



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

Action was taken to approve minutes July 30, 2013.

Date: Monday June 17, 2013 9:00 a.m.
Time: The Nevada State Capitol Building
Place: 101 N Carson Street, Guinn Room, Carson City, Nevada 89701

Video Conference was made available to Elko – High Tech Center Building Room 121; Winnemucca – Great Basin College Room 108; Ely – Great Basin College, Ely Campus, Room 111

A full recording of this meeting is accessible through the following website -
http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush_Ecosystem_Council_Meeting/

Council Members Present: Jim Barbee, Allen Biaggi, Steven Boies, Doug Busselman, Jeremy Drew, Leo Drozdoff, Bill Dunkelberger, Gerry Emm, JJ Goicoechea, Ted Koch, Starla Lacy, Amy Lueders, Kent McAdoo, Tina Nappe, and Tony Wasley.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 9:10 am.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – No public comment in Elko, Ely, and Winnemucca.
Carson City public comments:
 - a. Cliff Gardner – Mr. Gardner gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge. He outlined the historical changes to the area. He presented the council with a handout; both are available upon request. Presentation on SEC website.
 - b. Bob Clifford – Mr. Clifford attended a meeting held by Mr. Gardner and supports the data that he presented to the council. He said they will be taking this information public to bring visibility to the data. He urged the council to take Mr. Gardner's finding into consideration and said they would be negligent if they didn't.
 - c. Bill Hilary – Mr. Hilary also attended the meeting held by Mr. Gardner and provides his full support. He stated this program is not functioning as it was intended and cited executive order 7522. He said farming and grazing improves the environment and supports the habitat of all animals in the area. He feels farmers are the best stewards of the land.
 - d. Jim Falk – Mr. Falk read a statement into the record regarding his observations after his attendance at the May 31, 2013 council meeting. Mr. Falk presented a copy of his statement to the council and recording secretary.
 - e. Ed Martinez – Mr. Martinez expressed his support of grazing and range management and the benefits it provides to the habitat.

3. **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Vice-Chairman McAdoo made a motion to remove item #14 from the agenda; the item will be placed on the next meeting agenda, seconded by Member Lacy, motion passed unanimously. Member Nappe made a motion to approve the agenda as amended; seconded by Member Emm, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**
4. **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. *Approval of minutes from the meetings held April 22, May 31, and June 3, 2013.* The council reviewed the minutes and proposed minor changes to the recording secretary. The recording secretary captured the discussed changes. Member Biaggi made a motion to approve the April 22 minutes, as amended; seconded by Member Boies, motion passed unanimously. Vice-Chairman McAdoo made a motion to approve the May 31 minutes, as amended; seconded by Member Lacy, motion passed unanimously. Member Boies made a motion to approve the June 3 minutes, as is; seconded by Member Busselman, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**
5. **COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**
 - A. Chairman Goicoechea noted a flip chart would be used throughout the meeting to capture task assignments and future agenda item topics.
6. **FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES – UPDATES OF AGENCY ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST MEETING:**
 - A. *US Fish and Wildlife Service* – Member Koch provided an update on the proposed July meeting with private land stakeholders regarding cheatgrass suppression efforts; the technical team will prioritize areas.
 - B. *Bureau of Land Management* – Member Lueders noted the administrative draft is out for cooperating agency review and comments are due July 1, 2013. They anticipate incorporating those comments and releasing the document for public review at the end of September with a 90 day comment period.
 - C. *US Forest Service* – Member Dunkelberger said the Bi-State draft EIS will be released the first week in August and there will be a 90 day comment period.
 - D. *No other federal agency updates.*
7. **STATE AGENCY UPDATES – UPDATES OF AGENCY ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST MEETING:**
 - A. *Department of Conservation and Natural Resources* – Member Drozdoff noted AB461 passed; Nevada is the first state out of the 11 to have legislation versus an executive order. Resolution HR7 passed; council will provide updates to the legislature. He will be attending the Western Governors’ Sage-grouse Taskforce meeting the third week in July and will report to the council at their next scheduled meeting. Member Drozdoff requested the technical team to populate the timeline with identifying threats and develop a plan to address those threats for the next 18 months. ***Task Assigned**
 - B. *Department of Wildlife* – Member Wasley updated the council on the lek survey data collected. He noted they have removed 20+ acres of pinyon-juniper in the Duck Creek area thus far. He fielded a question regarding the use of drones; noting Nevada does not currently use that technology for wildlife monitoring.
 - C. *Department of Agriculture* – Member Barbee updated the council on a meeting he had with technical team member Kelly McGowan on an invasive weed mapping software; noting public, volunteers and producers would have the capability of downloading the software

and feeding data back to the agency. This would lend to the ground truthing capabilities and, once merged with the Coates model, would provide a layer on the plant side. He also said there was an opportunity for a potential fee increase that would help fund the use of seasonal staff.

