

STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
March 13-14, 2008
Burns, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, OR
Daniel Haak, Mechanized Consumptive Recreation, Burns, OR
William Renwick, Environmental Representative, Burns, OR
Stacy Davies, Chair, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, OR
David Bilyeu, Environmental Representative – Statewide, Bend, OR
Fred Otle, Private Landowner, Diamond, OR
Michael Beagle, Fish & Recreational Fishing, Eagle Point, OR
Pam Hardy, Vice–Chair, Dispersed Recreation, Bend, OR
Richard Angstrom, No Financial Interest, Salem, OR
Brenda Sam, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, OR (first day)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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:

Kevin Thissell, SMAC Coordinator, BLM, Hines, OR
Connie Pettyjohn, Program Analyst, BLM, Hines, OR

FACILITATOR:

Mike McGee, BLM, Hines, OR

PRESENTERS

Karla Bird, Andrews Field Manager, BLM, Hines, OR
Rob Perrin, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM, Hines, OR
Jeff Rose, Fire Ecologist, Science Strategy Lead, BLM, Hines, OR
Steve Morefield, FMO, BLM, Hines, OR
Tara Martinak, PAO, BLM, Hines, OR

COMMENTING PUBLIC:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Heather Swartz, Sagebrush Cooperative/The Nature Conservancy, Burns, OR
Phil Kessinger, Burns, OR
Rhonda Karges, BLM, Hines, OR
Kelly Hazen, BLM, Hines, OR
Eric Haakenson, BLM, Hines OR
Laura Dowlan, BLM, Hines, OR
Fred McDonald, BLM, Hines, OR
Tara Wilson, BLM, Hines, OR
Matt Obradovich, BLM, Hines, OR
Joe Glascock, BLM, Hines, OR
Doug Linn, BLM, Hines, OR
Dave Toney, BLM, Hines, OR (2nd day only)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

The meeting was called to order by substitute facilitator Mike McGee. Self introductions were made and housekeeping items were covered. The meeting began without a quorum.

CHAIRMAN UPDATE

Stacy encouraged comments from the public and attendees. He announced that he would be retiring as chairman and that nominations would be taken for the new Chair and Vice Chair. He explained that the responsibilities of the positions have typically provided a means of insuring varying view points for agenda setting. He noted that SMAC will be focusing largely on recreation management for the coming year.

Nominations for the two positions were as follows.

Chairman:

Richard Angstrom Nominated by Stacy Davies Seconded by Hoyt Wilson
Pam Hardy Nominated by Bill Renwick Seconded by Dan Haak

Vice Chairman:

Mike Beagle Nominated by Bill Renwick Seconded by Stacy Davies
David Bilyeu Nominated by Pam Hardy Seconded by Stacy Davies

There was group discussion on the responsibilities and roles of each position. Stacy pointed out that the Chair duties have been simplified because of SMAC facilitator and coordinator assistance. The rules establishing the committee stated that no one person was to represent SMAC to the public or speak to the public individually on issues.

Key roles for the two positions include: setting agendas, working as co-chairs, help the facilitator, approve minutes, and remind members of assignments between meetings. If a non-local member is elected they may need to check in with the local people to find out what is going on with local issues and activities.

There was group discussion on changing the structure of the lead roles. It was agreed to pursue the discussion further at a later meeting, possibly in September.

DFO UPDATE

- BLM is re-advertising for nominations for the four expiring positions. SMAC members should encourage any potential applicants.
- Dale White contacted BLM to resign because of family health needs. A card was passed around for signatures.
- Dana encouraged the group to consider a non-agency facilitator to assure non-bias during group discussions and meetings. BLM will advertise and try to get someone that the group feels comfortable with.
- Dana led discussion on possible facilitator candidates. Pam Hardy and Karla Bird suggested considering a professional facilitator, Terry Morton from Klamath Falls, who had been used previously.

