



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 24, 2014.

Date: Thursday, February 13, 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/Calednar/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, Bevan Lister, Kent McAdoo, Tony Wasley, and Starla Lacy via teleconference. Raul Morales as a proxy for Amy Lueders.

Council Members Absent: Allen Biaggi, Bill Dunkelberger, Amy Lueders, and Tina Nappe. Member Drozdoff left the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public comment was heard by: Don Amador, Western Representative, Blue Ribbon Coalition; Ira Hanson, Nevada Assemblyman – District 32; Cliff Gardner, Rural Heritage Preservation Project; Fred Fulstone, Fallon, NV; Floyd Rathbun, Fallon, NV. 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** – Chairman Goicoechea notified that agenda item #6 would be moved to the afternoon to accommodate Congressman Amodei’s schedule. Member Boies moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Member Lister, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**
- 4. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. *Approval of minutes from the meeting held January 23 and 24, 2014.* Member Wasley proposed an amendment to the minutes to reflect his comment under agenda item 14, NDOW agency update. Member Drew moved to approve the amended minutes; seconded by Member Lister, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Council members may make comments at this time and the Program Manager will bring forward any pertinent correspondence directed to the Council.

Member McAdoo discussed livestock grazing; the benefits of proper grazing and the damage from improper grazing. He commented on predator control and vegetation and how all of these factor into the sustainability of the ecosystem.

Member Lister commented on a letter that was signed by Shawn Espinoza, NDOW, which was submitted to BLM. He expressed his opinion of the negative impacts such a letter has on the process. Member Wasley addressed the letter and its intent, along with a letter he wrote as a follow-up to Mr. Espinoza's letter. Members of the council expressed their opinions, as did Cory Hunt from the Governor's Office. It was stressed that moving forward the Council and its representatives need to be more diligent in collaborating.

Mr. Rubald reviewed additional collateral items within the Council packets, including: letters from former Assemblyman John Carpenter regarding the Espinoza comments, and Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell acknowledging a letter from Governor Sandoval.

Chairman Goicoechea addressed Raul Morales, representing Amy Lueders on behalf of BLM, regarding BLM's approach to cooperating agencies submitting conflicting comments to the DEIS. Mr. Morales noted BLM is looking for substantive comments, and the process is not a tick mark voting contest.

6. DISCUSSION OF SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM ISSUES WITH US REPRESENTATIVE MARK AMODEI:

A. Congressman Amodei, representing the 2nd Congressional District of Nevada, addressed the Council and discussed areas and efforts of importance. Congressman Amodei highlighted acres, threats; fire being the most important threat to address, and regulatory mechanisms. In that, he included fuels management, rehabilitation – Nevada's unique situation, being that the majority of land is controlled by Federal Land Management Agencies. He expressed the importance of the Council's credibility and their work product having transparency. The Congressman discussed the issues related to funding and potential funding sources, along with research of where funding dollars have been expended over the last 10 years for the cause.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO THE LIVESTOCK GRAZING PORTION OF THE STATE'S ALTERNATIVE (ALT. "E") IN THE BLM/USFS SUB-REGIONAL EIS.

A. Mr. McGowan reviewed the staff report and the SETT's recommendations regarding the State's EIS alternative (Alternative E in the current DEIS) pertaining to livestock grazing. The SETT captured Council edits within the living document. A discussion ensued - a full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website. Chairman Goicoechea took public comment under this item from: John Tull, NDOW; Sam Mori, Mori Ranches; and Cliff Gardner, Rural Heritage Preservation Project.

The Council recessed for lunch at 12:35 p.m. Chairman Goicoechea reconvened at 1:38 p.m. Chairman Goicoechea took up Agenda item six, greeting Congressman Amodei. Congressman Amodei spoke until 1:56 p.m. (see comments under Agenda Item #6 above) and then the Council returned to complete their work on Agenda item seven at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Additional discussion ensued with additional changes being made on the living document. Member Boies moved to accept with the amendments, as proposed, the revisions to the language addressing Livestock Grazing in the State's Alternative (Alt. "E"), within the BLM/USFS Sub-Regional DEIS and for future incorporation into the State's Plan - section 6.5, Improper Livestock Grazing; seconded by Vice-Chairman McAdoo, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

8. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO THE WILD HORSES AND BURROS PORTION OF THE STATE'S ALTERNATIVE (ALT. "E") IN THE BLM/USFS SUB-REGIONAL EIS.

