

**STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 11 & 12, 2006
BEND, 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
Jerry Sutherland, Environmental Representative – Statewide, Portland, Oregon
William Renwick, Environmental Representative, Burns, Oregon
Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, Oregon
Brenda Sam, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, Oregon
Harland Yriarte, Private Landowner, Eugene, Oregon
Richard Angstrom, No Financial Interest, Salem, Oregon

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Paul Bradley, Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation, Hines, Oregon

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL (DFO):

Dana Shuford, 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

Karla Bird, Andrews Resource Area Field Manager, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Rick Hall, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Fred McDonald, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon

COMMENTING PUBLIC:

Susie Hammond, Steens Mountain Landowner Group, Frenchglen, Oregon
Harland Yriarte, Steens Mountain Running Camp
Jack Remington
Bill Marlett, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Bend, Oregon
Jill Workman
Borden Beck

OTHERS PRESENT:

Julie Weikel, Burns, Oregon
Ron Van Domelen, Oregon Hunter's Assoc.
Jack Rinn

Marilyn Miller
David Bilyea
Irene Vlach

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

The meeting was called to order and self introductions made.

CHAIRMAN UPDATE

No Update.

DFO UPDATE

- Dana stated he will be giving a broad update and Karla Bird will give a Field Manager update.
- Dana updated the SMAC on BLM Director Kathleen Clark's visit to Burns, what was discussed while she was here, and what Director Clark would like to see happen in the future.
- Dana reminded everyone of the update he made at the last meeting regarding the Travel Management Plan (TMP). Work on the EA (Environmental Assessment) was halted so BLM could work with the County to ensure a complete inventory of roads in the CMPA occurs. They are nearing completion of contacting all interested parties and giving them an opportunity to identify roads. The County held a meeting last night with numerous interested parties present. There were some questions raised concerning the roads, but very little new. The map as it stands right now is getting close. Next phase will be field verification. He anticipates towards the end of summer they will be able to reinstate scoping and then write an EA on the TMP.
- Blitzen River fence appeal - the BLM agreed to a one-year stay on the fence and entered into a Cooperative Agreement with Roaring Springs Ranch to resolve the issue. The SMAC was given a copy of the Cooperative Agreement in their packet and Dana briefly reviewed the agreement. He also noted there will be a map depicting the proposed action.
- Dana discussed the issue of budget cutbacks, noting they are working on a strategy to restructure the BLM's workforce. In the next few weeks they will be getting a rule set to conduct this study at a District level. In the rule set he is quite certain they will be asked to reevaluate and reconsider geographic boundaries for resource areas. Dana stated as a result of that, there is an opportunity to evaluate and look at a consolidation of boundaries to possibly maximize the capacity at the field level, eliminate some duplication, clarify some lines of authority and clean up some boundary confusion. He noted most of the CMPA falls into Andrews Resource Area but there is a portion that does fall within Three Rivers. Within the CMPA there are two field managers that have some level of responsibility. As this is developed, he would like to bring some of the things they are considering at the District level back to the SMAC, possibly at the August meeting, and hear their opinions and possibly get a recommendation on how they would like to see it set up organizationally to better position them to have good, clear line authority over the Steens Mountain area.

- Two days ago Dana was notified the House subcommittee approved \$500,000 for land acquisitions in the Steens CMPA.

There was a discussion on the funds asked for over the years and what that money would go to and the issues with the CMPA.

