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# Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan



Prepared by the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Gunnison County

October 20, 2009

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# **Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan**

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## ***Introduction***

This Conservation Action Plan is the result of the efforts of the Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee to ensure that adequate work is being conducted to conserve the Gunnison Sage-grouse. By creating a Conservation Action Plan, the scope of the work can be narrowed to specific needs identified in the plan, helping to guide the group in its efforts. The actions in this plan are based on two different criteria.

1) The first is that every action addresses one or more of the seven objectives listed in the Strategic Plan. If it doesn't meet one of the objectives, it is unlikely that it fits into the role of the Strategic Committee.

2) The second criteria for actions included in this plan relate to the five listing factors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since ultimately, most of the decisions related to listing are based on these five factors, emphasis should be placed on the actions that can help answer and address these questions. This will demonstrate this committee's efforts for the conservation of the sage-grouse in the Gunnison Basin. This Conservation Action Plan will help to continue to conserve the Gunnison Sage-grouse and work to preclude the need to list it under the Endangered Species Act. At a minimum the Plan will demonstrate the willingness of the Gunnison County community to preserve and protect the habitat which will lessen the impact if listing does occur.

It is the committee's duty to rank and prioritize the actions based on available time and resources. Doing this will give the committee focus and a goal to work towards. Some of these action items may take longer than others and it should be understood that the suggested timelines listed are provided only as estimates from which to set initial goals for completion of actions. The ultimate success of this Conservation Action Plan depends on the availability of resources to enable timely completion of tasks. We recognize that delays and/or bottlenecks may be inevitable. Regular evaluation of Action Item progress and results is important to properly manage these efforts and focus the project implementation team on key issues.

## ***Responsibility***

Gunnison County is responsible for facilitating the implementation of this Conservation Action Plan with assistance from the appropriate stakeholders in the form of financial and physical resources, program oversight, guidance and direction. Successful implementation is limited to the degree that it complies with existing regulations (i.e. federal/state/local laws, etc...).

## ***Including Stakeholders***

One of the key elements of having a successful action plan is to include all stakeholders involved. The Strategic Plan identifies and defines stakeholder groups. Identifying stakeholders is the first step for working on this Conservation Action Plan. By including all interested parties, well thought out decisions will be made and all interests will have the opportunity to be heard. The involvement of stakeholders cannot be a passive invitation to participate, but a responsibility of the County to provide assurance that stakeholder participation is comprehensive and dedicated. Prior to implementing this Conservation Action Plan, the Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator must create a database of stakeholders' contact information. The database will ensure a complete list of stakeholders for participation in meetings related to action items of interest to them.

## ***Conservation Action Plan Prioritization Process***

Prioritization of Action Items can assume a variety of criteria and assumptions. In this initial year of the Action Plan, the goal of the committee was to make progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan mission. Consequently, prioritization ranking was more a function of feasibility and likelihood of success rather than the overall impact of the results. In the beginning it is more important to raise awareness, assemble an organizational structure and experience success. We anticipate that future prioritization efforts will concentrate more on the consequence of the actions.

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In order to prioritize action items, the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee completed an exercise where each action item was evaluated on three criteria:

- 1) **Feasibility:** Whether or not the completion of the Action Item could be done in the 12 to 36 month time period for the plan.
- 2) **Resources:** Whether or not the resources needed to complete the Action Item are available or realistically obtainable.
- 3) **Sponsorship:** Those who would be responsible for completing the action item have the time and resources available to be successful.

Each of these criteria were ranked on a scale of three levels;

**High:** Highly likely that the action item would succeed

**Medium:** May succeed but would depend on the scope and/or resources

**Low:** Not likely to succeed or not likely to obtain necessary resources

The members of the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee each ranked every Action Item. High, medium and low scores were tallied and priorities were determined based on these tallies. Action Items in this Plan are listed in order of the priority rankings completed by the Strategic Committee. It is important to point out that even though an Action Item may have received a lower ranking through this prioritization exercise, it does not mean the Action Item is not important. Some of the items that are needed the most to work toward conserving the grouse are also the least feasible, need the most resources, and will need the most sponsorship to complete. If a person, team or agency takes sponsorship and works hard to complete a lower ranked item, it may move to the top of the priority list to complete.

### ***Implementation Schedule & Ongoing Planning Process***

To achieve manageable results, Action Items are defined with the intent of being completed within 12-36 months. Should the scope of a particular Action Item grow beyond this timeframe, that Action Item should be re-evaluated. The items have been prioritized and timelines will be placed on the items to ensure the work continues to completion. Availability of necessary resources will influence scheduling of Action Items. Other scheduling considerations include the seasonality of the work, the life cycle of the sage-grouse and relationships among the individual Action Items.