D. *Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team* – Melissa Faigeles informed the council that all chapters of the BLM & FS EIS Draft Alternative were released last Friday. Each cooperating agency is independently reviewing the document to ensure the state alternative is captured. As explained at the May 31 meeting, the direction of the Governor's office is for all state cooperating agencies to collectively submit one response. Tim Rubald said in continuation of addressing the threats, John Copeland will be presenting today on pinyon/juniper and Kelly McGowan will present at the next meeting on invasive weeds.

E. *Governor's Office* – Cory Hunt said with the passing of AB461, Annalyn Bo Carrillo with Governor's Office will be sending out statutory term paperwork for the members to sign. A press release has been drafted and will be shared with the agencies.

8. PRESENTATION BY KENT MCADOO, NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST WITH UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, ENTITLED SAGE-GROUSE IN NEVADA: INTEGRATING SCIENCE AND HISTORY.

A. Vice-Chairman McAdoo provided a detailed PowerPoint presentation reviewing historical information from proto-history to the present, and then compared what science and history has shown us regarding six relevant factors of the Sage-grouse. The council discussed various aspects of Member McAdoo's presentation; a lengthy discussion ensued. The council requested Member McAdoo develop a white paper. Member McAdoo noted this is preliminary research that has barely scratched the surface of all the information that is available. He was asked to produce and share the information with the council and technical team to determine if the same conclusion is met. Member Drozdoff suggested the technical team use Member McAdoo's presentation to T-up future threat based discussions and recommended actions. ***Task Assigned**

9. PRESENTATION REGARDING ACTIONS TO ADDRESS PINYON/JUNIPER ENCROACHMENT ISSUES AS THEY RELATE TO BEING A THREAT TO SAGE-GROUSE

A. John Copeland, Technical Team Member provided a PowerPoint presentation to the council on issues relating to the encroachment of pinyon/juniper (PJ) forest lands, its effect on the sagebrush ecosystem, and actions being taken to protect and expand sage-grouse habitat. The presentation has been posted to the SEC website and is available upon request. The council discussed Mr. Copeland's presentation at length. ***No action taken.**

- i. The council requested the technical team develop area maps with PJ/land management/SGMA's to develop possible projects involving CD's and NRCS. ***Task Assigned**
- ii. Member Drozdoff will invite Tim Griffiths with NRCS to the August SEC meeting. ***Task Assigned**
- iii. John Copeland will provide a report to the council after attending the WAFWA meeting being held in Idaho the third week of July. ***Task Assigned**
- iv. A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of BLM approving a programmatic EA to allow projects to be implemented more efficiently and not be delayed in the NEPA process. Member Lueders noted that you typically don't refer to the term programmatic and EA together rather a programmatic EIS. Her concern is often programmatics are done in a way that doesn't save time in the long run. Her recommendation is finding an efficiency that would speed up the permitting process for projects such as PJ and to do it at scale that is helpful once it becomes site specific. ***Task Assigned**

- v. The council expressed interest in involving Partners in Conservation; the technical team will contact Lee Turner and invite him to provide an update on the project database he is having developed. ***Task Assigned**
- vi. The technical team will integrate fire management differences into EIS, LUPs and RMPs ***Task Assigned**

Meeting recessed for lunch at 12:50 pm

Meeting reconvened at 2:00 pm

10. DISCUSSION OF REGULATORY ASSURANCES AND THE POTENTIAL FOR SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION REGULATIONS – Ted Koch, USFWS

A. Member Koch discussed with the council a number of possible regulatory assurance programs that could be considered for development by the council and presented the council with a briefing paper. Member Koch discussed ecologic goals and regulations. The council discussed the opportunity to apply for and obtain a Section 10 permit; which would allow the state to regulate based on the state plan and would empower the state. A discussion ensued. ***No action taken.**

