



STATE OF NEVADA  
**SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL**  
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### **APPROVED MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2015  
**Time:** 8:30 AM  
**Place:** Nevada Attorney General's Office – Conference Room

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/)

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**Council Members Present:** Allen Biaggi (left at 11:27 a.m.), Steven Boies, Leo Drozdoff, Bill Dunkelberger, JJ Goicoechea, Genevieve Skora for Mary Grimm, Gerry Emm, Starla Lacy (arrived at 9:03 a.m., left at 2:00 p.m.), Bevan Lister, Chris MacKenzie, Raul Morales for John Ruhs, Tina Nappe, Sherman Swanson, and Tony Wasley

**Council Members Absent:** Jim Barbee

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 8:41 a.m.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT** – Karen Boeger, Nevada Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (NV BHA), expressed concerns over two provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act. One of the provisions is to delay a decision regarding a sage-grouse listing for 10 years. The second provision is to withhold funds for implementation of any sage-grouse EIS by individual states. NV BHA is concerned about how these will affect the State Plan and the States' efforts to this point. Ms. Boeger encouraged the Council to speak out in favor of removing these provisions to Nevada's Congressional Delegation.

Chairman Goicoechea introduced Ray Dotson, Nevada State Conservationists, and Astor Broozer, United States Department of Agriculture. They both spoke briefly about their partnership with the Council.

Bill Dunkelberger, US Forest Service, introduced Margaret Bailey who is the acting State Liaison for Nevada for the US Forest Service.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

**3. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF AGENDA - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

A. Member Boies moved to approve the Agenda; seconded by Vice-chair MacKenzie; motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION**

**4. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES – \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

A. Member Biaggi moved to approve the meeting minutes from June 12, 2015; seconded by Vice-chair MacKenzie; motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION**

Member Emm moved to approve the meeting minutes from July 9, 2015; seconded by Member Boies; motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION**

**5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

A. Member Emm stated the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Nevada Indian Commission have been working with tribes from western Nevada and other tribal organizations concerning the cutting and clearing of Pinyon-Juniper (PJ). This is moving forward by the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The issue was elevated to the EOC, as a result there will be three listening sessions held in Reno, Yerington, and Bishop for tribes and others to speak about their concerns. There will also be a conference held in November. Member Emm stated noted one of the discussion issues is how to implement the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) along with the best available science. The US Forest Service has offered an opportunity to implement a co-management plan between them and tribes. This is only on the Bi-state. Member Emm asked the Council to allow the SETT to participate in the discussions and the meetings.

Leo Drozdoff, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), asked if the dates of the listening sessions and the conference have been set. Member Emm noted the listening sessions will happen the second week in September 2015 with three sessions in four days. He will let Council know the final schedule. Mr. Dunkelberger noted one goal of the listening sessions is to help inform an agenda for a workshop/conference to be held at UNR in November.

Kacey KC, SETT, noted the team was at the Bi-state meeting and they plan on attending the listening sessions and the workshop. They have talked to some tribes about getting the traditional use areas mapped into the Strategic Action Plan (SAP).

Chair Goicoechea asked Raul Morales, BLM, and Mr. Dunkelberger if any of the traditional use areas have been mapped by their agencies. Mr. Dunkelberger noted the US Forest Service has been successful in getting information from some tribes, including GIS information. Some tribes are reluctant, which is understandable.

Member Nappe asked about the different encroachment phases concerning production of pine nuts. Mr. Dunkelberger noted it would be a combination of active management and leaving some areas alone. The US Forest Service would look at management practices that would keep the woodland healthy and maximize pine nut production.

Member Emm stated one of the themes is to inform and educate tribes so they will not be single-focused on pine nut production. There is a need for them to look at things in a holistic manner.

Mr. Morales stated the Carson City BLM office has been working closely with tribes on this issue. The Bi-state is a good test model for the Greater Sage-grouse as the same issues will arise.

Ms. KC noted there were four letters submitted in Council meeting packets.

