

**John Day Snake
Resource Advisory Council
Pendleton, OR
Meeting Minutes
November 27, 2006- Business Meeting
Final Notes**

Business Meeting RAC Attendees: Frank Bird, Art Waugh, Adriane Borgias, Berta Youtie, John Tanaka, Mike Hayward, Phil Shephard, Terry Drever-Gee, Bill Lang, Dave Riley, Dan Forsea, Shirley Muse

RAC members not present: J. David Moryc, Robert Parker

Quorum: Yes

RAC Federal Official Attendees: Barron Bail, Dave Henderson, Kevin Martin, Bob Rock for Steve Ellis

Federal officials not present or represented: Jeff Walter, Gary Benes,

Presentors: Chris Knauf, Teal Purrington

Visitors: Larry Barte, Nancy Lull

Designated Federal Official: Barron Bail

RAC Chair: John Tanaka

Notetaker: Pam Robbins

Facilitator: Virginia Gibbons

Meeting Called to Order/Introductions-John Tanaka, Chairman

Travel voucher/Update Roster/Sept meeting minutes approved-Virginia Gibbons

Need to sign travel authorizations & vouchers & return to Virginia or mail to:

Esther Gruber

c/o Prineville District BLM

3050 NE 3rd Street

Prineville, OR 97754

RAC Business Update-Barron Bail

Appointments for 2006 have been made and folks should have received their appointment letters by now.

DFO responsibility after Barron leaves will likely default to Dave Henderson for an interim period.

Rec RAC nominations have been forwarded to the Forest Service Headquarters. Received more than 70 applications.

John Tanaka presented a plaque to Barron in appreciation of his service as DFO.

Hells Canyon Complex Relicensing Update-Dave Henderson

Marching along toward Jan 3, 2007 deadline. EIS was unsatisfactory, and we said so. Largest flaw in the analysis was the arbitrary shifting of Bureau's mandatory conditioning authority. Hope is that it will be reinserted. One element of EPCA last fall is that it allows the proponent to file alternatives to agency mandatory conditions. Differences were at a level that the six conditions could be negotiated on the alternatives. Some factors could not be adjusted in the abbreviated time available, so the "Alternatives Analysis" will respond to all of that by 1/3/07. All input from other agencies will be included as well. Goes through the Washington Office.

Comments included a request from DOI to prepare a supplemental EIS to repair the changes or oversights in the first version that FERC issued. The final is due in Spring 2007, so we hope to hear how they will deal with our concerns. FERC is taking the view that agency requirements or company commitments lie outside their area of concern.

Q. FERC is lead agency, right?

A. Yes

Q. What is the term of the license?

A. Unsure; 30-50 years likely

Q. FERC could invoke the annual license, right?

A. They could.

Q. Was it the company that wanted to go this route?

A. Yes. The process has stayed relatively the same, but EPCA allowed more flexibilities. This exposed a big hole in the process. On Pelton-Round Butte, the negotiated settlement includes some of the contractual things they had previously agreed to.

Travel Management Strategy Update-Chris Knauf

Chris explained the acronyms included in the Strategy Meeting notes. Travel Management Areas include areas where the same set of rules apply. The Interdisciplinary Team that worked on this strategy includes five BLM members, two JDS RAC members and three Southeast Oregon RAC members.

Effort was made to coordinate across the landscape, so that agencies designate areas that will not have negative impacts on protected areas of other agencies. They developed rule sets for areas designated "Open" and "Limited." Recommendation is to partition space uses so that incompatible uses do not overlap.

BLM has rules for our 7.8 M acres that prohibit willful destruction of resources, but as population grows, we want to have a framework for contending with appropriate use of open areas. Only 12% of Oregon is open for full access, but most of BLM. Consider route inventory and some signage that enumerates current condition and educates the public to model good use.

BLM approach is that we must close areas, where other agencies operate where it's all closed, and agency has to open specific area. Permittees and inholders will have access delineated in their permit or title. New owners are increasingly closing access through property where easements or informal approval had always been the norm. We may have to place our focus on those areas where there is the greatest pressure or where plans are just being developed or are up for review.

