

**STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
December 7 & 8, 2006
BURNS, OREGON**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Stacy Davies, Chair, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, Oregon
Pam Hardy, Vice–Chair, Dispersed Recreation, Eugene, Oregon
Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, Oregon
Cynthia Witzel, Recreation Permit Holder, Frenchglen, Oregon
David Bilyeu, Environmental Representative – Statewide, Bend, Oregon
William Renwick, Environmental Representative, Burns, Oregon
Brenda Sam, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, Oregon
Paul Bradley, Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation, Hines, Oregon (2nd day)
Michael Beagle, Fish and Recreational Fishing, Eagle Point, Oregon
Fred Otley, Private Landowner, Diamond, Oregon

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, Oregon
Richard Angstrom, No Financial Interest, Salem, Oregon
Paul Bradley, Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation, Hines, Oregon (1st day)
Ron VanDomelen, Wild Horse Management, Powell Butte, Oregon

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL (DFO):

Cody Hansen, Associate District Manager, Bureau of Land Management
(BLM), Hines, Oregon

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL ASSISTANTS:

Rhonda Karges, Management Support Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Amy Freitag, Clerical Assistant, BLM, Hines, Oregon

FACILITATOR:

Dale White, Burns, Oregon

PRESENTERS

Mark Sherbourne, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Mike Morcom, Fire Management Officer, BIFZ, Hines, Oregon
Jeff Rose, Fire Ecologist, BIFZ, Hines, Oregon
Rick Hall, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Darren Brumback, Fisheries Biologist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Steve Dowlan, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon

COMMENTING PUBLIC:

Susie Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc., Frenchglen, Oregon
Bill Marlett, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA)
Charlie Otley, Diamond, Oregon
Chad Karges, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tara Martinak, BLM, Hines, Oregon	Julie Weikel, Burns, Oregon
Dave Toney, BIFZ, Hines, Oregon	Brent Meisinger, BIFZ, Hines, Oregon
Don Rotell, BLM, Hines, Oregon	Laura Dowlan, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Joe Glascock, BLM, Hines, Oregon	Jonathan Manski, BIFZ, Hines, Oregon
Steve Morefield, BIFZ, Hines, Oregon	Bill Andersen, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Lisa Grant, BLM, Hines, Oregon	Bruce Hazen, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Fred McDonald, BLM, Hines, Oregon	Kelly Hazen, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Jim King, BLM, Hines, Oregon	
Karen Moon, HC Watershed Council, Burns, Oregon	

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

The meeting was called to order and self introductions made.

CHAIRMAN UPDATE

- Stacy noted he spoke with new State Director Ed Shepherd. They briefly spoke about the SMAC. Ed is fairly familiar with the Steens Act and will work hard to have vacant positions filled quickly.

DFO UPDATE

- The Steens Mountain CMPA agreement for a landscape-management partnership between Steens Mountain Landowners Group and the BLM has been signed.
- The GAO visited Burns by request from Senator Wyden's office to review the effectiveness of collaborative management within six NLCS units. Some SMAC members have been interviewed to see how the SMAC is functioning.
- Cody stated there will be five SMAC meetings established for 2007. The District Office would like to see one meeting in Bend, one in Frenchglen, and the rest in Burns.

FIELD MANAGER REPORT

Given by Mark Sherbourne

- They are currently blasting trees in the WJMA. They started December 6, and will continue until done.
- There are two vacancies in recreation BLM will be filling - an Outdoor Recreation Planner in Three Rivers and one in Andrews (vice-Evelyn Treiman).
- Prescribed fire in Ruby Springs occurred in September.
- The BLM will be entering into a cooperative management agreement with Kiger Ranch to do some work on private and public lands in their allotment.
- North Steens EIS has been delayed due to rehab efforts, but should commence shortly.
- New efforts for the CMPA include South Steens water development project. There should be a scoping document out within the next month.

- Willow Creek road reroute was out for comment this fall. No comments were received. A decision will be made when the easement is in place.
- Gary Miller land exchange is going through the proper channels and should be completed soon.
- Work has been done with ODFW on the Bighorn Sheep project. ODFW transplanted sheep to try to improve the diversity and will be doing blood tests to see if they have the diversity they want. They are also working on a transplant around Picket Rim.
- BLM has been working with Dan Jordan. A verbal 1-year agreement has been made. They have agreed on the compensation for 40 acres around Pate Lake, per his request. They will also be taking care of some things on other parts of the property with regards to road maintenance and will contact visitors to see how the public would like the property managed.
- Other 2007 projects for the CMPA will be provided to the SMAC at the next meeting.

