



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
201 South Roop Street, Suite 101
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5247
Phone (775) 684-8600 - Fax (775) 684-8604

MINUTES

Action was taken to approve minutes February 13, 2014.

Date: January 23-24, 2014 – 8:30 a.m.
Time: The Nevada Legislative Building
Place: 401 S. Carson Street, Room 4100, Carson City, Nevada 89701

Video Conference was not available, but could be viewed on the internet at:
<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Calendar/A/>

A full audio 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, Jeremy Drew, Leo Drozdoff, Gerry Emm, JJ Goicoechea, Ted Koch, Amy Lueders, Kent McAdoo, Tina Nappe, Tony Wasley. New appointee, Bevan Lister joined the meeting in the afternoon.

Council Members Absent: Bill Dunkelberger, Starla Lacy. Amy Lueders left the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Cassandra Joseph, Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's Office was representing.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public comment was heard by: Cliff Gardner, Rural Heritage Preservation Project; Floyd Rathbun, Fallon; Jim Faulk, Churchill County; Bevin Lister, NV Farm Bureau; Ira Hansen, Nevada Assemblyman – District 32. A full account of their comments are captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website.
- 3. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Member Drew moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Vice-Chairman McAdoo, motion passed unanimously.
***Action**

4. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. *Approval of minutes from the meeting held January 8, 2014.* Member Biaggi moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Member Boies, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Council members did not present correspondence under this item. Mr. Rubald reviewed additional handouts presented to the Council the morning of the meeting. He made mention of a MOA between the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program and BLM for the Bald Mountain Mine EIS.

6. UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS TO AMEND THE LIVESTOCK GRAZING PORTION OF THE STATE'S ALTERNATIVE (ALT. "E") IN THE BLM/USFS SUB-REGIONAL DRAFT EIS.

A. Mr. McGowan, SETT, discussed and reported the SETT's efforts to develop amendments to the State's DEIS alternative and the State Plan. The SETT will be providing NCAT updates as well as a Livestock Grazing presentation in February.

7. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT SUITABILITY MODEL CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED BY THE USGS.

A. Dr. Peter Coates, USGS, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation of draft products from the habitat suitability modeling currently being developed by the USGS for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program. The presentation and full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website.

B. Discussion of the outputs of the draft USGS model and possible consideration of accepting some or all of the current products. Ms. Niell noted that an Expert Review Team has been established and will meet in February. Members of the team include Mr. Shawn Espinoza, NDOW; Mr. Steve Abele, USFWS; Dr. Jim Sedinger, UNR; Ms. Pilar Ziegler, BLM, and Dr. Rachel Mazure, USFS.

Member Nappe made a motion to accept the current draft Habitat Suitability Map of the Greater Sage-grouse in Nevada as the habitat map for the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program, recognizing that additional refinements may be conducted from availability of additional input data or feedback from the Expert Review Team to improve the product for submittal to the BLM/USFS under Nevada's alternative E before the next SEC meeting; seconded by Member Drew, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

Mr. Bevan Lister was appointed by Governor Sandoval to the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council and was sworn in as the Agriculture representative.

8. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED SAGE-GROUSE MANAGEMENT MAPS TO INCLUDE POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF NEW MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES AND REVISION OF SAGE-GROUSE MANAGEMENT AREAS (SGMA).

A. The SETT and Dr. Peter Coates, USGS, discussed the definitions of management categories as presented initially in the "Avoid Process" approved at the October 10, 2013 SEC meeting. A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program website.

Member Biaggi noted for the record, based on previous comments from members Drew and Lueders, that there is a recognition that there will be some definition of what consultation entails and how that will be conducted among the SETT and federal agencies. Member Biaggi stated that part of the consideration and development of those consultation criteria should recognize requirements and permits already in place to address habitat for Sage-grouse and other species that have been imposed.

Member Biaggi made a motion to adopt the proposed Management Categories, recognizing that additional refinements may be conducted from the feedback from the Expert Review Team to improve the product for submittal to the BLM and USFS under Nevada's Alternative E, before the next SEC meeting; seconded by Member Drew, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

B. The SETT and Council discussed the possible adoption of revised Sage Grouse Management Area boundaries to reflect outputs from the habitat suitability model.