***Inventory is needed; they would like 100% of routes documented, but would need to have volunteers to get that accomplished. Want consistent rules across the landscape where possible, so the public knows what to expect. "Game retrieval" needs to be discussed across the board to protect hunters AND the resource.**

Monitoring would be most effective using overflights, because of amount of territory covered in a day. Other monitoring could be quite expensive. It's important to be aware of route proliferation, because of consequence to the resource. A single method could not be used for all landscapes. May be necessary to contract monitoring.

Q. Did the strategy team talk about enforcement?

A. There are some resources for OHV enforcement use through State and other entities, but uses such as mountain bikes and other classes are not funded at this point. There will likely be some self-policing of these zones by clubs and influential users.

Q. With 7.5 min quads, the detail on National Geographic is often missing. Is BLM using the new or the old stuff?

A. We're using the latest digital data merged with oldest photo quads. Trend is to have the best info from our data. In-house GIS info is included.

Q. Could BLM provide mapping and educational materials for off-road use in the same way Forest Service does with their firewood permit program? Also use volunteers, retirees for monitoring.

A. Those ideas have potential.

Q. Could we set up a hotline for people to report violators?

A. There has been discussion about this. We know it really annoys the folks who DO follow the rules to see the irresponsible users tearing things up.

Q. Is there a reason that BLM has very little road signage? Without numbers, it is difficult to identify locations as you navigate to monitor.

A. Most of the roads on BLM are not maintained by the agency and there is no adequate funding to replace the signs that are damaged or destroyed by weather, vandals, fire, etc.

Q. Have we specified roadless areas with any boundary?

A. The Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) were only designated places, but the Utah settlement has put that into question. After FLPMA, the WSAs were established, but set a date for Congress to decide one way or another. Forest Service is presently evaluating their areas to see if they qualify based on the handbook definition.

Q. Will the BLM set criteria that user groups can use if they are submitting area?

A. There is not currently a consistent standard for the Forest Service; BLM may consider it, but have to look into it more completely.

Q. Has BLM looked at the work done in the Rogue-Umpqua zone? They worked to resolve the disparity of data between the agencies.

A. Chris has not seen it, but will see what can be done. With Service First, the effort is being made to resolve these discrepancies. BLM has dropped those roads where there is no documentation of legal public access. Old maps may still show access into private holdings where access has not been granted.

******ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT & WHO)***

Virginia will verify addresses for all members so that appointment letters go to correct address. When complete

Barron and Dave will discuss the issues related to DFO operation – support staff will still likely need to come from Prineville District, as Vale cannot.

Chris will send Virginia definitions for roads/trails/etc. to forward to RAC members (Riley request).

Chris work with Virginia to try to get accurate info for road access for inholders - data quality on GIS, assessors maps, etc. has big variations with BLM, FS, County.

Virginia will draft travel management strategy basics from February session for April RAC meeting.

Virginia will send copies of Brent's presentation from September meeting.

John Day Basin RMP Update-Teal Purrington

Process status – need RAC input on OHV criteria, development of alternatives, and other involvement RAC may desire.

AMS should be mailed soon. Printer completes after next week, and expect release in mid-December. Since the AMS, some of the key issues are defined as access/travel management; OHV designation (open, limited, closed); road and transportation network; forest and rangeland health. RAC not intending to make recommendations on specific road areas. Process of whole planning process includes working with permittees, ROW holders, and inholders, as well as “fireside chats” for public involvement. Recommendation that a mailing go to these stakeholders. Responsibility ultimately rests on Tina and Teal.

Chris Martinson will be involved with the process, as Assistant Field Area Manager, but will not take on team lead duties. The planned timeline is ambitious, but the big push is in the next few months, so that the draft can be published by next November. Emphasis on the timeline will be the work with cooperators, other agencies, key stakeholders, as represented by the blue arrow.

Does RAC want to help develop additional alternatives? Help to conduct open houses? Assist in choosing what the preferred alternative should be? Determine if affects accurately reflect the situation? Assist in selecting the alternative? Review comments to respond to those which deal with substantive issues? Refine implementation strategy for final Plan.