FIELD MANAGER UPDATE

- Karla noted Laura Dowlan has been selected as the Steens Mountain Wilderness Specialist. Laura's husband, Steve Dowlan, has been selected as a Natural Resource Specialist focusing on fisheries and riparian. The Steens Mountain Project manager position will not be filled due to budget constraints.
- Karla said this may be the latest opening of the Steens Loop Road in a long time due to the snow levels. The gates may not be open until mid or late July. The South Loop Road is pretty dry and should be open anytime.
- There have been two meetings held on the Page Springs Weir removal coordination efforts since the SMAC last met. The parties agree the weir could be removed or modified to provide better fish passage. They will fully consider what might happen to the hydraulics of the river system if they take the weir out completely. The next step is to issue a scoping notice for the EA identifying a proposed action and possible alternatives. They expect this to be released by Fall.
- Stonehouse allotment - the lack of completed water developments created problems with livestock distribution during 2005. BLM plans and has budgeted maintenance and clean-out of several existing waterholes in 2006. BLM budgeted for two new waterholes as provided for in the previous Stonehouse AMP (Allotment Management Plan) EA during 2006. The application for water rights for the two new waterholes has been protested by downstream users. While BLM hopes to resolve these issues, they cannot construct new waterholes until the water rights issues are resolved. Karla and her staff discussed this water rights issue with Alvord Ranch on April 21, and they all recognize the water won't be developed by the 2006 grazing season. They also discussed the potential water rights may not be granted and, therefore, the new water developments will not be forthcoming. In the interim, livestock grazing will continue under strict utilization standards. The BLM staff will provide the monitoring presence and Alvord Ranch has agreed to remove cattle within three to four days from any pastures where utilization levels have been reached. An invitation to participate with the BLM in post-use monitoring will be provided to the Sierra Club and Alvord Ranch. It may be during August and it is possible the SMAC would like to participate as well, as part of the field trip for the August meeting. If it is not part of the SMAC field trip, they would be able to provide a monitoring update.
- Twenty comment letters on the draft North Steens EIS were received. Staff has been working hard to provide responses to those comments and incorporating good ideas. The preliminary final EIS will soon be sent to the State Office. The District Manager has determined the preferred alternative for the North Steens Ecosystem Restoration Project is the full treatment alternative as modified.
- The fire management staff is currently working to develop the fire plan and it will be shared with the SMAC as soon as it is available.

- The Harney County Watershed Council has applied for a grant to assist the BLM with interpretive signs and brochures for the WJMA (Wildland Juniper Management Area).
- RMP Implementation Plan - BLM completed the first two steps and have not received any further direction. BLM will use the plan to help develop five-year budgeting plans.

HISTORIC RECREATIONAL WILDERNESS SPRINGS

Karla provided an overview on the historic recreational wilderness springs and trough removal associated with the springs. Karla went on to discuss the sheet in their packet concerning this subject. Karla is proposing BLM go forward and analyze, with the Minimum Requirement Decision Guide and EA, replacing water opportunities at Grove Creek and Cold Springs for historic recreational use. She would like to know, after she answers any questions the SMAC members may have, what their concerns are as they go through with this proposal. The group went on to discuss their concerns with the trough issue. They also discussed the issue of how the SMAC could better obtain copies or be more informed of the EAs being developed.

Motion made: Hoyt made the motion to replace Grove Creek and Cold Springs water systems with facilities designed for recreation as opposed to grazing use. Structures would be wilderness friendly in look and how they are built (Pam seconded).

Unanimous Agreement: Replace Grove Creek and Cold Springs water systems with facilities designed for recreation as opposed to grazing use. Structures would be wilderness friendly in look and how they are built.

RMP AND WILDERNESS PLAN MAINTENANCE (including trail designations)

Karla noted there are sheets in their packets showing RMP clarifications and maintenance actions made. She stated several of these issues were brought to BLM's attention immediately following signing of the Records of Decision, during the appeal period. Karla went on to talk about the proposed changes to the Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan. The group discussed the proposed changes and changes they would like to make.

Motion made: Cindy made the motion to approve the changes as modified to the *Potential Clarifications to Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan* handout. The agreed upon changes follow:

P-1, Background, Paragraph 3, Lines 8-10: The Steens Act states, "Where management requirements for a stream segment described in the amendments made by this section differ between the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) and the Wilderness Area, the more restrictive requirements shall apply."

