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/meeting/tZAtf-6gpjkoGdWcguOfh1cjS\\_doa-q84cv0/ics?icsToken=DA1QYn8CQXR0UjQ-](https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/meeting/tZAtf-6gpjkoGdWcguOfh1cjS_doa-q84cv0/ics?icsToken=DA1QYn8CQXR0UjQ-rgAALAAAJsDPUFKSIswXD4kkXAKNqdjntwhrAqWJlpvSyweAE_KxYlvtA0HRVTgVMzXpi1jJF6s)**

**[rgAALAAAJsDPUFKSIswXD4kkXAKNqdjntwhrAqWJlpvSyweAE\\_KxYlvtA0HRVTgVMzXpi1jJF6s](https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/j/84087882231?pwd=rBGFOFB7BTnneb6OwENCYul0OB1hfV.1)**

**[kD-bdzS3PmyOoTAWMDAwMQ&meetingMasterEventId=1DPVqcVxTLe3SViBks83aQ](https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/j/84087882231?pwd=rBGFOFB7BTnneb6OwENCYul0OB1hfV.1)**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/j/84087882231?pwd=rBGFOFB7BTnneb6OwENCYul0OB1hfV.1>**

**View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion**

**<https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=af94b2d5-ed3d-4b5e-b6cc-fe715af16006>**

**Meeting ID: 840 8788 2231**

**Passcode: 100277**

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**One tap mobile**

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**+14086380968,,84087882231#,,,,\*100277# US (San Jose)**

**Join instructions**

<https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/join/84087882231?signature=LFptSlGtoTEncN7np0pEBdgUvcUi6c4U6MZKogucY>

**GUNNISON BASIN SAGE-GROUSE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 21, 2026**

The January 21, 2026 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. The meeting was also available on Zoom.

**Committee Members Present:**

**Voting Members:**

Kathy Griffin, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)  
Liz Smith, Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)  
Sue Navy, High County Conservation Advocates (HCCA)  
Matthew Vasquez, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)  
Steffanie Chain, Public At-Large  
Sarah Elzay, Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator  
Jessica Frey, alternate, National Park Service (NPS)  
Nathan Darnall, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Tim Kuegler, Gunnison Trails  
Sarah Elzay, Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator  
Andy Stokes, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
Wendi Maez, Saguache County

**Non-Voting Members**

Dayle Funka, USFS  
Angela Trnka, USFWS  
Miranda Middleton, CPW  
Jon Hare, HCCA

**Others in the Audience:**

Aleshia Rummel, NPS  
Marcella Tarantino, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (BCR)  
John Scott, Private Consultant  
Amanda Aulenbach, Upper Gunnison River Conservancy District's National Fish (UGRCD)

**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 Griffin called the January 21, 2026, meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to order at 10:02 AM.

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

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** Moved: by Navy and seconded by Smith to approve the January 21, 2026, agenda as provided. Motion carried unanimously.

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

**NOTE:** Full meeting video recordings are available at the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee webpage ([LINK](#)).

## HPT UPDATE

Smith has relayed the HPT update to the BOCC and other Gunnison County personnel. The next step will be for the BOCC to vote on the approval of the proposed HPT update. This will take place during a normal BOCC meeting. When the BOCC discusses the HPT update they can request additional information about the HPT update from the Gunnison Basin Sage Grouse Strategic Committee. The HPT update vote has yet to be scheduled for a BOCC meeting.

## COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS / REPORTS

**USFS:** USFS continues to work on developing formal agreements with partners. One such agreement is with the Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator, Sarah Elzay. USFS received a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation grant to treat cheatgrass on the Almont Triangle. Tristate has increased funds to USFS to treat weeds along power line corridors and access routes on USFS land. Most of USFS is under a hiring freeze, only fire can hire personnel at this time.

**BLM:** BLM is working on a streamlined consultation process with the USFWS for projects that take place in Gunnison sage grouse habitat on BLM lands. The BLM Gunnison Field Office's noxious weed management EA is still being worked on, but there are some delays due to personnel losses. Several fence pulls on BLM land are scheduled for summer with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. BLM will have two wildlife field interns for the field season.

**Gunnison County:** Gunnison County is working on renewing their Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA). IGA helped fund the Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator position and project implementation. The past Gunnison County IGA included partnerships with BLM, USFS, USFWS and other organizations. The county is still very committed to fighting the spread of noxious weeds within Gunnison County. Currently, the Cheatgrass Coordinator position is heavily focused on finding more funding through grants and other avenues. Renewing this IGA would help alleviate some of the funding concerns surrounding the Cheatgrass Coordinator position. The County is trying to finalize a new IGA by March (this is when the Cheatgrass Coordinator's contract is up for renewal).

**HCCA:** Still working on developing their summer stewardship projects. Navy shared a book about threatened and endangered species. Gunnison sage grouse is a featured species.

**CPW:** There have been no lek photo applications. Currently hiring the sage grouse lek coordinator position.

**Gunnison Trails:** New trail closure signs have been ordered and will be installed soon.

**Gunnison Conservation District:** Colorado State University Extension may be getting a no till seed drill that could be used for free by landowners and other parties.

**NPS:** Curecanti and Black Canyon are currently hiring 12 seasonals for the coming field season. NPS is currently without an aquatic ecologist, terrestrial biologist, hydrologist, and archaeologist. There is no timeline to hire these positions. NPS has contracts for ACE interns and a WCCC.

**USFWS:** The Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS) workshops are currently being planned for 2026. Trnka is working with USFWS Ecological Services to see potential pesticide impacts on Gunnison sage grouse.

**BCR:** The Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) application period for 2026 funding requests has closed. NRCS payment rates for private land projects have remained relatively the same as 2025.

**UGRCD:** The annual wet meadow planning meeting is occurring soon. UGRCD will be hiring two seasonal technicians. UGRCD's RESTORE grant application was tentatively accepted, just needs final board approval.

Committee members discussed future meeting topics including subcommittee organization, revisiting the committee action plan, HPT inclusion in Gunnison County's LUR, and future RIS workshop.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

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

03-25-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
04-15-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
05-20-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
06-17-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
07-15-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
08-19-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
09-16-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
10-21-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
11-18-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room
12-16-26	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room

**ADJOURN:** January 21, 2026, meeting of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee adjourned at 11:34 AM.

Minutes Prepared By: Ben Prior, Gunnison Conservation District

DRAFT