

# Sage-grouse Habitat Conservation Advisory Council

## NOTES

**Meeting 2:** Transmission and Infrastructure (power lines, pipelines); Wind Energy  
**Location:** Commission Room, FWP Headquarters, 1420 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Helena, MT  
**Dates:** June 11 – 12, 2013

June 11

### **Welcome and Introductions**

**Jeff Hagener & Tim Baker**

Council representatives: Pat Connell, Janet Ellis, Gary Forrester, Jay Gore, Robert Lee,  
Glenn Marx, Ray Shaw, Brad Hamlett, Bill McChesney, Jeff Hagener

Agency/invited partners:

USFWS: Jodi Bush, Brent Esmoil, Jeff Berglund;

Bureau of Land Management: Theresa Hanley, Sandra Brooks, Renee Johnson;

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation: Shawn Thomas, Hoyt Richards;

Department of Environmental Quality: Warren McCullough, Craig Jones

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks: Ken McDonald, Catherine Wightman

Public: Bob Green, Cloud Peak Energy; Patrick Farmer, Westech; Lauri Teig, KLJ; Van Jamison, Gaelectric;  
Rusty Shaw, Denbury Resources; Richard Brown, WYO-BEN, Inc.; Kalle Godel, Montana-Dakota Utilities;  
Jessie Luther, GNP/BKBH; Tim Rasmussen, MDU Resources Group; Glenn Oppel, MT Chamber; Gail  
Abercrombie, Gaila Consulting; Gary Wiens, Montana Electric Cooperatives Assoc.; Bud Clinch, MT Coal  
Council; Greg Copeland, Naturener;

### **USFWS PECE and Science Standards**

**Jodi Bush, USFWS**

Jodi Bush discussed how the USFWS uses science in making a listing determination and how the PECE policy is used to evaluate voluntary conservation action.

Presentation: Bush\_11June2013

### **Major Facilities Siting Act**

**Warren McCullough & Craig Jones, DEQ**

Warren McCullough introduced the Environmental Management Bureau at MT DEQ and the Metal Mining Reclamation Act and Major Facility Siting Act. Craig Jones presented on the Major Facility Siting Act and recent examples of permitting major pipelines and transmission lines in Montana.

Presentation: Craig\_11June2013

### **Power lines and associated infrastructure**

**Sam Milodragovich, NW Energy**

**Kalle Godel, Montana/Dakotas Utilities**

Sam Milodragovich discussed west-wide efforts by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee to minimize conflicts between power lines and wildlife.

Presentation: Milodragovich\_11June2013

Kalle Godel discussed efforts by Montana-Dakota Utilities to minimize impacts of transmission lines to sage-grouse.

Presentation: Godel\_11June2013

**Wind Industry****Greg Copeland, Naturener**

Greg Copeland presented on wind industry activities and how conservation measures for sage-grouse may influence the industry.

Presentation: Copeland\_11June2013

**Pipelines and associated infrastructure****Tim Rasmussen, WBI**

Tim Rasmussen presented on pipelines, reclamation efforts, and regulatory nexus.

Presentation: Rasmussen\_11June2013

**Approved Motion:** Council would like recommendations from FWP regarding conservation measures for sage-grouse prior to Council draft a set of recommendations

**Overview of sage-grouse research relative to power lines, pipelines, and wind energy****Catherine Wightman, FWP**

Catherine Wightman presented a brief overview of current research discussing impacts of power lines, pipelines, wind, and cumulative antropogenic disturbance on sage-grouse.

Presentation: Wightman\_11June2013

**BLM summary of recommendations/practices****Theresa Hanley & Renee Johnson, BLM**

Theresa Hanley and Renee Johnson presented on the range of alternatives of Right of Way stipulations in draft Resource Management Plans in Montana.

Presentation: Hanley\_Johnson\_11June2013

**Summary of COT and other state recommendations****Catherine Wightman, FWP**

Catherine Wightman provided a crosswalk of recommendations from the Conservation Objectives Report and the other states relative to power lines, pipelines, wind energy, and cumulative impacts.

Handout: COT and states' recommendations\_11June2013

June 12

Council representatives: Pat Connell, Janet Ellis, Gary Forrester, Jay Gore, Robert Lee, Glenn Marx, Ray Shaw, Brad Hamlett, Bill McChesney, Paul Callahan, Jeff Hagener

Agency/invited partners:

USFWS: Brent Esmoil, Jeff Berglund;

Bureau of Land Management: Theresa Hanley, Sandra Brooks, Renee Johnson;

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation: Shawn Thomas, Hoyt Richards;

Department of Environmental Quality: Craig Jones, John Grimm

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks: Ken McDonald, Catherine Wightman, Rob Brooks

Public: Bob Green, Cloud Peak Energy; Lauri Teig, KLJ; Van Jamison, Gaelectric; Rusty Shaw, Denbury Resources; Richard Brown, WYO-BEN, Inc.; Jessie Luther, GNP/BKBH; Tim Rasmussen, MDU Resources Group; Gail Abercrombie, Gaila Consulting; Gary Wiens, Montana Electric Cooperatives Assoc.; Bud Clinch, MT Coal Council; Greg Copeland, Naturener; Melissa Lewis, ONEOK;

**Draft recommendations related to power lines, pipelines, wind energy**

Catherine Wightman provided "straw-dog" recommendations from FWP on power lines, pipelines, and wind energy.

Handout: FWP recommendations\_11June2013

Council discussed recommendations and crafted draft recommendations for power lines, pipelines, and wind energy. Paul Callahan provided a draft structure, and refined power line recommendations, for documenting Montana's Council recommendations.

Completed draft document will be distributed prior to the next meeting.

**Approved Motion:** Council will send a letter to the APLIC working group requesting that the group completes their study and submits recommendations to this Council by October 1 so the work can inform Council's final recommendations

Council discussed a surface disturbance threshold to minimize cumulative impacts, both within and outside of core areas. This is a complicated discussion that requires additional clarification of definitions and spatial examples of how a disturbance threshold might be implemented. It was suggested that NRIS staff be asked to give a 'live' demonstration. Recommendations were not drafted.

**Approved Motion:** Council will spend one day at the July 16-17 meeting discussing a surface disturbance threshold. Wildfire and invasive species will be discussed on the other day.

#### **Field Trip discussion, August 13 – 14**

- Meet in Billings, start at 8am, charter bus
- Bob Green coal operations, coal strip powerlines, CBM, (lunch brought in to mining site)
- Head to cedar creek anticline – rely on Rusty and others to talk about oil/gas and pipelines; (dinner on-site?)
- Forrester – wind farm at Baker, lek site, compressor station
- Miles City – block of rooms, McChesney will arrange
- Miles City through Forsyth (Bob Lee) and then to Roundup
- Return to Billings late on August 14
- Move mitigation discussion to Sept 4-5 meeting