Action Item Project Teams will provide the County with regular updates of their progress. Every six months the Strategic Committee should review Action Items, update the schedule, and address issues with the progress of Action Items. The Ongoing Planning Process (See page 25) is needed to ensure that current and future Action Items are relevant and reflect the priorities of ongoing conservation efforts. On an annual basis, the County will review and approve the results of the annual planning process.

### ***Summary***

The Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan is considered a living document and must undergo continual review and revision to be effective. While the plan is the responsibility of Gunnison County, the success of the plan depends on the mobilization and commitment of the community at large. Involvement and compromise across stakeholders is necessary to achieve balanced results in light of the broader needs and interests of our community. In the end, we will meet the objectives set forth in the Strategic Plan.

## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item Format**

In defining Action Items, the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee utilized the following consistent format to ensure that clearly-defined goals, objectives, and strategies for success would ultimately result from the process of drafting a Conservation Action Plan. Action Items included in the remainder of this document follow the same format and include the same categories defined in the table below. The level of detail contained in the Action Item categories varies based on availability of information. Representations within the Action Items (scope of work, responsibility, results, schedule, etc.) are not a commitment or obligation and must be further defined.

### **Action Item Number & Title**

Objective: **(What objective the Action Item supports)**

Action Description:	Provides an overview of the action item including the scope of the work required, the context of its origination and the significance that its completion will have on the preservation efforts.
Action Activity: <b>(Clear Direction)</b>	An overview of the steps required to successfully implement the Action Item.
Responsibility: <b>(Passion)</b>	Identifies the one or two entities (people, organizations, etc.) who the Strategic Committee believes should lead the effort to complete the Action Items. This person(s) represent the driving force behind the Action Item.
Measurable Results: <b>(Intended Consequence)</b>	On what standard will this Action Item be evaluated? There should be very clear, measurable results identified prior to starting any Action Item.
Stakeholders: <b>(Ownership/Buy-in)</b>	Stakeholder groups have been defined in the Strategic Plan and every Action Item should establish which of those stakeholders have an interest in this Action Item.
Schedule / Target End Date: <b>(Schedule)</b>	What is the intended start and end date for the Action Item? Identify any known interdependencies among Action Items or involving other community activity that may influence scheduling.
Resource Requirements / Source:	Identify how long it will take to implement the Action Item, how much money will be required (whether direct expenditures or a value for internal resources) and estimated man-hours to complete the work.
Obstacles / Threats: <b>(Managed Success)</b>	In any project, there are forces that support the successful completion of the work and there are opposing forces. The idea is to anticipate the reasons why this project will not be successful so that these issues can be managed prior to or during the project.
Ranking / Priority	How important is this Action Item on its own merits and how does it compare across the other Action Items? Often times it is necessary for one task to be completed before something else can be started. These interdependencies are important to identify. Rankings were determined by the Strategic Committee.

**Action Item #1: Grazing Research**Objective: **Research**

Action Description:	Help with the coordination of a Grazing Research Project
Action Activity:	Have the Strategic committee participate and offer facilitation of the development and implementation of the recently state species conservation trust fund project.
Responsibility:	Strategic Committee, Stockgrowers
Measurable Results:	Grazing management practices that benefit sage-grouse needs and reduce controversy of grazing issues.
Stakeholders:	Private Land Owners, Public Land Management Agencies, Wildlife Management Agencies
Schedule / Target End Date:	5-6 years
Resource Requirements / Source:	Currently funded at \$300,000 per year
Obstacles / Threats:	Continued funding, cooperation of land owners/managers, adequate resources to scope a project that will yield actionable results. Impacts of research and the technical needs of a study of this scope.
Ranking / Priority	High



## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item #2: Create Organization Structure for Action Plan Implementation**