Member Lister stated there were no surprises in the BLM evaluation of the Governor's Consistency Review letter. He thanked the SETT for their hard work in getting the information to the Governor and thanked the Governor's Office for a straightforward and effective consistency review.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

## **6. FEDERAL UPDATE PROVIDED BY CONGRESSMAN MARK AMODEI**

A. Congressman Amodei was unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances.

## **7. PRESENTATION ON PROGRESS OF SEP MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES MAP ( August 2014) UPDATE**

A. Mr. Mark Ricca, Wildlife Biologist, USGS, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation to update the Council on the habitat modeling and mapping process, which included: an overview of the process; new data layers and targeted products that will be incorporated into the new annual habitat maps and seasonal maps; and workflow timeline and delivery date for the products. Councilmembers asked questions during the presentation. The USGS will provide a draft of the revised annual map and new seasonal maps by September 1, and may do some additional internal review before releasing the final product. According to Mr. Ricca, ideally the map should be updated annually to stay relevant, however, that it cost-prohibitive and time consuming, therefore, it should be done every 5 to 10 years.

Mr. Morales noted there will be concerns about the validity of the maps and how accurate they are if they are only updated every 5 to 10 years.

Mr. Jim Lawrence, DCNR, noted it is the SETT's intention to always use the best available science. The mitigation system is based on using the maps as the initial guiding document; however, on the ground verification is the larger input variable as far as determining mitigation. The use of the map in the EIS is different because it includes land use allocations, which was not the intended use when it was created. Currently whenever a map is updated in real time, there needs to be a Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendment done for the EIS, which makes it difficult to use the best available science. The BLM and the US Forest Service need to make adjustments as to how maps are updated in the EIS in order for them to stay accurate and current. Mr. Morales noted the maps and map changes are topics being discussed in Washington D.C., especially concerning the adaptability of the plan and the use of best available science. The reason it is such a challenge is if the BLM goes out to the public to show maps and the associated allocations and then changes to new maps with new areas and associated allocations, the public does not have an opportunity to weigh in on the new information. The solicitors believe there needs to be a plan amendment to deal with this issue.

Member Swanson asked if there is an implementation plan done that has NEPA associated with it, if the NEPA could be used for a new map and this could provide an opportunity for the public to comment through the Environmental Assessment (EA) for implementation. Mr. Morales noted that could be an opportunity for smaller areas, including FIAT areas.

Mr. Dunkelberger noted site-specific NEPA could be adopted on the most current science map for individual projects however to update information for the entire state, a major map update would need a plan amendment.

Chair Goicoechea asked if the BLM could do an Instruction Memorandum (IM) when it comes to a significant shift as it runs through the process. Mr. Morales noted the typical life of an IM is one to two years. Theoretically, if it is being done to buy time to do a larger appropriate process, in this case doing a state-wide mapping change that is significant, Mr. Morales is not sure if an IM would work. The last thing BLM wants to think about is a plan amendment at this point however BLM wants the flexibility to use the best available science.

Mr. Lawrence clarified the timeline of product delivery from the USGS. They would deliver draft versions on September 1 and then there would be a 30-day internal peer review. He asked if the USGS is comfortable releasing the draft maps to the SETT and the Council during the 30-day peer review. Mr. Ricca confirmed this is correct. Mr. Ricca noted the Council and SETT should wait until after the peer review to share the information.

Member Lister asked for clarification since the model is already built will updating the information in the future be extensive or will a new model need to be built. Mr. Ricca stated that if they are using the exact same model, it can be updated quickly.

Ms. KC spoke about the funding for the USGS information/maps asking the Council if they would like the SETT to bring funding opportunities before them for review. Mr. Morales noted information sharing is important to understanding processes and bringing this information to Council is beneficial. Chair Goicoechea stated there needs to be assurances that when there is money spent the requested products are delivered and incorporated into the federal agencies' planning processes. Mr. Morales stated this is a good point.

