



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
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APPROVED MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2016
Time: 9:00 AM
Place: Legislative Building, Room 4100, Carson City, NV

A full video recording of this meeting is accessible through the following website -
http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Sagebrush_Ecosystem_Council_Meeting/

Council Members Present: Meghan Brown for Jim Barbee (who left at 9:44 a.m. and returned at 1:26 p.m.), Allen Biaggi, Steven Boies, Bill Dunkelberger, Starla Lacy, Bevin Lister, Ted Koch for Mary Grimm, Tina Nappe, Sherman Swanson, Gerry Emm, John Ruhs and John Tull for Tony Wasley

Council Members Absent: JJ Goicoechea, Chris MacKenzie, Mary Grimm, and Tony Wasley

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Acting Chair Biaggi called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Kay Scherer, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), introduced herself as the Interim Director of DCNR. She also announced that after speaking with the Governor’s Office, Jim Lawrence, DCNR, would fill the vacancy left by Leo Drozdoff, DCNR, on the Council as the DCNR Ex-officio member. She spoke about her experience and her support for the Council and the work the Council is accomplishing.

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 ACTION***

A. Member Boies moved to approve the Agenda for September 13, 2016; seconded by Member Emm; motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION**

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

Member Swanson moved to approve the meeting minutes from June 29, 2016; seconded by Member Nappe; Member Lister abstained from voting as he was not in attendance at the June 29, 2016 meeting; motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION**

5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE

A. Member Boies noted scheduling meetings has become problematic and suggested keeping the regular meeting dates would be beneficial.

Mr. Lawrence spoke about a letter addressed to Chair JJ Goicoechea from Mary Grim and Ted Koch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service), distributed before the meeting. He reviewed the content of the letter. There was a meeting on September 12, 2016, between Mr. Lawrence and The Service to discuss the letter. They identified some areas and ideas for moving forward confidently with implementing the Conservation Credit System (CCS).

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

6. PRESENTATION ON THE NEWMONT CONSERVATION AGREEMENT

A. Jeff White, Newmont Mining Corporation (Newmont), provided an update on Newmont and the Conservation Agreement (Agreement) signed by the state, state agencies, Newmont and federal agencies. Newmont worked in partnership with key federal and state agencies to create an appropriate agreement to provide for conservation certainty for the state and federal agencies and business certainties for Newmont. They agreed to the signed Agreement.

He provided background on the creation of the Agreement and who took part in identifying key components of it. Newmont wanted emphasis on results and to ensure they could evaluate their actions and make adjustments or plan changes as required. They wanted the Agreement to be simple, transparent, consistent, flexible and adaptive as things change on the landscape. They will test the Agreement with pilot projects to ensure it works as intended. He acknowledged the key is the use of the CCS. The Agreement spells out the responsibilities, obligations and commitments of the various participants. Newmont looks to develop and implement project plans through the Agreement in consort with the participants of the Agreement, but also with other resource experts (e.g. University of Nevada Reno [UNR], the Conservation Districts [CDs], etc.) The project plans would be prepared, reviewed, endorsed, and implemented by Newmont; monitored collectively from a perspective of conservation gain and the generation of conservation credits that Newmont could use to offset the effects of the ongoing mineral exploration development and grazing operations. He reviewed some projects Newmont is considering as pilot projects.

Mr. White addressed Councilmembers' questions and/or concerns.

Member Boies asked about the timing of the Agreement and whether the Council should have been involved before it was signed. He asked if having Council involvement was a consideration by any of the signers. Mr. White noted he could not speak for other signers, however, upon reflection Newmont should not have been presumptive in their communications that involvement with the agencies, the Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT) and their presentations to the Council constituted engagement with the Council. He apologized for the procedure oversight.

Member Lacy asked for clarification on if Newmont would be using the CCS for their projects. Mr. White noted originally Newmont was looking at creating their own credit system since then things have changed including the creation of the State Plan and the CCS. Therefore, they changed their approach to include the CCS in the Agreement. Newmont's intent is that using their resources they would generate conservation credits principally for their use in regards to mineral explorations and associated development. If there should be surplus credits they would be used for Newmont's future growth that is currently not defined in a project. If there are any remaining credits after that they would be available for others. He noted their principle driver is the use of the CCS.

