



STATE OF NEVADA  
**SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL**  
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**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
**Time:** 8:30 a.m.  
**Place:** Teleconference Access:  
Teleconference Number – 877.422.8614  
Participant Code – 3983136#

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**Council Members Present:** JJ Goicoechea, Chris MacKenzie, Bevan Lister, Sherm Swanson, Steven Boies, Starla Lacey, William Molini, Bill Dunkelberger, Marc Jackson, Jon Raby, Jennifer Ott, Tony Wasley, Jim Lawrence for Bradley Crowell, Craig Burkett.

**Council Members Absent:** Gerry Emm, Allen Biaggi, Ray Dotson,

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Goicoechea called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Member Boies moved to approve the agenda, Member MacKenzie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. **\*ACTION**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Member MacKenzie moved to approve the minutes for the meeting on October 8th, 2020. Member Molini seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. **\*ACTION**

**5. COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence

**6. BLM UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF WILD HORSES AND ACTIVE MEASURES BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS POPULATIONS EXCEEDING APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT LEVELS AND THE RECENT STUDIES BY THE USGS TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILD HORSES, GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AND THEIR SHARED HABITATS– \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Mr. Allen Shepard and Ms. Ruth Thompson presented information about the Wild Horse and Burro program in the state of Nevada. This presentation is available online. A discussion ensued regarding actions the SEC could take that would support Wild Horse and Burro population levels in line with the original legislation. Mr Shepard emphasized the need for continued support for BLM action as they prioritize actions. A discussion was had regarding holding pastures and the logistical challenges associated with removing horses and requiring some sort of acclimation period prior to moving them. Chairman Goicoechea pointed out that 10,000 horses are needed for gathering next year if the state

population were to remain static. Member Swanson offered Proper Functioning Condition training to advance the understanding of riparian function as it relates to Appropriate Management Levels. **\*NO ACTION**

**7. STATUS UPDATE RELATIVE TO WESTERN OIL AND WESTERN GOLD EXPLORATION IN NEWARK VALLEY, NV– \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Mr. Kelly McGowan gave a verbal update of actions related to Western Oil and Gold. **\*NO ACTION**

**8. REVIEW OF THE TIMELINES ESTABLISHED FOR THE PROPONENT DRIVEN MITIGATION AND THE MITIGATION STATUS FOR GOLD BAR, GOLD ROCK, PROSPECT, AND ROSSI MINES – \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Mr. McGowan and Ms. Katie Andrlle gave a presentation that is available online. A conversation was had between council members and Mr. Jon Raby emphasizing the need for new and expanded projects to use the CCS in the future. **\*NO ACTION**

**9. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON THE SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE– \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Mr. McGowan presented the semi-annual report which is available online. Member Boies commented that credit supply seemed sufficient to the demand. Mr. McGowan replied in the affirmative, but mentioned that there are several projects anticipated that might require a significant number of credits. **\*NO ACTION**

**10. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON THE 2020 ANNUAL CCS SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE REPORT– \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Mr. McGowan presented the performance report which is available online. There was no discussion. **\*NO ACTION**

**11. UPDATE ON CCS MITIGATION TRANSACTIONS AND STATUS OF CREDIT AND DEBIT PROJECTS– \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Mr. McGowan presented information on transactions. This information is available online. Chairman Goicoechea made a motion to approve the semi-annual report to the governor, Member MacKenzie seconded. **\*ACTION**

**12. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING THIS MEETING AND SCHEDULING NEXT SEC MEETING– \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

The next SEC meeting was scheduled on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Mr. McGowan offered a Western Oil update as an agenda item. Member Molini requested an action item expressing support for a resolution created by the coalition for healthy lands Nevada regarding the wild horse and burro issue. Member Lister requested an agenda item tracking legislation considered by the legislature relevant to the sagebrush ecosystem. Mr. McGowan offered a continuation of the wild horse and burro topic with presentations of information newly available from Dr. Jim Sedinger from the University of Nevada – Reno.

