



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

**Date:** Wednesday, June 29, 2016  
**Time:** 10:30 AM  
**Place:** Legislative Building, Room 4100, Carson City, NV

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:** Meghan Brown for Jim Barbee (who arrived at 1:47 p.m.), Allen Biaggi, Steven Boies, Bill Dunkelberger, JJ Goicoechea, Ted Koch for Mary Grimm, Chris MacKenzie, Tina Nappe, Sherman Swanson, and Tony Wasley

**Council Members Absent:** Bevin Lister, Mary Grimm, Gerry Emm, Leo Drozdoff, John Ruhs, and Starla Lacy

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Karen Boeger, Nevada Chapter Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, spoke about Agenda Item #7 and provided questions to the Council, including wanting more details about Utah and more details concerning the Federal Advisory Committee Act. She also spoke about the Local Area Working Groups (LAWGs) and how inclusive the new collaborative group will be and how the 3 Tiers will work.

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. Vice-chair MacKenzie moved to approve the Agenda for June 29, 2016; seconded by Member Swanson; motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION**

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

Member Biaggi moved to approve the meeting minutes from April 7, 2016; seconded by Member Boies; motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION**

**5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

A. Chair Goicoechea welcomed the new Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT) Program Manager, Jennifer Celio, to the Council. Ms. Celio provided some background on her experience.

Vice-chair MacKenzie noted that he was contacted by a mapping technology company named Above NV and he passed along the contact information for the SETT. Ms. Celio noted they were contacted by the company.

Bill Dunkelberger, U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), thanked the Council for starting the meeting a little later in the morning due to conflicts with some members participating in the Tribal Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summit. He also noted that Member Emm will be facilitating the Summit all day.

Ms. Celio reviewed Council correspondence included in the meeting packets. Concerning the letter from the SETT to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service), she noted because of the timeline the letter was sent without prior Council review. Member Nappe asked for clarification concerning the sentence, "...Furthermore we encourage the FWS to give deference to state plans, policies, and programs..." Ms. Celio noted the word "deference" means "to defer to." The intent was if The Service needed to make a choice between their option and our option the request was if the SETT had the action in place they would defer to the SETT option. Member Nappe stated in her view there is a lot of wiggle room in the State Plan (Plan) and the Conservation Credit System (CCS), and she believes the federal agencies have a stronger motive to protect sage-grouse than the Council. The Council is more commodities oriented. Member Nappe noted she has concern using the word "deference" rather than the word "include." Member Swanson complimented Ms. Celio on the sentence, "...We encourage the use of tools...determining any baseline..." This is an important sentence and he hopes the movement will be in this direction. Ted Koch, The Service, noted he and his staff have not seen the letter and asked if Ms. Celio had copied them on it. Ms. Celio noted she did not.

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

**6. PRESENTATION AND UPDATE ON U.S. FOREST SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AMENDED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

A. John Shivik, Forest Service, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding two Records of Decisions (RODs) that were signed regarding Greater Sage-grouse. As this is being implemented at a regional level, a regional perspective is required but it must also be acknowledged there are differences between states. Mr. Shivik noted the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada has a big role. Relative to the regional lands and the amount of work that needs to get done, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is 73 percent of the work on the regional scale. He also noted the guidelines relative to the amendments are requirements that must be followed unless the same conservation objective can be achieved in another way and there is justification on why it was done

differently than the guidelines. During the Forest Service inventory, staff will note if a site cannot achieve the 7 inch height guideline and the site will not be held to that guideline. In this instance, they will go back and look at their overall desired conditions and manage toward those conditions. The language of the grazing permits will be changing this fall. The timeline for changes to operating instructions will be 12, 24, or 36 months. It is important that nothing will happen this year, it will be phased in.

Mitigation is being done differently by each state. The Forest Service has some limitations on what they can do. They cannot approve state plans as they are not a regulatory agency in that way. However, the Forest Service can acknowledge the state plans as tools they intend to use. They cannot defer the decision authority to the states. He does not see compensatory mitigation as being a huge issue with the Forest Service because the way their standards and guidelines and amendments are written. They have to either avoid or minimize and then use compensatory mitigation.