Objective: **Communication & Coordination**

Action Description:	There has been much discussion about who to go to for information on issues dealing with Gunnison Sage-grouse. Efforts to successfully complete many Action Items within the Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan will depend heavily on coordination of the expertise of the Working Group and Strategic Committee. The purpose of this Action Item is to facilitate cooperation and coordination of the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee with the Local Working Group's Habitat, Information and Education, and Research sub-committees. This will streamline efforts that are ongoing in the Gunnison Basin regarding Gunnison Sage-grouse conservation.
Action Activity:	The Strategic Committee will work with the standing sub-committees of the Local Working Group that are in place in order to streamline basin-wide efforts to conserve Gunnison Sage-grouse. Specifically, the working relationship between the LWG sub-committees and the Strategic Committee should be clearly defined and communicated by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening direct lines of communication between the Strategic Committee and the LWG sub-committees</li> <li>2. Establishing common goals and objectives for completing Action Items</li> <li>3. Appointing representative(s) from the Strategic Committee who will provide a direct line of support for completion of appropriate Action Items and who will communicate with the Strategic Committee on a regular basis with regard to progress being made on Action Items undertaken by members of the LWG sub-committees.</li> </ol>
Responsibility:	Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee
Measurable Results:	Policy and procedure that will allow for cooperation and coordination with Local Working-group standing sub-committees.
Stakeholders:	All
Schedule/Target End Dates	Put together a sub-committee within Q1 Implement process Q2
Resource Requirements / Source:	Time: 160 hours; Money: in-kind time commitment; Man-power: 20 people, 2-4 hour meetings
Obstacles / Threats:	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interests to be involved and rewarded.
Ranking / Priority	High

**Action Item #3: Use of the Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Trust**

Objective: **Habitat Conservation**

Action Description:	The Gunnison Sage-Grouse Conservation Trust was created in 1999 to mitigate impacts to the Gunnison Sage-grouse caused by the Gunnison County Landfill. Beginning in 2005 the Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Trust has been used to fund a part of the sage-grouse component of the County Wildlife Conservation Program, including spring (lekking) road closure expenditures, some BLM road closure expenditures and program operating expenses. Funding partnerships have declined from eleven organizations contributing \$44,000 in 2006 to two organizations contributing \$20,000 in 2009. Gunnison County, Gunnison County Electric Association and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. are the only entities currently contributing cash funding to the County sage-grouse conservation effort. This necessitates an increased level of contribution from the Conservation Trust to continue the sage-grouse component of the County's Wildlife Conservation Program.
Action Activity	Continue the Gunnison County Sage-grouse Conservation Program to preserve habitat. Evaluate the level of sage-grouse habitat related work conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Program on an annual basis and adjust the level of funding from the Conservation Trust appropriately.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County
Measurable Results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review, analysis and appropriate mitigation of all Gunnison County Land Use Change (Building, ISDS, Access, Reclamation, Minor and Major Impact) permit applications within Gunnison Sage-grouse Occupied Habitat.</li> <li>● Staff support to Gunnison Basin Sage-grouse Strategic Committee.</li> <li>● Administration of County sage-grouse conservation activities (road closures, permit conditions, mapping, County property CI's, LUR, County sage-grouse website)</li> <li>● Other habitat conservation efforts such as participation in developing the Ranchland Initiative Land Use Process; pursuing a Candidate Conservation Agreement option on Federal lands.</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	Private landowners, Public Land Management agencies, Wildlife Management Agencies, local governments and the business community
Schedule / Target End Date:	1 year and annually thereafter
Resource Requirements / Source:	Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation and other County staff
Obstacles / Threats:	Fund limitations
Ranking / Priority	High



## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item #4: Community Awareness**

#### **Objective: Information & Education**

Action Description	<p>Many people who live in and visit Gunnison County are not yet “on board” with or are unaware of the movement to protect the Gunnison Sage-grouse. The community has some members who really don’t care whether the species survives, others who wish to ensure the proliferation of the species and those who are unaware of the species and the issues surrounding it. The purpose of this Action Item is to raise the awareness level of all people in the County and to encourage their active participation in the efforts to protect the species. In doing so, activities and channels of communication will need to address a wide variety of interests and people in the county.</p>
Action Activity	<p>There may be some benefit to a sequential order of these Action Activities. However, they can be implemented on a stand-alone basis. Activities include:</p> <p>Organize a Sage-grouse Awareness week to facilitate public education, awareness and fundraising in support of ongoing local efforts to preserve the Gunnison Sage-grouse.</p> <p>Create and maintain an up-to-date database of stakeholders in sage-grouse related issues (i.e. antler hunters, recreation groups, contractors, realtors, etc.) and personally notify them of meetings where topics of interest to them are in the agenda to be discussed. This will foster increased public and stakeholder involvement in and awareness of GUSG issues and conservation efforts</p> <p>Create and publish links on Gunnison County’s website that will facilitate new residents’ understanding of wildlife issues in Gunnison County. For example, create a link to directing applicants for building permits, ISDS permits, etc. to information about the process and objective behind the DOW &amp; Gunnison County’s Wildlife Conservation Coordinator’s goals with respect to protecting the Gunnison Sage-grouse. Links could consist of information about wildlife friendly fences, noxious weeds management, proper grazing practices, pet control, bear-proof garbage containers, etc. Expand the availability of these materials beyond the GUSG local working group , DOW, and CSU Extension to include motels, title companies, realtors, attorneys, etc.</p> <p>Develop and implement age-appropriate sage-grouse, Endangered Species Act (ESA), and conservation education programs in elementary, middle and high school science programs.</p>