SUMMARY OF AUGUST FIRES / REHABILITATION EFFORTS / FIRE USE PLAN

Mike Morcom presented a summary on the fires that occurred last summer. There were a total of 216 fires in just over 160,000 acres. Of the 160,000 acres, about 115,000 were on BLM, approximately 45,000 acres on private land with the remaining acres being on other federal and state lands. The fire season started with a lightning bust in early May. Most fires were on the southern portion of Burns District BLM with the biggest fires occurring at the end of August.

Jeff Rose gave a summary/overview of fire rehab currently in progress. He noted there are two pieces to fire rehab - stabilization and rehab. Stabilization includes all actions taken in the first 12 months from containment. This is to basically hold the site making sure soils don't disappear, water that comes off doesn't get into somebody's house or damage land in some other way, immediately repair other facilities burned, and any other kind of immediate action. Rehab is long-term actions; actions taken in the 2nd and 3rd years, including planting of seedlings and catchments or water cleanout. They are seeding right now to hold the soil. If you want to seed to rehabilitate the site, it would go into a rehab plan. Other statistics follow:

- Nine stabilization plans were submitted this year.
- 11,000 to 12,000 acres were seeded.
- Drilling will be finished December 8, 2006 with about 11,000 acres done.
- In the wilderness area, they will use planes to drop seed.
- Fencing has been checked and a portion of it repaired.
- There has been some weed management, most of it being around the Crater Fire.

Some things delaying rehabilitation included obtaining seed, obtaining drills, and budget.

Jeff gave a power point presentation on the WJMA juniper blasting that occurred on December 6, 2006. They were able to blast 31 trees, which is about a third of an acre. Jeff estimated a cost of \$3,000 to do this much area. This method will not be used for all areas, but will be used to treat smaller areas. A fence contractor is currently putting up fence around the WJMA.

Jeff and Mike talked about fire use. Two maps were provided outlining areas they will be working in during the next year. The group continued with a discussion on fire use.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mark Sherbourne presented an overview on the status of the Travel Management Plan. Sheets were included in their packets, one discussed routes within the CMPA and one discussed scoping alternatives. Included with these sheets were 4 maps to review. A draft of the scoping document was also provided to the SMAC. They reviewed and discussed the document.

In the discussion, there were a few suggested changes to the document. They will continue the discussion and the possibility of making a recommendation after lunch.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Susie Hammond, private landowner, Steens Mountain Landowners Group, stated she is pleased they have signed and delivered the CMA between the BLM and the landowners group. She expressed concern about the map Jeff presented and the fire management part of it. As private landowner they have tried for years to address the liability and the responsibility for fire management. She said it doesn't happen, and she doesn't know why. It seems to her it is a pulling back of the agency and not wanting to address the liability. Every landowner has their own reasons for allowing or not allowing fire, but she thinks there is an agreement that could be made. She would like to see the BLM produce some kind of a proposed agreement for the next SMAC meeting. In between time they could consult with private landowners. On the travel plan, the landowner group asked to have an overlay for trails, historic trails, and some of them do not show up. She stated there is no way you can get historic information they don't have for base line inventory in the travel plan if they don't put it in to some kind of scoping document. They also asked for an overlay for private property access. They do not want to let those roads be used if they don't want to respect them.

Charlie Otley, private landowner, stated he sees a road on the map he was told was going to be taken off. He wanted to know why. He wants to be able to use the road without having to obtain a permit every time he wants to travel on the road.

Bill Marlett, ONDA, wanted to know in alternative A, when it refers to the permit routes and historical routes within WSA, if they are specifically referring to those routes that are on the WSA inventory maps. His question was answered with a yes. He noted it may be worth clarifying that, because there could be a new route pop up and he wouldn't want the SMAC or the BLM to go down the path of trying to create new ways within a WSA. Bill stated this would cause legal issues that would be fairly unproductive. He also suggested changing the sentence that says, "This essentially provides for off-road vehicle travel". They don't have a problem with permittee access in WSA to the extent it is on a new route found or on an existing way or if its historical use is tied to an existing valid permit. As far as they are concerned, it is a bonafide usage that can and should continue.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

