



STATE OF NEVADA
SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
201 South Roop Street, Suite 101
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5247
Phone (775) 687-2000

MINUTES

Date: Thursday, May 30, 2024

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Place: Nevada State Legislature
Room 1214
401 S Carson St
Carson City, NV 89701

Zoom Access for the Public

Phone number: 888.475.4499

Meeting ID: 861 1432 7224

Live streaming can be accessed on the NV Legislature Website:

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Calendar/A/>

Council Members Present: Chris MacKenzie, Chair; Jake Tibbitts, Vice Chair; Bevan Lister, Steven Boies, William Molini, Sherman Swanson; Daphne Emm Hooper; Mathew Johns; Kyle Davis; James Settelmeyer, DCNR; Mark Freese, NDOW; Justin Barrett, USFWS; Cheva Gabor, USFS; Alan Shepherd, BLM; Chris Rose, NRCS; JJ Goicoechea, NDA

Council Members Absent: None

1. CALL TO ORDER @ 8:33am; ROLL CALL- All members present

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Program manager directed the council to public comments that were sent via letter.
 - [Public Comment 1](#)
 - [Public Comment 2](#)
- No further public comment was made at that time.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - *ACTION: Approval of [agenda](#) for Thursday, May 30, 2024. Member Molini moved to approve the [agenda](#) for May 30, 2024; Member Boies seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *ACTION: Approval of [minutes](#) from the meetings held on Friday, April 19, 2024; Member Swanson moved to approve the minutes for April 19, 2024; Member Molini seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. [Final minutes.](#)

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. K.Steele

- Member Davis brought forth concerns about the issue of decertifying verifiers with the belief that those actions should be discussed and voted upon by the committee. Council Chair MacKenzie confirmed that the matter would be included in a future council meeting.
- K. Steele directed the council's attention to the letter that was sent to the BLM to request that the SEC be considered a [Cooperating Agency](#).

6. Review and Approval of the SEP Language Access Plan

***ACTION:** Member Lister motioned to adopt it; Member Davis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- K.Steele gave a short [presentation](#) on the mandatory SEP Language Access Plan, to be voted on for approval.
- Council Chair MacKenzie asked if there would be a future need to add an interpreter to the budget.
- DCNR Deputy Director Etchegoyhen stated that the DCNR has not yet made a request for funding, however there are funds that can be utilized in the interim.
- K.Steele brought to attention that the SETT website has the ability to be translated into various common languages.
- No public comment was provided.

7. Public Lands Rule Presentation and Discussion

Pat Johnston, BLM

[Presentation](#) given by Pat Johnston on the BLM Public Lands Rule

- Member Boies followed-up with questions and statements
- Member Lister followed-up with questions and concerns about ACECs and temporary management
- Director Goicoechea followed-up with questions about land health standards
- Member Tibbitts followed-up with questions about term permits and restoration leases
- Member Swanson followed-up with questions about opportunities for mitigation leases, and planned processes to do discuss what this ruling would allow for conservation credits
- Chair MacKenzie followed-up with a question about minimum or maximum sizes to the leases
- Member Lister followed-up with a question about who makes the decision whether a lease has a fee or not
- Director Goicoechea followed-up with a question regarding economic impact and money generation from the rule

NO ACTION TAKEN

8. Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP Amendment and Draft EIS Public Comments Discussion

SEP Staff

- K.Steele gave a [presentation](#) on overview of BLM DRAFT EIS and the SETTs proposed alternatives.
- The council discussed that the SETT should make comments based solely on the state plan.
- The council discussed comments on disturbance cap and exclusions in relation to the state plan the original purpose of the SEP.
- The council discussed the importance of choosing an alternative.
- Members Tibbitts and Boies stated that they could not endorse any alternatives that go against the state plan.
- The council discussed ACECs in relation to the state plan.
- The council discussed the Solar EIS in relation to the DEIS.
- The council discussed keeping the comments high level.

***ACTION:** Member Swanson motioned to have the list of comments go out again and they could have a time period for any of them to request a withdrawal of any comments they feel are not in alignment with our state plan and purposes or are not high level enough so that those that remain that are high level enough and broadly based remain. Member Molini seconded. No committee approval vote was taken.

