



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
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MINUTES

Action was taken to approve minutes April 8, 2014.

Date: Thursday, March 13, 2014 – 9:00 a.m.
Time: The Nevada Legislative Building
Place: 401 S. Carson Street, Room 1214, 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/](http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush_Ecosystem_Council_Meeting/)

Council Members Present: Jim Barbee arrived at 9:53 AM, Allen Biaggi arrived at 9:29 AM, Steven Boies, Jeremy Drew, Bill Dunkelberger arrived at 9:40 AM, JJ Goicoechea, Ted Koch, Starla Lacy, Bevan Lister, Tina Nappe, Tony Wasley, and Raul Morales as a proxy for Amy Lueders.

Council Members Absent: Leo Drozdoff, Gerry Emm, Amy Lueders, and Tony Wasley.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public comment was heard by: Cliff Gardner, Rural Heritage Preservation, his statement was provided to the recording secretary; Max Symonds, on behalf of Fred Fulstone, 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** - Member Lister moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Member Boies, motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION**
4. **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. *Approval of minutes from the meeting held February 24, 2014.* – Minutes were deferred to the next regular meeting.
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 Nappe apologized for her absence at the last couple meetings. She commented on the correspondence in the press at the local and national level; and feels it is her duty to represent both. She believes the value of the Council is beyond Sage-grouse and should be the primary issues identified; fire, weeds, and pj invasion. She doesn't feel the state has put its best foot forward when looking at how national environmental organizations view the state and feels it is important for her to represent them as well. She feels this is a valid effort that has been put forth and wondered how this effort will be funded over the next biennium.

Mr. Rubald brought attention to two documents provided to the Council from Mr. Fred Fulstone.

Mr. Rubald introduced Kimberly Elliott. Ms. Elliott is a contracted staff person, hired on a temporary, part-time basis. She will be working on special projects to include a media plan and website development for the Program, along with semi-annual and annual reports.

Member Koch introduced new USFWS staff member, Lee Corum. Lee came to the Service from Portland, OR. His position is funded to address a variety of issues, including and specifically Energy. Member Koch expressed his upset after reviewing a position letter by the Nevada Cattleman's Association, rereading the Eureka County Commission letter signed by Chairman Goicoechea to Director Wasley on the state's comments, and read in detail the state's comments. He directed his question, as members of the Nevada Cattleman's Association to Member Boies, Member Lister and Chairman Goicoechea and expressed that he had significant concerns that he wanted to address at some point.

6. DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF REVISIONS TO THE STATE PLAN, AND THE STATE'S ALTERNATIVE "E" REGARDING WILD HORSES AND BURROS FOR INCLUSION IN THE BLM/USFS SUB-REGIONAL EIS, AND ALSO THE STATE PLAN.

A. Mr. McGowan with the SETT, lead the discussion and reviewed the revisions to the State Plan and the State's Alternative "E" regarding Wild Horses and Burros. He introduced Allan Sheppard, State Wild Horse and Burros Specialist, Nevada BLM. Mr. Sheppard provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Council. A discussion ensued regarding the presentation and the population data. A full account of the discussion is available through the audio file on the Program's website.

Member Koch appealed to members of the Council to act in a specific manner; addressing the two major threat factors to Sage-grouse, adequacy of regulatory mechanisms and habitat loss and fragmentation. The Service believes there is evidence that suggests use of sagebrush ecosystems by horses can impact habitat quality for Sage-grouse. Member Koch thinks the Council has a very important opportunity, and the State of Nevada is in a strong position, to help improve the adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms for horses and burros through specified law and policy, in addition to possible budget and social and political forces. Begin by advocating that BLM meet the AML as soon as possible, demonstrate the efficiency of the AML numbers and that it is adequate to conserve sagebrush ecosystems. Also proactively reach out through state government to openly support and advocate for the BLM to complete these tasks as soon as possible. Failure to do so risks not meeting the needs of the Service in their assessment under the ESA.

The Council reviewed the staff report and considered revised language for sections of the State Plan and also the State Alternative (Alt. E) pertaining to wild horses and burros. Proposed language was discussed and changes were captured within the document and reviewed on the overhead projector. A copy of the revised document has been placed as (Attachment A) to the minutes.

Chairman Goicoechea entertained a motion to approve the revised Wild Horses and Burros section of the State EIS Alternative, as amended, so moved by Member Lacy; seconded by Member Lister, motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION**

Break for lunch 12:45 – 2:00 p.m.

7. DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF DRAFT GREATER SAGE-GROUSE MAPPING PRODUCTS AS WELL AS CHANGES MADE FOLLOWING THE MOST RECENT “EXPERT REVIEW TEAM” (ERT) MEETING

A. Lara Neill with the SETT, provided a staff report and reviewed the Draft Habitat Suitability Index map, Draft Suitable Habitat Map and Draft Management Categories map as submitted to the BLM/FS as part of the State Alternative revisions. In addition, staff reviewed changes to the habitat map and management categories maps subsequent to an Expert Review Team meeting. A full account of the discussion is available through the audio recording on the Program’s website. ***No action taken.**

Member Koch commented that he felt there should be consistency between the wild horse and burros section and livestock grazing section of the plan; sighting several areas in the plan he did not feel were consistent. Member Boies disagreed and said they are separate and should be discussed and acted upon separately. Member Nappe said they are lumped together in many circles and have similar impacts. Koch agreed with both and encouraged the Council to review both sections for consistency to ensure credibility in the plan. Chairman Goicoechea reminded the members of the Council that this agenda item has been closed.

8. 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. One action occurred during the meeting.

B. Determination of any specific items the Council would like to work on at their April 8th, 2014 meeting, which is the next scheduled Council meeting.

- Letter for NACO lawsuit on wild horse and burro;
- Possible letter to congressional delegation regarding wild horse and burro;
- Water rights and management – Invite State Engineer and BLM Hydrologist;
- Predation; it was noted by staff that this may not be completed for the April meeting;
- Update on Sage-grouse bill being brought forward by NV US Senators Reid & Heller.

9. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. US Fish and Wildlife Service – No update.

B. Bureau of Land Management – Mr. Morales stated 17,000 comments have been received and a three week review process will begin on March 17.

C. US Forest Service – Member Dunkelberger introduced Cheva Gabor, Forest Service Capitol City Coordinator, temporarily for 120 days, who replaced Terry Frolew who retired. Analyzing comments on the Bi-State Draft EIS that was out for comment until January 17; approximately 220 comments and several thousand form letters were received. They will produce a final EIS and proposed plan amendments for the Humboldt-Toiyabe Forest and Carson District in June. He will provide a presentation to the Council at that time.

D. Other – No update.

10. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Jim Lawrence commented that the SETT and Environmental Incentives had a good meeting last Tuesday to continue updating the manual. EI sketched the work plan for the next several months. They will start truthing the model and performing case studies and will return to report to the Council.

B. Department of Wildlife – No update.

C. Department of Agriculture – Eddmaps contract is complete; the phone app will allow the public, members of the conservation districts and the general resource community to identify invasives on the ground and submit them to DOA weed specialists to investigate and provide further invasive mapping. \$200,000 of funding was secured for invasive projects and project proposals will be vetted.

D. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – No update.

E. Other – No update.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment.

12. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Goicoechea moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned by acclamation at 2:48 p.m.