



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL

MINUTES

Action was taken to approve minutes September 12, 2013.

Date: Tuesday, July 30, 2013 8:30 a.m.
Time: The Nevada Legislative Building
Place: 401 S. Carson Street, Room 4100, Carson City, Nevada 89701

Video Conference was made available to Elko – High Tech Center Building Room 137; Winnemucca – Great Basin College Room 108; Ely – Great Basin College, Ely Campus, Room 114

A full recording of this meeting is accessible through the following website -
[http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting/](http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush_Ecosystem_Council_Meeting/)

Council Members Present: Allen Biaggi, Jeremy Drew, Leo Drozdoff, Bill Dunkelberger, JJ Goicoechea, Ted Koch, Starla Lacy, Tina Nappe, and Tony Wasley.

Council Members Present via Video Conference: Steve Boies, Kent McAdoo

Council Members Absent: Jim Barbee, Doug Busselman, Gerry Emm, Amy Lueders

Others Present: Raul Morales and Joe Tague representing BLM on behalf of Amy Lueders; Robert Little, representing Dept. of Ag on behalf of Jim Barbee; Selena Werdon representing USFWS on behalf of Ted Koch (Mr. Koch left the meeting early).

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 8:49 am.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – No public comment in Elko, Ely, and Winnemucca.
Carson City public comments:
 - a. Floyd Rathbun – Mr. Rathbun read a letter into the record prepared by Fred Fulstone. The letter and supporting articles were provided to the recording secretary and distributed to the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program manager. Mr. Rubald noted he would post them to the website.
 - b. Cliff Gardner, representing Rural Heritage Preservation Project. Mr. Gardner addressed the council and read a statement into the record. Mr. Gardner said he would email a copy of his statement to the recording secretary. He feels the political agenda is driving the council and that the literature and input he presents is not being fully considered.

- c. Bob Clifford, representing Fallon Tea Party – Mr. Clifford expressed his concern that the council’s objectives are focused solely on habitat and not on range management through grazing, which in his opinion increases the Sage-grouse population.
 - d. Jim Falk, representing Fallon Tea Party – Mr. Falk expressed his concern with the mitigation equation, noting the lay person would have a difficult time understanding such a formula. He does not think the council is on the right track and urged the Governor to abolish the council.
- 3. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF AGENDA –** Member Nappe made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Member Drew, motion passed unanimously.
***Action**
- 4. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- A. *Approval of minutes from the meeting held June 17, 2013.* Member Biaggi proposed minor grammatical changes to Item 11 of the minutes to the recording secretary. Member Biaggi made a motion to approve the June 17 minutes, as amended; seconded by Member Lacy, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**
- 5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**
- A. No items were reported under this agenda item.
- 6. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES – UPDATES OF AGENCY ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST MEETING:**
- A. *US Fish and Wildlife Service* – Member Koch noted the first meeting of the Nevada Cheatgrass Action Team will be held tomorrow, July 31st; stating the Service perceives the greatest threat to Sage-grouse in the Great Basin to be invasive species, specifically cheatgrass. He will be in Washington DC this week, meeting with the Nevada congressional delegation reporting on the good work being done and the opportunities for their support. The timeline for the Bi-State preliminary finding or federal register notice is the 3rd week in September. September 2014 is when the Service will be asking for a data call on conservation efforts to date regarding the greater sage grouse.
 - B. *Bureau of Land Management* – Raul Morales representing Member Lueders, provided an update on the mining MOU. Joe Tague, BLM, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Draft Sub-regional EIS effort and the upcoming timelines. The draft will be released September 30th. A discussion ensued. A copy of the presentation is available on the web site. The highest rated threats identified by BLM include: fire, conifer, invasive species, infrastructure, grazing, and recreation.
 - C. *US Forest Service* – Member Dunkelberger provided an agency update on the seasonal fires and how firefighters have implemented goals and objectives to protect Sage-grouse habitat; there has been no loss of Sage-grouse habitat at this time. Humboldt-Toiyabe is working on the Draft EIS on the Bi-State Sage-grouse; it will be released for public review within 2 to 3 weeks.
 - 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 provided highlights from the Western Governors Association Task Force meeting he attended in Denver earlier this month. He noted a presentation provided by the USFWS in which the states were encouraged that they will be provided an opportunity, from a narrative perspective, to participate and respond. USFWS expressed concern that they would receive 11 completely different state plans. A metrics team will be created to collaborate with states with commonalities, including Utah, Wyoming, Nevada and Oregon. A presentation was provided on a USFWS separate effort utilizing bacteria to control cheatgrass and its success. USFWS is working with EPA to receive approval to use this on a larger scale. NDOW, DNCR, and Dept. of Agriculture are working to have Nevada as a pilot state for the bacteria application. He noted more on this topic would be incorporated into the invasive species presentation given by the SETT. Member Drozdoff said there are 3 other states forming councils that had expressed interest in Nevada’s model.