Last year, the Council adopted a revision of the Habitat Management Categories so the maps changed. There have been requests for the Forest Service to change their maps. The issue for the Forest Service is this is an amendment process that went through the EIS. The current maps will stay as they are unless the Forest Service does another plan amendment, however, there is a footnote on the first page of the amendment that states that priority areas and general management areas may contain non-habitat, and management direction would not apply to those areas of non-habitat. Mr. Shivik noted the Forest Service will review on a case by case basis. He acknowledged the Sage-grouse Focal Areas (SFAs) are a potential sticking point. He reviewed the implementation timeline for the Forest Service.

Mr. Shivik addressed Councilmember questions and concerns, including desired conditions, and wild horse and burro grazing. Mr. Shivik noted the Forest Service has standards and guidelines in the amendments relative to wild horse and burro grazing in Idaho and Nevada. Chair Goicoechea asked if SFAs are mentioned in the objectives and, even after on-the-ground inspection determines it is non-habitat, the objective will still need to be enforced because of the SFA designation. Mr. Shivik noted that is correct.

Member Boies asked for clarification on the timeline concerning grazing permits. Mr. Shivik noted that guidelines are in effect once the amendments are signed, and the amendments were signed in September 2015. In carrying out the guidelines, the first thing is to determine the current nature of the sites as they pertain to the guidelines. The Forest Service needs to do their inventory and see when the guidelines would apply and when they would not apply. This is the reason for the timeline of 12, 24, up to 36 months. Mr. Dunkelberger noted the permit modifications can be appealed. The permittee will be involved in this process. He also asked for clarification from Mr. Shivik that if they get to a site that can only produce 5 inches, do they document it and fall back to that objective, which states to provide adequate lateral and overhead cover. Mr. Shivik noted that was correct.

Member Swanson stated there was discussion at an earlier Council meeting concerning the Bureau of Land Management table of habitat objectives and asked for clarification on if the Forest Service table was similar in taking the collective of the habitat objectives and not taking any individual objective to be used as the trigger. Mr. Shivik noted the desired conditions is the entire the table, however, there are footnotes to navigate through the table relative to grazing, if you cannot get to the 7 inches, it works toward having the adequate vertical cover. Member Swanson stated the movement of animals to provide recovery periods for riparian areas is a strong tool concerning grazing. Mr. Shivik noted the Forest Service has to acknowledge that habitats are different. They will look and evaluate a site and acknowledge multiple uses, but they are up against a five-year timeline with The Service.

Member Swanson asked for clarification about the zero fire target for Nevada. Mr. Shivik noted that means there is no objective for it. It can still be used. Mr. Dunkelberger noted the Forest Service did specify that in areas with more than 12 inches of precipitation prescribed fires are an option. If the area has less than 12 inches of precipitation you would have to write a justification to do a prescribed fire. They did not want to have a target for prescribed fire because that could send the wrong message to the local district ranger that they may feel the need to go out and burn some sage-grouse habitat. They don't want to send that message.

Member Swanson noted the State of Nevada has approximately 1200 ecological sites. Member Swanson noted the state and transition model based ecological site descriptions are being developed by the natural resources conservation service with the help of others at the University of Nevada Reno (UNR). Within each state there are also phases that are easily manipulated so that we can move among those different phases. A lot of the changes being talked about are not state changes; they are just changes/improvements in vegetation within a state. The ones that are irreversible, the ecological threshold transitions, are a big deal.

