



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
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APPROVED MINUTES

Date: Thursday, November 9, 2017
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Nevada Legislature - Room 1214
401 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701

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

Council Members Present: J.J. Goicoechea, Steven Boies, Bevan Lister, William Molini, Gerry Emm, Starla Lacy via telephone, Cheva Gabor for Bill Dunkelberger, Marci Todd for John Ruhs, Carolyn Swed, Jim Barbee, Tony Wasley, Bradley Crowell and Jim Lawrence.

Council Members Absent: Allen Biaggi, Chris MacKenzie, Ray Dotson, John Ruhs and Bill Dunkelberger.

Prior to the convening of the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council (SEC) Meeting, a signing ceremony was held between the Nevada Division of State Lands and KG Mining (Bald Mountain) Inc., executing the first transfer of credits of the Conservation Credit System (CCS).

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** - Chairman J.J. Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT** - Ms. Robin Boies noted that eight ranches in the northeastern corner of the State of Nevada formed the Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko (SANE), and introduced their new coordinator, Rainy Lawson, who was hired in September of 2017. Ms. Tina Nappe noted the support conservationists have given with respect to the sage-grouse management planning meetings held by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), but stated her concern with regard to the SEC's proposed correspondence regarding the management measures of wild horses and burros. Ms. Nappe noted the lack of attendance by wild horse advocates and encouraged the SEC to involve those advocates in future meetings. Ms. Nappe also stated her concern with regard to livestock grazing permit renewals and if there has been a review and/or feedback of the success of the grazing. Robert Veldman, who has been working on the Crawford Cattle Company credit project, congratulated the Council on its first transaction of the CCS.
- 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
Approval of agenda for November 9, 2017 – Member Bevan Lister moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Member Steven Boies; motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION**
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
Approval of minutes from the meeting held on September 14, 2017 – Member Starla Lacy noted that she was marked as present at the September 14, 2017 meeting, when in fact, she was absent. Member William Molini

made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction; seconded by Member Gerry Emm; motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION**

5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE -

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

Mr. Kelly McGowan, Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Manager introduced Ms. Kathleen Petter, the newest member of the Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT), representing the Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL).

6. U.S. FOREST SERVICE PRESENTATION ON THEIR REVIEW OF THE SAGE-GROUSE PLAN AMENDMENTS - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION* John Shivik, Regional Sage-Grouse Implementation Lead, USFS

Mr. John Shivik reviewed a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Reviewing the Greater Sage-Grouse Forest Plan Amendment," a copy of which is available on the Program's website. Mr. Shivik stated that until future decisions are made, the United States Forest Service (USFS) will continue to implement and follow current plans as amended. Mr. Shivik noted that a determination is still being made regarding the modification of grazing permits, but that no permits would be modified in 2017. Mr. Shivik said that the USFS was not directed to participate in the Department of Interior's (DOI) review under Secretarial Order 3353, however, the USFS is taking this opportunity to learn and listen from their state liaisons. Mr. Shivik outlined the key topics of his presentation as grazing timelines; grazing and vegetation table/maps and prescription; lek buffers; adaptive management and triggers; and objectives and desired conditions. Other topics noted were habitat assessment framework (HAF); livestock compatibility with greater sage-grouse; travel management and roads; valid existing rights; predator control; and fire and invasive species.

Council members had questions and concerns, and a full account of the discussion is captured in the audio recording, which is available on the Program's website. ***NO ACTION**

7. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SEC INPUT AND RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR'S NOTICE OF INTENT TO AMEND LAND USE PLANS REGARDING GREATER SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Mr. James Lawrence, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) stated that this is the official public comment period for the Notice of Intent (NOI) issued by the DOI and internal meetings have been held with state agencies regarding highlighting of topics; comparison of the Nevada Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan (State Plan) with the federal plans, highlighting the inconsistencies; and the preparation of comments on those topics. Mr. Lawrence said that it is now a function of the State of Nevada to prepare an official comment letter through the Governor's office. Mr. Lawrence said that at today's meeting, it would be important to hear from the SEC, and the public, regarding any other inclusions to those comments. Ms. Pam Robinson, Policy Director, Office of the Governor, offered that the Governor's office is coordinating the state response after multiple meetings with state departments, the Sage-grouse Task Force and federal partners and encourages the SEC to provide information from their constituencies and stakeholders. Ms. Robinson noted that they had a positive meeting with the Deputy Secretary of the Interior who is looking for solid recommendations and findings from each state involved. Member Molini remarked that he has received information of the intent to bypass the short term recommendations, as presented at the last SEC meeting, and work only on the long term recommendations requiring plan amendments. Ms. Robinson stated that information was not conveyed to the Governor's office. Mr. Tony Wasley, Department of Wildlife (NDOW), added that the impression he received from the meetings he has attended is that the DOI wants to empower the states in the planning process. Mr. Wasley believes that the DOI intends to develop a report that will serve as a menu for changes that each state desires to include in the plan. Mr. Wasley noted that this comment period relates to developing the report and DOI will look at the most appropriate means to accomplish