- Council discussed the motion further with concerns about one person vetoing comments for all council members.
- Member Swanson suggested an amendment to the motion.
- DAG Ting suggested a withdrawal of motion from Member Swanson to create a new motion instead.
- Member Swanson withdrew his motion. Member Molini withdrew his seconding of the motion.

***ACTION:** Member Swanson motioned that the SETT continue with their work, that work would then go out to the SEC before the BLM, in a timely manner of 5 business days to individually review the comments and if they believe there is anything in those that they feel is inconsistent with our purpose or state plan, they can suggest that it be removed and the SETT can make the final decision whether to remove it based on whether it is supported by our current state plan or any decisions previously made officially by the SEC. If it is consistent with our state plan and those decisions, they can go ahead and leave it in and submit it to the BLM. No second was called for. No committee approval vote was taken.

- D. Etchegoyhen discussed the Governors Consistency Review Process.
- The previous motion was withdrawn by Member Swanson.

***ACTION:** Member Lister motioned to table the discussion and revisit it towards the end of the meeting. No second to the motion. No committee approval vote was taken.

***ACTION:** Member Molini motioned to direct the SETT to go through current comments to determine, in their discretion, what aligns with the Nevada state plan and accept any comments that they receive from any board members as to what might not be in line with the state plan and take that into consideration before making their comments. Member Tibbitts seconded.

- SEC discussed the motion.

***ACTION:** Member Molini amended the motion to state that if council members have a concern about inconsistencies with the state plan that they provide that by the 5th of June to the SETT, who could then make determination if it was in concert with the state plan or not. Member Tibbitts removed his second. Member Swanson Seconded. Members Tibbitts and Hooper are opposed. The motion did not pass.

***ACTION:** Member Tibbitts motioned to go on record to say that the SEC will not and cannot support any alternatives that are not consistent with the state plan. That the SEP wants to work with the BLM to reach that consistency before a final resource management plan amendment is put forward. Member Boies seconded the motion. Member Molini opposed. All other members in agreement. Motion passes.

- The council held more discussion about the consistency review.

***ACTION:** Member Tibbitts motioned to have the SETT look at the comments and frame them through the lens of the state plan, in consistency with the state plan; Member Davis seconded the motion. Steve Boies opposed the motion. The motion was approved with seven in favor.

9. Review the Updated Science and the Proposed Improvement to the Conservation Credit System's GRSG Habitat Management Categories. Consider for Adoption Proposed Updated Habitat Management Categories – SEP Staff

***ACTION:** Member Tibbitts motioned to approve the updated maps with the understanding that they are meant to be used at the landscape level and implementation is based on refined on the ground information; Member Davis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- K.Steele provided a [Presentation](#) on the updated [Habitat Management maps](#) along with the changes incorporated from the previous council meeting in which they were discussed.
- Member Lister had questions on where to find an interactive map.
- K.Steele directed the council to visit the BLM's public interactive map.
- Member Tibbitts thanked the various members that worked to update the maps and the justifications that were made.
- Member Boies responded with a question about the interactive maps.

10. Consideration of the June 2024 Semi-Annual Report for Submission to the Governor’s Office, in Accordance with NRS 232.162. – SEP Staff *ACTION: Member Davis motioned to approve the Semi-Annual report. Member Swanson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- SEP Staff presented the [Semi-Annual Report](#)
 - S.Hale presented the [Annual Report](#) to the group regarding the background information, current activities and future plans of the SETT staff.
 - S.Monaghan presented the [Annual Report](#) to the group regarding the Credit side of the presentation highlighting a total of more than 34,000 acres conserved.
 - More than 24,000 credits are anticipated to become available over the next year.
 - Over 10,800 credits have been sold.
 - C.Acevedo continued the [Annual Report](#), going over the Debit side of the presentation.
 - There are over 34,000 anticipated debits currently in the system with 31,106 acres of impact
 - Cheyenne also reported on new science utilizing scientific papers that have been written about Greater Sage-Grouse.
- Member Boies asked a question about GRSG counts

11. STAFF BRIEFINGS AND UPDATES TO THE COUNCIL - SEP Staff *ACTION: Member Lister moved to approve to add the definition for satellites, large telescopes and other antennas into our communications towers and approve the combining of reports. Member Swanson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- K.Steele gave a presentation about [CCS Updates](#) to be made regarding new anthropogenic features and the combining of reports.
- Member Davis asked a question about the program’s success regarding the recent changes made.

12. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING THIS MEETING AND SCHEDULING NEXT SEC MEETING

- 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.
- Determination of any specific items the Council would like to work on at their next regularly scheduled Council meeting.
 - Certification and Decertification Process
 - Criteria for Land Transactions that Can Benefit Conservation – *Presentation by BLM*
 - Accessible Maps
 - Actions on State Lands Regarding Sage Grouse – *Presentation by State Agencies*
 - Orla Mining Company Hearing
 - Using Conservation to create Credits on Public Lands
- Scheduling of the next Council meeting date, time, and place.
 - Wednesday, July 31st, 2024 @ Location TBD

13. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

- Justin Barrett with US Fish and Wildlife Service (*USFW*)
 - Published document, Proposed Critical Habitat for Dixie Valley Toad, open for 60-day public comment

- Tim Bowden with Bureau of Land Management (*BLM*)
 - No Updates
- Cheva Gabor with US Forest Service (*USFS*)
 - Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscape received 29 million dollars, 1.5 million will go to NDF for the good neighbor agreement
 - Using Nevada shared stewardship agreement and structure to elevate projects for consideration for funding under the state agreement, which is a new approach
 - Prescribed Fire NEPA to be released in JULY
 - Aerial Herbicide NEPA is almost ready to be released
 - Briefed the governor on the upcoming wildfire season, to forward that briefing to the council.
 - Resource Advisory Committee funding update
- Chris Rose with USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (*NRCS*)
 - Completed and signed Bi-State letter of commitment at the beginning of May 2024
 - Provided a sponsorship for the 2025 Traditional Ecological Summit
 - Personell Updates:
 - Permanent state biologist – Todd Aly
 - Permanent state Range Management Specialist – Angela Mushrush
 - Brought on a long-term detail as head of programs section for at least a year - Ari Delara
 - Brought on 3 partner biologists through Pheasants forever
 - Programs:
 - Ending 3rd round of EQIP sign ups, fourth round is TBD
 - STAC Meeting, June 11th at Nevada Department of Agriculture HQ

14. STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

- Office of the Governor- No update
- J. Settelmeyer & D. Etchegoyhen with Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (*NDCNR*) provided update on BDA for budget and informed the council that he would contact state lands to lead a presentation at the next meeting to discuss actions on state lands that benefit Sage Grouse habitat.
- Allen Jenne with Department of Wildlife (*NDOW*)
 - Mark Freese provided an update
 - Working on comments for the GRSG RMPA
 - Status of sagebrush habitat plan
 - Work with federal partners on restoration projects
 - Gathering resources for upcoming fire season
 - Shawn Espinosa provided an update
 - Raven Take permit increases
 - GRSG Counts
 - Pat Jackson provided an update
 - Raven Take permit increases and switch from depredation permit to miscellaneous permit
 - Removed 12,500 adults
 - Removed 15 nests
 - Report will follow removal season
 - \$3 predator fee update to the big game application

- Justin Small provided an update
 - Drafting commitment letter for the bi-state.
- JJ Goicoechea with Department of Agriculture (NDA)
 - Wildfire crisis landscape to work with partners to fund weed treatments
 - Native Seed Program
 - Working with growers and are releases RFP to contract grow outs
 - Provide, free of cost, seed to producers
 - Mormon cricket surveys and treatments
 - Completed all aerial treatments
 - Noxious weed surveys and enforcement
 - Ongoing but tapering off
 - Adaptive Management
 - Recruiting for Deputy Administrator for Plant compliance
 - H5N1 Update: No cases in domestic livestock thus far but continue to monitor
 - Shared Stewardship
 - Open field position for Wildlife Services position
 - Not going to rehire a lion specialist, to hire a trapper
- Other:
 - No further updates

15. PUBLIC COMMENT - *NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment will be made on any matter relevant to the Council. Public comments will be taken at the beginning and end of the meeting and may be taken at the discretion of the Chair on specific agenda items. Public comments may be limited to 3 minutes per person at the discretion of the Chair. Comments will not be restricted based on viewpoint. No action will be taken on any matters raised during the public comment period that are not already on the agenda. Persons providing comments will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record.

No comment was made

16. ADJOURNMENT

Chair MacKenzie adjourned the meeting at 12:41pm

All details not covered in these minutes can be heard on the meeting recording at <https://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/Meetings/Meetings/>.