P-4, Steens Mountain Wildlife Overview, Paragraph 1, lines 3-4: Section 202(a) of the Steens Act requires the Secretary to administer Steens Mountain Wilderness in accordance with Title II of the Steens Act and Wilderness Act.

P-20, Wilderness Trails and Trailheads, Current Management Situation, Paragraph 1: There are no extensively or formally developed trailheads or other recreational facilities in Steens Mountain Wilderness or in overlapping areas containing WSR corridors. However, ten trails within Steens Wilderness and WSR corridors have been identified and “ground truthed”. In addition, numerous other recreational trails are known to exist based on information submitted by permit holders and other sources. Below is a summary description of the ten trails/trailheads mentioned above.

P-21, stand alone Paragraphs 5-6: At the time of development of the Steens Mountain Wilderness/WSRs Plan, BLM had identified and “ground truthed” ten trails within Steens Mountain Wilderness. In addition, numerous other recreational trails are known to exist based on information submitted by permit holders and other sources. As these, and possibly other trails, are identified and documented they may be added to the trail inventory.

The Steens Act allows for construction of new nonmotorized/nonmechanized trails which may be authorized based on established need. New trails may be constructed only if needed to preserve wilderness values and resources and if naturalness or solitude would not be appreciably affected. Nonmotorized/nonmechanized cross-country travel is not restricted, and use of established trails is not required. Where resource damage has occurred or is occurring or adverse effects to the wilderness experience are taking place by excessive or continual off-trail use, which creates permanent and long-lasting user trails, may be obliterated and restored to a natural condition. Continued or excessive use of such areas may trigger corrective actions. Trails are identified as a convenience for wilderness travelers but use is not required.

(Bill seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: Approve the changes as modified to the *Potential Clarifications to Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan* handout.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND Q&A

Susie Hammond, Steens Mountain Landowner Group, referred to the letter sent from the Steens Mountain Landowner’s Group regarding the Grove Creek and Cold Springs water troughs. Listening to the group talk she does not feel like the issue has been resolved. She wonders from the discussion and lack of documentation what other water sources were removed they don’t know about. It just happened they came on to the two, and they were affecting some of the users. Maybe they need to have that discussion. She made note, somebody said depending on how thirsty you are, is how important that water source is. It seems to her they were mistakenly taken out, as she understood the conversation, and somebody was trying to designate how significant they were based on how thirsty you are, how hot the day is and what your problem is. Nobody addressed wildlife using these areas. To her removing a historic water source you’re changing a whole area of use for wildlife. It has nothing to do with livestock grazing that it was agreed to be removed. She thinks there should be some way for them to replace those springs/facilities as soon as

possible for the people who are going there and expecting to have a water source. Her question would be if it was destroyed through vandalism or some other source, how would they replace them. And if it was a mistake, they should be able to replace them in the same manner as they would if it was destroyed through vandalism. She doesn't think it would have to go through a total new EA, not that they don't need to have a discussion about it. The Steens Mountain Landowner Group is very concerned over the lack of water being there. She also stated she thinks SMAC is doing a really good job today.

Harland Yriarte, Steens Mountain Running Camp, since 1975, has utilized any possible venue to get in and out of the gorges, a variety of different combinations of gorges. He has looked at maps and took the advice of old shepherders who herded sheep in the 20's and 30's up there. When he got the Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan and saw the language saying, while other historic trails may exist, no conclusive evidence has been presented regarding such trails, he said they have internet, Google, and REI. He went to REI, which has a pretty good list of people that have published hiking books. He showed hiking books he had brought with him. Through Google, go to trails.com. It shows the Steens Mountain gorges loop put out by the Wilderness Press out of Berkley in partnership with trails.com. It actually shows the loop using both gorges. *Sunset Magazine* wrote an article on the trail in Kiger. Doug Rasmussen wrote the *Kiger Gorge Backpack* and joined the Desert Trail Association outing and went down into Kiger. He thought it was bizarre that you go to the National Landscape Conservation System website and the American Hiking System and it talks about a one-way trail into Blitzen with photos supplied by John Neeling. He asked why did suddenly something that historically had loops has suddenly become one-way. He asked if it was for the same reason two troughs were taken out. He then noted an article from the *Burns Times-Herald*, which talked about the Native Americans using all of Steens Mountain, Big Indian Gorge may have been the most popular place, and the bottom of Big Indian was their race track. He said from race tracks to roads and trails. He commented Brenda Sam's people would be in violation all over the Mountain and they truly knew what wilderness was. He referenced the Steens Mountain book which also shows the trail.