**13. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:**

A. US Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. Jackson updated the council on three proposed listing decisions, one for white bark pine (threatened), relict dace (not warranted), three spring snail species in the east part of the state (not warranted). The listing decisions are open for comments.

B. Bureau of Land Management

Mr. Raby updated the council on the greater sage grouse supplemental EIS published on November 20<sup>th</sup> that addressed issues identified Judge Windmill. Until action is taken by the court, BLM operates under the 2015 sage grouse plan. Fuels reduction/fuels breaks EIS is signed and ready for use. The hazardous fuels reductions for restoration was published in November and the record of decision is expected to be signed in the new year. Progress has been made in the outcome based grazing projects. BLM has continued to work with APHIS wildlife services on predator management and a new Memorandum of Understanding, and have a new statewide EIS for predator damage management.

C. US Forest Service

Mr. Dunkelberger updated the council on a new deputy forester (John Stansfield) NEPA related issues. The Forest Service is requesting public input on Cat-ex streamlines for wildfire. This will enable the treatment of up

to 100,000 acres/year across the Forest. The Shared Stewardship Executive Committee identified the two projects to complete by the end of 2021 in Southern and Northern Nevada.

D. USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

E. Other

#### 14. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

A. Office of the Governor

B. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Mr. Lawrence updated the council on budget processes that might play out due to the pandemic.

C. Department of Wildlife

Mr. Jenne announced that the sage-grouse season is open. Staff recently attended Prairie Grouse and Wind forum, with the findings being that energy development on prairie grouse is negligible but substantial on sage-grouse. NDOW is doing noise monitoring to establish baseline sound levels. Additional sites have been monitored this year but there is no data yet. A partner position for USFWS housed in NDOW in Winnemucca for Pheasants Forever. NRCS and NDOW hired a new partner position in Winnemucca, and a new position in Elko has been flown. The NRCS/NDOW shared position in Reno should be flying soon as well.

D. Department of Agriculture

Ms. Brown noted that the NDA has been engaged in many activities already been presented on. Additionally, they will be hosting the Nevada Native Seed forum in the spring, virtually and possibly in person. They are also engaged in the BLM grazing regulations.

E. Conservation Districts Program

Mr. Ormsby announced that the State Conservation Commission has issued \$65,000 through the Sage-Grouse Grant Program to three conservation districts. This year, they will be working with the SETT in helping to change the grading and ranking criteria to encourage some of the partners in the work they are doing. There's a capacity issue for everyone, and they are looking into folding the Local Area Working Group meetings into Conservation District (CDs) meetings which helps with capacity issues. They will also work with the SETT on adaptive management trigger responses. The CDs may need help furthering the Resource Needs Assessments (RNAs). Mr. Ormsby requested the Council to start thinking of other funding mechanisms to develop the RNAs. The state is working on the climate initiative and the focus is on natural and working lands. The talks attracted people who live in the cities primarily from the southern part of the state, and rural members were not represented. Assistance to get more rural people to attend would be great. Program is updating the State Conservation Commission Strategic Plan and creating a strategic plan for the CDs.

F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team

Two days ago, the SETT began the process for holding the adaptive management analysis for 2020. Mr. Mower took over to explain that the SETT had our meeting to review the habitat warnings. They do not have population data or triggers, so they are pushing ahead with habitat warnings. None of the recommendations from the prior year are in any stage of implementation, so they are going to work with the CDs to get a select number of recommendations to get on the path to be acted upon. But they did come up with new triggers for this year in the Shoshone, South Fork, Buffalo-Skedaddle, and Cortez PMUs, two of which contain population triggers with associated recommendations. Mr. McGowan added that they are in very initial stages of working with partners to establish funding that would go to fund a position to help us implement the adaptive management process and to work with the local work group level to ensure they are heard and incorporated. The team is working their way to begin to look for more funding to address invasive weeds and work on the prioritization they developed to get funded actions on the ground.

G. Other

#### 15. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

#### 16. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Goicoechea adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.