FIELD MANAGER REPORT

- Karla Bird met with the Steens Mountain Landowner Group on December 5 to talk about all of the project lists that had previously been provided at the January 31, 2008 SMAC meeting, the comprehensive recreation plan, the Steens Science Strategy and about cooperative fire management. Jeff Rose will be talking about this tomorrow.
- BLM submitted the Science Strategy on February 29, 2008.
- Karla, Jeff and David Bilyeu met with OSU about the Oregon Explorer Info site. It is a neutral site where information can be made available to the public. There is a \$30,000 - \$50,000 start up fee with no annual fee. BLM and SMAC will need to pursue funding options. A steering committee could oversee items submitted to the site to assure appropriateness.
- During the next SMAC meeting on Friday, May 2, Janine Salwasser with OSU Libraries is available to give a demonstration to show SMAC how the site works and how to research information on the site.
- There is opportunity to find partners, such as OWEB, who might also want the site populated and could provide assistance.
- Rob Perrin will be briefing the group on the Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan (CRMP) later in the meeting.
- New developments within the CMPA
 - 1. One landowner within the CMPA has been working with a company to do wind tests on private lands on the north end of the Steens. Active wind tests are ongoing in areas outside the CMPA. BLM will wait until any required State or county permits are issued before proceeding further with any potential ROW requests.
 - 2. Within the CMPA no livestock grazing wilderness area, private land owners have lost their farm deferred status. In order to regain that tax advantage, the landowners would have to reapply agricultural use on the parcels. The in-holdings did have cattle on them prior to the Act through leases to parties that held associated federal grazing permits. BLM intends to provide reasonable access to in-holders for reasonable uses of their private lands. Fencing may be an issue as the private lands are not currently fenced. BLM is providing this information at this SMAC meeting because the next

meeting is not until May and BLM could provide a scoping notice or EA for the public and SMAC members prior to the next meeting.

- SMAC comments and questions: 1) Are there options for land owners to lease to ONDA, Nature Conservancy, etc. to reduce some of the issues within the no livestock zone? A conservation easement might be an option.
- The tax savings is substantial for farm deferred properties so any lease would need to cover the land owner's additional tax expense. The tax law allows for 5 years of conservation use to maintain farm deferral status
- The ONDA appeals to the North Steens Project and the CMPA TMP are ongoing. ONDA is concerned with the WSAs or additional areas ONDA would like to see become WSAs and BLM's desire to do some fuels treatments. Brent Fenty is reviewing the North Steens document to look for a way to deal with the appeal. He's concerned BLM will do things in the treatments that will compromise WSA characteristics.
 - Karla will locate documents related to the two appeals and provide them to interested committee members, following guidance from the DOI Solicitor.
 - Stays have been filed but have not been granted at this point in time.
 - The North Steens project may have extra funding to do fuels treatment during 2008 around the Riddle Brothers Ranch buildings, to protect these historic structures, if no stay is issued. The Riddle Brothers Ranch is located outside of Wilderness and outside of WSAs.
 - Response to SMAC comments and questions:
 - The judge has not ruled on the TMP lawsuit. There are substantive challenges regarding the obscure roads.
 - The TMP has been appealed by five groups so no progress is being made at this time.
 - The RMP appeal is ongoing.

Richard Angstrom asked SMAC to consider the lessons learned from the TMP process and appeal.

1. Members could/should get involved.
2. Consider 'what is the sense of the attorneys' as to the approach that SMAC came up with.
3. The judge is currently looking more at procedural concerns rather than substantive issues.
4. Some members of the public are concerned about the obscure and historic routes and are asking how it got through SMAC discussions and recommendation. The public would like acknowledgement in BLM documents.
5. Some constituents feel that putting these routes on a map will only invite degradation by the public. They are not opposed to landowners using the routes infrequently.
6. Published maps could exclude these routes. A separate map could be provided for landowners that would show these routes.

There will be further discussion on this topic during tomorrow's meeting.

GROVE CREEK ROAD ISSUE FOR SMAC RECOMMENDATION

Due to lack of a quorum at the previous meeting there was continued discussion regarding the motion and recommendation that had been made at that time. Karla reviewed previous discussion

and presented BLM's proposal to show the route as open on both forks and cherry-stemmed outside of the Wilderness Area. They recommend showing the road on the map and adjust the map line to where the road actually exists to include the end of the Grove Creek route (on both forks). The route was originally left open for the public as well as private land owners. However, the map did not accurately reflect that the entire route was to be cherrystemmed outside of the wilderness.

Individual SMAC members expressed the following concerns:

- Would like to see the segment beyond the gate as a private property route only.
- Will traffic be shut off at the Y or at the fence?
- Would like to travel the route before making a decision.

The original motion as made at the January meeting:

Motion Made: Hoyt moved that the GPS segment of the route shown on the aerial image map handout be included as a part of the Grove Creek Road route within the CMPA travel network. The motion was seconded by Bill Renwick.

Unanimous Agreement (made without a quorum): Include the GPS segment of the route as shown on the aerial image map as part of the Grove Creek Road route within the CMPA travel network.