Jack Remington stated the original Wilderness Act called for prohibition of motor vehicles in wilderness areas and he hopes they can hold to that as much as possible in the Steens Mountain Area.

Bill Marlett, Oregon Natural Desert Association, supports the motion they made regarding the troughs. Regarding decision making in what areas they worked in, he said they basically worked under the direction of John Neeling. He doesn't think there was any rhyme or reason or conspiracy as to troughs going out and doesn't have any problem with the troughs going back in. The process or protocols the BLM elects to use, whether it is the CE or EA, it is their call. He can see where it was construed as an error, and regarding the decision making you might want to go through some abbreviated process. He thinks there are some conditions and they need to lay them out clearly. Regarding Karla's statement on trails, they have included proposed trails in their proposed recommendation on the travel plan. They have not passed that on to BLM yet, but they

will do so when the time is appropriate. They have felt strongly all along the whole TMP should include trails. If they want to provide them that information or any information, they would be happy to put that into their recommendation and pass that onto BLM.

The group went on to discuss the issue of trails with the present public.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN (PROPOSED LANGUAGE) (OFF-ROAD TRAVEL)

Dale reviewed the TMP proposal the group came up with at the last meeting. The group went around and gave their view and considerations of them and their constituents. With further discussion the group decided to go forward to consider the road situation in the CMPA outside wilderness and wilderness study areas. They reviewed the version of the language Jerry drafted.

Motion made: Jerry made the motion they adopt the language that he has come up with (Bill seconded) as follows:

“Regarding the Steens CMPA Travel Management Plan EA, the SMAC recommends BLM consider a provision allowing grazing permittees motor vehicle off road travel as needed to implement terms and conditions of their permit in an economical manner, limited to normally-authorized grazing management activities. This provision would take the place of designating existing or additional routes for such purposes. It would not apply to Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. In the EA BLM will write standards and indicators in consultation with the SMAC that would be referred to as a stipulation in each permit. These would be intended to prevent and mitigate for new lasting impressions upon the landscape or other measurable adverse ecological impacts resulting from this provision, including suspension of off road travel until such time as conditions return to what they were prior to the TMP.”

The group was out of time for this item and will continue to discuss it later in the day after they have a chance to see in hand the proposed language.

MONITORING PLAN

Rick Hall gave an update on the Monitoring Plan he has been putting together. He provided background on the rules and regulations he has to follow for the plan, including the Steens Act. He noted monitoring is defined as the process of collecting information to evaluate the effects of management actions on identified resources. He also went through and discussed the issues he has discussed in the monitoring plan. Rick has interviewed staff specialists and wildlife biologists to find out what kind of methodologies they have used, which is included in the plan. He made note of what the plan is used for and presented three maps showing the wilderness and recreation monitoring, upland monitoring, and riparian monitoring. He said monitoring is dependent on money and staffing. Rick asked for them to look at the plan, see what they think, and if they think the BLM is doing a satisfactory job. The group discussed the monitoring plan with no real issues being raised. Rick stated if the SMAC members had any further input on the Monitoring Plan, they could contact him at the BLM.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES (GUIDING) NEEDS ASSESMENT

Fred McDonald is currently the acting Natural Supervisory Resource Specialist. He wanted to let them know that a spot for a pull-out for the WJMA area off the North Loop road had been picked, and they are hauling gravel today and building it. He also noted BLM will be opening the South Loop road into the South Steens campground as soon as possible. The bridges on the Refuge that go over Donner und Blitzen and the east canal are BLM bridges. Along with ODOT's help, they repaired the bridges and will soon be replacing the asphalt where it was taken out for repair.

