



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Friday, December 13, 2024

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Place: Nevada Department of Wildlife
Main Conference Room
6980 Sierra Center Pkwy #120
Reno, Nevada 89511

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1) CALL TO ORDER @ 8:30am; ROLL CALL

- a. Council Members Present: Chris MacKenzie, Chair; Jake Tibbitts, Vice Chair; Bevan Lister, Steven Boies, Mathew Johns, William Molini, Sherman Swanson; Daphne Emm Hooper; Kyle Davis; Alan Jenne, NDOW; Kristen Jule, USFWS; Jon Stansfield, USFS; Jon Raby, BLM; Chris Rose, NRCS; Meghan Brown, NDA
- b. Council Members Absent: James Settelmeyer, DCNR

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None

3) APPROVAL OF AGENDA –

***ACTION** Approval of agenda for Friday, December 13, 2024. Member Tibbitts moved to approve the agenda for Friday, December 13, 2024; Member Molini second the motion. The motion was approved.

4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

***ACTION** Approval of minutes from the subcommittee meeting held on Tuesday, September 24, 2024. Member Boies moved to approve the minutes and Member Davis seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

- a. Member Tibbitts stated a mistake in the title given to the DAG Ting, to be corrected by SETT.

***ACTION** Approval of minutes from the meeting held on Thursday, September 26, 2024, with edit made to DAG Ting's title. Member Johns moved to approve the minutes and Member Lister seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5) **COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**

- a. No correspondence from the Council or the SETT Program Manager

6) **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE TEMPORARY REGULATIONS FOR CHANGES TO NAC 232.400 – 232.480 – (REFER TO SEPARATE MEETING MINUTES FOR OFFICIAL MINUTES OF HEARING)**

***NO ACTION**

7) **SUGGESTIONS TO INCREASE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

- a. Mr. Kim Summers, Credit Project Proponent for the RDD Credit Project at Knott Creek Ranch, along with his legal representative, Paul Taggart discussed more efficient and effective methods to communicate with proponents.
- b. Among these methods to consider were:
 - i. Listening sessions with stakeholders across the state on both the credit and debit side.
 - ii. Potential termination is done through proper noticing process.
 - iii. Cancellation only done by the committee and to have a hearing to do so
- c. Council members held discussion about listening sessions for proponents, the termination process, and recommended the SETT present on the credit process at a future meeting.

***NO ACTION**

8) **REVIEW THE CURRENT PROCEDURES FOR COMPETING LAND USES, VERSION CONTROL, AND FINALIZING A DEBIT PROJECT; AND DISCUSS POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE PROCEDURE**

- a. C. Acevedo presented a NEPA overview in respect to the CCS, current CCS policies, and options for possible adoption.
- b. Member Lister thanked Cheyenne for the presentation and asked for her to explain the options that are inverse to the current policy.
- c. Member Lister asked for Cheyenne to walk the council through the implications of each option.
- d. Member Raby asked for Cheyenne to walk him through the term "Competing Land Use" as it pertains to SETT projects.
- e. Member Boies asked about how the SETT determines how collocation of anthropogenic features, specifically about powerlines, would affect debits.
- f. C. Acevedo suggested that the SETT takes the council through the HQT process at a later meeting.

- g. Member Tibbitts asked for clarification from the Bureau of Land Management on the start of the NEPA process. Discussion was held between the Council and the BLM about the specifics of the timeline.
- h. Member Lister asked C. Acevedo when the projects that only have an EA come to the SETT to mitigate.
- i. Member Tibbitts asked C. Acevedo what maps the new projects, running under an EA, are using since the Council approved the new HMAs.
- j. Member Lister asked when the current HQT version is finalized.
- k. Member Lister asked about procedures projects with SERs.
- l. Member Swanson recommended that once a project enters the CCS, they should know what version they will be running under.
- m. Member Swanson proposed an idea that a debit project be able to choose if they wanted to use the new science or stick with the version that they enter into the SEP at. Discussion was held over this concept.
- n. Member Lister asked a question about the differences between the options, as it pertains to the advantages of not having land use, version, and entering the CCS at one time.
- o. Member Lister asked if there would be heartburn if the final version was not set until the ROD would be signed. Discussion occurred, with the council agreeing that there would be.
- p. Member Davis asked how long the current process has been in place and stated that the current process does not align with the current NEPA process.
- q. Member Davis asked if the program needed to tie specific parts of this process to the NEPA process.
- r. Member Davis proposed tying entering into the CCS at “End of Milestone 1” in the BLM’s NEPA process. Discussion was held.
- s. Member Tibbitts proposed a motion to ensure that BLM makes SETT a Cooperating Agency for every project. Discussion was held.
- t. Member Davis asked who serves on the Technical Review Group/Science Working Group and what their role was.
- u. Member Davis shared his concern for the potential impacts to the Debit Project Proponents and his support for Member Swanson’s suggestion to allow debit projects to choose when they wanted to lock the HQT version in.
- v. Discussion was held over competing land use.
- w. Member Davis suggested that projects enter CCS at time of their baselines being completed. Discussion was held.
- x. S. Monaghan explained benefits to credit projects if competing land use is moved towards later parts of the NEPA process.