**Action Item #4: Community Awareness, Continued**

<p>Action Activity</p>	<p>In conjunction with the road and recreation closures, identify areas of lesser concern to the seasonal activity of sage grouse (Centennial Wildlife area, Cimarron, etc.) and create areas of opportunity (road “openings”). The objective is to encourage and direct outdoor recreation activity during sensitive times (i.e. lek season) so as to minimize the impact on sage grouse, while creating a positive, pro-recreation message to those who may not be focused on the Gunnison Sage-grouse concerns.</p> <p>Create and publicize a website that gives research-based information about the identification, biology and control of plants listed on the Gunnison County Noxious Weed List and other commonly occurring and problematic weeds in Gunnison County. This will allow improved public access to information about weeds, their effects on habitat and science-based approaches to their control on private lands. In addition to general information about invasive plants and their control, the website will also include information specific to sage grouse habitat: weeds most problematic in GUSG habitat, when to implement control measures in GUSG habitat, etc. Identify what businesses (or other points of contact) can be solicited for information dissemination and establish those relationships.</p> <p>“Sage Chicken” menu items at local restaurants that result in a monetary donation to “Save the Grouse” foundation. The existence of the menu items will promote discussion about the sensitivity.</p> <p>Establish sponsors (local businesses, organizations, schools, etc.) of geographic subsets of GUSG habitat areas. Sponsor activity will include: highway signage, distribution of information, trail signage, habitat restoration, GUSG population challenges, neighborhood mailings, road closure monitoring, volunteer work, fund raising for projects in their area, billboard space, etc.</p> <p>Design Gunnison Sage-grouse bumper stickers and other related items</p> <p>Organize a mural painting contest. Have artists submit drawings for potential murals and award winners by painting their mural on prominent buildings in Gunnison and/or rural Gunnison (such as barns).</p> <p>Integrate messaging into existing Celebrations. Incorporate GUSG messages into existing celebrations such as Cattlemen’s Days, July 4<sup>th</sup>, High School and WSC functions, Night of Lights, etc.</p>
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## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### ***Action Item #4: Community Awareness, Continued***

Responsibility	Community Leaders
Measurable Results	Event and meeting attendance Website hits Implement fundraising through restaurants Sponsorship of all geographic areas of concern Local, Regional and National exposure to the issues with a consistent message of support rather than controversy.
Stakeholders	All
Schedule / Target End Dates	Establish Activity Champions within Q1 Champions will establish clear goals and timeline for implementation and completion of each activity during Q2. Q3 begin implementation of activities
Resource Requirements	Time: Ongoing, Money: Year 1 - \$50,000, future years will generate money, Manpower: Significant volunteer hours
Obstacles / Threats	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interests to be involved and rewarded.
Ranking / Priority	High to Medium



**Action Item #5: Campaign For Continuation of Land Use Preservation Fund**Objective: **Grants & Fundraising**

Action Description:	Ensure the continuation of the Gunnison County Land Preservation Fund. Currently, a portion of sales tax from towns and the county goes to the Land Preservation Fund. Landowners can ask for funding through this for matching funds to carry out land preservation projects. Promote and educate the public of the upcoming 2011 renewal of the Land Preservation Fund.
Action Activity:	Promote and educate the public about the need to renew the Land Preservation Fund in 2011.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County Land Preservation Board
Measurable Results:	Majority vote in next election
Stakeholders:	Conservation Groups, landowners, public of Gunnison County
Schedule / Target End Date:	2011
Resource Requirements / Source:	Money for press releases, time for contacting stakeholders
Obstacles / Threats:	Poor economy, lack of interest, unaware public of incentives of program.
Ranking / Priority	High to Medium

## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item #6: Coordination of Invasive Plant Control Efforts**