Member Biaggi made a motion to adopt the proposed revisions to the Sage-grouse Management Areas; recognizing the areas are not final and are subject to revisions. In additions, the following language will be placed on each map, 'the express purpose of these maps is to trigger consultation with the SETT. Specific area or project habitat determinations must be conducted in accordance with established scientific protocol; they shall not be used for any other purpose. Motion seconded by Member Boies, further discussion, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

9. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM PROGRAM COMMENTS AND LETTER, ON THE BLM/USFS SUB-REGIONAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS).

Dr. Barry Perryman, UNCE provided a Fuels Management Concept presentation to the Council. The presentation and full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website.

A. The SETT lead a discussion and reviewed comments on the Sub-regional DEIS prepared by the SETT and submitted by the Council. Additional comments were developed and considered on specific items by the Council. The SETT captured Council edits within the living document. Deferred additional revisions/discussion of this item to tomorrow meeting. A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program website.

B. The SETT lead a discussion and reviewed of the drafted cover letter that will accompany the prepared comments submitted to BLM. It was determined the letter inserted into the Council packets did to not include previous edits to the letter. Mr. Rubald will provide the revised letter to the Council when they convene tomorrow.

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comment, as there was none, he called the meeting to recess at 4:28 p.m. The meeting will reconvene tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. in room 4100.

Date: Friday, January 24, 2014 – 8:30 a.m.
Time: The Nevada Legislative Building
Place: 401 S. Carson Street, Room 4100, Carson City, Nevada 89701

Council Members Present, January 24, 2014 – Jim Barbee, Allen Biaggi, Steven Boies, Jeremy Drew, Leo Drozdoff, Gerry Emm – arrived at 10:59 a.m., JJ Goicoechea – arrived at 8:48 a.m., Ted Koch, Bevan Lister, Amy Lueders, Kent McAdoo, Tina Nappe, Tony Wasley.

Council Members Absent, January 24, 2014 – Bill Dunkelberger, Starla Lacy. Allen Biaggi left the meeting at 10:35 a.m. and Amy Lueders left the meeting at 11:41 a.m.

Dennis Belcourt, Sr. Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's Office was representing.

Vice Chairman McAdoo called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

Vice Chairman McAdoo called for public comment. Public comment was heard by: Bob Clifford, Fallon. A full account of the comments are captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website.

Chairman Goicoechea joined the meeting at 8:48 a.m. and took over facilitation of the meeting.

9B.- resumed – Mr. Rubald presented the Council with the updated draft cover letter that will accompany the prepared comments submitted to BLM. The Council reviewed and revised the letter. Edits were captured by Lara Niell, SETT via the projector – track changes to the letter are available upon request.

Member Biaggi made a motion to eliminate the first two sentences on pg. 2 line 17 – 20 and include suggested replacement language after line 24 to state, 'the SEC strongly supports the concept of multiple use on public lands and is opposed to alternatives that partly or wholly eliminate land uses. Federal law specifically allows certain uses, (i.e. grazing, mining, wild horses, renewable energy) which must be recognized in the selection of the preferred alternative; seconded by Member Nappe, discussion, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

Chairman Goicoechea made a motion to include language changes on pg. 1 line 13, 'Any management alternative as a whole or component of such, that are inconsistent with the State Plan or other plans, policies, controls and laws of the State of Nevada and local government jurisdictions be reconciled as required by NEPA, FLPMA and respective regulations; seconded by Member Nappe, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

Vice-Chairman McAdoo moved to adopt the cover letter, as amended; seconded by Member Boies, discussion, 8 ayes, Member Drew abstained due to possible conflict, motion passed. ***Action**

9A.- resumed – The SETT and Council reviewed additional comments on the Sub-regional DEIS prepared by the SETT and submitted by the Council. Comments were developed and considered. The SETT captured Council edits within the living document. A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program website.

Member Biaggi made a motion that on the topic of hunting, in relation to comments 42 and 43, the Council direct the SETT to review 42 and 43 and reword these comments to reflect the Council's request for an evaluation of hunting cumulative effects in the EIS; seconded by Vice-Chairman McAdoo, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

Vice-Chairman McAdoo reviewed his narrative on predation and spoke to the importance of having it addressed in the DEIS. A discussion ensued. Chairman Goicoechea clarified that there was consensus among the members to take 33 out as it will be addressed in 31 and to have the SETT work on the 7 or 8 steps collectively regarding this section.