***ACTION** Member Swanson motioned that the SEC support option 3 with flexibility for version changes based on if the science changes, as the proponent’s choice, and that competing land use will apply at the end of final public comment. Member Emm Hooper seconded. All were in favor.

9) REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE CCS MANUAL, USER’S GUIDE, AND HQT DOCUMENT UPDATE FOR VERSION 2.0

- a. K. Steele discussed the major and minor changes in the documents, as well as updates based on new comments from the SEC.
- b. Member Tibbitts gave edits to be incorporated into the documents.
- c. Member Davis discussed the potential for the public to be a part of updating the documents.

* **ACTION** Member Swanson Motioned to update, to version 2.0, the Manual, User’s Guide, and Scientific Methods documents. Member Lister seconded. All in favor.

10) GREENLINK NORTH POWERLINE PROJECT STATUS AND UPDATE

- a. Brian Buttazoni gave a presentation on the background and status of the project.
 - i. History of the project
 - ii. Spoke about the physical specifications of the project
 - iii. Greater Sage-Grouse Mitigation
 - iv. Project Milestones
 - v. Final EIS to be released in 2025
 - vi. Construction to begin 2026
- b. SEC members asked clarifying questions

***NO ACTION**

11) CONSIDERATION OF THE DECEMBER 2024 SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT FOR SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNORS OFFICE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NRS 232.162.

- a. Staff members presented the Semi-Annual Report to the SEC.
***ACTION** Member Molini motioned to approve the Semi-Annual Report. Member Davis seconded. All were in favor.

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

- a. Discussion of next hearing date (Was changed after the meeting due ambiguity about hearing notice length)
- b. Next SEC Meeting to be held virtually February 7th at 8:30am
 - i. Presentation by NDOT for creating alternative form of credits
 - ii. Request to talk about including mitigation efforts, Federally, underneath the SETT umbrella
 - iii. Presentation for annual monitoring schedule and communication strategy
 - iv. Rationale behind HQT and Scientific Methods
 - v. HQT refresher

13) FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS

- a. US Fish and Wildlife Service, Justin Barrett
 - i. Sage Bill funding updates
 - ii. Funded three actionable science projects
 - iii. Supporting 41 projects for a total of \$6.6 million in collaboration with many partners.
 - iv. Received funding through BAER for work in the Great Basin used to implement objectives identified in Nevada
 - v. Update on the Bi-state listing
 - vi. Monarch butterfly update – proposed threatened
- b. Bureau of Land Management, Jon Raby, State Director
 - i. Transition updates
- c. US Forest Service, Jon Stansfield
 - i. Aerial herbicide EA is progressing, objection period ongoing
 - ii. Forest-wide prescribed fire BEA submitted to FWS
 - iii. East Humboldt Ruby Mountain project scoping closed
 - iv. NV Shared stewardship renewal occurred
- d. USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Chris Rose, Partnership Coordinator
 - i. Discussed payment limitations
 - ii. Farm Bill limit reset

- iii. Farm Bill update
- iv. Conservation Innovation Grant program will be posted
 - 1. 600,000 dollars set aside
- v. Virtual fencing was authorized as a fencing practice this year
- vi. 2 years of IRA funding left
- vii. Increased EQUIP funding
- viii. Launching a new campaign to communicate with customers better about conservation and resource concerns

14) STATE AGENCY UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

- a. Office of the Governor, Chase McNamara, Policy Advisor
 - i. Working on the Governor's consistency review on the FEIS of the GRSG RMPA
 - ii. Governor signed the shared stewardship agreement
- b. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Dominique Etchegoyhen, DCNR Deputy Director
 - i. New Reno office update and consolidations
 - ii. Camera trap project with Division of Natural Heritage update
 - iii. Recreation economics update
 - iv. Recreation Division working with UNR
 - v. Fencing project in the Virginia Range WHB
 - vi. Administrator search update
- c. Department of Wildlife, Alan Jenne, Director
 - i. Restoration rehabilitation update
 - ii. Sagebrush Habitat Plan update
 - iii. GRSG wing collection Update
 - 1. Production down 22% from last year
- d. Department of Agriculture, Skyler Monaghan
 - i. NDA was awarded through USFWS Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/Burned Area Rehabilitation for continued native seed contract grow outs
 - 1. One contract currently and are working to have a new request for proposals for spring planting/grow outs
 - ii. Noxious weeds: Early Detection and Rapid Response regional meetings occurring and plans for priority treatments, enforcement, and coordination is underway across the three regional areas.
 - 1. Goal to have more coordinated plans and verifications to eradicate species that are new to the state or areas.
 - iii. Continued coordination regarding the Greater Sage Grouse BLM RMPA Governors Consistency
 - iv. Continued coordination on Shared Stewardship activities- and subawards to local area workgroups
 - v. NDA SETT Staff participated and the Central Committee for Nevada State Grazing Boards to talk about the CCS and SEP

15) PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. No public comment given at this time.

16) ADJOURNMENT

- a. Member Tibbitts adjourned the meeting at 3:30pm.