

STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2008
Frenchglen, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pam Hardy, Chair, Dispersed Recreation, Bend, OR
Michael Beagle, Vice Chair, Fish & Recreational Fishing, Eagle Point, OR
Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, OR
Daniel Haak, Mechanized Consumptive Recreation, Burns, OR
William Renwick, Environmental Representative, Burns, OR
David Bilyeu, Environmental Representative – Statewide, Bend, OR
Fred Otley, Private Landowner, Diamond, OR
Richard Angstrom, No Financial Interest, Salem, OR
Richard Jenkins, Recreational Permit Holder, Diamond, OR
Paul Bradley, Wild Horse Management, Burns, OR

MEMBERS ABSENT

Brenda Sam, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, OR
Stacy Davies, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, OR
Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, OR

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL (DFO)

Dana Shuford, District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Hines, OR

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL ASSISTANTS

Tara Martinak, Acting SMAC Coordinator, BLM, Hines, OR
Connie Pettyjohn, Program Analyst, BLM, Hines, OR

FACILITATOR

Terry Morton, Klamath Falls, OR

PRESENTERS

Bill Pieratt, Andrews Supervisory NRS, BLM, Hines, OR
Jeff Rose & Dan Ridenour, BLM Fire Specialists, Ruby Springs Tour Guides
Ruth Vondracek, Oregon State University Libraries, Corvallis, OR
Janine Salwasser, Oregon State University Libraries, Corvallis, OR
David Bilyeu, SMAC member, Bend, OR
Fred McDonald, BLM, Hines, OR

COMMENTING PUBLIC:

Susan Hammond, Hammond Ranches
Julie Weikel, Burns, OR
Kate Martin, ONDA,

OTHERS PRESENT:

Karla Bird, BLM, Hines, OR
Mike Mottice, Oregon State Office BLM, OSO, Portland, OR
Matt Obradovich, BLM, Hines, OR
Steve Harris,

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

Facilitator Terry Morton opened the meeting. Self introductions were made, housekeeping items were covered and the agenda was reviewed.

CHAIRPERSON UPDATE

Pam Hardy told the group she is looking forward to the field trip as well as some good informal discussions to help the group develop acceptable solutions to the water development proposal. Stacy Davies will not be able to attend the meeting.

Pam has spoken with Dan Jordan to assure that SMAC is consistently updated on workings with his property at Pate Lake. Another large concern going on in the Steens area is the Wind Farm proposals. The proposals are out of BLM and SMAC jurisdiction however wind farms could have an impact on the view on Steens Mountain.

Other topics of concern expressed by SMAC members included:

1) The Campbell Land Exchange and whether there is any information the SMAC could or should be aware of.

2) Home Creek access and BLM's progress related to this. SMAC had recommended that BLM pursue securing public access across Roaring Springs Ranch. SMAC has concerns about Home Creek access and will determine if this topic is worth pursuing as a future agenda item. They will determine what additional information they need for future discussions.

DFO UPDATE

- Steve Purchase is unable to attend due to family health concerns. A card will be available for signing.
- Dana provided feedback on the Transportation Management Plan regarding obscure routes. After reviewing the issue with council, BLM has decided that no obscure routes will be shown on newly produced maps until the IBLA case has been decided on merit. This will not affect a great deal of roads. Most obscure routes are "ways" in WSAs and are legal for use, however due to IBLA ruling they will not be shown on the new maps.
- Steens High Desert Country map should be ready for distribution by spring 2009.
- FOIAs –many FOIA requests have been received. Employees are spending a lot of time pulling together administrative records. The most recent one is related to the Scott Campbell land exchange. He has purchased land on Fish Creek with the idea of using the land in an exchange with the purpose of getting it into federal ownership, which BLM had not been able to do with the previous owner. He also purchased lands in Silvies Valley and owns land on Hay Creek. He has identified

lands in Silvies Valley that he would like to exchange for the Steens property. His current requested exchange rate is 10 to 1. He is aware however that it would need to be a value to value exchange for BLM to consider it. His realtor has requested resource information about the exchange which BLM provided. Dr. S. Campbell held a public meeting in order to respond to questions about the exchange. Dr. Campbell has no intention of applying for the exchange with BLM through the administrative process. BLM is not taking any action on the exchange. They are answering questions and providing information as requested. Enough requests have been received that BLM has posted documents on their website that provide much of the same information as an administrative record. There is currently no piece of legislation in draft form related to this. Wayne Kinney of Senator Ron Wyden's office has been getting a lot of information requests. Wyden has asked Campbell to work out the controversies prior to presenting a legislative action proposal. It is now up to Campbell to do the things necessary to present an exchange proposal that Greg Walden, Ron Wyden, and Gordon Smith can inform their constituents they are supportive of.