Q. *Were there areas where there was no turnout, so they could be skipped next time?*

A. *Turnout was about the same everywhere, so*

Q. *Can members get a copy of the timeline, or is it on the web?*

A. *Not sure, but will check.*

******ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT & WHO)**

Teal *will verify that RAC members are on the list for mailing the exec summary and CD. Berta recommended that the John Day sub-group be on the list right away for hard copy and the searchable CD.*

Roundtable

Frank Bird - *Nothing*

Dave Riley - *Nothing*

Dave Henderson – *Baker RMP got funded for FY08, so they'll be busy next year getting that process underway.*

Kevin Martin – *Passed around the Umatilla travel plan. They already have a system in place, and will roll that over. Working to complete the 90,000 acres in the western areas, starting in February. Game retrieval is limited on much of the Forest, and has been fairly successful in implementation. Blue Mountain land exchange did not get finalized in its most recent iteration. Forest is looking at the next steps, because interest is there – still exploring their options.*

Proposed draft in August 2007 for Blue Mountain Plan for the three Forests; co-convenors have a preliminary version.

School Fire salvage is underway; BAER work done and additional acreage up for bid soon. Using 21,000 lbs. of native seed. Trying shredded wood as replacement for hay bales, and are monitoring the success of that effort. Research station has high interest in this effort. Mostly helicopter logging and other methods; not entering roadless areas, and have buffers on all riparian areas. Columbia Complex fire will likely have much less salvage. Did not burn into roadless very much. Northeast Oregon ecological collection compiled the info from Charlie Johnson's records of his documents and those of his predecessors. Donated to Eastern Oregon University and hosted on their website.

Mike Hayward – *Nothing*

Adrienne Borgias – *Nothing*

Berta Youtie – *Seedbank put together a guide for people who want to use the native seedbank. Cooperative effort funded by the Prineville BLM.*

Barron Bail – *Biomass project at Warm Springs is still waiting for a purchase agreement. Predicated on the expiration of the tax credit, so they are holding off to see if the tax credit is renewed. A second company in LaPine is working with agencies to locate a site.*

Molly Brown is in place as field manager. Gary Cooper will be acting DM for January, Elaine Raper acting in February; hope to have Barron's long-term replacement in place by late February or early March.

Trail system between Redmond and Bend continuing to be developed. Involvement with local partners, Resorts, and BLM. State is allowing this as mitigation for wetland impacts of resorts. The growth typically adjoins BLM or requires the district to work on aspects of it.

John Tanaka – SRA meeting in San Diego in February. BLM Director Clarke is planning to be there.

Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable (SRR) is pushing for national initiative to collect data and make sense of it in a standardized way. Agencies developing a pilot program for Central Oregon (NRCS, Forest Service NRI, etc) to see what's involved in sustainable indicators, and how to meld the inventories, so it can be used by BLM & others. SRR wants the same sort of data sets info for socio-economic data. They realize that BLM only has 18 Social Scientists for 10,000 employees. SRR will interview the public for their understanding of needs. The RAC will be included in that interview process.

Nancy Lull – Baker went direct from a very busy fire season into emergency rehab for steep terrain to retain soils and mitigate risks to homes in the area. Getting seeds and accomplishing the work is biggest challenge.

Bob Rock – Effects analysis for veg EIS should be completed in December. Want to have the draft out by mid-January, and they want to have a copy to the sub-group by February. Want response by mid-March, but can discuss it at the April meeting. Proposing aerial spraying for specific areas, and that brings some controversy. They want to release draft in May to finalize by September.

Updating trail information and putting together interdisciplinary team for that effort.

Steve is working on a fire cost containment review and will have a report to the Chief by early 2007.

Larry Bartee – Nothing

Phil Shephard – Nothing

Terri Drever-Gee – Question for Kevin: where is the wood fiber for rehab coming from?

Answer: An Idaho company provided it as a biomass project and WSU paid for it to study use.

Depending on the effectiveness, it may be an option for other suppliers to get into this market. They must evaluate cost issues as balanced against weed-free straw.