In 2005, 24 Special Recreation Permits (SRP) were issued for the Burns District. Of those 24, 16 of them were commercial operations, 7 organized groups and 1 competitive event. This year there are 9 permits that have been issued so far. Seven of them are commercial and 2 of them are organized groups. They do anticipate having pretty close to the same number issued as last year. The BLM has been working quite a few years on a District SRP policy which was just signed by Dana about a week ago. It is based on the National policy and is a handbook/guidebook for the District to issue SRPs. They have tailored it to the District and have a package of information they can send out. All of this ties into why they are doing a "needs assessment". The BLM has the authority to issue SRPs. What they need to do is look at what types of permits can be issued in the wilderness to keep it in the intent of the Act. They want to provide recreation opportunities within the wilderness but also allow having those types of opportunities offering unconfined primitive types of recreation. He went on to talk about the objectives in the wilderness plan and recreation and SRPs in the wilderness and how to make things work best as far as SRPs on the Steens.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN (proposed language) (off-road travel) Continued

The group came back to the language Jerry drafted. With everyone having had a chance to look at it, the group continued to discuss their concerns and tried to come up with a solution.

The group voted on the motion made earlier by Jerry. There were objections, a vote was taken, and the motion failed due to lack of 9 affirmative votes.

Members voting:
Jerry Sutherland: Yes
Brenda Sam: No
Cindy Witzel: No
Stacy Davies: No

Pam Hardy: Yes
Richard Angstrom: No
Bill Renwick: No
Hoyt Wilson: No
Harland Yriarte: No

Motion made: Rich made a motion for the language as follows: (Bill seconded)

Regarding the Steens CMPA Travel Management Plan EA, the SMAC recommends BLM consider a provision allowing grazing permittees motor vehicle off road travel as needed to implement terms and conditions of their permit in an economical manner, limited to normally-authorized grazing management activities. This provision would take the place of designating existing or additional routes for such purposes. In the EA BLM

will write standards and indicators in consultation with the SMAC that would be referred to as a stipulation in each permit. These would be intended to prevent and mitigate for new lasting impressions upon the landscape or other measurable adverse ecological impacts resulting from this provision, including suspension of off road travel until such time as conditions return to what they were prior to the TMP. The BLM would consider applying the above provision to the different land designations within the CMPA in accordance with the values associated with those designations.

There were objections, a vote was taken, and the motion failed due to lack of 9 affirmative votes.

Members voting:

Jerry Sutherland: No
Brenda Sam: Yes
Cindy Witzel: Yes
Stacy Davies: Yes
Pam Hardy: No

Richard Angstrom: Yes
Bill Renwick: Yes
Hoyt Wilson: Yes
Harland Yriarte: Yes

Motion made: Pam made the motion as follows: (Stacy seconded)

CMPA (Non-Wilderness/Non-Wilderness Study Area)

Regarding the Steens CMPA Travel Management Plan EA, the SMAC recommends BLM consider a provision allowing grazing permittees motor vehicle off road travel as needed to implement terms and conditions of their permit in an economical manner, limited to normally-authorized grazing management activities. This provision would take the place of designating existing or additional routes for such purposes. In the EA BLM will write standards and indicators in consultation with the SMAC that would be referred to as a stipulation in each permit. These would be intended to prevent and mitigate for new lasting impressions upon the landscape or other measurable adverse ecological impacts resulting from this provision, including suspension of off road travel until such time as conditions return to what they were prior to the TMP. The BLM would consider applying the above provision to the different land designations within the CMPA in accordance with the values associated with those designations.

There were objections, a vote was taken, and the motion failed due to lack of 9 affirmative votes.