- Dr. Campbell could still ask for an administrative action with BLM who would then be required to determine that the exchange is in the public's best interest before considering the exchange proposal. The burden of proof would be on Dr. Scott Campbell. Maps and additional information will be on BLM's website.
- In response to SMAC member questions, Dana clarified that the total is 1000 acres, however just 700 acres, in the no livestock zone, are addressed in a recent EA. The BLM could purchase the land outright without an exchange and it would depend on BLM's ability to compete successfully for land and water conservation funds. A SMAC member noted that BLM and Campbell have other options to affect what he wants to do that would be in the best interest of the BLM and the public such as; exchange of use, cooperative management agreements, and CRMPs, to name a few.
- On the litigation front related to the RMP lawsuit, BLM has filed a response with the court on ONDA's request for reconsideration. ONDA has filed a reply to BLM's response and both parties are waiting for a reply from the Court. There have been no other changes since the last meeting.
- SMAC membership - Four positions on the SMAC are awaiting WO review of the applications. Four members are reapplying for positions.
- Personnel – Rhonda will be replaced by Christi Courdenmanche who will report on October 12 and will assist with planning the next SMAC meeting. Laura Dowlan will assume an Environmental Coordinator position. BLM will be hiring two new Outdoor Recreation Planners. Karla has accepted a detail at the WO and will be reporting at the end of the month. Joan Suther will be taking over as Andrews FM and will be working with SMAC regularly beginning October 1. Dana is retiring in January and his replacement will be hired by then.
- In response to a question, Dana reported that he had no new information on the Miller Land Exchange with Rock Creek Ranch.

FIELD MANAGER REPORT

- Karla Bird, Field Manager for Andrews Resource Area, gave the update.
- There is no news on the land exchanges.
- BLM land that provided access to Home Creek was traded to private ownership and no easements were retained.
- Wind power interests on public lands have been a priority so the Home Creek easement has not been worked on.
- Livestock owner access – BLM has an option of providing an incentive payment to the Ankle Creek in-holder so they did not need to use their land for livestock use. An EA was issued to Campbell to use his land for sheep grazing. A land incentive payment was issued to Jordan for public use of his land.
- In 1939 stock driveways were revoked or withdrawn.
- There were two fires on Steens Mountain that could have been managed, but BLM decided to suppress them due to multiple lightening strikes at that time. Smoke jumpers were sent in to perform the suppression and their opinion was that ten smoke jumpers could have managed it without endangering the South Steens campground. BLM has a decision table for making a fire management determination.
- Rob Perrin has arranged with Terry Slider to review and make recommendations for Steens Mountain recreation management. Perrin was offered a promotion in Washington DC and will not be here to follow up with this. His good work and coordination with landowners and SMAC will be missed by the SMAC.
- Karla will be going to Washington DC to fill in as Acting Division Chief for Decision Support, Planning and NEPA. Joan Suther will be assigned as Andrews FM and will attend the December meeting.
- Judge Aiken's finding remanding the TMP was in May. The Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan is in the scoping process until the end of December 2008. In 2009 BLM will be working with SMAC for recommendations related to trails, route decisions, etc. which will be wrapped together with the TMP to form the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.
- BLM's compiled report of the Running Camp shows that all use by the Running Camp complies with acceptable use in Wilderness Areas.
- A North Steens project at the Riddle Brothers Ranch for fuels reduction, better fire control, and safer access to protect historic buildings and personnel has been in progress.
- The Ruby Springs project and the Oliver Springs project in the Chimney Allotment are being completed.
- The Fire Management and Use option was not implemented during 2008 but hopefully will be used next fire season.
- The Riddle Creek pasture in the Stonehouse Allotment was rested this year.
- Karla noted that she has enjoyed working with the SMAC and gave an overview of BLM's accomplishments with SMAC and her appreciation of their input and perspectives.

BREAK

SOUTH STEENS WATER DEVELOPMENT EA

SMAC Comments and Discussion

Many members attended an unofficial information sharing field trip hosted by member Stacy Davies and Roaring Springs Ranch (RSR) on July 16-17, 2008.