Member Nappe asked if the Forest Service acknowledges the differences between livestock grazing and wild horse grazing. Mr. Shivik noted this is a complicated issue. The Forest Service is managing issues that are under their authority and ability and a lot of that concerns livestock grazing. He provided examples. He noted the Forest Service has specifics of what they do relative to grazing and specifics of what they do relative to wild horse and burros and where the two overlap. Monique Nelson, Forest Service, noted that while staff is out sampling for the grazing guidelines, they are looking specifically at wild horse and burro territory. Even though the areas are not being grazed by cattle at this time, staff is documenting if the 7 inches is being achieved. The Forest Service is looking at this as a pilot season to determine where they may and may not achieve the grass height. Bryan Stockton, Nevada Attorney General's Office, noted the term "territory" was being used in conjunction with horses instead of "Horse Management Areas." He asked how the terms differ. Ms. Nelson stated she may have misspoken and could not clarify the difference. Member Swanson noted that on Forest Service Lands, what would be called a herd management area on BLM lands, is called a territory. It is simply a different term for the same thing among different agencies. Chair Goicoechea asked if while staff is out reviewing grazing data are they documenting the location of wild horses outside territories in the forest or is staff receptive to receiving notification of large numbers of horses outside of the territories. Mr. Dunkelberger noted the Forest Service is always receptive to receiving that information. There was discussion concerning locations and the numbers of wild horses.

Mandy Brinnand, Forest Service, reviewed some of the PowerPoint slides concerning the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. She noted they do have the CCS finalized in the MOU in April 2016, for the interagency implementation of the Nevada CCS. The intent is to avoid or minimize the impacts first. If they are unable to achieve this, then the CCS may be used if compensatory mitigation is needed. They do recognize the SETT as a cooperating agency. She reviewed some accomplishments of the Forest Service in the Humboldt-Toiyabe.

Meghan Brown, Nevada Department of Agriculture, asked if the sampling design is a regional systematic grid and if it is similar to how the BLM is using the AIM data. Mr. Shivik noted the Forest Service is different than the BLM in that they do not utilize the AIM data. They already had a grid system that they use for their Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) and they applied this grid system. They had other things going on in the intermountain region where they were measuring vegetation. He explained the way the vegetation tool works. Ms. Brown asked how often they would be visiting the sites. Mr. Shivik noted they are having discussions about that and there is a certain amount relative to grazing that is always the 7 inches or the 4 inches. They have to figure out their capacity and ability. Ms. Brown asked about permittee involvement in the monitoring process. Mr. Shivik noted the Forest Service would know a lot more after this year. They are currently evaluating, doing

inventory and figuring it out. They will figure out the current state and then include permittees. Ms. Nelson noted at pre-season meetings with the permittees the Forest Service has discussed habitat assessments as well as grass heights. Permittees were also invited to go out with field crews. Mr. Shivik noted the Forest Service has sent out training teams concerning vegetation measurements. Teams went to the different forests to train personnel and they invited local grazing groups as well. They do intend to continue the conversation as they move forward.

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

**7. DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE AND POTENTIAL ROLE FOR THE SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AMENDED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

A. Sheila Anderson, Governor's Office, and Cheva Gabor, Forest Service, provided an update on this item. Ms. Anderson noted the final decision-making authority would always remain with the land management agencies. The group looking at the scope of this structure looked at what Utah was doing, looked at the Bi-state and how it is structured and how it is working. The group is proposing a three tiered approach, which Ms. Anderson reviewed for the Council. She noted Council would work on a consensus basis and formulate a recommendation on how to resolve a certain issue or amend a process. The recommendation will go from the Council to the Governor's Office and the Governor's Office will forward the recommendation to the land management agencies. Mr. Dunkelberger stated it makes it more persuasive for the BLM and the Forest Service if a recommendation comes directly from the Governor and it prevents them from violating the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Ms. Gabor reviewed the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Vice-chair MacKenzie asked what if the only entity against a recommendation is the Forest Service, how would it be addressed. Ms. Anderson noted with working by consensus if an entity disagrees, it means there needs to be additional work on the issue until the conflict is resolved, or there is no recommendation. Vice-chair MacKenzie asked if the ex-Officio members of the Council would vote on issues pertaining to this structure. Ms. Anderson noted that was the vision of the group. There was discussion. Mr. Dunkelberger stated his understanding was that he could not participate on this Council if he was a voting member because of his position so he is an ex-officio and he does not vote. Mr. Stockton agreed with Mr. Dunkelberger, the statute states who can and cannot vote. He envisions any motion would note some ex-officio members object to the decision and that would be forwarded to the Governor and the Governor would take appropriate action. There was discussion on where national conservation groups would fit into the structure with Ms. Gabor noting that these groups would be engaged through the Forest Service's agency structure. Mr. Dunkelberger added in most cases the local members of these national groups would participate in the LAWGS.