A discussion ensued regarding Vice-Chairman McAdoo's comment on grazing and upcoming comments regarding resilience and wanted to know if the Council wanted them included. Member Nappe moved to incorporate Vice-Chairman McAdoo's narrative document, including the one to come on resiliency, into the DEIS comments; seconded by Member Boies, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

Chairman Goicoechea entertained a motion to accept the comments as reviewed, in addition to those coming from Vice-Chairman McAdoo; granting the SETT the ability to wordsmith, as it relates to typographical error corrections and referencing most current literature if there is redundancy, and authorizing the Chairman to sign the cover letter outside of this meeting; so moved by Member Nappe, seconded by Member Lister, 8 ayes, Member Drew abstained. ***Action**

Member Drozdoff mentioned the Governor's 60 day extension request and suggested we continue reviewing materials as it affects the State Plan, and that it should be discussed at the next meeting, regardless of the February 29 BLM DEIS comment deadline. Chairman Goicoechea suggested if in fact the deadline holds, to incorporate the comments into the State Plan or another document for long-term consistency.

10. CONSIDERATION OF CREATION OF A COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE INPUT INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM AND REPORT BACK TO THE FULL COUNCIL FOR FURTHER ACTION; AND THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS THERETO

A. The Council discussed the possible creation of a committee, consisting of current Council Members, and authorize the Chair to appoint members of the committee to work with the SETT and the contractor on the development of the Conservation Credit System.

Chairman Goicoechea entertained a motion to create a committee for the CCS and authorize the Chair to appoint members to the committee; moved by Member McAdoo, seconded by Member Boies, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

B. Appointment of Council members to serve on the Committee. Chairman Goicoechea appointed Member Biaggi, Member Drew, Member Lacy, and Member Nappe to serve on the Committee and report to the Council at a future meeting. Chairman Goicoechea encouraged the committee to reach out to Members Boies and Lister as well as Ag groups when moving forward with the CCS.

11. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS PRESENTED BY ENVIRONMENTAL INCENTIVES, THE CONTRACTOR DEVELOPING THE STATE'S CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM.

A. Jennifer Newmark, NNHP, introduced Jeremy Sokulsky, Eoin Doherty and Katie Riley Environmental Incentives (EI). EI lead a discussion of Habitat Quantification tool, policies, and operations involving the work to develop the Conservation Credit System. No decisions would be made today, although suggestion and recommendation were welcomed. A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website.

Member Boies moved to have a second meeting February 24, with the main agenda item the Conservation Credit System; seconded by Member Drew, motion passed unanimously.

***Action**

Member Drew will work with Mr. Rubald to push a doodle poll to the Committee members as well as Member Drozdoff, Member Wasley and Member Koch for their participation in the CCS development. Member Koch mentioned he would like Service staff involved in the process.

12. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DRAFTED ON FLIP CHARTS DURING THIS MEETING - *No Action Taken

A. With staff assistance, the Council reviewed items discussed, as well as items acted upon during this meeting, and items directed to the SETT.

B. The next Council meeting will be held on February 13th, 2014 meeting, at 8:30 a.m. in room 4100. Mr. Rubald mentioned items for the agenda would include grazing, and an NCAT committee report, along with a CCS Committee update. Member Koch would like the NCAT report to include the future level of involvement with WAFWA fire and invasives group as part of the presentation.

13. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

- A. US Fish and Wildlife Service – No agency report.
- B. Bureau of Land Management – No agency report.
- C. US Forest Service – No agency report.
- D. Other – No additional reports.

14. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Member Drozdoff mentioned the 60 day request from the Governor, a letter Mr. Rubald sent to FWS regarding metrics development, a letter commenting on the framework for mitigation, and asked that they all be posted and distributed. He noted the next WGA Task Forces meeting would be held February 5-6, 2014.

B. Department of Wildlife – Member Wasley provided an update on NDOW projects and a workshop conducted on Sharptail-grouse. He mentioned they are working on populations of Sage-grouse, but data analysis would not be completed for another 6 months. Chairman Goicoechea asked about UAVs or if helicopters alone were being used for population work. Wasley noted Colorado is doing a bit of a pilot project using the UAV technology. Wasley didn't know if NDOW had the ability with the technological limitation to do it now.

C. Department of Agriculture – Member Barbee spoke about UAVs as well and other possible technologies. Regulation on set aside money should be through the process in a couple of weeks and it should be considered when identifying projects utilizing that funding.

D. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – No report.

E. Other – No report.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT – Member McAdoo said he would be tendering his resignation on February 14, 2014. Although difficult, he felt he had to resign due to personal and professional reasons. He wished the council all the best. Chairman Goicochea thanked him and said we would be “resilient” moving forward.

16. ADJOURNMENT – Member Nappe moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned by acclamation at 12:20 p.m.