Ms. Boeger asked about a resilient and resistant layer for the map. Mr. Ricca noted this layer was not incorporated into the map. The next step in the process will be incorporating some of the FIAT classifications in terms of recovery time on disturbances. Sandy Gregory, BLM, explained how the information could be combined using the FIAT data sets.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

## **8. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON FIRE AND INVASIVES ASSESSMENT TOOL (FIAT) OUTCOMES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES – \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Sandy Gregory, Head Fuels Program Lead, BLM, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation to update the Council on FIAT outcomes and implementation strategies, including: a background on what FIAT is and how it is used; the timeline for FIAT; and a FIAT process overview. Ms. Gregory noted access to FIAT Reports can be through the BLM website ([www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)) by searching "FIAT". Ms. Gregory reviewed the report and how it is used. She answered Council questions during the presentation.

Member Nappe asked if all the projects they have now been cleared through NEPA. Ms. Gregory noted not all are cleared through NEPA. Mr. Morales noted the Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA) will be a top priority for implementation of these projects. Member Nappe asked if SFAs are a priority and if they have to go through the entire EIS process, if the state has identified the priority areas, such as weeds and fire, is there some way that an EIS will not take two or three years. Mr. Morales noted this is one of big areas being talked about. The BLM is looking at the cumulative effects. There could be some areas, depending on if a NEPA has been done already and what information is included,

perhaps an EA can be done instead of an EIS. He anticipates there will be some EIS efforts as well as some EA efforts. The BLM implementation team is attempting to determine how this will be done.

Member Swanson suggested the agency strengthen their partnerships with the rangeland management and the grazing management programs. Mr. Morales noted the key thing right now is to identify the work and prioritize it. In the Priority Planning Areas (PPA), there is a list of things that are identified in the FIAT. There is a bigger engagement both internally and externally through NEPA. Each PPA may have a unique situation beyond what the FIAT did and the NEPA process is a way to deal with this.

Member Lister asked if there was a NEPA process done on the FIAT. Mr. Morales noted that the FIAT is an assessment tool. The NEPA process will come when the projects are put together on the landscape. Member Lister noted the presentation reviewed the FIAT as an accepted management strategy and there is a discrepancy on how the public input issue is administered. Ms. Gregory stated the intent of the FIAT tool is to inform, these are potential areas where treatments could be done. There was an agreement and from that agreement is where the FIAT process was created. She also noted the NEPA process is where local involvement will be important. Mr. Morales stated once the BLM finishes the prioritization it will be brought forward to the Council to show them where they are in the process.

Chair Goicoechea noted this will be an issue. It is going to be difficult to perform NEPA and explain the FIAT assessment. This is a local government concern.

Member Swanson spoke about three stewardship programs put into place in 1978, noting their most-effective tool was collaboration. He also explained how CRM and NEPA could be used together.

Mr. Morales noted the frustration and stated that the BLM needed to show they had a plan for dealing with invasive species and fire rather than just saying they had a plan. The BLM had to be more specific in the EIS. There has been nothing done on the ground. There will be public engagement in the process. They are still discussing the best way to do this. What has happened within the Bi-state will influence what happens with the Greater Sage-grouse.

Mr. Lawrence asked for clarification on the prioritization and if it was coming from the BLM National Implementation Team. He asked where the local state involvement is when the prioritization is coming from Washington D.C. Mr. Morales noted there are two things, local engagement in prioritization versus local engagement on what happens on the ground. The Washington Office is looking at the prioritization of where the BLM needs to go first with funds and providing directions on where to begin in the field. Mr. Lawrence asked if local governments or the state will be involved in this process. Mr. Morales noted the Washington Office will take care of the prioritization piece which is not completed. He also noted not everything can be sage-grouse local area centered because there is a lot of landscape in Nevada so there will be work outside of that area. Right now there is a focus on getting the plan out.

Member Swanson noted that if there is no involvement in the creation process there will be frustration by the public. Member Boies asked for clarification on if projects are just in the planning stage or if they have already happened. Ms. Gregory noted there are some ongoing projects done through other programs. Member Boies asked if there was Cooperating Agreements in place for landowners on these projects. Ms. Gregory noted there was. She reviewed some of the projects as an example.

Member Boies asked if fire crews have access to the map and Ms. Gregory noted that they do.