Ms. Anderson stated the intent is for Tier 1 and Tier 2 members to attend collaborative training. The BLM has agreed to bring instructors in to conduct this training. Mr. Dunkelberger noted that if along the way (from a LAWG up to the Governor) consistency is reached there is a good possibility the federal agencies will adopt it.

Mr. Koch stated he had some questions about the specifics of this agenda item. He asked how the Council wanted to address questions or comments. Chair Goicoechea asked Ms. Gabor and Ms. Anderson how they would like to address questions, adding that considering the wording on the agenda the item could be changed. Ms. Anderson noted she believes the group has taken it as far as they can take it without hearing Council ideas on how to make it better.

Ms. Anderson let Mr. Koch know that Steve Abel, The Service, did review the structure and made comments and those comments were included in the paper. Mr. Koch noted there were more

questions, however, it would be better done staff to staff. He wondered if the Council could adopt the concept with a follow-up for staff to refine it. Chair Goicoechea proposed the question to the Council on if there is a vote on the adoption of the proposed collaborative structure and the Council's potential role, can it go on the next agenda to make any additional necessary changes. Mr. Stockton answered even if a current motion stated this was the final word, the Council could modify it at a later date. Mr. Dunkelberger suggested it may be helpful to review a scenario where this structure is utilized. It would help to inform the Council on making any changes.

Member Swanson made a motion to accept this as a concept paper that does not change anything the Council is already doing, inclusive of the three tiered approach. Member Nappe seconded the motion. There was discussion Motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION**

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

## **8. INFORMATIONAL UPDATE ON CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM STATE SOLICITATION PROJECTS**

A. Ms. Celio reviewed the information submitted within meeting packets with help from Kelly McGowan, Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT), and Melissa Faigeles (SETT), including a list of current accomplishments for the team.

There are currently four state solicitation projects for the 2016 field window. The SETT was also contacted concerning three additional privately funded projects that will generate credits. The SETT reviewed each project individually.

There was discussion of the projects with the SETT addressing Council questions or comments.

Member Biaggi asked for clarification on the Coleman Valley Ranch project being able to charge what they wanted for their credits. Ms. Celio noted the verbiage is that the SETT would not mandate what was charged for those credits. The SETT would give them the flexibility to charge what they wanted. For the repayment of the solicitation to the State there is a minimum in the contract that the State expects to receive. Member Biaggi asked if the contracts need to be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. Mr. Stockton noted that Jim Lawrence, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Jim Wells, Secretary, Board of Examiners, had a conversation and came to the conclusion these agreements were more akin to a grant and do not need to be reviewed by the Board of Examiners.

Member Nappe asked about next steps. Ms. Celio noted the field work is done and the next step is the management plans. The SETT is working through the processes for verification policies for quality control on the data that is submitted, determination on what data will be requested, and developing a policy concerning financial assurances. She also reviewed items for next year's solicitation.

Ms. Celio noted there are approximately six debits projects the SETT is currently working on and verifying. She briefly reviewed these.