Members voting:

Jerry Sutherland: No
Brenda Sam: Yes
Cindy Witzel: Yes
Stacy Davies: Yes
Pam Hardy: Yes

Richard Angstrom: No
Bill Renwick: Yes
Hoyt Wilson: Yes
Harland Yriarte: Yes

With no further discussion the group ended the conversation on this subject.

Dana gave a quick update on the SMAC positions stating the nomination package has been prepared and is at the State Office as of last week with a draft letter for the State Director's signature to be sent off to Washington, D.C.

May 12, 2006

INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order and self introductions made.

Dana made the comment he thought their attempt yesterday at being proactive was a real good effort with good discussion. He feels the BLM was able to hear some good concerns and there will be consideration in those things discussed.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MARCH MINUTES

Rhonda suggested adding Larry Bartee from Senators Smith's Office to the list of others present.

Jerry motioned to approve the minutes as amended (Cindy seconded).

Consensus: Minutes were approved as amended.

ACTION ITEMS REVIEW

Stacy asked about a discussion that occurred during the December 05 meeting concerning stewardship contracts/agreements for old fence post removal. Rhonda stated it can be done if the fence materials are put back into a fence the permittee is responsible for maintaining, but a person cannot just go and take the materials. Stacy was still interested and it was asked what to do now. Rhonda suggested talking with Bill Andersen to find out exactly how the agreement works.

Motion made: Rich made the motion the SMAC asks the BLM to consider an agreement that would allow people to take down and remove the fence material in exchange for the material (Bill seconded).

Unanimous agreement: The SMAC asks the BLM to consider agreements that would allow people to take down and remove the fence material in exchange for the material.

Action Items:

- ✓ The action item for Brenda and Cindy; completed.
- ✓ The action item regarding talking to constituents regarding the TMP; completed.
- ✓ The action item regarding the monitoring plan has been reviewed: still ongoing.
- ✓ The action item on the Page Springs weir has been reviewed; still ongoing.

Jerry had asked Dana for a summary on the issues the Steens Mountain Landowners Group had sent forth to Congressman Walden's office. Dana made a summary and

Rhonda will make copies for the SMAC members. Dana reviewed the list he had made about the concerns they have.

Steve stated he would like to see them focus on the full staffing of the SMAC. There was a discussion on the process and why they haven't filled the two positions. They are waiting for the additional three to fill all five together.

The group briefly discussed their processes and how they can be effective. They will choose an item they will spend a half day on with Pam being in charge of that.

Dana continued with the review of the summarization of the letter sent to Congressman Walden's office. Dana commented he and Stacy felt a little uncomfortable going through the list from the Steens Mountain Landowners Group. They decided to let everyone take it with them and have time to think about it.

PROJECTS (additional)

The group discussed the projects that came up last time and continued to discuss further projects they would like to see happen. Additional projects include:

- Tribal interpretive signs - history on the tribe
- Better website presence
- Acquisitions/easements
- Grazing projects, water development, fencing
- Secondary road maintenance/modifications
- Trail head maintenance/improvements
- Off stream water development

Additional items added to the list by the audience:

- TMP
- Comprehensive Recreation Plan
- Workforce – volunteers, cooperative management., etc, landowners

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FUNDING PROJECTS

The group then went into a discussion on how to prioritize the list of projects and the priorities of each item. Bill reiterated a comment he made at the last meeting that there is grant funds available to fund some of these projects.

Motion made: Stacy made the motion the SMAC is willing to endorse grants and help facilitate any activities necessary to implement the North Steens EIS and Five Creeks projects (Bill seconded).

Unanimous agreement: The SMAC is willing to endorse grants and help facilitate any activities necessary to implement the North Steens EIS and Five Creeks projects.

The WJMA was discussed, the grant funding that was applied for, the signs and the implementation of the North Steens EIS.

They continued to discuss the list of projects they have come up with and in what priority they would like to see these completed.