#### Objective: **Habitat/ Monitoring & Reporting**

Action Description	Increased Coordination of Invasive Plant Control Efforts on Public and Private Land
Action Activity	The creation of a centralized weed database (or expanded use of an existing database) that documents occurrence and scheduled/completed treatments of target weed species will allow federal, state and local land management agencies/ departments to coordinate effectively to control invasive plant species that negatively impact wildlife habitat. This process has already been started by the county GIS department but this committee would help facilitate the entry and coordination across the different responsible parties. This GIS-based database should be accessible to weed managers from multiple agencies to allow frequent updates. Help with the facilitation of additional weed surveys may also be needed to ensure the final product will help determine the priorities for treatment.
Responsibility	Lead role is divided between the technical (County GIS) and the field work (Gunnison County Wildlife Conservation Coordinator - GCWCC)
Measurable Results	Completion of GIS-based database, establishment of protocol and training of personnel for reporting/submission of invasive plant occurrences and control measures. Published literature to educate public land users about species of concern. Annual compilation of multi-agency, basin-wide accomplishments and efforts to control invasive plants in GUSG habitat. Raised awareness of public land users measured by follow-up to handouts that identify local species of concern.
Stakeholders	The Gunnison County GIS department would be responsible for the creation and maintenance of this database, and all other land management agency and private land agency personnel involved in invasive plant species control would be contributors of data and information. Public Land Management Agencies, Wildlife Management Agencies, Local Government, Public Land Users, Private Land Owners
Schedule / Target End Dates	1 year to plan and implement the database and define the on-going input and reporting process. System refinement, data entry and reporting will be an ongoing task.
Resource Requirements	Time: one year; Money: \$ 100,000; Manpower: 1 FTE
Obstacles / Threats	Resource Availability, effective coordination across stakeholders
Ranking / Priority	Medium

**Action Item #7: Programmatic Environmental Assessments for Habitat Projects**

Objective: **Habitat/ Monitoring & Reporting**

Action Description:	Programmatic Environmental Assessment (E.A) for sage grouse habitat improvement projects
Action Activity:	BLM and Park Service working together to develop a programmatic E.A. for habitat improvement projects across the Gunnison Basin on public lands. If the Forest Service is able to also work with these agencies it would be very beneficial. Will cover a broad array of treatment types to allow for maximum flexibility in project planning. Would provide basin wide strategies for improvement and tie the actions to the range wide and local conservation plans and address cumulative impacts over the life of the E.A.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County Coordination of BLM and National Park Service, possibly Forest Service
Measurable Results:	Completed E.A.
Stakeholders:	Public Land Management agencies, Strategic committee
Schedule / Target End Date:	3 Year
Resource Requirements / Source:	Employee time
Obstacles / Threats:	Making the E.A. a priority for agencies when there are already are several other priorities over the next several years.
Ranking / Priority	Medium



## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item #8: Manage Priority Areas**

Objective: **Habitat/Regulation & Incentives/Information & Education**

Action Description:	Assess the Basin-wide landscape from key perspectives to enable effective management of Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat and its influencing factors. The impact of a changing population of people and their use of the landscape can be significant relative to a healthy grouse population and a healthy and productive community. Finding a balance that enables both a healthy community and bird population depends on a comprehensive understanding of the following factors: sage grouse activity, habitat health and the influence of other listing factors, landowner priorities, public use and recreation and the economic drivers of the area. Assessment of these factors and the creation of management tools will result in a policy backed plan that identifies management areas and priority for Gunnison sage-grouse.
Action Activity:	A series of “sub-projects” will be implemented in parallel to assess the landscape. Based on a compilation of the results, the final project will develop a detailed strategy for the conservation of the Gunnison sage-grouse. This action item will result in the coordination and completion of the various “sub-projects”. The “sub-projects” include the creation and analysis of data about the landscape: AI-8A: Assess Sage-grouse Population Dynamics AI-8B: Assess Habitat and Listing Factors AI-8C: Assess Landowner Values and Priority AI-8D: Assess Public Use and Recreation AI-8E: Assess New and Existing Economic Drivers AI-8F: Overlay Layers 1-5 and define management tools and priority areas.  This Action Item and the corresponding layers of assessment should be considered an ongoing process of data collection and analysis and policy review.
Responsibility:	Gunnison County (facilitating the coordination of efforts, the availability of resources and the overall guidance and scope management to ensure timely and compatible results from each sub-project)
Measurable Results:	Designated standards for landscape definition (i.e. geographic boundaries, parcel owner, section/range, etc.) . Integrated database with mapping . Communication mechanism across sub-projects . Resource commitment . Stakeholder buy-in and participation

**Action Item #8: Manage Priority Areas, Continued**

Stakeholders:	Local Government and those stakeholders who are responsible for the respective sub-projects.
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	Meeting space Administrative resources Technical resources
Obstacles / Threats:	Scope management is critical as there will be a tendency to try to accomplish too much. This should be viewed as a process of refinement.
Ranking / Priority	Medium



## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item #8A: Assess Sage-Grouse Activity**