Mr. Dunkelberger asked if any of the projects establish credits on public lands. Ms. Faigeles noted that none of the projects are on federal lands. Mr. Dunkelberger asked if the SETT received any proposals for federal lands. Ms. Faigeles noted there were some proposals, however, for various reasons they were deemed inappropriate because of other complications. There was a pilot project on the Boies Ranch and part of that did include public land. There has been talk about moving forward on that project. The Cottonwood Ranch project is interested in expanding on to federal land

and they also have Forest Service permits. There are opportunities available in the future. Mr. Dunkelberger asked if there was a process in place for permission approval from the Forest Service or the BLM. Both Ms. Faigeles and Mr. Dunkelberger acknowledged this would need addressed. Mr. Dunkelberger noted his support and is looking for the right project on Forest Service land to pilot both debit and credit projects. He stated this is something that was not addressed in the MOU, however, this would be more appropriate for an operating plan. Ms. Faigeles acknowledged the MOU does state the Forest Service and the BLM will come up with policies for credits on public lands, therefore, there is a commitment to work on it.

Mr. Koch stated he has a broad question for the Council. He asked what role, if any, does the Council want The Service to play in the State mitigation program. Chair Goicoechea asked if Mr. Koch meant in the Conservation Credit System (CCS) or in the projects currently being reviewed. Mr. Koch noted the Council asked The Service a year ago for regulatory assurances for CCS outcomes and the letter two weeks ago from Ms. Celio asked for deference to the State program. There has been varying levels of engagement for various reasons that he understands between The Service and the State. They were meeting pretty frequently earlier this year, less so recently, so he is wondering if the Council has a vision for The Service's involvement or support. Chair Goicoechea noted that as long as the habitat the Council is restoring, creating or conserving meets the objectives of the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) he is sure Tony Wasley, NDOW, and Mr. Wasley's staff is working closely with The Service's staff ensuring it is being done correctly. That is the role Chair Goicoechea sees The Service playing in conjunction with the NDOW. Mr. Koch noted that that is great and The Service is eager to play that role. The Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI) has told the Governor she very much wants the DOI to support the State's efforts in this regard. Mr. Koch has technical staff that have interest in components of the CCS in seeing it be successful and at the end of the day they have questions on certain things, including what it will mean to implement the CCS. One of the people on his staff is Lara Enders and she brings great expertise from having worked on the SETT. Mr. Koch added that with the six months Ms. Enders has been on The Service's staff she's been exposed to The Service/federal way of thinking, including with their sage-grouse mitigation expert Shauna Ginger in Portland, Oregon. Mr. Koch feels that she is at a point right now that she may have a great deal to offer concerning implementation. He noted he and Ms. Celio met yesterday and shared a brief conversation on the topic. He would like the Council to think, it does not need to be answered today, and be cognizant of what exactly the role The Service can play. He noted Chair Goicoechea summarized it well initially. The Service wants to be sensitive to the fact that number one they do not manage the species, number two they do not manage the land. It would be easy for The Service to say that they have decided a listing is warranted thanks to the federal land management plans and other things, good luck and we'll come back and pass judgement on everyone in four and a half years. The Service does not want to do that, but on the other hand they are not the lead managers so he would welcome the Council's guidance on how to most effectively participate.

Member Nappe noted last fall the Council reduced the value of some of the credits and she would like to have some understanding as to whether the debits or the credits actually match in terms of value. Her concern is that we are losing more habitat than we are gaining. She wonders if this is being reviewed across the country. Chair Goicoechea stated he believes this is something The Service is looking at with the Net Conservation Gain policy and something the Council has built into the CCS. Chair Goicoechea is confident Mr. Koch (The Service) will weigh in at some point and encouraged Mr. Koch not to wait four and a half years to say, "I'm not really sure we are getting there." Mr. Koch responded that he is not really sure we are getting there. He doesn't believe we are not getting there. He is just not sure. Chair Goicoechea acknowledged The Service has not seen anything on the ground. The SETT is still working on it. These projects need to get on the ground. Mr. Koch stated this is correct. Once The Service sees what is being done, Chair Goicoechea believes The Service and Member Nappe will be more comfortable. Mr. Koch noted he is hopeful for that. Hence his question to the Council, and maybe the answer should be informed by the SETT, when,

where and how would the Council like The Service involvement. Ms. Celio noted the SETT would like The Service's involvement through the entire process. Having The Service's perspective is going to be crucial. She noted getting The Service's involvement at the Council meetings and on a regular basis is going to be important.