Pam provided a general overview and each member gave their perspective of the tour. Although no official recommendation was drafted, Dan Haak did compile a tour report with some of the following items noted:

- The group would like to distribute the competing grazing uses of the allotment through water developments.
- The group looked at water gaps and fencing design alternatives to minimize cattle impact. All agreed that: 1) many areas have a lot of un-utilized grass, 2) adding more water would disperse impact and be a good idea, and 3) developments should be made of natural materials to blend into the environment.
- The group did not agree on the number of troughs needed along the Lauserica Road.
- Pipelines in the wilderness are not necessary.
- Three Springs does not have sufficient water to pipe to troughs, but could be rehabilitated and reservoirs developed nearby.
- The condition of treated vs untreated juniper areas were dramatic and showed the group what could be done with good management practices.
- They would like to see WH management included in the Need and Scope. Horses have been located on one side of the HMA, due to fencing of the Donner Und Blitzen River, with water access limited to over-utilized water sources. Water development should help disperse the horse use. Dana Shuford said SMAC could address horse concerns if they are within lands that are part of the EA.
- Fencing of the Donner und Blitzen River has caused a large impact from horse, cattle, and deer use which is focused on a narrow area.
- Three Springs is on private property and has been heavily impacted. RSR would like to have the spring area fenced off to protect it. Water developments would allow this spring to be excluded from development and allow protection.
- Site specific recommendations were made as follows:
 - ✓ ER15 needs to be eliminated.
 - ✓ W16 Long dam well site should be moved out of site.
 - ✓ Twin reservoirs are obscure and have been in place, so leave them as is.
 - ✓ R7,12,13 Camp up drainage to Three Springs – drainage fairly deep, with good cover and good sites for placing obscure reservoirs (e). Using naturalized dams would not impact WSAs.
 - ✓ Water gap near ER6 – RSR has an easement to the water gap.
 - ✓ S3 – The Three Springs Road recommendation would involve moving the road uphill away from spring area so it doesn't go through the spring.

General observations and input from SMAC members included:

- ✓ Hoyt – Tabor Cabin is near wilderness and affects location/placement of the water gap.
- ✓ Fred O - Group should look at what has affected the need for water development. BLM has a responsibility to RSR under the Steens Act to maintain a sustainable

- use of the allotment. RSR should be able to utilize the full allotment. A viable option could be to let wild horses into the cattle area.
- ✓ Richard – There is a diverse need in the allotment. The lack of water affects wildlife in the allotment. Need to capture the breadth of the issue and the various angles. The EA Purpose and Need should be broader - “To balance the ecological and economic integrity.”
 - ✓ David B – Disagrees that BLM has a responsibility to RSR. The original agreement provided for compensation to RSR in the Steens Act.
 - ✓ Hoyt – The main thing that ties the diverse views is to balance use and resource management. Water development is for the overall benefit of the area and should be viewed that way.
 - ✓ Mike B – The meeting/tour resulted in the basis for a SMAC recommendation.
 - ✓ Dan H - Juniper cutting on RSR private land, which consists of a dual drainage system divided by a ridge, has created a windrow fence to protect riparian areas. The natural fence can be burned after the riparian area is recovered.
 - ✓ SMAC agrees that some form of water development is needed on the South Steens Allotment. The Purpose and Need should be changed: To maintain and balance the ecological needs and integrity, not to “develop water.”
 - ✓ SMAC would like to see other options proposed such as juniper control, horse control, and fence reduction/alternatives in addition to additional water sources and their location.
 - ✓ SMAC’s universal concerns include; rangeland health, ecological health, and the Wildhorse Act.

Karla Bird, Andrews FM, responded to several SMAC’s concerns reminding them that the EA is already out and cannot be changed. Therefore, the purpose and need cannot be changed. BLM’s purpose and need of the action is to develop water within the side boards of the Steens Act. SMACs purpose and need for their recommendation could be to balance ecological and economic integrity. The value of SMAC would be to make a recommendation based on their purpose and need perspective (ecological integrity). She noted that juniper management is dealt with in the North Steen EIS.

Dana Shuford, DFO, reminded the group that this allotment will set precedence for other areas even though this allotment is unique due to the Donner und Blitzen River ruling and the Grazing Free Area within the Steens Act.

Agenda revisions were made.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Julie Weikel – She has spent time on the ground to understand the water development proposals. She saw a lot of horse impact and brought up some questions. What do we know about inventory? How long has it been since adjustments were made? She is aware of the feral vs wild horse perspectives and recognizes the national dilemma is huge and pending legislation could have a huge impact. She shared her observations from on the ground. She felt some sights should not be made into reservoirs. RSR’s proposal/suggestion may be a large wish list and there may be willingness to accept less.