Member MacKenzie asked if a fire occurs in an area is that area bumped up in priority in terms of rehab. Ms. Gregory noted they have 20-days to get a rehab plan done. Once the rehab plans are completed, they are submitted and are taken into consideration. Ms. Gregory has not seen the criteria on this noting there are different programs where pots of money come from and fire emergency stabilization and rehabilitation is a different program. Rehab is important and a priority. Mr. Morales stated the goal is to restore or stabilize landscapes after a fire. The Secretary is attempting to blend a lot of the funding.

Robin Boies, Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko (SANE), stated when it comes to NEPA finding reasons to do programmatic EAs in areas where there is a functioning local group trying to build resources and capacity should be seriously considered. There have been presentations to the BLM at the state level for several years about NEPA Strike Teams. Because of the amount of federal lands in Nevada, it makes sense to have NEPA teams in the field that can assist with completing the backlog. She also noted there are examples available of local organizations doing their own EAs working through the federal agencies (e.g. the Diablo Trust, Flagstaff). She also noted Stewardship Contracts is a tool available through the BLM to use. Ms. Gregory noted Stewardship Contracts are something to be explored as well as other contracting methods. Mr. Morales noted the BLM has been looking at the idea of NEPA Strike Teams. He also stated that local capacity is a major issue, e.g. who will feed the NEPA Strike Teams. There may need to be re-prioritization of the BLM's current work. Mr. Morales suggested the Council form a smaller team to look at the best way to engage local area groups not only in the prioritization piece, but in how to complete the work on the ground. Member Swanson supported Mr. Morales' suggestion on creating a smaller group.

Chair Goicoechea asked for direction from Bryan Stockton, Nevada Attorney General's Office, about how the Council should establish the group. Mr. Stockton stated the Council could appoint a working team to partner with the BLM as a public body through the open meeting law, or create a sub-committee. Chair Goicoechea noted he wanted to keep the group small, fewer than five members. Mr. Stockton noted it should be made clear the group is not a decision-making group.

Mr. Drozdoff asked for clarification on if the group would be able to include other members of the public and Mr. Stockton stated it could. Mr. Drozdoff noted there were people not on the Council who would be helpful for the discussion.

Chair Goicoechea asked Mr. Morales about timeline for this group. Mr. Morales stated it should occur soon. The sage-grouse plan implementation will be rolled out to the BLM offices internally by the end of August. This group could start meeting in early September. Chair Goicoechea noted his interest in being a part of the group on the local government level.

Member Swanson mentioned the Conservation Districts asked for funding from NRCS for coordinated resource management plans and this could work along with this issue. Chair Goicoechea stated that Mr. Tim Rubald, Nevada Society of Range Management and Conservation Districts, and/or someone from his group to participate in the working group. Chair Goicoechea asked Member Emm to participate and he agreed. Member Emm noted tribes need to be involved as well. Member Swanson stated he would be able to participate. Mr. Stockton clarified the BLM would need to initiate the meetings.

Member Boies stated there is a lot of information already available, e.g. county plans, etc. These need to be submitted to the BLM. Mr. Morales noted the BLM want to get input on the priority settings as far as Nevada, some of that will come from the Washington D.C. office, and depending on the location of the priority, how to ensure all the information for that location, including plans, etc., are pulled together through NEPA. Mr. Morales will set up a meeting.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

Break 11:27 a.m. to 12:40 p.m.

**9. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION CONCERNING THE STATE PLAN'S DRAFT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN (SAP) - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Ms. KC provided a brief overview with Sheila Anderson, SETT, providing a detailed explanation on the latest draft of the SAP (dated August 11, 2015), addressing Council comments/questions/suggestions.

Ms. KC noted the SAP is based upon the Bi-state Plan and the SETT wants to ensure the format works for the Council.

Ms. Anderson stated items within the SAP come from the 2014 Conservation Plan. The introduction focuses on the purpose of the plan. She also pointed to four items included to verbalize the goals of the SAP: first, is developing the MOU with the federal agencies for implementation of the Conservation Credit System (CCS); second, engaging stakeholders; third, empower local planning groups; and fourth, identify and prioritize landscape-scale.