changes to the plan. USFS and BLM also noted that was their understanding, with Ms. Marci Todd adding that the formal comments will be added to a scoping report describing the states requested changes. Chair Goicoechea stated that was his impression as well, and is encouraged by the statement, "empowering the states," which is something the SEC has advocated for as the legislatively established body regarding sage-grouse habitat. Chair Goicoechea, speaking on behalf of local governments, brought up Judge Du's decision remanding the record of decision (ROD) and that the local governments believe that sagebrush focal areas (SFAs); as well as mapping, habitat objectives, new science and mitigation ratios were their main concerns. Ms. Robinson and Mr. Wasley stated that it is important to review the State Plan for needed changes, as well as a review of the inconsistencies between the land use plan amendment (LUPA), and the State Plan and where those inconsistencies may be reconciled. Member Lister, on behalf of his constituents, stated that his constituents would prefer that the 2015 LUPA be rescinded and the State of Nevada's CCS be adopted as the mitigation means for anthropogenic disturbances. Member Boies asked, as a council, what is our position on SFAs and are they needed. Chair Goicoechea said that as stated by his constituents, they do not believe these should be in the plan. Member Lister said that the CCS has the ability to incorporate new science and changes on a timely basis, whereas the BLM planning efforts do not allow for incorporating new science and require a plan amendment. Member Swanson brought up the issue of wildland fire and that issue should be incorporated in the SEC comments, emphasizing the need for fuels management, maintenance of fuel breaks, commitments to monitoring and flexibility in grazing management using monitoring as a tool for adaptive management. Ms. Todd added the approximately one year ago, Nevada BLM submitted a NOI to start a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Great Basin for fuel breaks to reduce fire threats and they are hopeful that EIS will be approved and move forward. Chair Goicoechea stated that in order to give direction to the Governor's office, the SEC believes that SFAs are a major concern and must be addressed in the scoping comments. The Chair further requested that Ms. Todd address targeted grazing and results-based grazing and asked if the BLM was any closer to receiving interim guidance on those subjects. Ms. Todd responded that they have made a concerted effort for getting projects to come forward, including reviewing the Emergency Stabilization Restoration Plans (ESR) as having some flexibility to take on targeted grazing efforts; reviewing cheat grass mono-culture repeated fire areas as well as other projects. Chair Goicoechea reiterated that flexibility in the time allotted for grazing permits is a necessity. Member Swanson noted that the SEC must be careful with language that is too broad for targeted grazing. Chair Goicoechea continued that mapping is a key item, and the need for a new method for mapping. Ms. Robinson agreed, noting that the SEC has adopted Dr. Peter Coates' new maps and she believes there is an effort being made for the BLM to put those maps into effect immediately. Ms. Robinson also echoed previous statements that Nevada cannot go through the full NEPA process every time an adjustment or change to a map needs to be made. Member Swanson stated that the way forward in accomplishing the flexibility to draw maps is to have clarity regarding the purpose of those maps. Member Emm opined that during the NEPA negotiation, it may be that if a suggestion were made that the plan be as flexible and adaptive to the different conditions as possible. Chair Goicoechea agreed and further said that the SEC needs to recommend the DOI to take a state-by-state approach. Ms. Sheila Anderson, Office of the Governor, noted that a discussion has been had with regard to the updating and flexibility of mapping by incorporating the maps by reference in the Approved Resource Management Plan (ARMPA). The state can then update plans as necessary. Ms. Anderson further noted that the Nevada State Plan sections can also be incorporated by reference in the ARMPA. Chair Goicoechea and the Council agreed with that recommendation. Member Boies had further comments with regard to water rights and that the language should be aligned with Nevada's state water law. Ms. Carolyn Swed, USFWS, said that all parties are learning through this process and the value of looking at this issue from a multitude of scales while taking into account the legitimate variations of each state. However, Ms. Swed noted that the status of the birds must be considered on a range-wide scale and it will be necessary for USFWS to recognize how to stitch the plan together while enabling USFWS to uphold the desire and intent to not list the sage-grouse as endangered. Ms. Robinson said that issue was brought up during the meetings and the states should keep in mind the fragmentation of the habitat. Chair Goicoechea stated that he would entertain a motion as follows: "1) The Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Council is opposed to the sagebrush focal areas as they were adopted in the 2015 LUPA; 2) The SEC encourages flexibility and adaptive management in regards to grazing and fuel