How are pipelines able to be considered in WSAs? Three springs area is disgusting and reflects poorly on management and should be fixed. Reservoirs are justified by benefiting wildlife, however wildlife already knows where to go and so development isn't really about wildlife but is more about cattle. Developments won't really improve the situation for wildlife.

Susan Hammond, Hammond Ranches – The inconsistency of BLM personnel is concerning and causes a direct disadvantage to land owners as memory and important issues seem to fall through the cracks. Regarding the discussion of horses and putting them back on livestock free area, she doesn't see this as a problem but they should take into consideration that the livestock free area was to be fenced according to the Act. Putting horses in the area could be a problem without fencing.

Kate Martin, ONDA – She is a wildlife biologist working on stream issues in the John Day basin. She is looking at the developments in relation to their impact on wildlife. She toured several sights yesterday. Her first concern is that S. Davies is a good conscientious operator but they must think beyond that and consider that the land may not always be managed by him. Need to look at the worst case scenario that it may not always be managed by a conscientious person. Grazing and dispersion of water will not change the forage or habitat that is available to the wildlife. The Three Springs area could be an amazing riparian area for wildlife. ONDA's attendance on the field trip would have been greatly beneficial.

SMAC response to public comments:

Dan H – Regarding the horse scenario on SS allotment, current AML is 180 – 306 head. Stacy's comment indicated that if gathers are done on a 5 year cycle it would not greatly affect the allotment.

Bill Pieratt, BLM – The current estimate is 300 head, so they are currently at the high end of AML. A gather is scheduled for this fall but may be postponed due to funding issues.

Bill R – While on tour, the only wildlife activity observed was deer and elk moving up and down fence at the Blitzen River enclosure.

Pam H – She would like more information regarding Kate's concern that extra water and subsequent dispersion would cause more competition by cattle with wildlife. Can she share more wildlife background and science to the group?

Kate – New water developments would be beneficial to cattle and horses and disperse them, they will then stay at those reservoirs until something limits their use (feed). Use would result in less forage for wildlife, less vegetation diversity, more noxious weeds, and less key forage (bitterbrush) for wildlife.

Fred O – Every AMP looks at the affects on wildlife. BLM and permittees give this consideration and rotation of cattle is an ongoing grazing management practice.

Monitoring provides a method of measuring the impacts.

Richard A – The group shouldn't make decisions based on who the current landowner is. BLM and Mr. Davies are apparently asking for an increase in the number of cattle on the allotment. What are the natural water sources available for wildlife in the area in addition to the river? The tour showed that water supply is limited in the area, however the rangeland is in good health due to lack of use from limited water.

Matt Obradovich, BLM – The Donner und Blitzen River was the main source of water. There are other springs and waterholes that fill from spring runoff. Water develop would help distribute wildlife but it is not yet determined if it would increase their population. The fence along the river in south end was supposedly built according to BLM standards which would allow passage of wildlife under and over. However, wildlife typically will only go over a fence when pressured and forced to.

Paul B – Reminded the group that Stacy Davies mentioned that the manmade reservoirs that were incorporated into the wilderness area are a very telling point that water is a benefiting factor to the wilderness experience and were determined acceptable.

Fred O – Predation activity will increase a little along fence lines. Water development and dispersal in drought conditions will help decrease predation.

Mike Mottice, BLM, Deputy State Director for Resources at OSO – He oversees budget and policy for all the programs that were discussed this morning. He is watching the Steens issue from a policy and budget perspective. He believes the SMAC is making great progress and is committed to bringing this topic to closure. He shared with the group what works and what doesn't and how the group can be most effective to BLM. An effective RAC is one that engages the public, brings a consensus recommendation to the table, tells BLM what they do agree on (not what they don't agree on), and focuses on what they can agree on. He encouraged the group to remember the decision that is in front of them and/or on the table. For example: In relation to Purpose and Need (P&N), the group should focus on the stated P&N. The topic on the table at this point is the water developments, not rangeland health or ecological diversity which are addressed in the EA document. This P&N is about bringing water to the southern portion of the allotment to support livestock and wild horse herds. Two points need to be addressed: 1) The SMAC should decide if there are other issues that need to be discussed (wild horses) later, 2) Right now BLM needs their consensus on whether BLM should put water developments in which is the proposed action that is on the table.

Richard A – He feels its important to know if BLM has considered other alternatives like juniper management and WHB management which could enhance or affect the need to put in more pipelines. He doesn't feel the group could ignore the broader concepts.