Vice-chair MacKenzie asked for clarification from Mr. Koch concerning what level of involvement The Service is asking for, but noted that convincing The Service that this is a good system will go a long way to convincing other agencies.

Mr. Koch stated this is a good question, but he was not sure exactly what level of involvement The Service is asking for. He noted he has far fewer staff in Nevada than the BLM, the Forest Service and NDOW. The Service does not want to surprise people four and half years from now. He also believes The Service has a fair amount to offer, in fact, they are uniquely positioned with the skills they have on staff to try to help and provide a broader perspective on an ongoing basis at multiple levels. Part of this reflects back to Agenda Item #7 where he spoke about how his agency still has comments. They seem to be the only one. He understands the way ideas evolve. There were conversations at an earlier Council meeting that lead in part to the collaborative structure. He spoke with Ms. Anderson along the way in which she acknowledged meeting regularly with The Forest Service and the BLM to develop the draft document and he thought there was some indication of follow-up with The Service between that conversation and today's date. He confirmed with Ms. Anderson that in fact there have been no conversations on Agenda Item #7 with The Service. He noted The Service is not the land managers and the last conversation he had with Ms. Anderson was a couple of months ago and he understands and respects what was being done and why, but suddenly he finds himself in a position today of feeling behind the curve or out of the loop. The Service does not manage the species or manage the land so on the one hand he does not want to invite himself, however, on the other hand Vice-chair MacKenzie is correct he is looking for guidance from the Council on when, where and how to be involved given The Service's role. A lot of people think of The Service as a regulatory agency. He does not, he thinks of The Service as a regulatory and service agency and in this environment they are in a position of providing a service and not regulation and so if they are to service, he believes being asked to serve is an important step. That is his "ask" of the Council is to be sensitive to The Service's position to this point in time and to be deliberate and thoughtful about their service and participation and there can be discussion after today on what that means.

Ms. Faigeles noted there was a process put in place to select projects. The NDOW was involved in the process and if there have been any changes, e.g. in the Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT), the NDOW was involved. The SETT is ensuring input from others. Sometimes there is not time to get everyone involved. The SETT is pulling people in as is needed. In a number of instances they have been deferring to the NDOW on the sage-grouse biology side. There was some discussion.

Mr. Wasley stated the role of the NDOW is they look at the SETT and have an interdisciplinary team that represents more than just wildlife so a lot of the time they have a closely aligned mission with The Service and the conservation arena. If there is an inadequate amount of communication between The Service and the SETT directly, it puts the NDOW, as an agency, in an awkward position. Either they are left to be the messenger for The Service in which case they are either potentially the "bad guy" in delivering their message or potentially they "spill the water" and do not give The Service the message. Mr. Wasley noted he would welcome any discussion amongst the Councilmembers about formalizing, if there is a desire to do so, the role of The Service with the SETT and what that communication looks like. It is far easier for the State wildlife agency to agree with The Service on issues of conservation, but for the state wildlife agency to carry that perspective forward to the SETT, it may not make it to the SETT. The SETT is an interdisciplinary team that takes multiple views and interests into consideration. From where he sits it makes him a little bit nervous of being the primary or sole communicator with The Service. If there is a desire by the