There was discussion about the Agreement including the language used within it. Mr. Lawrence noted the choice of language in the Agreement concerning the CCS is a result of Newmont working on their own system before the creation of the CCS and some of the language was also reviewed and added by legal representatives. The CCS is still new and from Newmont's perspective, what if the CCS is not functional in two years and they have an agreement that is completely bound by the CCS.

John Ruhs, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), noted from BLM's perspective the Agreement is a good opportunity and a good framework to get started on.

There was discussion on the Agreement and Newmont's commitment to using the CCS.

Member Lister asked Mr. Koch to explain how and why the Agreement was supported by him, but the CCS does not have the same support. Mr. Koch noted The Service is looking for an opportunity to support the CCS. With this Agreement, Newmont has provided them with this opportunity.

There was some discussion with Mr. Lawrence acknowledging The Service did have some concerns with the CCS, including the same some Councilmembers have expressed (e.g. durability and additionality of the CCS on public lands). This agreement is going to provide an opportunity to work collaboratively and answer some of the lingering concerns.

Mr. White noted the language in the Agreement concerning the CCS was a result of Newmont wanting to maintain flexibility from a business standpoint. The language was intended to address the possibility of an immediate need for credits that may be out of sync temporally with the assessment side of things which may drive them to use other tools.

Mr. Koch asked Member Boies if he would like The Service's help with making the CCS a success and how that looks. Member Boies noted that it would take collaboration from all partners. The Service is instrumental especially through communication. Mr. Koch stated The Service still has unanswered questions about the CCS and they have mitigation policies coming out from their agency. The Service does not manage the species or the land so they need a specific overture from the state to try and help them fit in with their evolving policies, especially when they are four years away from their reassessment.

Bryan Stockton, Nevada Attorney General's Office (AG), stated the meeting was moving beyond the agenda topic.

Mr. Koch noted the system is quite evolved and The Service is very interested in supporting it.

Mr. Ruhs stated the BLM is committed to work with the state on the CCS. Whatever the BLM has to do to answer questions and to bring other agencies together with them is what they are willing to do.

Member Lister noted in his reading of the law plans/programs like these are the Council's responsibility to approve. This action puts the Council in a precarious position where they were not involved to any extent in the drafting of the Agreement. He is unsure of the role of the Council in relation to this Agreement.

Acting Chair Biaggi requested Mr. Lawrence coordinate with Mr. White and come to the Council periodically for a status update with particular interest on how the Agreement is interacting with the CCS. Mr. Lawrence noted this was the original intent and he would coordinate with Mr. White. He stated the next step is to develop pilot projects for implementation. Those projects will be brought before the Council for review.

Mr. White noted Newmont would be keeping the Council informed on their progress both directly and indirectly through the SETT and the DCNR.

Member Nappe stated that given the difficulty it is for the Council to set up meetings, and with the policies and protocols in place, the Council may be seeing more of this type of thing in the future if they want the Sagebrush Program to move forward. She suggested the Council revisit exactly what they would like to come before them prior to something being signed.

Bill Dunkelberger, U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), asked if Newmont had any Forest Service Lands. Mr. White noted Newmont has lands adjacent to Forest Service lands, but not actually on Forest Service lands. There was discussion with Mr. Dunkelberger noting there should be discussion in the future about this possibility.

Acting Chair Biaggi asked for Public Comment on this agenda item.

Preston Wright, Marys River Ranch, asked if the Agreement makes it easier for the next big power project corridor to come in and possibly buy land (ranches) and do the same thing as Newmont. He asked if this weakens the idea of the CCS in general and if the promises in this Agreement offset the BLM policies and restrictions.

Mr. Stockton stated these questions and the discussion are moving away from the agenda topic.

Mr. Ruhs stated the BLM is looking at additionalty and durability in CCS projects. They must show a net conservation gain. He unsure with a grazing permit you may be able to offset with a net conservation gain. Grazing is based upon the permit renewal. Each individual project needs to be reviewed by the BLM.

Mr. White noted on October 25th and 26th in Winnemucca, the Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Newmont, UNR, and others are conducting the second livestock operator oriented ecological site description workshop.