Amendment to the motion as made at the March meeting:

Motion Amendment: The SMAC recommends permitting public access on the south spur of the Grove Creek Road but closing the north spur to public access. The Travel Management Plan map will show the north spur to be a private property access route and it will be noted on the map and in the travel plan as such. The road will be signed at the junction of the Y to designate closure of the north spur (right fork) to public access.

Richard Angstrom moved to ratify the motion as amended. It was seconded by Dan Haak and Michael Beagle. **Motion passed by unanimous agreement.**

SMYTH-KIGER AMP/EA DRAFT

Joan Suther reviewed last meeting's discussion and proposal. The public's concern is wild horse use and length of season allowed for permit grazing. BLM believes the draft proposal is the best management option for the land and resources. Overall use time is more but length of individual pasture use is shorter. The plan will increase riparian protection from year round horse use and long use seasons by cattle. The area is not in wilderness or a WSA. It is in a Herd Management Area so fencing has been limited and the allotment consists of large pastures with late season forage. One proposal had been to create two pastures and provide a change of use, but it would still have year round horse use. So an alternative was to fence the creek off and decide how to do it. A few members had more questions so the group will come back to this topic later today before voting on the recommendation in order to allow time for further review by the members who missed the presentation at the January meeting.

The original motion as made at the January meeting:

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

SMAC recommends BLM adopt Alternative C amended to include gap style fencing with two water gaps versus three.

Motion made: Hoyt moved that SMAC recommend that the BLM should adopt Alternative C; amended to include gap style fencing with two water gaps. The motion was seconded by Dan Haak.

Unanimous Agreement: SMAC recommends that BLM adopt Smyth-Kiger Allotment Management Plan Alternative C amended to include gap style fencing with two water gaps.

Amendment to the motion as made at the March meeting.

Richard Angstrom moved to amend the Motion: SMAC recommends that BLM adopt Smyth-Kiger Allotment Management Plan Alternative C, amended to include gap style fencing as and where needed, with two water gaps.

Hoyt Wilson seconded the amended motion. **Motion passed by unanimous agreement.**

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

SMAC recommends that BLM adopt Smyth-Kiger Allotment Management Plan Alternative C amended to include gap style fencing as and where needed, with two water gaps.

SMAC dinner will be tonight at Harney County Watershed Council presentation.

They will follow up with further discussion regarding changing the structure of SMAC roles for the chair and vice chair positions. This will not cause a charter change, only a procedural change.

UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP)

Rob Perrin, BLM Recreation Planner, shared more information and updates regarding the scoping process and efforts made so far.

- ✓ He has spoken with Back Country Horsemen (BCH) of Oregon at the suggestion of the local BCH group. Many BCH folks have been recreating in the area for years and have invited BLM to set up a table at the upcoming BCH Packing Clinic. At the Oregon meeting BLM showed the members maps and learned of the areas they are interested in. They invited BLM to submit a short article to their quarterly news letter. The article will provide information about the recreation plan scoping process. It will be written so that it would be appropriate for other organizational newsletters as well. The article will also provide information about the open house to be held in Bend in May. SMAC can offer format suggestions.
- ✓ Attendance at landowners group meeting 2/5/08. The group is concerned about development of Alvord hot springs. He's having individual meetings with landowners, and local business operators; Jenkins, Warburton, Witzel as suggested by SMAC.

- ✓ Has contacted ODFW to get hunter information from tags issued. Will be meeting with them to get information from the Steens hunt unit to get additional names.
- ✓ Desert Trails Association has been contacted. The recreation planners would like to attend an annual meeting to share information with the group.
- ✓ The FS and BLM have gathered demographic information on a regional scale and have learned that the Steens Mountain area is a big hole in the data. There is potential for doing some monitoring to contribute to their regional data. Terry Slider is willing to do a presentation at the May meeting
- ✓ Still working on the difficulties associated with gathering information from visitors through surveys. It is difficult for BLM to do unique surveys. There is an existing agreement with OMB and USFS to do this type of information gathering. This would simplify the process for BLM and Rob Perrin will continue to pursue this.
- ✓ BLM can send out scoping letters regarding the plan. Anything that would ask detailed questions is considered a formal survey. Pam Hardy suggested putting out notices at area businesses to allow/encourage public comments. The notices should provide sufficient instructions to the public to help them submit their comments with the details needed by BLM.
- ✓ BLM recreation staff will be doing surveys at the campgrounds and could incorporate recreation plan questions.
- ✓ Rob would like to assign a graduate student to review previous surveys to help determine how to conduct this one to comply with OMB requirements.
- ✓ One SMAC member suggested that BLM use a polling organization.
- ✓ BLM can explain to people how to write a good comment to include; how, when, why.
- ✓ BLM has asked the county to conduct the survey but they declined due to lack of time and funds.
- ✓ Surveys allow a scientific method of collecting information. If funding can be obtained it would be helpful for SMAC discussion on the CRMP.
- ✓ Rob will pursue scheduling a speaker from Portland for the May meeting in Bend to share regional demographics to help inform the group of the bigger picture and discuss future as well as past recreational uses.