Dana Shuford, BLM – The proposed action is water development; however the purpose of development is to restore ecological diversity that the Act and implementation actions have affected. It comes down to one option that could be pursued to meet the purpose and need to provide replacement water that was lost as a result of the Donner und Blitzen fence. The current articulation in the EA may not be sufficient. Scoping and comments from the field trip have influenced BLM's proposed action. SMAC should work through the proposed action and tell them what they can't agree should be done and what they can agree should be done to help BLM arrive at a final decision. SMAC needs to arrive at a recommendation prior to a BLM decision being made, which will be made prior to the next SMAC meeting. SMAC should present their consensus agreements and disagreements as to what BLM should do.

Lunch

BLM Presentation on SS Water Development EA – by Bill Pieratt

Horses are managed according to a predetermined AML high and low range.

AMLs are set in land management process and so are outside the scope of this EA.

This EA has three purposes;

1. Update the existing AMP. The previous one was done in 1995 and prior to land exchanges of the Steens Act.
2. Is the basis for re-issuance of a ten year grazing permit.
3. Analyze alternatives for development of additional water sources.

The Standards and Guides (S&G) assessment has been completed. The allotment is meeting all S&Gs in 3 out of 4 pastures. Riparian and water quality are not being met due to horse and livestock management and juniper encroachment.

Management decisions for juniper are outside the scope of this EA. However, it is included in the North Steens EIS and BLM will be doing a three year monitoring study.

BLM has three side boards in developing and EA and ID teams are aware that BLM must; 1) comply with law, 2) conform to regulation, and 3) consider policy.

BLM has received public comments. Some are useful and others are outside scope of the EA. The comments could change what is included in the EA document. The comment period will close on October 10, 2008.

After reviewing the four alternatives below BLM came up with a proposed action.

- A. No Action
- B. Develop for maximum changes.
- C. Install water only along roads and ways.
- D. Develop water around edges of WSA.

Bill would like to have a SMAC recommendation by the end of the meeting and is confident that SMAC can present a recommendation of the EA proposal on behalf of the Secretary of Interior.

SMAC Comments and Discussion (cont)

Matt O, BLM – The HMA takes in a portion of the allotment. As a result of the land exchanges, fences have been removed allowing more access than was allowed when the land was private and had fences.

Richard A – What is the impact of juniper control on water availability? Has this been considered? What would a good juniper control program do for water availability? Is the EA a stop gap until juniper management is enacted? Are pipelines actually needed if juniper control is developed and implemented? How will juniper control affect water availability?

Bill P, BLM – Juniper control will affect late season water availability in streams and springs but not reservoirs.

Fred O – Has seen cases where results of juniper control on water supply vary. It can increase or decrease the supply as rangeland grasses and health increase.

Facilitator Terry Morton summarized SMAC consensus points as follows:

1. # proposed reservoirs: 12-13
2. Which of the proposed new reservoirs should SMAC recommend be installed within WSA: to be discussed later.
3. # pipelines: 3 or 5 depending on final decision
4. Rehab and fence at Three Springs to exclude livestock: EA is consistent with some of this and not with other aspects. Water gap fencing design to minimize cattle impact will be included in the design of present gaps (no new ones).
5. New developments should be natural. The EA does allow for this in the project design but it should be on a site specific basis to allow a natural appearance within the WSA. SMAC could provide a design feature that meets their requirement for natural appearance. They could present specific suggestions for designs and materials in their recommendation.
6. Developments should be naturalized with a certain level of specificity. SMAC can submit a list of acceptable designs.
7. ER 15 is scheduled for decommission in the EA.
8. W16 Long Dam well to be located out of sight on downstream side: Not sure if EA states this. Need a geological assessment; however BLM is ok with this.
9. Twin Reservoirs will be left as is. Map will need to be revised to reflect the recommendation. One will need work and the other will not need to be decommissioned
10. Move Three Springs road upstream per SMAC consensus. (addressed in the EA?)
11. Wild horse management within EA should be considered.
12. Include juniper management recommendation: SMAC would like BLM to place a high priority on this, as it might take care of other water issues. They acknowledge that juniper management is included in another document (N Steens EIS).
13. Storage tanks should be completely buried and naturalized.

Bill R - Comprehensive planning takes into account all concerns surrounding an issue and could be addressed more strongly in the EA.

Dan H - The N Steens EIS addressed juniper issue. The horse issue and maintaining a sustainable number is addressed with the present AML. Water distribution is what SMAC is working on today.

Mike M – BLM manages juniper not to change distribution of water. However, it will allow more water to flow from springs and streams. Alternatively this project is to change the distribution of water around the allotment.