Council, he would like to see a formalization of the communication between The Service and the SETT that does not put the NDOW in the crosshairs. Mr. Koch noted that he does not even pick up the phone and call Mr. Wasley on matters related to the CCS, because it is clear that is for the SETT. Chair Goicoechea asked if Mr. Koch picked up the phone and called the SETT. Mr. Koch answered in the affirmative and noted they were having regular meetings through March of 2016, and then things got busy and the next time he spoke with Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Lawrence acknowledged the SETT was busy in the field so The Service has been patient in that regard. He observed that what has come to mind during this conversation is the State has an MOU with the Forest Service and the BLM, but not with The Service. He did acknowledge they have no management authority. Chair Goicoechea noted there is an MOU with the land management agencies and with the wildlife agency in the State being on the Council, but Mr. Koch had already acknowledged The Service does not manage the species or the land therefore how would there be an MOU if The Service does not manage either. Mr. Koch noted that was his question to the Council, what if any role does the Council want The Service to play. If the answer is no role, that is one answer. He is not hearing that. Chair Goicoechea noted if Mr. Koch is picking up the phone and calling the SETT and having the conversations, he is doing exactly what everyone else is doing. Chair Goicoechea is not sure what Mr. Koch feels the disconnect is and maybe if he did that would help. He asked for clarification from Mr. Koch on what message is Mr. Koch trying to get to the Council that is not coming through the SETT or that Mr. Koch is trying to get to the SETT that is not getting to them. Chair Goicoechea asked for a specific example. Mr. Koch stated that it is what Chair Goicoechea mentioned earlier that he was confident that Mr. Koch would give the Council a "heads up" if The Service was not feeling fully onboard or supportive. The Council wrote The Service a year ago asking for The Service's assurance so The Service is not in a position to provide the Council with that assurance. This is Mr. Koch's concern. Chair Goicoechea noted as the Council and the SETT move forward to prove the CCS, there is nothing to deliver to The Service today therefore, what would Mr. Koch like the Council to deliver to The Service today that they do not have. Mr. Koch again noted that is his question to the Council. He noted the Council could put The Service in the position of waiting for products to be delivered or in a position of being an ex-officio member of the SETT, which he is not sure he would agree with or support, or the Council can do something in-between. Mr. Koch is unsure and again noted that is the question he has for the Council. He interprets a difference between a year ago asking for assurances from The Service to two weeks ago asking for deference from The Service. He does not know if it needs to be resolved today. His message to the Council today is in terms of what Chair Goicoechea stated earlier in the meeting about The Service letting the Council know if they were not feeling like they are in a position to fully support the CCS and that is the case, they are not in that position and perhaps there can be exploration going forward on what it takes to get there.

Member Nappe noted that what she is hearing is that the Council has been going through a process here of looking at sites and developing criteria and asked if it would be beneficial if The Service was more a part of that process. Mr. Koch noted it would be of value, however, he is confident that at some point The Service would not have the capacity. He is not sure how they could be invested and supportive without exceeding their ability. They do not want to slow things down. Ms. Celio noted that she was not sure if right now was the appropriate time to have some mechanism to ensure The Service's involvement. She noted it is the SETT's intention to work with The Service and the fact that she has only been in her current position for a month there may be some oversight, but she is here now and she and the SETT hear Mr. Koch's concerns and there can be discussion off-line to try and discuss it. She sees a positive relationship moving forward.

Chair Goicoechea stated the Council felt a lot of the same discomfort Mr. Koch is feeling now as they were going through the land use plan amendments. Everything is moving fast getting the CCS on the ground and proved. There is an open dialogue and there can be further discussions on it. The Service has been at every meeting and the Council has been listening and trying to incorporate necessary suggestions similar to how the federal agencies have been trying to incorporate the Council's concerns. There is no desire to exclude anyone. It is far from that. He is committed to

address Mr. Koch's concerns with more involvement for The Service with the SETT and with the program.

Member Swanson noted it may be time for a field trip.

There was discussion on the CCS and the projects being reviewed, including what is included in the desktop analysis and how the process works.

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

## **9. 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 June 29, 2016
- Approved Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2016
- Approved the collaborative structure concept paper that does not change anything the Council is already doing, inclusive of the three tiered approach.

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

- Review structure of collaborative agreement for possible adjustments – Sheila Anderson and Cheva Gabor
- Review an example utilizing the collaborative agreement – Sheila Anderson and Cheva Gabor
- Update on CCS projects - SETT
- Review timeline for future CCS projects
- Federal Legislative Update – Governor's Staff
- Next Steps - SETT
- Review of Draft Strategic Action Plan (SAP) – SETT
- The Bi-annual Report - SETT

The Council decided the date of their next meeting:

- Thursday, August 25, 2016, location and time to be determined.