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

7. UPDATE ON 2016 FIRE SEASON AND IMPACTS TO GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Kacey KC, Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), provided a handout and updated the Council on the current fire season. The two primary fires that caused the most damage to Greater Sage-grouse Habitat are the Virginia Mountain Complex, which was a complex of five fires, and the Hot Pot Fire. She reviewed the acres of Greater Sage-grouse acres burned, including the Sage-grouse Focal Areas (SFAs) acres. She noted there was better collaboration between partners in 2016, because of the

Greater Sage-grouse Plan. Resources were mobilized and pre-positioned with federal partners, which assisted with the initial attack capabilities. The NDF also used and moved resources quickly and efficiently. She spoke about the NDF's rehabilitation efforts with state and federal agencies. The NDF is working with their federal and state partners on getting a Governor level master Good Neighbor Authority Agreement that would cover all state agencies. The hope is to have the master agreement out to their partners for review within the next couple of weeks. Under the master agreement you would have to have supplemental agreements that cover each specific agency to implement projects on public lands.

Ms. KC addressed Council questions and/or concerns.

Mr. Koch stated The Service would be making their determination on the species in four years. He stated The Service believes the biggest threats to sagebrush habitat are invasive species and fire, specifically cheat-grass. He requested that in the future when someone reports acres of sage-grouse habitat burned if they can be more precise on the different types of areas.

Member Boies noted the SFAs had their own column on the handout and wanted clarification on how the SFA designation affects resources. Ms. KC stated the SFA designation is a factor however it is not a primary factor.

John Tull, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), stated the NDOW had received some communication from landowners affected by the Virginia Mountain Complex fire that there was a lag response in resources. Ms. KC noted the NDF responded quickly to the Virginia Mountain Complex Fire. The NDF knew the fire would get larger as that is traditionally what happens in that area. It may not look to others that the NDF is moving as fast as they can be, but they are.

Acting Chair Biaggi noted there were no fires located in U.S. Forest Service Greater Sage-grouse habitat. Mr. Dunkelberger acknowledged this statement.

Member Nappe asked if a fire was above a certain elevation would the NDF let it burn. Ms. KC noted there are areas designated to allow to burn. She also noted there were areas that need fire especially where there is cheat-grass and they do work on prescribed burns for certain areas.

Member Swanson noted that in future reports perhaps the NDF should add a column concerning the differentiation between those places where fire has done some ecological good for sage-grouse and those places where fire did not.

There was discussion on the fires.

Member Boies asked if there was a possibility to not having the mandatory grazing exclusion for a certain number of years. There is a report stating that livestock grazing can be effective in post fire rehab. Mr. Ruhs noted the BLM has grazing opportunities, including target grazing. He also noted a BLM press release where a fuel break stopped a fire and allowed fire fighters to get there.

Mr. Lawrence asked how the BLM's Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool (FIAT) process is utilized. Mr. Ruhs noted there is opportunity to take projects that are identified in the FIAT process and other sage-grouse rehabilitation project areas and move them forward looking at statewide and larger landscape scenarios so they can implement projects that cover all lands rather than smaller portions. These conversations have been held at the Western Governors' Association. The BLM is close to setting up some initial processes on how this is done.

Ms. KC noted the importance of the Council's role concerning the NDF's rehabilitation and other projects being done in sage-grouse habitat.

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

8. EXAMPLE COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE SCENARIO FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF GREATER SAGE-GROUSE PLANS - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Sheila Anderson, Nevada Governor's Office, reviewed the history of this item including identifying the three different tiers. She provided an example for how this tiered system will work.

Member Lister asked for clarification on who would be assigned to the mid-level tier. Cheva Gabor, U.S. Forest Service, noted it would include the federal program staff, sage-grouse program managers, state agency program staff and the district managers from the BLM and the Forest Service district rangers. The mid-level tier is agency focused. The Council tier is more constituent focused and the Local Area Working Group (LAWG) level is also constituent focused. There are some aspects that still need to be defined. Mr. Lawrence noted that because of the desire and need to have local involvement the CD Program Manager would also be included in a tier.