David B - Water development is the process of blending ecological and economic balance. He is willing to support development where there is an offset/trade off.

14. Make it clear that new developments will not increase AUMs. SMAC will make a statement regarding this.
15. SMAC agreed that reservoir development will move forward but BLM should reclaim Three Springs (Road, Burnt Car, and Keuny) and keep them undeveloped for wildlife use only (no troughs). Also need to remember that some of the developments will be on private land.

Dana S – Three Springs is a high public use site and could allow development for potable water supply.

Hoyt – A spring is the best and most efficient and cost effective source of water and takes minimal efforts and disturbance to develop. Troughs at springs need to provide a large storage capacity to handle large groups of cattle.

Richard A – BLM and Stacy were specifically asked if the number of reservoirs and developments would be sufficient to handle the livestock needs.

SMAC will draft their motion for presentation at the meeting tomorrow.

RUBY SPRINGS TOUR

The group traveled to the project site where they were met by tour leaders, Jeff Rose and Dan Ridenour, BLM Fire Management Specialists. The results of a variety of juniper treatment projects were observed.

September 12, 2008

APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Pam Hardy moved to approve the minutes as amended. Bill Renwick seconded the motion. **The May minutes were approved.**

OREGON EXPLORER WEBSITE

David Bilyeu gave an overview of his involvement with OSU's website and the desire to put together a site where science information is available for use by a variety of parties. The SMAC science committee originally hoped there could be a Steens Mountain portal for scientific information and data. The Lakes Basin portal was established for science information related to this region. The committee's efforts resulted in a grant application with OWEB which was turned in on September 2, 2008.

Janine Salwasser and Ruth Vondracek provided a presentation and shared more information on the portal and grant application. With the aid of a projector they explained the Explorer website and the work done on some of the other portals.

The Natural Resources Digital Library Vision:

- Designed to be the go to place for natural resources information
- Create a purposeful digital library
- Address the importance of “place”. Initially with Basins within Oregon

The site uses multi formats to offer:

Feature stories about background and issues

Multi layer mapping

Distributed data harvesting

Discussion forums

Information sharing from Watershed council folks of various areas

Accessing restoration data

Remote updating

Archived historic documents

3D visualization using Virtual Earth - Integrating and synthesizing data

Oregon Explorer is the mother site with focused portals.

- Phase 1: funded by OSU and OWEB
- Phase 2; funded by OSU and OWEB

The site is designed with and for users to:

- Learn about a place
- Learn about a topic (to be identified locally)

In an advance search Steens Mountain currently has three site stories. A search also pulls up 88 documents from the Scholars Archive.

The proposal to OWEB was a result of a partnership with SMAC, BLM, OSU, and the Harney County Watershed Council.

The deliverables proposed include:

1. Creation and release of Lakes basin explorer portal.
2. Updated Oregon Explorer county pages for both Harney and Lake County.
3. A governance document.
4. \$51,236 was requested with a \$30,634 OSU match.

If the OWEB grant is received they will hold a kick off meeting to develop a work plan. They had requested an 18 month time period. SMAC members can still contact OWEB board members to express their priority topics.

The Sagebrush Cooperative is doing a similar effort with a report cd that can be made available on the site.

OSU libraries and the Institute of Natural Resources is the partnership working to develop the Explorer Website.

BREAK

WJMA PRESENTATION

Fred McDonald provided the presentation for Karen Moon.

Congress designated 3000 acres for juniper management in the Steens Act. Treatment plots have been established and signing is being installed. Two pullout areas have been installed. Six interpretive signs and one introduction or portal sign will be installed. Three will be at the first pullout and three at the study plots.

BLM will have mock-ups available at the December SMAC meeting. Members can post recommendations on the mockup posters. Signs will go through one more review and then be submitted for construction and installation next year. They will be made of high pressure laminate material. An Oregon State Office Sign Specialist has reviewed the signs. They've received an OWEB grant of \$35,000 plus cost shares of \$35,000 to supplement completion of the WJMA Interpretation project. A brochure is being created by the Frenchglen School. There will be an interpretive trail through the plots. Chris Pratt has been contracted to do GIS stuff for the maps and Fossil Graphics will be building the signs.

After the signs and brochures are completed, SMAC will need to help come up with a plan to manage the remaining WJMA area. Fred O and Bill R have already provided additional input for this project. Karen Moon, HC Watershed Coordinator has done a lot of work to get the grants and complete the initial steps for the project. One suggestion is to include Dick Jenkin's historic photos and OSU Research Station juniper management research results.

A mockup of the brochure will be made available for SMAC members to review.