Question for Kevin: Is there much opposition to salvage logging? Yes – conference call today.

Q for Bob: in travel management

Dan Forsea – Nothing

Art Waugh – Went up to Canyon Mountain to learn about concerns. Dirt, trespass, firearms, and safety are the key issues. Meeting near the staging area, and houses are right at the edge of major use area. The issues must be addressed, and some of it can be in the RMP; Sierra Club will put on a collaborative planning effort in Bend on 12/9, which will include Tom & Pat Harris. Will likely start with the John Day Basin plan.

Bill Lang – Nothing

Shirley Muse – Working more in her local area, so has missed some meetings.

Walla Walla was working to limit a Bend-type development, but did not prevent it.

JD Basin/OHV Subgroups meet with JD Basin team leader/Teal Purrington

AMS input – RAC will review material and do check-in by e-mail; if there are red flag issues, subgroup to forward by January 8, 2007. Phil will take lead on response, and if they need a conference call, Pam will arrange for it.

How RAC wants to be involved – If the AMS brings an issue to mind in the subgroup, please notify Berta before February 8 so she can meet with Teal. Adrienne would like to see a type of matrix for the issues & criteria. RAC plans a face-to-face meeting in Prineville on Jan 22 from 1:00-4:00. Meet on March 5 from 1:00-4:00 to craft alternatives.

Public involvement – Probably drop the Pendleton open house, as attendance and interest was lower.

OHV Criteria Possibilities –

Protect Resources

Deer winter range

Seasonal closures

Salmon habitat

No trails in riparian

Promote Safety

ROW facilities

Fire hazard

No use if Level IV

Minimize Conflicts

Residences

Consider:

- *Is “Open” OK anywhere?*
- *If it’s all closed, where do they go?*

*****ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT & WHO)**

April meeting to include Dave to discuss tri-Forest plan, and RAC have pre-work so they can give him useful input prior to the discussion.

Berta would like a report from Kevin on the monitoring of the native seed in the School Fire rehab.

Virginia can send notes from Sonoran Institute work to Bill Lang.

Teal to provide background material to the sub-group for OHV issues and range of criteria that might apply, so the group can develop some ideas prior to the January 22 meeting.

Public Comment Period

No public present

Subgroup Updates

Terri Drever-Gee - Blue Mountain Co-conveners did not meet over the summer. Commissioners hired someone, and their next meeting is Thursday, where they will consider releasing the draft working document to stakeholders. Mike Hayward remarks about the potential limits to the RAC’s

ability to comment on how to treat specific pieces of property. Virginia reminded subgroups that responses from the RAC should be signed by the Chair (John), and a file must be included in the official RAC records.

Weeds plan (Vegetation EIS) will require comments by mid-March. Draft will be available by mid-January on the Umatilla, the other Forests following closely behind. Phil would like RAC members to consider endorsing the issues of aerial spraying and expedited treatment options. RAC would like Phil to prepare a draft letter for the full RAC to consider, and discuss it on a conference call for Wednesday February 28 at 7:00 pm. Dave Henderson related that BLM's national plan is coming, and states will have to do step-down version of it when it's out. Will need some facilitation with the Department of Justice, but we're at least a few years out. Hope to have an update at the April meeting.

Meeting dates and field trip considerations – April 3 in Pendleton; June 26-27 in TBA (likely Pendleton or preferably Walla Walla) (field trip on first day to view seeding); September 11-12 in Baker City (field trip on first day to view sage grouse habitat).

*****ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT & WHO)**

Pam Robbins to schedule conference line for February 28 for RAC to consolidate their input.

Phil Shephard will send out suggested letter by February 14 to gather feedback prior to the call. If there are changes or revisions, he will get the latest version of the letter to members prior to the conference call.

Bob Rock to send hard copy of plan material to subgroup members as soon as it's available.

Kevin Martin to get Virginia the contact information for seed project team lead.

ADJOURN BUSINESS MEETING at 1:25 pm

Approved as written:

RAC Vice-Chair

Acting Designated Federal Officer