The group talked with the public about comments made during the public comment period. They discussed the issue of fire use and the burning of fires in areas that are "let

burn” areas. Who is responsible if it is a man-caused fire and who is responsible for fire burning on private land? It was suggested the Fire Use Plan proposed map should show the cooperative management agreements for the “let burn” policy. It was noted they have a unique opportunity for presenting alternatives that may be outside the current parameters of what BLM is allowed to do. Another tool available is a process called Coordinated Resource Planning, which is a process invoked through SWCD and mandates, if necessary, for agencies involved and landowners to come to a solution. This has been briefly talked about in the past. It was noted as a suggestion to the BLM to incorporate this process.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN CONTINUED

The group was given a chance to individually express their concerns on this subject. Concerns/points were taken including:

- Law enforcement
- Deer habitat
- New found routes
- Future conditions
- Criteria for future road decisions
- Closing roads that would be used for tribal reasons
- More definition on new found roads in wilderness

MONITORING PLAN

Rick Hall gathered feedback from the SMAC concerning the Monitoring Plan. The group discussed their concerns/comments. It was decided the group will receive a Word copy of the Monitoring Plan. Members will make their comments in the electronic document within the next couple of weeks and send their commented version to Rhonda via email. Along with comments, each individual will put together a list prioritizing how they feel things should be prioritized for a possible recommendation.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN CONTINUED

The group went back to discuss the travel management plan.

Motion made: Cindy made the motion to remove reference in route category #4 to private land access. Sentence #5 says, “Motor vehicle use of these routes is restricted to livestock operators and private landowners.” It would just say, “Motor vehicle use of these routes is restricted to livestock operators.” As well, add a new category number 5 that reads: “Private Property Access - These routes provide access to private lands within the CMPA. These routes are delineated by the color purple on the map.” Renumber the subsequent categories. (Bill seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: Remove reference in route category #4 to private land access. Sentence #5 says, “Motor vehicle use of these routes is restricted to livestock operators and private landowners.” It would just say, “Motor vehicle use of these routes is restricted to livestock operators.” As well, add a new category number 5 that reads: “Private Property Access - These routes provide access to private lands within the CMPA. These routes are delineated by the color purple on the map.” Renumber the subsequent categories.

Motion made: Cindy moved to Replace existing Numbers 1 and 2 [scoping document]

with the following verbiage and adjust the rest of the numbers to coincide as well as remove reference to the “New-Found Routes” category.

“Base Routes-These routes are shown as black lines on the map. They are currently open to motor vehicle travel unless shown as closed. There are 563 miles of these routes that are currently available for vehicular use within the CMPA. This includes 517 miles that are currently mapped on the GIS system as well as 46 miles that were missing from the GIS data base used in the development of the Transportation Plan in the RMP. The routes included within these 46 miles are well-defined, mostly primitive roads outside of WSAs and Wilderness.

Additionally, about 15 miles of well defined WSA ways were located during the route inventory and these ways were added to this route category. These additional WSA route miles were not shown on previous maps, but were identified during the WSA inventory process in the early 1980s.”

Also, remove references to the “New-Found Routes” category throughout the Travel Plan scoping document (Alternatives A, B, & C). (Hoyt seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: Replace existing Numbers 1 and 2 [scoping document] with the following verbiage and adjust the rest of the numbers to coincide as well as remove reference to the “New-Found Routes” category.

“Base Routes-These routes are shown as black lines on the map. They are currently open to motor vehicle travel unless shown as closed. There are 563 miles of these routes that are currently available for vehicular use within the CMPA. This includes 517 miles that are currently mapped on the GIS system as well as 46 miles that were missing from the GIS data base used in the development of the Transportation Plan in the RMP. The routes included within these 46 miles are well-defined, mostly primitive roads outside of WSAs and Wilderness.

Additionally, about 15 miles of well defined WSA ways were located during the route inventory and these ways were added to this route category. These additional WSA route miles were not shown on previous maps, but were identified during the WSA inventory process in the early 1980s.”

Also, remove references to the “New-Found Routes” category throughout the Travel Plan scoping document (Alternatives A, B, & C).

PAGE SPRINGS WEIR

Darren Brumback and Steve Dowlan reviewed the Page Springs Weir project for the new members and as a refresher from last March’s meeting. The planned completion for the EA is May of 2007. Money has been programmed for the project in FY07. The target is to basically have an EA compiled and an analysis completed sometime in March. Then hopefully have a decision in May. The group discussed the options shown to them by Darren and Steve.

Motion made: David made the motion the SMAC recommends removal of the dam [Page Springs Weir] that should be done incrementally and begins with modification. (Pam seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: SMAC recommends removal of the dam [Page Springs Weir] that should be done incrementally and begins with modification.

December 8, 2006

INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order and self introductions made.