SMAC Discussion on Recreation Surveys

Hoyt suggested that BLM provide survey design and guidance and allow others to execute it. The university that's done survey work for last 10 years could also help with the design to better tier/coordinate with past data collection efforts. They wouldn't be required to administer the survey. It could cost \$15,000 – \$30,000 to complete the survey. The field season will be here soon so there may not be time to complete the design before this season's use. If a one year survey is done they could begin the survey in the fall and end it next summer. BLM would need year round data to do a comprehensive recreation plan to include all types of users. Dates of the surveys would affect the results with regard to the type of populations using the recreation area during the various events, hunt seasons, bird festival, etc.

Overall use peaked in the early 1990's. Use shifts by month. BLM doesn't have accurate vehicle count equipment. Rob Perrin is working on the need to upgrade equipment to help collect accurate and detailed data on the Loop road traffic.

Other questions that need to be answered include: Does BLM need the additional information they could get from a survey. Does it need to be scientific? What scope/area? What time frame? What is the due date?

SMAC Discussion and Comments

- When and where the questions are asked is more important than the actual questions asked.
- How will the questions be asked? Will they cover the entire area that is included in the recreation plan?
- Need to survey year round to cover all demographic uses.
- A certain level of expertise is needed to conduct surveys. SMAC doesn't possess the expertise to provide BLM guidance on how to do a survey. SMAC just needs to suggest parameters.
- BLM should put together a proposal of needs to present to SMAC for further discussion.
- How in-depth should the survey be?
- SMAC needs to communicate to the survey taker the likely biases to be aware of and avoid.
- The scoping process will be this winter prior to starting work on the recreation plan. A full one year survey may not be completed in time to be useful for the plan.
- For future planning SMAC should emphasize that surveys should be ongoing.
- SMAC members should go to their constituent groups to collect comments to help with the current process.

Fred McDonald told the group that he did a previous survey in the 1990's that was helpful, and could initiate a similar survey. A survey is important for the comprehensive recreation plan. It is beneficial to get the data into the system. It will take several years to get the plan completed and so there will be time to do a full survey. The survey could be based on the 1990's survey, tiered to the Act, tied to economical analysis, and include all demographics. There may not be a need to do it throughout the entire year since BLM already knows the seasons of use in the recreation areas and could customize it based on the known seasons of use. BLM has survey models from the 1990's that are OBM approved and could be used again.

David Bilyeu made a motion that SMAC recommend the BLM investigate conducting a survey that is complimentary to the 1990's survey that was completed. Motion seconded by Fred Otley. **The motion passed by unanimous consensus.**

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

The SMAC recommends that BLM conduct a survey that is complimentary to the 1990's survey that was completed.

David Bilyeu made a motion that SMAC recommend the BLM increase recreation use monitoring within the CMPA by upgrading the vehicle counting equipment so that it records time and date of use, with initial focus on the Loop road. Motion seconded by Stacy Davies. **Motion passed.**

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

The SMAC recommends that the BLM increase recreation use monitoring within the CMPA by upgrading the vehicle counting equipment so that they record time and date of use, with initial focus on the Loop road.

BLM will try to find funding for the equipment upgrade. SMAC members will also pursue possible funding sources.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments.

SMAC DISCUSSION

A recreational use regional demographics presentation could provide good information related to wilderness use.

Fred McDonald and Laura Dowlan have attended a Terry Slider presentation and suggest that SMAC decide what type of questions they would like to have answered and ask the speaker to tailor his presentation to the CMPA specifically.

The speaker needs to know that SMAC is trying to form a recommendation on a recreation plan and needs useful data from surrounding areas. He should also be provided a copy of the idea list that was generated by SMAC as well as potential user group conflicts.

The RMP referenced a recreation plan, the scoping document addressed it, but SMAC has not previously discussed the direction they want it to go.