Objective: **Research/ Monitoring & Reporting**

Action Description:	Determine the population dynamics of Gunnison Sage Grouse and assess the health of the population in the area. Considering the five listing factors, determine what can be done to improve the conditions for Gunnison Sage Grouse and the likelihood that the improvements will have a material impact on the bird population.
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Gather data to represent the sage grouse population dynamics during the various life stages (breeding/ lek activity, nesting, brood rearing, winter survival). Submit results to the central data collection and reporting resources. This Action Item will require some level of assumption about winter range activity given the schedule of the initial effort.
Responsibility:	Division of Wildlife
Measurable Results:	<p>Within a standard geographic area, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Bird counts (male, female, youth, adult) both current and historical</li> <li>. Primary lek site(s) as well as other life stages</li> <li>. Predator activity</li> <li>. Range of mobility</li> <li>. Mortality rate and source of mortality</li> <li>. Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	Division of Wildlife
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	<p>Monitoring equipment</p> <p>Trapping and monitoring personnel</p> <p>Volunteer observation and data collection</p>
Obstacles / Threats:	Accuracy of data and ability to monitor activity with limited resources.
Ranking / Priority	Medium



**Action Item #8B: Assess Habitat & Listing Factors**Objective: **Habitat/Monitoring & Reporting**

Action Description:	Assess the type and health of the habitat in the area, including what is natural and what is directly influenced by human activity. Considering the five listing factors, define what can be done to improve the conditions for Gunnison Sage-grouse and the likelihood that the improvements will have a material impact on the bird population. In conjunction with the habitat assessment for Gunnison Sage-grouse, we want to determine the habitat quality for their predators and the degree to which it affects the GUSG proliferation?
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Gather data to represent the quality and condition of the habitat as it pertains to the life cycle of the Gunnison Sage-grouse. Submit results to the central data collection and reporting resources.
Responsibility:	Department of Natural Resources
Measurable Results:	<p>Within a standard geographic area, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Sage brush cover (height, maturity, status)</li> <li>. Desired food sources</li> <li>. Competing vegetation (noxious weeds, hay meadow, trees, willows, etc.)</li> <li>. Quality and quantity of riparian areas</li> <li>. Predator cover and/or perches</li> <li>. Annual variability, seasonal variability</li> <li>. SWOT analysis</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	NRCS, BLM, NFS, Private Landowner
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Expertise in habitat identification and health</li> <li>. Land owner participation in data collection</li> </ul>
Obstacles / Threats:	Accuracy of data and ability to monitor habitat with limited resources.
Ranking / Priority	Medium

## Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

### **Action Item #8C: Assess Landowner Values & Priorities**

#### Objective: Regulation & Incentives

Action Description:	Decisions made by local, state and national governing entities have an impact on land owners, both public and private. These decisions impose limitations on the land owners with the intent of creating a better overall environment for the Gunnison-sage Grouse. It is critical to understand the real and perceived value considerations from the landowner's perspective to ensure a cooperative and productive relationship with the land owners. This assessment will result in protection of the rights of the land owner as well as identify ideas and opportunities for "win-win" solutions (land exchanges, easements, habitat mitigation/ improvement, etc.) that benefit the Gunnison Sage-grouse.
Action Activity:	Create a set of assumptions about private land owner concerns relative to sage grouse. Form a task force consisting of individuals who represent private land owners. Validate assumptions about what a land owner values in terms of the use of their property vs. the relative impact on the Gunnison Sage Grouse. Define parameters that allow private land owners to protect their rights to use their land and, at the same time, optimize the overall impact on Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat (minimize negative impact and maximize positive impact).
Responsibility:	CDOW, Public and Private Land Owners
Measurable Results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Parameters (Value Measures) to use during any decision making process to enable "win-win" solutions among the sage grouse and land owner interest. In other words, enable the land owner to maximize the value of their land (i.e., achieve their desired results with property improvements such as house, road or driveway, septic, etc. and/or large scale development efforts) with the least possible impact (and perhaps a net improvement) on the Gunnison Sage-grouse and its habitat.</li> <li>. Documented current use and potential use (based on adjoining or area density/use)</li> <li>. Increased number of CCAA applications.</li> <li>. Land management plan by property owner</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	Public and Private Land Owners, Business Community (contractors, realtors, lawyers, etc. who deal with private land owner interests), City and County Government, Wildlife Management Agencies
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)

**Action Item #8C: Assess Landowner Values & Priorities, Continued**

Resource Requirements / Source:	1. Funding for initial landowner contact, work sessions and information gathering. 2. County leadership and stakeholder participation.
Obstacles / Threats:	Not obtaining a comprehensive understanding of landowner priorities. It will require a dedicated effort to educate the individual land owners and assess their feedback.
Ranking / Priority	Medium