Member Boies asked for clarification on the term "Local Area Working Groups (LAWGS)" with Ms. Anderson noting this term would include a number of diverse entities beyond how the term has been in the past. There was discussion about this with Member Nappe asking for criteria to be included identifying these groups.

Ms. Anderson reviewed the layout of the SAP, including goals, strategies, and actions.

Ms. Anderson stated one of the included actions is having an annual forum where participants check-in on what they have accomplished and there are updates on science. This would be open to public participation and would be a permanent action state-wide.

Ms. Anderson suggested the Council review the idea of developing a Service First Agreement, which is also used in the Bi-state. Mr. Dunkelberger noted the Council could use the Bi-state form with minor changes. This allows agencies to cross-over with funding and resources to implement projects on the ground. He noted it streamlines the ability to share staff or share funding on projects. Tony Wasley, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), asked if this extended to contracts. Mr. Dunkelberger noted it does, as long as the funds are within \$1,000 they can just off-set the costs. There does not have to be an agreement and this would be in addition to agreements already in place.

There was discussion on using the Division of Forestry nursery for local seed and how finding seeds can be difficult. Mr. Morales noted the BLM will be rolling out their National Seed Strategy soon and the BLM works toward buying locally grown, locally-collected and locally planted seeds. Agencies are recognizing seeds from other areas may not do well in the Nevada climate. Partnering with this nursery and getting private landowners to grow the seed is exactly where the BLM wants to go. They will be hiring a position dedicated to these efforts for the Great Basin.

Mr. Wasley talked about working with the BLM on a seed bank in eastern Nevada. Mr. Morales noted they hope to have the MOU on this signed by their annual meeting in October.

Mr. Rubald spoke about being on a ranch that harvested its own seed. The rancher's seed harvests come up with 98 percent of pure live seed. It is used when rehab work is done. He noted the

technology is there, however, the challenge is trying to get ranchers to do this unless there is an economic benefit.

Chair Goicoechea asked Mr. Morales how long seeds could be stored. Mr. Morales stated if they are good quality seeds, they can last a couple of years and some can last multiple years.

Member Swanson asked if the information being provided to LAWGs and others would be available through a website. Ms. Anderson noted that in her experience a lot of the groups do not have the GIS capability available to download the information. Member Swanson asked if it would be worth it to have the SETT put the information on a server so that other people can download it even if they have to go to agency offices to do it. It would be available to those who do have the ability to do so as a planning tool. Chair Goicoechea noted this would help local governments, who may have GIS capability, and people could go to their local government offices for the information. Ms. KC stated this could be problematic as there may be some layers that could not be posted because of licensing issues.

Member Swanson suggested having a member of the SETT, the BLM, and the newly created working group meet and discuss LAWGs and the collaborative process.

There was discussion on the SAP with Council proposing changes and additions, including adding more structure to the section on the LAWGs and including a flowchart identifying responsibilities and processes.

Member Boies noted he is concerned about getting the word out to people not involved in LAWGs. There needs to be outreach to make contact with these individuals. Ms. Anderson stated this idea would work in the section on education and outreach.

Mr. Rubald noted the LAWGs barely exist and he knows of two active ones, and he is not sure how active they really are. The Conservation Districts (CDs) are active. Every supervisor in a Conservation District lives within the district which is required by law. Mr. Rubald is concerned about referring to LAWGs as if they are functioning entities that get a lot done. There is the existing structure in place with the CDs, which have been around since the 1930s. This is where the Council should focus as there is authority written into the statute concerning CDs. Ms. Anderson noted there may be an issue with using the term "LAWGs". Ms. KC noted the way they are referring to LAWGs includes many more groups than the previous definition included. Perhaps they can revisit the use of the term.

Mr. Wasley noted the LAWG model used in the Bi-state seems to be effective. He asked what the difference is in the landscape participation-wise between the Bi-state and the Greater Sage-grouse. Ms. Anderson stated it is the individuals involved and their commitment.