Mr. Tull asked for clarification on the consensus-based recommendations and if it included both the formal and Ad-hoc Councilmembers. Ms. Gabor noted it would be the entire Council. The Council would make their recommendations to the Governor's Office and the Governor's Office would forward the recommendations to the federal agencies.

Member Emm asked what would happen if there was no possibility of getting to a consensus. Ms. Anderson noted the Council can only make recommendations for resolution to the agencies. The decision making authority still lies with the agencies.

There was discussion on this issue, including conversations about the LAWGs.

Mr. Dunkelberger clarified the goal is to attempt to solve conflicts at the lowest level possible. The issues would only come before the Council if they could not be resolved at a lower level. Ms. Anderson noted this is correct, but stated the Council could still review some of the concepts and items could come directly to the Council from Councilmember stakeholders. Mr. Dunkelberger noted perhaps the Council should have a standing agenda item concerning this topic.

Ms. Anderson stated the keystone to this process is collaboration. In this vein, there will be collaboration training for Councilmembers November 29th, 30th, and December 1st. The BLM will organize and pay for this training. She provided a brief description of the three day training. Other attendees will include individuals from the LAWGs and individuals from the mid-level tier.

Acting Chair Biaggi noted it would be beneficial to send out the dates to Councilmembers soon so they can be added to calendars. Ms. Anderson stated a "Save the Date" message would go out to Council soon.

Mr. Koch stated The Services' 2020 status review and information sheet states what they will be reviewing for successful implementation of conservation plans, including both the CCS, and the State Plan. The Service's greatest hope is that they set expectations at a level that is sure to be met right out of the gate. Ms. Anderson noted that in collaborative processes the way things happen and the way success is built depends on the people involved in the process. Mr. Koch imagines that if there is an issue that involves conflict at a local level the issue is elevated to the tiers. The expectation is no issue will be forwarded unless there is consensus. He also asked if there would be opportunities for broader questions. Ms. Gabor noted there would be broader issues. Mr. Koch noted he is asking these questions to help everyone consider how this process may play out. He also noted that at the

end of the day he perceives this as the State of Nevada Governor's Office commenting to the federal land management agencies. Ms. Gabor noted that is an accurate depiction. The process is the Council will advise the Governor's Office who will in turn advise the federal agencies. Mr. Koch noted his staff is interested in this process giving birth to issue papers on either side of an issue to help facilitate communication.

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

Break from 11:58 a.m. to 1:26 p.m.

9. UPDATE ON CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM PROJECTS

Jennifer Celio, SETT, introduced Katie Andrlle to the Council. She will fill the NDOW representative position on the SETT. Ms. Andrlle provided a brief background on her experience and knowledge.

Ms. Celio shared a map concerning the distribution of current CCS projects and provided a brief explanation of the map.

Kelly McGowan, SETT, provided an overview of the current state sponsored credit projects and the stand alone credit projects, which are developing credits without the state's funding assistance.

Both Ms. Celio and Mr. McGowan addressed Council questions and/or concerns during the overview.

Member Lister asked about the verifier's process. Ms. Celio noted there are currently 64 certified verifiers.

Member Boies suggested clarifying the "base cost for credit" considering there are other costs that will be associated with the project. He also asked about the timeline of credits to be up for sale. Mr. McGowan noted the next step would be to develop management plans for each project. His estimation is sometime this winter the credits will be available for sale.

There was discussion.

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

10. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT NEVADA STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN (SAP) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2014 NEVADA GREATER SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION PLAN - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Ms. Celio reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the SAP goals, action plans, project toolbox and planning area implementation, noting the intent is the SAP will be the working plan for the SETT. The SETT will bring the SAP back to the Council bi-annually for review.

Ms. Celio requested Councilmembers review each action item to ensure the item is appropriate and in line with the vision of the Council.

Ms. Celio noted the SETT is not currently looking for action on this item however this item will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Acting Chair Biaggi requested the SETT provide documents for Council meetings sooner than the night before the meeting. This would be helpful for Councilmembers to prepare for the meeting.