The list of priorities is as follows:

- North Steens EIS and Five Creeks
- Wildland Juniper Management Plan
- Page Springs Weir
- Law Enforcement

Motion made: A motion was made the SMAC encourages the BLM to increase education and presence of law enforcement to look for ways to elevate current staff and their role in law enforcement activities and look for cooperative management agreements with local agencies and local people to assist in this effort (Bill seconded).

There were objections, a vote was taken, and the motion failed due to lack of 9 affirmative votes.

Members voting:

Jerry Sutherland: Yes
Brenda Sam: Yes
Cindy Witzel: Yes
Stacy Davies: No
Pam Hardy: Yes

Richard Angstrom: Yes
Bill Renwick: Yes
Hoyt Wilson: Yes
Harland Yriarte: Yes

Motion made: Cindy made the motion the BLM include what they need to into permits to facilitate necessary trail maintenance (Pam seconded).

Unanimous Agreement: BLM include what they need to into permits to facilitate necessary trail maintenance.

The monitoring plan will be added to the August agenda to give input on.

Action Item: Incorporate the signage issue into the TMP.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND Q&A

Susie Hammond, Steens Mountain Landowners Group and Hammond Ranches Inc., did not have a real good opportunity to look at the monitoring plan, but she didn't see anything in there about the fir trees. She thinks in the past they have tried to manage those trees that are a mess up there, that are contiguous to the BLM with insect problems that are critical. They cannot manage their's without the BLM managing their's; it is a waste of time and money. She would like to see that considered. She is glad the monitoring plan is in draft form. The Landowner Group and she will have some input on it if it is allowed. The more she looked at it, she thinks the big management plans are neat things but she would like to see them focus on what they really want monitored. One of the things they anticipated being monitored was the cow free wilderness, the

original base line data. It would be nice to be able to compare cow free wilderness to see how successful it really is after the fact.

Jill Workman, Sierra Club, with her Sierra Club “hat” on she said the Sierra Club likes wilderness and they want everyone to like it too. There is really not much room for compromise as to how to get you there, because in compromising on wilderness you lose the very essence of wilderness and they just can’t do that. They support the views Jerry portrayed to the group. When the legislation passed, it created the SMAC. They all knew, in just reading it in the first go round, there was going to be a lot of issues for them to have stalemates that you could not pass on. There are a lot of tough issues that you just won’t find agreement. Those, at some point, you will have to realize and move on, and maybe you can come back to revisit it after some successes and get there. There are some things that are going to take years of work to reach agreement on, the TMP being one of those. You notice those who created the legislation nicely punted on that issue. They did not deal with travel management because it was a tough issue. They did not dot all the “I’s” and cross the “T’s” because the legislation wouldn’t have passed if they tried to do it. They wouldn’t have come to agreement. Some of the tough issues were left on the table. Unfortunately for you, you get to deal with them. Unfortunately for BLM, they really get to deal with them, regarding whether you can bid from it or not. Hopefully the best way is to come to agreement, because occasionally they go there. The Federal court judges aren’t the best land managers at times, but sometimes that is where things have to go unfortunately. She then put on her other “hat” as chair of the Southeast Oregon RAC. As a person who has served on an advisory council for eleven years, she has seen how they function. She is quite envious of some of the things the SMAC does. They talk and share opinions, which is really good. There are times it is hard for her to get people around the table at the RAC meetings to share their opinions. Sometimes you have to pull the group and say, “O.k., what do you think about this?” and go around the table. The SMAC rarely has to do that; they are really good at sharing the opinions. While they share opinions well, they don’t always take notice when they have an opportunity for agreement or when they come to agreement. Yesterday Jerry and Cindy were agreeing on trails. It seemed like there should have been high-five’s around the table and a motion for BLM to do trail inventory and a process of closing duplicate of roads. Instead of doing that, they went to lunch and didn’t pick it up when they came back. It seems that is an opportunity for success. She said in trying to advocate and deal with the agenda sometimes you have to put the agenda aside and deal with the opportunity that comes before you, because the agenda is a tool. Despite Stacy’s optimism about appointments and reappointments after talking to Kathleen, she has had the same conversation with her for five years about RAC appointments. They never had a problem with appointments until a couple years ago. For the first eight years they never had a meeting where they didn’t have a quorum, The last three years they have had a problem, mostly due to lack of appointments. She hopes Kathleen has it all figured out and the appointments will come timely but she wouldn’t bet on it. She mentioned the fence materials Stacy had talked about and noted they had talked about that at RAC and thinks that falls under stewardship contracting.