A. Melissa Faigeles, SETT, discussed possible action regarding changes to the State's EIS Alternative (Alternative E in the current DEIS) pertaining to wild horses and burros. Members of the Council suggested this item be tied with Livestock Grazing. Member Emm suggested it tie back to impacts on the habitat. A discussion ensued – a full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website.

Member Drew made a motion to direct the SETT to work with various stakeholders to revise the wild horses and burros section of the State's EIS Alternative and bring a revised version to the SEC for review and possible approval; seconded by Member Lister, discussion, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

9. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION TO INCORPORATE SEC ADOPTED TERMINOLOGY REGARDING MANAGEMENT AREAS AND CATEGORIES INTO THE REVISED STATE PLAN.

A. Lara Niell, SETT, discussed possible considerations to incorporate SEC adopted terminology regarding management areas and categories adopted by the SEC at the January 23, 2014 meeting into the revised State Plan approved by the SEC at the December 18, 2013 meeting. Ms. Niell reviewed the staff report/track changes provided in the Council packets. Discussion.

Member Drew moved to incorporate the new management area and category terminology into the revised State Plan; seconded by Member Boies, motion passed unanimously. ***Action**

10. REPORT, UPDATE, AND POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON THE CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM (CCS).

A. Committee Chairman Drew reported on the activities of the Council's Committee on the CCS, noting they met twice in February. Chairman Drew reviewed a handout highlighting Chpt. 1 – Conservation System Overview, Chpt. 2 – Technical and Policy Considerations, Chpt. 3 – Conservation System Operations. The Committee received detailed information and conducted significant discussion regarding the development of the State's CCS. Further discussion ensued – a full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording and available on the Program's website. It was requested of Mr. Rubald to receive the document being prepared by the contractor, Environmental Incentives, and to provide it to the Council once received. ***No action taken.**

11. REPORT AND UPDATE ON THE NEVADA CHEATGRASS ACTION TEAM'S (NCAT), PAST ACTIVITIES, MEETINGS, AND PLANNING PROGRESS.

A. Kelly McGowan, SETT, reviewed activities of the group, field visits, and possible future on-the-ground activities being discussed and planned. A presentation was provided and is available on the Program's website.

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

A. With staff assistance, the Council reviewed items discussed, as well as items acted upon during this meeting, and items directed to the SETT. ***No action taken.**

B. Determination of specific items the Council would like to work on at their *February 24th, 2014* meeting, which is the next scheduled Council meeting. The meeting will be held at the Nevada Legislative Building in room 4100 at 8:30 a.m.

- Election of Council Vice-Chairman – vacated by Kent McAdoo
- Conservation Credit System (CCS) – EI Consultants

March 13, 2014 meeting items:

- Wild horse and burros – revisions to section in State EIS Alternative
- CCS – mitigation ratios, including the Science Work Group's feedback

April 10, 2014 meeting items:

- Predation

13. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. US Fish and Wildlife Service – Member Koch noted the comment period closed on USFSW proposed rule to list the Bi-State population of Sage-grouse. February 28, 2014 Bi-State EOC meeting, and a new Farm Bill passed.

B. Bureau of Land Management – Mr. Morales noted BLM has received 17,000 comments to the BLM DEIS; most of them in form letters.

C. US Forest Service – No update – representative not in attendance.

D. Other – No update.

14. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Mr. Lawrence provided an update on behalf of Member Drozdoff regarding correspondence Mr. Drozdoff sent to the Western Governor's Association Task Force as well as others, including: a letter that referenced the Council's comments on the DEIS; a letter from Mr. Drozdoff on the EIS, a letter drafted by Mr. Rubald to Nicole Alt, USFWS, commenting on the metrics being developed on a regional level; and a letter from Member Drozdoff to Maureen Walsh regarding the regional development of a credit system framework that would be complementary to the work being done in Nevada. Mr. Lawrence also passed along updates of specific developments of the (CCS), and the Council and Team's work with Dr. Peter Coates and the Habitat Suitability Model.

B. Department of Wildlife – Member Wasley noted NDOW submitted comments on the Bi-State proposed rule.

C. Department of Agriculture – No update.

D. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – No update.

E. Other – No update.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment.

16. ADJOURNMENT – Chairman Goicoechea moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned by acclamation at 4:03 p.m.