Items identified for a future agenda:

- 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

Member Boies suggested a work item for the SETT to address the issue concerning the public land, private land relationship in regards to the CCS and the BLM. Ms. Celio noted that could be a directive to the SETT to prioritize it.

There was discussion about the Council taking a field trip and when would be the appropriate time and place to do that.

Member Nappe brought up how to gauge success for the Council, perhaps the number of sage-grouse now as opposed to two years ago. She would like to see a report beyond the State and the Council. There was discussion.

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

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

- A. US Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service) – No update.
- B. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – No update.
- C. US Forest Service – No additional update.
- D. Other – No update.

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

- A. Office of the Governor – No update.
- B. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – No update.
- C. Department of Wildlife (NDOW) – Mr. Wasley stated there were a number of excellent candidates for the NDOW position on the SETT, however, due to unforeseen circumstances, they had to re-announce the position. NDOW staff attended a sage-grouse workshop a couple of weeks earlier. He attended the Western Governors' Association Sage-grouse Taskforce meeting in Denver. There were briefings from fire staff and discussion on the challenges of coordinating all the on-going efforts. The NDOW is still working on compiling lek data. It will be done by the next meeting. He will provide the data during his update at the next meeting. The NDOW is working with the USGS and the SETT to finalize some of the upgrades with imagery and analysis to assist with implementation of the CCS.
- D. Department of Agriculture (NDA) – Ms. Brown stated the NDA made an offer on their range position in Elko. The range monitoring app is in draft form. They are working on getting the instruction portion done. They are hoping that by the end of the field season they will have something available for both the iPhone and Android versions. The NDA is working on doing some field guides for Nevada. They are doing a general one and a fall and spring one. They put out an RFP for Forest Service grants. The deadline was Friday and there are four applicants. If the project is in sage-grouse habitat it will get priority funding. The packet went out today to get the same funding for next year. In two weeks, the NDA is having a meeting with the NDOW, The Service and UNR concerning the seed lab to talk about native seeds. Ms. Brown can provide

more information if anyone is interested. Mr. Koch noted his appreciation to the NDA staff for setting up the meeting.

- E. Conservation Districts (CD) Program – Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts (CDs), noted the State Conservation Commission met a few months ago and approved projects for a competitive sage-grouse project grant program. Three were Pinyon Juniper Projects (White Pine County, Lincoln County and Eureka County). The projects are well underway and some are completed. The White Pine and Lincoln County projects may even become credit projects. They have gone through the process before starting the cutting. As of yet, there have been no discussions with the SETT. This is something that can be discussed at a later time. They are working on a project at the Little Humboldt where they are building beaver dams. They are building 22 beaver dam analogs. This is a process that has been done in Utah and other places. They also planted 1100 seedlings on a fire rehab in the Santa Rosas. They are also involved in two CCS projects. He expressed appreciation to the NDOW for help concerning a new LAWG in Winnemucca.
- F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT) – Ms. Celio noted the SETT has been giving overview trainings of the CCS. They have done BLM, NRCS, Forest Service and State agencies. The SETT has also been involved in the bi-state sage-grouse meetings. Ms. Celio attended the Bi-state Traditional Knowledge Summit. She would like to see more outreach and “PR” concerning the CCS. The SETT has partnered with the Nevada Division of Forestry on grants. They are working with the USGS to improve data sets. The next items for the SETT to work on are the SAP that will outline their work. Ms. Celio is comparing it to the State Plan to ensure the SAP is addressing what is included in the State Plan. Ms. Celio also noted there is normally a bi-annual report done in July and she hopes to have the report done for the Council next meeting.
- G. Other – No update.

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

**12. PUBLIC COMMENT** – No Public Comment.

**13. ADJOURNMENT** – Member Biaggi made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Member Nappe; meeting adjourned by acclamation at 2:31 p.m. **\*ACTION**