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF MISSION STATEMENT

The council discussed the draft mission statement: *"The Sagebrush Ecosystem Council's mission is to maintain and restore an ecologically resistant and resilient sagebrush ecosystem to benefit all species while allowing for various land uses. This will be accomplished by working through a diverse coalition of public and private stakeholders."* The council collectively decided to strike "an ecologically resistant" and reworked the statement to read, *"The Sagebrush Ecosystem Council's mission is to maintain and restore a functional and resilient sagebrush ecosystem to benefit all species while allowing for various land uses. This will be accomplished by working through a diverse coalition of public and private stakeholders."* Member Busselman made a motion to amend the draft mission statement; seconded by Member Lacy, motion passed unanimously. Member Busselman moved to adopt the mission statement as amended; seconded by Member Lacy, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

12. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PAST, CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK BEING DONE ON THE GROUND FOR THE BENEFIT OF SAGE-GROUSE

The council reviewed the draft 'Statement of Support' and discussed possible changes at length. The amendments appear in the first and second paragraphs. The paragraphs now read, (¶1) *"The Sagebrush Ecosystem Council expresses its support to all continuing efforts in the planning and implementation of projects to benefit the sagebrush ecosystem and the species that utilize its resources in Nevada, especially those benefiting the greater sage-grouse."* (¶2 – first sentence) *"The Council is aware of many projects, starting with the 2004 Nevada plan, that have been completed and others being planned or implemented that will assist in the ongoing conservation activities for the greater sage-grouse."* Member Busselman made a motion to amend the statement; seconded by member Biaggi, motion passed unanimously. Member Nappe made a motion to adopt the statement of support as amended and distribute throughout appropriate locations in Nevada; seconded by Member Emm, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

13. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS ON A MITIGATION CREDITING SYSTEM BASED ON THE RFI PRESENTATIONS MADE DURING THE MAY 31, 2013 COUNCIL MEETING

A. Mr. Rubald reviewed the staff report on the presentations made at the council meeting on May 31, 2013 in response to the RFI. A discussion ensued. The council's direction to the team when preparing the draft RFP included: a federal agency accepted product; use of existing metrics being successfully implemented elsewhere; and a (short) contract term within 6 months. ***No action taken.**

Member Biaggi will provide a copy of the BLM & FS Mining MOU and Mr. Rubald will distribute it to the council members. ***Task Assigned**

14. DISCUSSION OF REVISIONS TO GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SECTION OF THE STATE PLAN- Item was removed under agenda item #3 and will be placed on the next meeting agenda. ***No action taken.**

15. DISCUSSION REGARDING SETTING REGULAR MEETING DATES

A. The council discussed setting a regular meeting date/time beginning September, 2013. Member Biaggi made a motion for the council to have a regular meeting date the second Thursday of each month; seconded by Member Busselman, motion passed unanimously.

***Action**

16. DETERMINATION OF DATE OF MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN JULY AND AUGUST, 2013

A. The council discussed the staff's suggestions for the next two meeting dates. Member Drew made a motion to approve July 30, with August 16 as a tentative date if additional business is required; seconded by Vice-Chairman McAadoo, motion passed unanimously.

***Action**

17. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DRAFTED ON FLIP CHARTS DURING THIS MEETING

A. Items were placed next to the agenda items in which discussed with either an ***Action** or ***Task Assigned** notation next to them.

Future Agenda Items:

- Item #14 from 6/17 agenda
- Member Koch's mitigation equation
- Detailed timeline plan from now-9/2015
- Technical team invasive weeds presentation
- Tim Griffiths attend August meeting
- Lee Turner – project update list
- John Copeland report back from WAFWA meeting
- Discuss PJ/Land Management/SGMA's maps

Action Items:

- Technical team work with Kent to T-up discussion on threats; council in agreement with recommendations
- Develop area maps with PJ/Land Management/SGMA's to develop possible projects, involving CD's and NRCS
- Speed up permitting process for PJ projects with possible programmatic EA or EIS categorically excluded
- Integrate fire management differences into EIS, LUP's & RMP's

18. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comments in Elko, Ely, Winnemucca, and Carson City.

19. ADJOURNMENT – Vice Chairman McAadoo moved to adjourn; seconded by Member Boies, meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.