Pam Hardy made a motion that SMAC recommend BLM invite Terry Slider to give a demographic presentation at the next SMAC meeting and ask Rob Perrin to review SMAC notes and forward their questions to Terry for his presentation. **Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

The BLM should invite Terry Slider to give a demographic presentation at the next SMAC meeting May 1-2, 2008, based on questions developed by the SMAC as forwarded by Rob Perrin.

CRMP DISCUSSION

Rob Perrin proposed an open house format at Central Oregon Community College for a scoping event. BLM employees and SMAC members could be on hand to provide information, answer questions, and obtain comments. They could provide informational postcards about the scoping process and direct people to the website.

This open house event will be held 6-8 pm on Wednesday at the rotunda at the COCC library. BLM will issue a news release to inform the public about the event.

It was suggested that BLM could also set up information stations at REI, Sportsman's Warehouse, GI Joes, etc.

COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION STRATEGY – MOUNTAIN BIKE POLICY

Rob Perrin provided a briefing on mountain bike use and led the discussion.

The Act says, "No new road or trail for motorized or mechanized use will be constructed ... unless it is necessary for public safety or protection of the environment". This would preclude development of any new single track opportunities within the CMPA. Any designated trail would need to be outside of the wilderness.

SMAC DISCUSSION

- A mountain bike policy would need to address three main topics:

1. Conflict with horses.
2. If we build it will they come and if we don't they won't.
3. Various motorized uses (bikes on same roads as cars).

- Increased bike use is anticipated in the future.

- Per Steens Act language what is considered mechanized use? Wheelchair, wheel barrows, any wheeled tool, game retrieval devices? ADA allows for wheelchair use in WSAs. There is a need to determine the accurate definition of mechanized use. What is the context of mechanized use and how should it be written into the recreation plan?

- Mountain bikes are limited to existing routes. Are all mechanized vehicles allowed on open routes? Should we close some of those routes to motorized and leave them open to mechanized.

- Riddle Road from the locked gate to Cold Springs could be designated for mechanized, non-motorized use.

- They could leave everything open to everyone and highlight the areas for mechanized use.

BLM could possibly use seasonal closures to help avoid conflicts of use. Topography and terrain provides some natural limitations to some of the uses and conflicts.

- BLM should define the terms and use areas for the various types of uses: mechanized, motorized, horse, hiking.

- Specific designations could result in increased law enforcement issues.

- The Forest Service has had a lot of discussions on this topic and may be able to provide helpful input.

- Hunters are also beginning to use bikes a lot. Hunting use of mountain bikes is a completely different use of the bikes and some members would like them to be allowed unrestricted use.

- Rather than prohibiting certain uses on trails it may be best to provide general education for mountain bike etiquette around horses to avoid bike and pack stock issues.

- Mountain bikes are allowed on the mountain on any open routes within TMP. BLM should not design special trails only for them but could highlight special areas for them.

- Highlighting routes for specific uses may generate increased use and damage.

- Some obscure routes are best suited for mountain bike use.

- Landowner issues could arise with routes that go through private land and from potential misuses and erosion issues. BLM may need to consider seasonal management.

- In favor of keeping all routes open to all mechanized/motorized use.

- Could highlight areas for everyone but not for special uses. Highlighting uses creates ownership issues by favoring a single use. There are already many miles of routes available to all users. It should remain a multi-use area with education provided to the various users.
- Foresee increase in accidents and emergency trips for medical assistance for injured bikers.
- It will take time to determine the best safety practices for the Loop road. Education of the various users will help them understand other users and safety needs.
- Suggest opening the bottom of the Cold Springs road to bikers only to provide a loop to the campground for them.
- Unnecessary designation and over regulation would be confusing to the public.
- SMAC asked for BLM's definition of a vehicle. Is it something that is designed primarily to transport a person? If it doesn't transport a person can it be considered a vehicle? Rob Perrin will research this and report back to SMAC.

The SMAC general recommendation for the Comprehensive Recreation Plan is to allow multiple-use with no special designations.

Rob Perrin expressed his interest in having additional conversations with the SMAC on similar topics.

SMCMPA SCIENCE STRATEGY UPDATE

Jeff Rose, Burns District Science Coordinator, provided a copy of the science strategy that was submitted to the NLCS office. The document is open to updating as needed and is considered an operating document.

SMAC DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS regarding the Science Strategy

The committee reviewed the motion that had been made and passed by unanimous agreement with out a quorum at the January meeting.