South Steens Water Development EA (cont)

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

The SMAC agrees to the following recommendation regarding the South Steens Allotment Management Plan EA.

1. The SMAC recommends the new water development will not increase the number of permitted AUMs or AML management plan on the SS Allotment. The intent of the SMACs recommendation is that the existing allowed AUMs can be managed in a more ecologically balanced manner.
2. The SMAC recommends that springs should be fenced to exclude livestock and wild horses. Those springs are Three Springs (and Road Spring), Burnt Car, and Keuny Spring. Fencing material should be natural, for example, split rail juniper or rock fence or other natural fencing material that would accomplish the goal of excluding livestock and wild horses. At these springs, the BLM should build water structures for human access and use. These developments should be built to minimize visual impacts. Other than Three Springs, where there is enough water for human use at the spring, the trough should be set up outside the enclosure for

- livestock, wild horses and wildlife. Troughs or other water developments should be made of natural local stone or products that look nature (i.e. concrete).
3. The SMAC recommends that the BLM realign the road away from Road Spring.
 4. The SMAC observed that existing reservoirs were not designed or constructed to obscure, or for low impact on wilderness values. The SMAC recommends that new reservoirs will be screened and naturalized to reduce impacts to wilderness characteristics. Other than R9, the SMAC supports the BLM's proposed action for reservoirs. R9 was identified by ONDA's biologist as a unique meadow with substantial wildlife and wilderness values that needed to be protected. As a result, the SMAC recommends not developing R9.
 5. The SMAC has no objection to the two wells (W7 & W3) on non WSA. In regard to the well at Long Dam (W16) the SMAC strongly recommends that no well be constructed at this site because it is a low priority well scheduled only to be used in extreme conditions, and it adversely affects wilderness values from noise and presence of mechanized equipment. However, if the BLM elects to construct a well at this site or any of the other sites the wells should be constructed as follows: A "bunker" should be dug for the placement of a temporary generator. The generator should be below ground and covered, for camouflage as well as to minimize noise. Pipes from the well should be buried or rocked over. Rocks should be replaced over pipes with the mossy side up. Any troughs for well water should be robust in design and made from local stone, or possibly from concrete designed to look like stone. The SMAC also recommends that for the Long Dam well (W16), if the BLM chooses to construct the well, that it only be used to save wild horses and wildlife in extreme drought situations, and only for a short period of time because of the noise impact of the generator to wilderness values.
 6. SMAC recommends eliminating the proposed pipelines P7, P8 and P16. The SMAC recommends installing well (W7) and trough. The well (W7) and trough are sufficient to accomplish the BLM's goals in this area.
 7. The SMAC recommends, where possible, that all storage tanks or other water storage structures proposed in this EA be buried and completely naturalized.
 8. The SMAC recommends that ER 11-14 and ER 19-22 not be removed. These reservoirs are already naturalized and to the extent that they are not the BLM should naturalize them. The SMAC believes that removing them will have greater adverse impacts to wilderness values than leaving them in place.

The SMAC recommends the BLM manage the AML at the low end of the targeted range for the South Steens Allotment. The SMAC understands, after touring the allotment, that wild horses have an impact on the ecological integrity of the area. The SMAC believes that for the management plan to accomplish its stated goals, the management of wild horses has to be an integral part of BLM's management of the area.

The SMAC recommends that the BLM enter into a cooperative arrangement with the permit holder, local watershed council, and other interested parties to manage junipers on the South Steens Allotment concurrent with the placement of water developments. The SMAC believes that this will allow the BLM to reach their water development goals while minimizing the adverse effects on wilderness values. The SMAC believes that

reducing the encroachment of junipers in the allotment will increase overall water availability on the allotment and help restore the natural hydrologic cycle. (see North Steens EIS).

The SMAC defines naturalized to include the use of natural material and native vegetation to the greatest extent possible to minimize the visual intrusion of any manmade water developments. This can include but is not limited to using local rocks and junipers, matching natural slopes and contours, and planting native vegetation. Man made materials can be used if it simulates natural materials in color and texture. For example, concrete troughs can be colored and textured to represent surrounding materials.

Dan Haak moved the group accept the above as an official recommendation. David Bilyeu seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.**

A copy of the recommendation will be sent out to all members to present to their constituents. Chairperson Pam Hardy will draft a recommendation letter to BLM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Susan Hammond, Hammond Ranches – Has no comment at this time other than the SMAC is doing a wonderful job.