## Gunnison County Sage Grouse-Conservation Action Plan

### ***Action Item #8D: Assess Public Use & Recreation***

Objective: **Habitat/ Regulation & Incentives**

Action Description:	Public use on private and public lands has a direct impact on the Gunnison Sage-grouse, especially during certain stages in the grouse life cycle. This action will result in clarification of the form and impact of public use/recreation that influences the landscape. There are opportunities to encourage or direct activities to alternative areas during certain times of the year. There may also be the need to restrict certain types of activity within a given area.
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Assemble subject matter experts representing public use/recreation interests and identify when, how often and the scope of impact to Gunnison Sage-grouse. Generate ideas for managing the use of public lands. These efforts may coincide with other sub-projects.
Responsibility:	DOW
Measurable Results:	Within a standard geographic area, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Type of use / recreation activity</li> <li>. Form of use (motorized / non-motorized)</li> <li>. Season of use</li> <li>. Coverage (general use or route specific)</li> <li>. Habitat and/or Sage Grouse impact</li> <li>. Annual variability, seasonal variability</li> <li>. SWOT analysis</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	NRCS, BLM, NFS, Private Landowner, Business Community
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Public participation</li> <li>. Work session and facilitation resources</li> <li>. Mailings and phone interviews</li> </ul>
Obstacles / Threats:	Ability to assemble representatives of the many different uses of the landscape. It will be more difficult to establish meaningful alternatives that are acceptable to the users of the land.
Ranking / Priority	Medium

**Action Item #8E: Assess Economic Drivers**

Objective: **Regulation & Incentives**

Action Description:	What is the highest and best use for the property? Given today's economic drivers and the potential for economic growth in the basin, characterize the potential for future economic application in the respective landscape. Presently, the majority of the landscape is influenced by ranching and/or development. The purpose of this action is to address new and expanded uses, such as solar or wind energy creation, geothermal research and production, forestry, oil, gas, mining, extensions of tourism or WSC, etc.
Action Activity:	Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Gather data to represent the condition of the economic drivers during the various seasons. Submit results to the central data collection and reporting resources.
Responsibility:	Community Leaders
Measurable Results:	Within a standard geographic area, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Current economic use</li> <li>. Potential (and likely) economic use</li> <li>. Secondary impacts of economic change</li> <li>. Annual variability, seasonal variability</li> <li>. SWOT analysis</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	All
Schedule / Target End Date:	6 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe)
Resource Requirements / Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Public participation</li> <li>. Work session and facilitation resources</li> <li>. Mailings and phone interviews</li> </ul>
Obstacles / Threats:	Lack of vision and anticipation of the expansion of the economic base in the area.
Ranking / Priority	Medium



**Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan**

**Action Item #8F: Management Tools & Priority Areas**

Objective: **Habitat/ Regulation & Incentives**

<p>Action Description:</p>	<p>Given the various components of analysis, compile results and formulate management tools. Based on the group's ability to manage and identify top priorities, define the best methods that create a win-win scenario for the sage grouse, the respective landowner and the community at large.</p> <p>Develop a detailed habitat conservation strategy that identifies key sage-grouse habitats within areas that are at high risk of being impacted. Develop and implement tools that allow for the protection of these high quality habitats. This action item requires synthesis of available habitat data, habitat use data, threats potential, etc.</p> <p>Landscape Strategy: Develop and implement tools that allow for the protection of high quality habitats within areas that are at high risk of being impacted. For example, the prioritization of land for development and wildlife values is needed. Facilitate/coordinate the effort to prioritize the key Gunnison Sage-grouse leks and seasonal habitats on public and private lands in each of the Conservation Priority Regions in the Gunnison Basin. In doing so, the community will have the needed assurances that decisions made regarding private lands will be consistent and equitable.</p>
<p>Action Activity:</p>	<p>Obtain standards and overall project direction from Action Item #8. Provide findings to central data collection and reporting resources. This Action Item will require some level of assumption about winter range activity given the schedule of the initial effort.</p>
<p>Responsibility:</p>	<p>Gunnison County</p>