B. *Department of Wildlife* – Member Wasley provided an update that a contract has been developed for the continued facilitation of local working group meetings in portions of the state including: Lincoln, Washoe, White Pine, Lassen, Modoc and Bi-State local working groups. The contract is in review and will go before the state Board of Examiners in September. Approximately 50% of the Duck Creek Basin PJ removal project has been completed; 250 acres have been cleared thus far. A sub-grant amendment is being developed for continued research within the Virginia Mountains to study the effects of raven control over a three year period. There have been over 100 Sage-grouse feather samples collected from Nevada that have been sent to the Ft. Collins Science Center in Colorado for inclusion in a range wide genetic connectivity analysis study. The Sage-grouse hunting season dates were adjusted during the Wildlife Commission meeting for the 2013 season. For most of the western portion of Nevada, the season length was reduced by 5 days. Additionally, one of the two hunt periods for the Sheldon Special Sage-grouse hunt was eliminated. In the eastern portion of the state, there were unit closures in several areas. Coordination and venue are underway for the 2014 Sage and Columbian sharp-tail grouse workshop to be held in Elko, June 16-19. On July 22nd BLM held a conference call of the Regional Management Team for the Sage-grouse EIS; NDOW agreed to have BLM release the DEIS on September 30.

C. *Department of Agriculture* – Robert Little, Dept. of Ag., Noxious Weed Coordinator, presented a department update on behalf of Jim Barbee. Mr. Little provided an update on the invasive species online based mapping program, which will allow for public participation. He referred the council, staff and public to Google [*eddmaps*](#) to review the development of the program.

D. *Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team* – Mr. Rubald noted the Cheatgrass Action Team will meet tomorrow and the SETT will be participating. The Science Work Group is being established and is hopeful to have an initial meeting scheduled sometime the middle of next month. All the meetings of that group will be open to the public. He provided a staff update and introduced Steve Weaver, Conservation Specialist, who is based in the Winnemucca NRCS office.

E. *Other* – Cory Hunt from the Governor’s Office had no comment under this item.

8. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE "MITIGATION EQUATION" DEVELOPED BY USFWS

A. Member Koch provided a presentation on a "Mitigation Equation" developed by USFWS staff and discussed the possible consideration in the development of the Conservation Credit System (handout provided and placed on the web site). Vice-Chairman McAdoo made a motion to delegate the mitigation equation to the SETT to incorporate in the RFP and to have the Science Work Group create a scientifically produced set of metrics; seconded by Member Nappe, motion passed unanimously. ***Action / Task Assigned**

9. PRESENTATION ON THE NEVADA PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A. Mr. Lee Turner, Habitat Ecologist, NDOW, provided a PowerPoint presentation and discussed NDOW's Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development Program (NPCD). Mr. Turner's presentation is available on the web site.