Mr. Tull noted in the planning area implementation the SETT relied on the PMU level conservation plans that are 12 year old documents. He noted those threat assessments are probably outdated. He stated the NDOW staff can assist the SETT in helping to get these current. Ms. Celio stated her agreement and that she would like to see the SETT going to the LAWGs for input and put that information in the SAP, ensuring they are being provided the tools and information that they need.

Member Lister asked how the SETT envisions the coordination between the SAP and the LAWGs. Ms. Celio referred to Pages 8 in the SAP for answering Member Lister's question, noting the listed actions are the specific actions the SETT will do in hopes of engaging the LAWGs and the CDs.

There was discussion.

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

11. CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS PRIORITY LIST PREVIEW - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Ms. Celio provided background on this item and reviewed a list of priority improvements for the CCS. The intent is for the Council to decide if the items should be listed or modified, or if there are other items more important that should be added to the list. Ms. Celio noted the SETT has approximately 40 items and the top ten are currently listed.

Member Swanson stated the baseline should more closely aligned with the ecological site descriptions that are being developed by the NRCS. This should be added to the list if it is not already listed.

Member Lister asked if the issues brought up in The Service's letter to Chair Goicoechea had been address within the list. Ms. Celio noted that currently the list is not specifically aligned with the concerns of The Service, however, there have been discussions on how to achieve that in the future. Member Lister noted the letter is not specific so he is not sure what The Service's concerns are. He asked the SETT to keep the Council apprised as they move forward.

There was discussion with Mr. McGowan and Ms. Celio addressing Council questions and/or concerns.

Mr. Koch noted the SETT's presentations make it clear to him they are being thoughtful in the implementation and continual improvement opportunities for the CCS. He asked if the SETT had a timeframe for the continual improvement processes and when the larger list may be available. Ms. Celio noted in December the SETT usually brings the Council the annual improvements. Mr. McGowan noted the current list would be the list reviewed in December unless Council makes any changes to it. Ms. Celio also stated if Mr. Koch can review the meeting packet information from the December 2015 meeting on the Sagebrush Program website. He will find the larger list as part of that packet.

Mr. Koch acknowledged Member Lister's comment earlier in the meeting about The Service letter addressed to Chair Goicoechea noting The Service wants to put things in writing to make sure they are clear without being too specific before having face to face conversations on the topic. He acknowledged the letter was vague, but noted The Service wanted to keep it vague so they could have conversations at the staff level to ensure everyone is on the same page, using the right language with each other and communicating back and forth before putting more of information in writing in case there are miscommunications and have the potential of mudding the waters even more. It is an awkward and subtle "little dance" for not providing enough information or providing too much information. There will be meetings held to have more detailed conversations to come together on some of the issues.

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

12. 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 September 13, 2016
- Approved Meeting Minutes from June 29, 2016

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

- Newmont Conservation Agreement Update (SETT and Newmont) – Standing Item
- Strategic Action Plan for review and potential approval (SETT)
- Continual Improvements for review and potential approval (SETT) – December
- Collaborative Structure Update
- Collaborative 3 Day Training (November 29th, 30th, and December 1st)
- Overview of the BLM Greater Sage-grouse Instructional Memorandums and other policies (BLM)

The Council decided the date of their next meeting:

- Thursday, November 10, 2016, location and time to be determined.

Items still needing dates for a future agenda:

- Review timeline for future CCS projects
- Federal Legislative Update – Governor's Staff
- Discussion on the implementation of Table 2.2 within the Greater Sage-grouse Land Use Plan
- Review how Powerlines are Weighed in the CCS
- Review Debit Projects, Processes, and Demand
- Public Relations, Communications Concerning CCS
- FIAT Working Group Update
- Reports from Different Agencies on Sage-grouse items
- 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
- Concept of SETT to host a central database for the State on conservation actions
- Establish measurables for the next two years

There was discussion with Mr. Lawrence suggesting the Council keep meetings the second Thursday of every other month.