management and wishes to address the habitat objectives contained within the plans; 3) The SEC encourages referencing the State Plan process in regards to mapping and ground-truthing, so that it may be accepted in the LUPA; 4) The SEC encourages a state-by-state basis for the planning process; 5) The SEC encourages referencing Nevada water law, when applicable, so that it is incorporated into the LUPA by reference." Pam Robinson asked for clarification regarding monitoring and Table 2.2. Chair Goicoechea stated that those issues were included in habitat objectives. Ms. Robinson then asked if the mitigation discussion was also included in the habitat objectives. Chair Goicoechea said he believed that should be included separately, with language supporting the CCS as the mitigation tool available for the State of Nevada. Member Emm offered his concern of the CCS being the only mitigation tool available, as he is unsure how the BIA trust lands will fit in, and he does not want to lock those trust lands out. Chair Goicoechea then restated the Motion as follows: "1) The Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Council is opposed to the sagebrush focal areas as they were adopted in the 2015 LUPA; 2) The SEC promotes the use of flexibility in adaptive management for addressing habitat objectives including monitoring, fine fuels reduction and reducing the threat of wildfire; 3) The SEC references the CCS process and EIS in regards to mapping and ground-truthing; 4) The SEC encourages referencing Nevada state water law, when applicable; 5) The SEC promotes the CCS as the primary mitigation tool, with the exception of BIA trust lands; 6) The SEC encourages a state-by-state basis for the planning process, with the understanding that incorporating the range-wide population is necessary." Member Lister made the motion; seconded by Member Boies; motion passed unanimously.

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

Chair Goicoechea called for a recess at 11:01 a.m., and reconvened at 11:17 a.m.

8. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A DRAFT LETTER TO U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REQUESTING AN INCREASE IN TAKE PERMITS SPECIFIC TO TARGETED RAVEN CONTROL - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A copy of the draft letter requesting an increase in take permits specific to targeted raven control is available on the Program's website. Chair Goicoechea advised the SEC that the letter is being revised and those changes will be discussed. The Chair noted that he had discussed the correspondence with Mr. McGowan and noted the raven problem is similar to other birds across the country. Chair Goicoechea said that one avenue available, rather than asking for an increased take, would be to initiate a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and an EIS on the raven population, and at the conclusion of this process, a depredation order could be issued. Chair Goicoechea likened this method to other species where the population has expanded to the point that the conventional method of control is not having a positive effect. Chair Goicoechea's suggestion to the SEC is that rather than asking for an increased take, he would propose that the USFWS initiate a NEPA process to draft an EIS addressing the need for a depredation order, related to the common raven across the west, and asked for thoughts from the Council. Member Lister asked about the procedure entailed in requesting an EIS. Chair Goicoechea noted that an NOI would first need to be published in the federal register. Mr. Wasley advised that presently Wildlife Services is in the process of a much broader EIS in which raven take is addressed, and he has had discussions with Mr. Mark Jensen, who may be able to provide further details. Mr. Mark Jensen, State Director, United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA APHIS/WS) stated that the USDA is currently updating the environmental assessment for the predator management program in Nevada. Mr. Jensen stated it has been agreed that three percent (currently 5,000 birds) of the raven population could be removed without a negative effect on the population. Mr. Jensen said that if the SEC chooses to remove more than three percent of the population, producing a negative impact on the species, an EIS would be triggered with the possible result a depredation order. Mr. Jensen said that the current EA could not be utilized to negatively impact the population. Mr. Wasley asked Mr. Jensen if the current EA allows a take of three percent of the historically determined population estimate, and if new information determines that the present population is significantly higher, could the EA process allow for an adjustment to the 5,000 raven take.