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM PROGRAM DETAILED TIMELINE

A. Melissa Faigeles, SETT, provided a presentation of the detailed work timeline as requested by the Council at the April 22, 2013 Council Meeting. A discussion and review of the timelines ensued. Member Biaggi made a motion to insert "Council Decision" between item 11 and 12 on the Credit System timeline; seconded by Member Nappe, motion passed unanimously. The Council agreed there would be the need to make additional updates as appropriate, to this living document. ***Action**

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF REVISIONS TO GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SECTION OF THE STATE PLAN

A. Lara Niell and Melissa Faigeles, SETT led the council in a review of the proposed revisions to Section 3.0 Goals and Objectives of the State Plan, made per discussions during the April 22, 2013 Council Meeting. A discussion ensued and the council provided feedback to the revisions that included: requesting the team to cite peer reviewed scientific literature throughout the document, create maps showing 1, 2, 3, 4 mile disturbance examination areas, and to collect additional input from each council member to incorporate into the document. The members will provide their concerns/input to the SETT no later than August 14. The SETT will compile a comprehensive list of the concerns, and will produce a response for the September 12 meeting. *** No Action Taken / Task Assigned**

12. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A PLAN OF WORK TO BE USED IN A PLANNED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP), FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM

A. Mr. Rubald reviewed the draft *Plan of Work* for a proposed RFP for the creation of a Conservation Credit System; developed from responses to an RFI and Council discussions at the May 31, 2013 and June 17, 2013 Council meetings. Member Nappe made a motion to authorize the SETT to work as needed with State Purchasing and to accept services and/or contractor, as soon as practical and funding is available; seconded by Member Lacy, motion passed unanimously. ***Action / Task Assigned**

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

A. The Council, with staff assistance, reviewed items discussed as well as items acted upon during this meeting, and determined which of those they wished to direct staff to further work on, as well as which items the Council wishes to act on that may not have been acted upon during earlier discussion. ***No Action Taken**

Agenda Items for the September Meeting:

- Section 3.0 revision updates including SEC comments
- Minimization Design Features (for inclusion in the State's Alternative)
- DOA's invasive species presentation
- Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Timeline
- Bi-State DEIS Briefing – Bill Dunkelberger
- Bison Fire ESR update

Possible Future Agenda Items:

- Tim Griffith presentation from NRCS on Sage-grouse Initiative
- Bacteria/Cheatgrass pilot study (informational item/update)
- Tamzen Stringham presentation on the state and transition models
- Member Koch presentation on impacts/outcome of a listing, including implementation of the State Plan
- Development of policies of livestock and wild horse grazing
- Discussion of predation

Action Items:

- Council members comments/questions on Section 3.0 revisions to SETT by August 14; SETT will provide answers to Council prior to the September meeting
- SETT update on Section 3.0 revisions and provide to Council for approval at September 12 meeting
- SETT create DDCT maps showing 1, 2, 3, 4 mile disturbance examination areas
- Insert "Council Decision" in between item 11 & 12 on Credit System timeline – Council approval of metrics
- Member McAdoo's presentation from the 6/17 meeting may eventually be turned into a white paper for the Council
- Incorporate concepts from USFWS' Mitigation Equation into the RFP
- SETT to work with the Science Work Group on Mitigation Equation

B. The Council determined that they will NOT meet on August 16, 2013 as originally planned. The next scheduled Council meeting is September 12, 2013 in Carson City at the LCB building.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment in Elko, Ely, and Winnemucca.

Carson City Public Comment: Michael Cameron, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – Mr. Cameron updated the council that the TNC has received a grant to do a study on firebreaks. This is funding through the LLC and USFWS, and that BLM had assisted them in getting the funding. TNC will have recommendation available by September 2014 and will be happy to provide those details to the SETT and provide a presentation to the council at a later date if the council is interested.

15. ADJOURNMENT –Vice-Chairman McAdoo moved to adjourn; seconded by Member Drew, meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.