APPROVAL OF MAY & OCTOBER MINUTES

Bill moved to approve the May minutes. (David seconded)

Consensus: May minutes approved.

On page 6 of the October minutes, the date is incorrect; change will be made to reflect the correct date.

Bill moved to approve the October minutes as amended. (David seconded)

Consensus: October minutes approved as amended.

ACTION ITEMS REVIEW

- Update WJMA, they have gotten through the treatments and through the planning.
- Update on Stonehouse, waterhole cleaning project is complete.
- Update Page Springs Weir, recommendation has been made, SMAC involvement is complete.
- Update October 2006 travel plan, completed.

CHARTER REVIEW

It was noted the current charter was actually an amendment; therefore, the charter needs to be renewed every two years as required. The SMAC reviewed the charter and discussed if any changes needed to be submitted.

Motion made: Cindy moved to adopt the charter as written. (Pam seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: Adopt the charter as written.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN continued

It was noted some kind of principle needs to be made so future changes can be made to what roads are open and what roads are closed. Something like adaptive management principles. It is not in the RMP but is part of adaptive management. The group discussed

the detail that should be added to the letter.

Motion made: Pam moved the BLM include the entire Transportation Plan out of the RMP minus the Glossary of Terms and an explanation of exactly how the current travel plan fits into the existing Transportation Plan and interrelates with the Federal road maintenance system that is going to be coming out in 2008. (Bill seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: The BLM include the entire Transportation Plan out of the RMP minus the Glossary of Terms and an explanation of exactly how the current travel plan fits into the existing Transportation Plan and interrelates with the Federal road maintenance system that is going to be coming out in 2008.

The group, along with Mark, continued to discuss adaptive management. Mark gave an overview on what adaptive management means. The group briefly discussed adaptive management that was in a newsletter put out by the Wilderness Society.

The exception language the SMAC discussed at a previous meeting was brought up and discussed again. They discussed whether or not to move forward and adopt any of these options. Also discussed was what kind of adaptive management alternatives the SMAC members would like to see.

Motion made: Stacy made the motion the SMAC recommends that the BLM include in the Travel Plan scoping document the language from Section 112 (b) – *Prohibition of Off-road Motorized Travel* - that includes a prohibition and the exceptions and three brief alternatives for interpretation of that language. (Cindy seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: Include in the Travel Plan scoping document the language from Section 112 (b) – *Prohibition of Off-road Motorized Travel* - that includes a prohibition and the exceptions and three brief alternatives for interpretation of that language.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Marlett, answered the question pertaining to the current litigation and if it would answer the question of what the language in the Act means. He stated it would not. The lawsuit pertains to the BLM failing to meet the deadline, and they wanted a hard date to be set by the court.

Chad Karges, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, provided background on how the refuge uses the Page Springs weir. They have been using the weir for approximately 70 years to measure flows going onto the refuge. The refuge manages about 35,000 acres of wetlands based on the real-time data that the weir provides. It is linked by satellite through USGS and the information is used on a daily basis to make decisions on how they are going to manage their wetlands. In addition, they use the same real-time information to make decisions on how they are going to protect infrastructures, depending on flows at certain times of the day. They would support removal of the structure as long as it is done incrementally. An incremental approach, where it is notched first and allows passage to address biological issues, would address their needs. Then as science is available and technology improves and they can accurately measure in real time what flows are coming past that point in the river, additional removal

techniques could work for them as well. Right now meeting with the different hydrologists there is concern that if complete removal was to occur at this time, it may be difficult to achieve real-time data due to the destabilization of the stream channel. Nobody can assure them that the stream channel can re-stabilize. Being able to measure the water is a condition of the refuge's state water rights.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were questions asked to clarify issues pertaining to the lawsuit between ONDA and the BLM.

SET FUTURE MEETING DATES AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Meetings for 2007:

- February 1 & 2 – BLM, Hines, Oregon
- March 8 & 9 – BLM, Hines, Oregon
- May 17 & 18 – Bend, Oregon
- August 16 & 17 – Frenchglen, Oregon
- November 15 & 16 - BLM, Hines, Oregon

Agenda items for February meeting:

- Chair election
- Monitoring plan
- Travel Plan
- Purposes of the Act
- Stonehouse (DFO Update)

Agenda item for March meeting:

- Wildland fire use – Map of fire use area
- Public Information (15 minute update)
- WJMA Update/Juniper Video
- Wilderness Plan

Agenda item for May meeting:

- Public Information

Submitted by Amy Freitag

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council approved the minutes as presented on February 2, 2007.

Stacy Davies, Chair

Date