Mr. Jensen replied that they know three percent did not have a negative impact on the raven population, as the count went from 101,000 ravens to 190,000 ravens, all while removing three percent of the population. Mr. Jensen said that as they re-model, he believes the three percent number will probably change, but so may the population numbers. Mr. Jensen noted that new number will still not result in a negative impact on the population. Ms. Swed noted that in discussions with members of the Migratory Bird Program, the trajectory and trend is recognized and USFWS believes that in order to measurably increase the take, an EIS would be necessary. Ms. Swed offered that it would be imperative to contextualize the take within the framework that the state has put forward in the State Plan, stressing that it is not just about increasing the amount of take; it is about doing so in a strategic manner that addresses the sources of the raven population increase. Member Molini offered that the correspondence could be amended to request the initiation of an EIS in order to achieve a depredation order and in the interim the SEC could request an increase in the take amount reflecting the higher population numbers. There was further discussion by the SEC with regard to revisions to the correspondence, a full account of which can be found in the recording on the Program's website. Chair Goicoechea stated that he would entertain a motion to craft correspondence to USFWS requesting the initiation of an EIS on a west-wide level in order to achieve a depredation order and to also request an increase in the take amount reflecting the current raven population levels; add information regarding the work of Dr. Coates; and to authorize the changes to the correspondence and that the Chair will sign outside of the meeting in order to expedite the process. Member Lister made the motion; seconded by Member Lacy. There was discussion on the motion with Mr. McGowan requesting assistance in directing the correspondence to the correct agency. Ms. Swed responded that the appropriate parties would be the Secretary of the Interior and USFWS, principal deputy director, Greg Sheehan. Chair Goicoechea asked Member Lister if, as part of his motion, he would add that Mr. McGowan be allowed to work with USFWS in order to receive the correct contacts and addresses; Member Lister agreed; motion passed unanimously.

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

9. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A DRAFT LETTER OF SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT MEASURES WITHIN THE WILD HORSES AND BURROS ACT, TO MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT LEVELS (AML) IN HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS, HERD AREAS, AND WILD HORSE AND BURRO TERRITORIES - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Chair Goicoechea began by stating that amendments were being drafted and that he wants to be sure that the letter refers to the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, **as amended**. Member Swanson said that it was appropriate to discuss AML as a range, noting the low and high numbers and attempt to have the population in the middle range. Member Swanson further pointed out that there has been remarkable growth and an incredibly high number of horses and burros on the range. Member Swanson said the population will double in four years and even at a conservative 15% growth rate, the population would double in five years. Member Swanson said that in areas where there are a substantially high numbers of horses and where permanent damage to the soil and vegetation is occurring; ecological thresholds are being crossed creating permanent change. Chair Goicoechea, for the benefit of participants attending via teleconference, advised that the last paragraph on the first page should have an additional statement as follows: "With an 18% growth rate, the population, without maintenance management, will double again in four years (five years at 15% growth, three years at 25% growth). In areas where horse and burro populations substantially exceed carrying capacity, permanent damage is occurring where rangeland and riparian vegetation and soils are crossing ecological thresholds." Member Lister suggested a change to the first paragraph of the letter introducing the Council; he believes that the SEC should be described as a statutorily authorized body for the State of Nevada for sage-grouse habitat management. Chair Goicoechea entertained a motion to make the changes to the correspondence as described above, with the authority for the Chair to sign the correspondence outside the council meeting. Motion by Member Swanson; seconded by Member Molini; motion passed unanimously.

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

10. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A DRAFT LETTER TO ADDRESS ISSUES WITH "FIRE BORROWING" IN FEDERAL AGENCY BUDGETS AND ASSOCIATED FUNDING FOR LONG TERM RECOVERY AND MONITORING OF SITES AFFECTED BY FIRE - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Member Swanson provided some technical revisions and further added that in the second paragraph, he would like to strike, "We feel that," and insert instead, "The act of fire borrowing within and amongst similar agencies impairs the ability of agencies to conduct pre-suppression fuels management and to build the infrastructure needed for ongoing effectiveness in fire suppression." Member Swanson asked that the bullet points on page two, be changed as follows:

- "Where the potential for recovery to a desirable state exists, provide greater funding flexibility and duration of integrated management approaches for sites to be recovered and trending towards a desirable vegetative state."