Chair Goicoechea noted the Council needs to allow the LAWGs to identify themselves and work in their areas. Mr. Wasley stated his concern about getting the right people to even come to the table to represent their own interests. This is a bigger challenge. Ms. Anderson stated it has to be reinvigorated and inspire others to participate. The hope is in providing this information as a tool it will offer some incentive for participation.

There was discussion concerning the Conservation Districts.

Ms. Boies spoke about SANE noting that it works as a working group under the local CD. The CDs are organized under a more community-oriented system than boundaries drawn on a map. The groups need to come together and be autonomous. They will each be different. There needs to be some accountability built in with the diverse stakeholders.



Mr. Lawrence noted the draft SAP being broken up by BSU does not mean that the boundaries of the BSU correlate with LAWGs. The BSU level is a way to transfer data at a smaller scale that is important for planning purposes. There could be multiple LAWGs for each BSU.

Chair Goicoechea clarified what the SETT needs from the Council. Ms. KC noted that if Councilmembers have proposed changes or anything they feel should be added concerning the SAP they should send them to her and the SETT will work on compiling the information into another draft to bring to the Council for review.

Mr. Rathbun noted that 20 years ago he worked on resource management and these efforts included participation with local citizens and producers. About 10 years ago they did the same thing on sage-grouse management. The local plans that were created as a result of this work were sent to the Governor and the state and nothing was ever done with them. The hope is the SETT is working with LAWGs is not another effort in futility.

Chair Goicoechea stated he would provide his comments in writing, including questions he will address to Mr. Dunkelberger and Mr. Morales.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

## **10. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DRAFTED ON FLIPCHARTS 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.

### Approved Items

- Approved Agenda for August 13, 2015
- Approved meeting minutes from June 12, 2015
- Approved meeting minutes from July 9, 2015

B. The Council determined specific items they would like to work on at their next scheduled Council meeting.

- Federal Update – Congressman Amodei
- Strategic Action Plan (SAP) – On the Ground Communication/Action
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- FIAT Working Group Update
- Draft USGS Maps
- Updated State Management Categories Map and Seasonal Habitat Maps
- MOU with Federal Agencies
- Review of Debits and Credits Projects
- Legislative Monies – Review of Criteria for Projects

The Council decided the date of their next meeting:

- Thursday, October 15, 2015, location to be determined

Items still needing dates for a future agenda:

- Reports from Different Agencies on Sage-grouse items – Future Item

- Updated Pinyon Juniper Layer for Coates Map
- Review adding areas of the Bi-state to be eligible for the CCS
- Review a comparison between the BEA and the State Plan, specifically looking at ratios
- New Versions of HQT and CCS Manual
- Concept of SETT to host a central database for the State on conservation actions
- Establish measurables for the next two years

During the discussion on meeting dates, Genevieve Skora, US Fish and Wildlife Service, noted there will be information on the listing by September 30, 2015.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

## **11. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:**

- A. US Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service) – Ms. Skora noted that Mary Grimm expressed her regrets for not being able to attend the meeting.
- B. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Mr. Morales stated the BLM is continuing their implementation training to their field units. The feedback so far is that it is needed and appreciated. The feedback reiterates the need for external outreach once the Record of Decision (ROD) is signed.
- C. US Forest Service – Mr. Dunkelberger stated final ROD is coming out September 15. Also, there are fires in California, Oregon and Washington. Federal agencies are at preparedness level five, which means if there is a fire in Nevada there may not be a lot of resources available. As the US Forest Service and the BLM are working on finalizing the Bi-state sage-grouse ROD, they resolved the objections that could be resolved. The TEK listening sessions and the coordinating conference dates have not been set. The US Forest Service and NRS have committed funding for these events and are looking for others to contribute if they can. The total cost will be \$10,000 to \$15,000.
- D. Other – No update.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

## **12. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:**

- A. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – Mr. Drozdoff noted all the states that did final protest letters received responses and are comparing notes and figuring out next steps as individual states or as a group.
- B. Department of Wildlife (NDOW) – Mr. Wasley provided an update on the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program on DOD lands. The NDOW, the Nevada Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Districts, the BLM and NRCS are protecting three parcels of Greater Sage-grouse habitat along Fallon Range Training Complex. The award is just over \$2 million with another \$4 million in partner funding to protect just over 11,000 acres of sage-grouse habitat. This is one of three projects selected nationally.