Julie Weikel - She is impressed with the SMAC's process and their efforts to collaborate on the water development issue.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

All SMAC members accepted the public comments as a greatly appreciated acknowledgement of their determined efforts to produce the recommendation.

Dan Haak asked BLM if they felt SMAC had covered all the topics that BLM was hoping they would address regarding the Water Development EA recommendation. Dana Shuford congratulated the group on their great effort to finalize their recommendation.

Mike Mottice addressed the group and expressed his appreciation for them and for the opportunity to participate in their conversations during the field trip and meeting. He has worked with various advisory councils and RACS and he noted that this is the model that BLM is striving for. According to Mike, the impressive qualities of the SMAC are:

1. Their interest, enthusiasm and passion for the mountain.
2. Their commitment to working together. Relaying their position while remaining flexible in an effort to work together for a solution and recommendation.
3. The group is working according to the intent of the Steens Act to find out-of-the box creative solutions.

Mr. Mottice recommended that the SMAC's official recommendation be included verbatim in the South Steens Water Development EA document.

Pam H asked members to contemplate what allowed them to reach the success of this meeting. Are there lessons learned for the next topic and collaborative experience?

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

Bill Renwick proposed a statement of recommendation to the State Director and Secretary of Interior regarding filling the upcoming vacant BLM leadership positions.

Richard Angstrom moved that the group adopt the letter concept with word-smithing to add in the names of all vacating staff. Mike Beagle seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

SMAC Vision and Goals Refresher

Highlights of the accomplishments and drafted recommendation to BLM for the Water EA. What worked?

- ✓ Setting aside righteous attitudes.
- ✓ Setting aside personal interests and making decisions that are good for the resources, without compromising core values (good collaborative efforts).
- ✓ The field trip to obtain on the ground perspective was a worthwhile pre-work that contributed to the success of the meeting.
- ✓ Majority of the hard work was accomplished during the informal working group and after hours time together (informal settings provide a good foundation for working relationships).
- ✓ The group took the time to go out and recognize the extent of the problem through the field trip. They went beyond their own interest to arrive at a workable solution for all concerns.
- ✓ The cross training, stepping into another persons environment/shoes/saddle allows a person to shed preconceived notions and see the issue from other's perspectives.
- ✓ Trust resulting from experience, understanding, and history are built outside the meeting room. It comes from action.
- ✓ A large part of SMAC's success is due to BLM staff and personnel willingness to stand up to threats of litigation and go beyond BLM protocol as well as their willingness to work with the group to arrive at a creative solution.
- ✓ Attitude of the general public and their comments have been more positive.
- ✓ Current members are more willing to work together and listen to each other.
- ✓ Leadership provided by Dana has been extremely effective.
- ✓ The respect members have for each other that has been built from willingness to learn from each other, and efforts taken to learn their view points and interests.
- ✓ The field trip contributed to success and was essential.
- ✓ Good relationships contribute to a culture of trust among members and BLM staff.
- ✓ Longevity of the group's members has helped them to think of the others positions and how to arrive at a solution that would consider their interests.
- ✓ Extra effort to develop text outside of the official meeting improves efficiency.
- ✓ The well thought out SS recommendation will affect BLM's final EA product.

- ✓ Consensus is a feeling of collaboration and commonality that moves the important issues ahead while not agreeing on every point.
- ✓ Relationships built with each other and BLM staff: culture of trust, listening, respect for others, ideas, longevity.
- ✓ Janine Salwasser felt the group's excellent communication is impressive and is what others aspire to.

Karla Bird expressed her appreciation for recommendations on the RMP and the TMP that BLM can use (legal, moral, affordable).

Hoyt Wilson shared that he would like to see long term monitoring on wilderness. Karla noted that BLM has a monitoring plan but needs to prioritize. SMAC can help BLM successfully prioritize monitoring projects within budget constraints. Monitoring Plans and Science Strategy have been developed but there is a need to have projects prioritized.

Agenda Items for the December meeting:

- ✓ WJMA Interpretation signs
- ✓ Wild Horse Program Management – brainstorm
- ✓ Page Springs Weir update
- ✓ Home Creek Assess Easement Update
- ✓ Land Trades Update
- ✓ Stonehouse Update
- ✓ Oregon Explorer Update/OWEB grant
- ✓ Establish next years calendar
- ✓ Recreation stats – Fred M/Terry Slider
- ✓ LE Issues

Next meeting date: December 4-5, 2008 in Burns, Oregon.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.46 p.m.

Submitted by Connie Pettyjohn.

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council approved the minutes on December 5, 2008.

Signed by Pam Hardy, SMAC Chair _____