Member Swanson also asked that a new bullet point be added as follows:

- "Fuel breaks created in many areas across Nevada to protect sage grouse habitats and other important resources are in perpetual need of maintenance. Failure to fund this investment is short-sighted and often exacerbates the problems with fuel flammability and continuity."

Member Lister requested that the first paragraph be re-written for clarity. Chair Goicoechea asked for a motion on the correspondence, allowing Mr. McGowan to request assistance in directing the correspondence to the correct agency; to make the changes as described above and with the authority for the Chair to sign the correspondence outside the council meeting. There was discussion on the motion with Mr. McGowan providing the SEC with information that Ms. Anderson had submitted suggested edits to the correspondence and he will provide those edits to the Council. Ms. Anderson stated that some of the revisions were strictly editorial, however, legislation has been previously introduced in Congress and in order to make the correspondence current, a reference to the legislation and the bill number should be incorporated in the letter. Ms. Anderson further noted that the Western Governors' Association (WGA) had sent a similar letter and she will provide the Council with a copy of that correspondence. Chair Goicoechea added that the motion should also include reference to legislation introduced; the bill number; and the date of the WGA letter. Motion by Member Lister; seconded by Member Boies; motion passed unanimously.

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

11. REVIEW OF THE 2017 CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT FINDINGS AND POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Kelly McGowan, Program Manager

Mr. McGowan reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, entitled, "Improvement Recommendations for the Nevada Conservation Credit System Planned for Winter 2017/2018," a copy of which is available on the Program's website. Mr. McGowan began with the overview of the recommended improvements. Item 1 is identified as permanent disturbance, with the improvement recommendation of providing alternatives to permanent credits. Item 2 is identified as HSI on debit projects, with the improvement recommendation of focusing on alternative methods, including utilizing the HSI, in place of data collection to calculate debits in order to increase efficiency and ensure a net conservation gain. Item 3 is to identify areas of non-habitat, with the improvement recommendation of allowing the utilization of GIS layers to pre-screen Project Areas during map unit development for attributes that when present eliminate or reduce the need for transects in the field. Item 4 is identified as the refinement of anthropogenic removal processes, with the improvement recommendation to focus on the removal of anthropogenic structures to generate credits only for reduced impacts on federal lands. Item 5 is identified as site specific performance measures, with the improvement recommendation to ensure long-term credit project compliance is based on site-specific measures within the credit producer's control, as opposed to aggregate HQT scores. Item 6 is identified as new methods for conifer removal, with the improvement recommendation of

addressing the quantification of impacts and the credits awarded through conifer removal. Item 7 is identified as ancillary features on debit projects; this recommendation is in development and will be dependent upon research, analysis, and consultation. Item 8 is identified as changes to powerline subtypes, with the recommended improvement focusing on the development of new powerline subtypes to more appropriately address impacts from ravens based on recent data on single and three phase distribution lines. Mr. McGowan noted that some of the recommended improvements are meant to increase efficiency and reduce cost to the credit and debit producer. The remaining improvements capitalize on newly acquired data, information or science. Chair Goicoechea asked when these improvements would be presented to the SEC in final form. Mr. McGowan replied that it was the SETT's projection that six of the improvements would be ready to present in December, with the remaining available for presentation in January. There was further discussion and comments from the Council which are captured in the audio recording available on the Program's website. ***NO ACTION***

12. INTRODUCTION TO THE ONLINE SITE SCREENING TOOL ALLOWING LANDOWNERS TO INSTANTANEOUSLY ASSESS CREDIT POTENTIAL - Kelly McGowan, Program Manager

Mr. McGowan presented the new online site screening tool to the SEC, demonstrating the various tools available for calculating the potential for credit development on private lands. Mr. McGowan noted that the public could delineate their private land boundaries on the map and the tool would evaluate the habitat quality based on the habitat characteristics, proximity to roads, mines and other anthropogenic features. The site screening tool can be viewed at: <https://www.enviroaccounting.com/NVCreditSystem/SiteScreeningTool/Basics> There were questions and comments from the Council, which are captured in the audio recording available on the Program's website. ***NO ACTION***

13. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING THIS MEETING AND SCHEDULING THE NEXT SEC MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

- A. With staff assistance, the Council will review items discussed, as well as items acted upon during this meeting, and determine which of those they wish to direct staff to do further work on, as well as which items the Council wishes to act on that may not have been acted upon during earlier discussion.
- B. Discussion of the 2017 Conservation Credit System Continual Improvement findings and recommendations for improvements.
- C. Update on scoping process response to the DOI NOI.
- D. NDA demonstration of its monitoring application.
- E. The Council scheduled their next meeting for Friday, December 15, 2017, location and time to be determined.

14. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS -

- A. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – (USFWS) Carolyn Swed congratulated the SEC on its first credit conservation transaction and said that the USFWS appreciates the commitment of the Council to sagebrush ecosystem conservation. Ms. Swed stated that USFWS has published in the federal register a Notice of Review for two mitigation policies, with comments due on January 5, 2018. The USFWS is specifically seeking input on the mitigation goals of net conservation gain and she encourages the SEC to comment.
- B. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Marci Todd also congratulated the SEC on the transaction and that the BLM has been proud to be part of such a cooperative and collaborative effort. Ms. Todd noted that the BLM exceeded the 67,000 acre target for fuel treatments. Ms. Todd also reported that the public scoping

meetings for the sage-grouse plan amendments are underway and that cooperating agency invitations were mailed out with regard to the planning efforts.

C. US Forest Service (USFS) – Cheva Gabor echoed the congratulations to the SEC and USFS is glad to see forward progress in the State of Nevada. Ms. Gabor advised the SEC that the USFS Director and the Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest briefed Tony Tooke, Forest Service Chief, on the wild horse and burro issue and Mr. Tooke has indicated that he would like USFS to take a proactive role on this issue and not to defer to the BLM as the lead on managing USFS' wild horse and burro issues. Ms. Gabor also advised that the USFS had signed the cooperating agency agreement invitation from the BLM. Ms. Gabor said that meetings have been scheduled with the Nevada Department of Agricultural (NDA) and NDOW for coordination meetings.

D. US Department of Agriculture (NRCS) – No update.

E. Other – No update.

15.STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS

A. Office of the Governor – No update.

B. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – Jim Lawrence advised that DCNR has been working with the Governor's office on the public scoping response and DCNR has also signed the cooperating agency invitation.

C. Department of Wildlife (NDOW) – Tony Wasley advised that NDOW has a new video on its Facebook page explaining the wing barrel program. Mr. Wasley updated the SEC on NDOW's fire restoration efforts and its pinyon juniper treatment efforts in the bi-state area

D. Department of Agriculture (NDA) – Jim Barbee stated that they are working with USFS on administering a sage-grouse grant and NDA also has been moving forward on water efficiency grants. Mr. Barbee said that NDA's monitoring application is in the final editing stage and requested that NDA provide the SEC with a demonstration of the application at the next SEC meeting.

E. Conservation Districts Program – Gerry Miller advised the SEC that all 28 Conservation Districts were found to be in good standing and the Nevada Association of Conservation District meeting was held in Minden, Nevada. Mr. Miller also introduced Melany Aten as the newest member of the Conservation Districts Program.

F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team (SETT) – Kelly McGowan provided the SEC with a handout regarding updates on the current credit projects. Mr. McGowan also provided information on the RCPP and noted that the SETT intends to have an announcement out soon with information and the benefits of signing up for the program. Mr. McGowan advised that the Greater Phoenix, Newmont mine is interested in off-setting their disturbance with credits through the CCS. Mr. McGowan also announced that Shane Hall, representing Crawford Cattle Company, is present today to execute the management plan with the SETT.

G. Other – No update.

16.PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Goicoechea asked that all letters voted upon today be copied to Nevada's congressional delegation. Member Lister stated that the Lincoln County local area working group (LAWG) finished their plan addendum last winter and provide copies to numerous parties. Member Lister has been charged with gathering the signatures on the addendum and has asked that all parties review the addendum, sign and return the documents to him. Member Swanson announced that the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) has a newly approved graduate program in animal and rangeland sciences. Member Swanson also said that the Society for Range Management will be holding an all-day symposium regarding the Emerald Islands presented by the Sage-Grouse Initiative.

17. ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business to come before the Council, Chair Goicoechea adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.