Borden Beck thanked them for having the meeting in Bend once a year. He wanted to offer his opinion on the TMP. He has helped with fence pulls down on the Steens and has been backpacking out there. What he hears about the TMP is what he reads on the internet and from talking to people here and there. He would encourage them not to allow any off road travel in the wilderness. He thinks it is inappropriate in a wilderness area and part of the purpose in designating wilderness, originally, was to protect those wild values and that included not having vehicles in it. He thinks to change that violates the whole vision of the purpose of it and will alter the landscape of them being wild lands. He also thinks they should not allow off road vehicle travel in the Wilderness Study Areas. When they were designated 20 some years ago, part of the reason for designating them was because they didn't have roads in them. They were not areas crisscrossed with roads. They had the potential to someday be considered for wilderness. He thinks it is incumbent upon us to protect those values and he thinks allowing cross country/off-road vehicle travel could compromise that potential. In terms of the rest of the CMPA, which he is a little less familiar with, his general standpoint would be they shouldn't be encouraging or allowing carte blanc off-road vehicle travel in the CMPA either. The BLM should designate roads that are open, places where they expect people to drive and everything else should be closed. He is worried if they open the world up to ORVs, it becomes a management nightmare. It will damage the character of the Steens, which is largely still a pretty wild place, and that's probably why they all value it. If there are specific needs, by needs he means it is necessary for motorized access outside the WSAs and wilderness, then he thinks the travel plan should address those needs and decide where it is necessary to have someone drive their vehicle. In his vision of the Steens Act, he thinks they are trying to do a lot of different things. The purpose he values is to protect the ecological integrity of the mountain and maybe not just to protect it but to rehabilitate and enhance that ecological integrity. Within that primary goal, he thinks the Act was intended to provide some structure and supervision and management tools as to how other uses of the land such as grazing, the wide variety of recreation that goes on, and other development that might take place should be managed and be compatible with the primary goal of improving and maintaining the ecological integrity of the area.

Dale asked Steve Purchase to give his view on how the group has come along over the last five years. He noted they have a pretty difficult task to try and figure out how to make this very unique opportunity they have been given to structure a plan that meets a lot of different needs for a lot of different people. He briefly continued to share his opinion.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FUNDING PROJECTS (Continued)

The group continued to discuss the priorities of the projects.

Motion made: Cindy made the motion the SMAC recommends the BLM expedite getting the website for the Steens CMPA back up and running at the earliest time possible (Bill seconded).

Unanimous Agreement: The SMAC recommends the BLM expedite getting the website for the Steens CMPA back up and running at the earliest time possible.

Additional projects:

- Comprehensive recreation plan
- Weeds, education, management and control

Motion made: Stacy made the motion the SMAC recommends the BLM educate, manage and control the spread of noxious weeds as a high priority (Cindy seconded).

Unanimous Agreement: The SMAC recommends the BLM educate, manage and control the spread of noxious weeds as a high priority.

The group continued on to discuss the processes of how things are handed out to the SMAC. Coming up with a few suggestions on how they can better obtain the materials.

PURPOSES OF THE ACT

The group reviewed number (1) of the purposes of the Act and discussed what it says and what it means to them.

AGENDA SETTING FOR AUGUST MEETING

Public Information on the Mountain	Travel Management Plan – DFO update
Reorganization options discussion	Monitoring
Fire Use Planning Update	Tour WJMA

Meeting adjourned

Submitted by Amy Freitag

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council approved the minutes as amended on December 8, 2006.

Stacy Davies, Chair

Date