**Action Item: #8F Management Tools & Priority Areas, Continued**

Measurable Results:	<p>By geographic area, define the landscape in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Regulatory or Governmental processes that facilitate the painless protection of these habitats.</li> <li>. Revise City of Gunnison 3-mile Development Plan</li> <li>. Funding opportunities</li> <li>. Authorities and incentives that allow for and encourage protection of key habitats (e.g. land exchanges, mitigation formulas, etc.)</li> <li>. Grouse population objectives</li> <li>. Priority within each area</li> <li>. Development / Preservation efforts</li> <li>. Habitat improvement initiatives</li> <li>. Targeted activity (trade, sale, CCAAs, etc.).</li> <li>. Public information that describes the benefits of participating in habitat protection actions.</li> <li>. Community involvement / sponsorship</li> </ul>
Stakeholders:	Must consider all stakeholders in the strategy development
Schedule / Target End Date:	6-12 months (recognizing that this is an ongoing process, some level of assessment should be completed within this timeframe). This Action Item is more dependent on the completion of "Sub-projects" 8A through 8E.
Resource Requirements / Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Report writing and administrative resources</li> <li>. Work sessions to gather information and formulate plans</li> </ul>
Obstacles / Threats:	Overcoming the initial resistance of people to get on board, finding compromise to enable all interests to be involved and rewarded. While this is an ongoing process, the initial synchronization of effort may result in incomplete data which in turn limits the ability to create a good strategy. Allowing more time to complete this sub-project may be necessary.
Ranking / Priority	Medium



Implementation Schedule

Implementation Schedule														
Gunnison Sage Grouse Action Plan														
No.	Action Item Description	January	Quarter 1 February	March	April	Quarter 2 May	June	July	Quarter 3 August	September	October	Quarter 4 November	December	Est. 5 year project
1	Grazing Research													ONGOING
2	Promote Use of GSG Mitigation Fund													Est. 5 year project
3	Use and Facilitation of Local Working Group													
4	Community Awareness													
5	Preservation Fund													
6	Coordination of Invasive Plant Control Efforts													
7	Environmental Assessment for Habitat Projects													
8	Management of Priority Areas													
	• AI-8A: Assess Sage Grouse Activity													
	• AI-8B: Assess Habitat and Listing Factors													
	• AI-8C: Assess Landowner Values and Priority													
	• AI-8D: Assess Public Use and Recreation													
	• AI-8E: Assess New and Existing Economic Drivers													
	• AI-8F: Overlay 8A-8E and Define Management Tools and Priority Areas													
	RESERVE													

Workplan Template

Action Item  
Work Plan Template

**S** Denotes Strategic Committee Meeting Schedule

\* Every project should have a workplan and schedule. The tasks will vary as will the level of detail. However, the project manager must define the project in sufficient detail to effectively manage the resources and keep the project on schedule. Workplans will change during the course of the project and enable the project manager to adjust resources accordingly. These versions, as they change, should be noted at the top of the workplan to ensure that everyone on the project team is working from the same set of tasks and schedule.

	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15	W16	W17	W18	W19	W20	W21	W22	W23	W24	W25	W26	
<b>I. Organization &amp; Administration</b>			<b>S</b>			<b>S</b>					<b>S</b>				<b>S</b>									<b>S</b>			
Task Description																											
Define Project Team Structure & Workplan	x	x	x																								
Identify & Obtain Resources		x	x																								
Conduct Stakeholder Orientation			x																								
Define Project Objectives and Scope				x																							
Outline Final Deliverable																											
Conduct Strategic Committee Review																											
Create and Maintain Schedule	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
<b>II. Define Information Requirements</b>																											
Identify Intended, Measurable Results			x																								
Determine Sources of Information			x																								
Document Information Objectives		x	x																								
<b>III. Identify and Collect Data</b>																											
Establish Data Collection Methods					x																						
Organize and Educate Resources						x																					
Gather Data						x																					
Validate Data																											
<b>IV. Assemble Necessary Information</b>																											
Analyze Data																											
Assess Ability to Formulate Conclusions																											
Identify Additional Information																											
<b>V. Formulate Conclusions and Assumptions</b>																											
Review Findings and Conclusions																											
Document Assumptions																											
Define Recommendations																											
<b>VI. Publish Results</b>																											
Publish Final Deliverable																											
Educate Community																											
<b>VII. Monitor Progress</b>																											

# Gunnison County Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan

## Ongoing Planning Process

		October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
	Ongoing Planning Process Gunnison Sage Grouse Action Plan												
	Task Description		Quarter 4			Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3	
I.	Organize Planning Team												
II.	Evaluate Prior Year Implementation												
III.	Assess Grouse Population & Habitat by Landscape Region												
IV.	Summarize Federal, State and Local Ongoing Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division of Wildlife</li> <li>• USEFWS</li> <li>• Gunnison County</li> </ul>												
V.	Analyze Local Strengths/Weakness/Opportunity/Threat												
VI.	Define and Prioritize Action Items												
VII.	Determine Resource Availability												
VIII.	Update Action Item Schedule (April)												
IX.	Report and Obtain Approval from Gunnison County (June)												
X.	Monitor Ongoing Needs and Adjust Plan												