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

13. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

- A. US Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service) – Mr. Koch provided an update, including The Service has recently shared communications regarding their 2020 status review. Mr. Lawrence distributed copies of the 2020 review. On August 31, 2016, The Service announced their draft comprehensive mitigation policy. There is a 45 day comment period open on this. It encompasses more than sage-grouse and is a national policy. He noted that he accepted a position in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and his last day will be October 14, 2016. Ms. Carolyn Swed, The Service, will be taking his place temporarily.
- B. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Mr. Ruhs thanked Ms. Anderson and Ms. Gabor for their presentation on the collaborative structure and the BLM continues to work to assist in developing that. Internal to Nevada BLM is developing an overview of the new Washington, office policy Instructional Memos (IMs). They will have some internal training for their specialists in the field. Later this year there will be more sessions around the state. On a case by case basis the BLM is continuing to work with the implementation of projects to ensure they have consistency of interpretation district by district and they continue to look for opportunities to work together to look for answers, define processes and to find solutions on how to move forward. Member Biaggi asked staff to keep in touch with Mr. Ruhs concerning a Council agenda item concerning the BLM's new IMs.
- C. US Forest Service – Mr. Dunkelberger also thanked Ms. Gabor and Ms. Anderson for their work on the collaborative structure. He noted the Humboldt-Toiyabe fire season has been unusual. It did not burn any sage-grouse acres and only burned 500 acres total in the whole state. The Forest Service has been wrapping up field work. By next month they will have accomplished several thousand acres of habitat improvement in the Bi-state Sage-grouse areas, as well as several thousand Greater Sage-grouse areas.
- D. Other – No update.

14. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

- A. Office of the Governor – Ms. Anderson noted the Governor's Office has been speaking with Ray Dotson, USDA-NRCS, about joining the Council as an Ex-officio member. He has agreed and will present at the next meeting.
- B. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – Mr. Lawrence provided an update on the status of the SETT, noting there are two positions that need to be filled, the NDF position and the State Lands position. The hope is by the next meeting there will be a full team.
- C. Department of Wildlife (NDOW) – Mr. Tull noted the trend lek data has been mostly analyzed. He provided some highlights and what has been seen in 2016. In terms of overall counts across all leks that were visited there were 976 leks, which were surveyed, which is a little over half of the known leks in Nevada. There has been approximately a 14 percent increase in average peak male lek attendance. Looking at the trend leks, which are more statistically reliable lek there was a 19.3 percent increase over 2015. Looking at the 20 year average we are up 15.2 percent. There was discussion about the percentages and explanations for them.
- D. Department of Agriculture (NDA) – Mr. Barbee noted the Board of Agriculture went up to the Cottonwood Ranch and went on a tour with the Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko (SANE) group. He announced a new hire for the new range position on the Elko office. Chair Goicoechea

is in Ames, Iowa working on his lab certification so they can start doing disease testing back in their Elko lab.

- E. Conservation Districts (CD) Program – Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts (CDs), noted there is a vacant seat in Ely. He provided an update on the LAWG in Humboldt County. The CDs are also working on a couple of more LAWGs, another in Humboldt County and one west of Humboldt County. The CD staff is working with some producers on credit projects. They are looking at creating some late-brooding habitat. He provided an update on PJ projects staff has just completed. The NRCS has asked the CDs to participate in the second round of their Resource Conservation Partnership Program. It is due next Monday. The proposal will be to implement cooperative resource management plans and planning processes for all 28 conservation districts. It is a five year program which will be over 20 million dollars' worth of resources.
- F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT) – Ms. Celio noted in October the SETT road show is hitting three different locations, Winnemucca, Eureka and Elko. In late October they will be giving a presentation at the Nevada Rural Electric Association (NREA) conference in Las Vegas, NV.
- G. Other – No update.

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15. PUBLIC COMMENT

Member Lister stated processes are important, including the processes to make the State Plan work at a local level. When the Council finds out about a major plan that has been adopted for sage-brush ecosystems and sage-grouse conservation on the news that neither the Council or staff has seen, heard, known or put any input in, this is frustrating, because there is a process for things. This raises a concern.

Member Nappe wanted to acknowledge the work Leo Drozdoff did with the Council, setting it up and getting it going. She also acknowledged Mr. Koch as a major contributor to the Council. Both have made the Council far more effective.

- 16. **ADJOURNMENT** – Member Lister made a motion to adjourn; meeting adjourned by acclamation at 3:28 p.m. ***ACTION**