Mr. Wasley provided an update on the Lek survey. During the spring of 2015, 965 leks were surveyed out of 892 known lek locations in Nevada. Just under 12,000 males were observed on

559 leks that were considered active resulting in an average of 21.3 males per lek. Overall the attendance rate was 19 percent greater than that of 2014.

Mr. Wasley asked about five projects submitted to the SETT to use funding allocated by the legislature (\$2 million). The projects total approximately \$390,000. He asked if there was a competitive process for the monies. Mr. Lawrence noted the legislature appropriated \$2 million to do project work to capitalize on the CCS. One million dollars in Year One (money will carry over) and another million in Year Two. The SETT has put out feelers to other state agencies to identify what types of projects may be available. This project list, once complete, would be compiled and brought back to the Council for strategic direction on where the monies should be invested. The SETT would like to get it started quickly to generate credits as quickly as possible. The projects are restoration, enhancement and protection projects that will create uplift in areas that will be run through the CCS so there is a sense of how many credits will be generated and then those credits can be sold to generate additional revenue to do additional restoration. There was discussion about this with Member Nappe noting the money needs to have some accountability attached to it. Mr. Lawrence noted the funded projects will need to go through the CCS and the HQT. Any credit that is sold, the revenue goes back into the system. Vice-chair MacKenzie stated his concern with state monies being used for state projects stating that private participants should deal with private monies. Mr. Wasley stated The US Fish and Wildlife Service expressed concern with additionality and explained the type of projects submitted by NDOW for review. Ms. KC stated submitted projects are both on public and private lands.

C. Department of Agriculture – No update.

D. Conservation Districts (CD) Program – No update.

E. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT) – Ms. KC noted the SETT is working on a training roll out for state agencies internal to the SETT and the Conservation Districts. This will be completed within the next couple of months. The SETT is also working on getting on agendas for meetings such as the Cattlemen’s Association. They have been attending the BLM trainings.

The SETT will be collecting data from the Boies Ranch and once the data is collected, they will have their first completed project through the system. By the Council’s October meeting they will have two debit projects that have been run through desktop analysis and the Boies project. The SETT will bring a report back to the Council on what they are finding.

The SETT is working on the MOU with federal agencies and hope to get it finalized within the next month.

The SETT is waiting on The Service to provide a timeline for the review of the Nevada CCS.

Mr. Dunkelberger asked if his staff could attend the training that the SETT is developing and Ms. KC noted the training will be available to everyone.

Member Boies asked if the Council would be reviewing the MOU. Ms. KC noted the Council would review the MOU and if it was finalized before the October meeting it would be sent out via email. There was discussion concerning the Open Meeting Laws. The Council decided it would be okay to do a phone meeting concerning the MOU if it is completed before the October Council meeting. Mr. Dunkelberger stated the hope is it is signed shortly after September 15.

F. Other – No update.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

- 13. PUBLIC COMMENT** – Mr. Rathbun stated he wanted to encourage the Governor to pursue some sort of protest on the reaction of the BLM to the Governor's Consistency letter. He also noted during the FIAT discussion there was no mention of the use of grazing to control fires. This is an option that should be explored.

Member Lister stated the response of the BLM to the Governor's Consistency Review letter was expected, but unfortunate. As a citizen, he would hope a federal agency would have a little more regard for the governor of a state rather than to discount him completely. He also participated in a tour to look at a herd management area. It is disturbing the amount of time and money being spent to address sagebrush ecosystem when a federal agency has a statutory obligation to control the wild horse population that is destroying sagebrush habitat and ignoring their responsibilities. There is no accountability.

A full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website.

- 14. ADJOURNMENT** – Member Swanson made a motion to adjourn; meeting adjourned by acclamation at 2:47 p.m. **\*ACTION**