Motion made: Stacy Davies moved that the SMAC support the science strategy effort and recommends including a paragraph listing items that are the scientific focus of today as well as recognize a need for more research on the social and economic impacts of their decisions, and recognizing that the focus may change over time. The motion was seconded by David Bilyeu. *Motion passed by Unanimous Agreement.*

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

The SMAC supports the science strategy effort and recommends including a paragraph listing items that are identified as the SMAC scientific focus of today as well as recognize a need for more research on the social and economic impacts of their decisions, and also recognizing that the focus may change over time.

Research ideas from January meeting:

1. Prevention of invasive weed expansion.

2. Soil conditions that are conducive to invasive species establishment.
3. Recreational use patterns on the Steens (historic and current).
4. Vegetation cover impacts on snow movement, snow drift pattern and soil moisture retention for plant use in summer as well as the overall hydrological function.
5. Ecological differences/effects of livestock free zones versus livestock grazing zones at the Watershed Analysis level.
6. Existence of livestock free area lends itself to long term research on watershed analysis.
7. Effects on botanical diversity from grazing, fire, Western Juniper removal/eradication
8. Wildlife use patterns related to grazing/no grazing, juniper control/no juniper control, burned/non burned areas
9. Causes of Sagebrush (patchiness) and its effect on wildlife (not sagebrush mosaic).
10. Seasonal burning and its impacts on forbs and desirable forage production.
11. Effect of prescribed fire on livestock and horse grazing and wildlife use.
12. Appropriate fire frequency and impacts of various frequencies on vegetation.
13. Impacts/effects of burning under different fire intervals.
14. Include input from constituents and other interest groups. There may already be existing research on some of the suggested research ideas.
15. Climate change and its impact on management actions.
16. Traffic and road effects on wildlife use pattern.
17. Impacts to wildlife related to density of water developments. Is a single water feature more or less destructive than many smaller ones?
18. Relation of the density of cover and existence of a monoculture to adverse impacts on Redband trout.

Research ideas suggested at March meeting:

19. Effects of reintroduction of bighorn sheep.
20. Impact of sediment loading on redband trout spawning and rearing from roads and trails.
21. Relationship of redband trout population health to upland management.
22. Variations of redband trout populations and health within the preserve compared to outside of the preserve.
23. Sage grouse monitoring and effects of cattle free zones.
24. Affects of livestock management and cattle free zones on tribal cultural plant health and distribution.
25. Cultural site management, disturbance, vandalism.
26. Impacts of water distribution and types of water sources on animal distribution, (wildlife, livestock, wild horses) and effects on total population.
27. Impact of juniper removal on predator-ungulate relationship and numbers.
28. Impacts of large carnivores on cattle and ungulate distribution along riparian areas.
29. Impact of beaver population on stream and riparian health.
30. Reintroduction of beaver and impact on riparian health and fish populations.

The SMAC research topics list will be added to the science strategy.

Graduate students can get BLM permission to collect baseline data for the water improvement project proposal.

SCIENCE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Oregon Explorer update by Karla Bird. She provided a concept paper handout with information about the website and types of information that is available. Karla, Jeff and the Science Committee will be meeting with Janine Salwasser on April 15. They will be taking a van to the meeting and other SMAC members are welcome to join to help define the process. The SMAC will need to provide BLM with recommendations to the following:

1. What information does SMAC wish to be available on this site?

- Science papers
- Stories of people
- History from primary sources such as diaries
- Steens Science Strategy and related documents
- County or region wide information
- Information will be posted under the Lakes Basin section which includes the internal drainages of Warner Wetlands, Alvord Basin, Harney and Malheur Lakes.
- Historical photographs

2. Develop a statement explaining the goals of the Steens Mountain portal.

3. How do people find the site?

- The site would be linked to BLM site or could be linked to other public agency sites, universities, researchers.
- Search by topic.
- Check with Umpqua on their experience with the use of the site.

4. Who can add to the site?

- It is an OSU site and they want to keep it neutral and not be politically motivated.
- There will be only one entry point.
- Submissions must go through the OSU library for approval before inclusion on the site.
- The idea is to not duplicate BLM site information.
- Papers could be screened by the Science Committee before being submitted to the library.
- The Committee will check into screening criteria currently being used by the library.
- Papers would include an annotated bibliography, metadata.
- How many partners do we want or can deal with?
- What is the optimum size?

5. Should the Science Committee focus on populating the site with Steens specific information or broaden the scope to other areas of the Lakes Basin?

Janine Salwasser from OSU is available to speak at the May meeting if SMAC would like. She will address any questions members have regarding the website.

As the SMAC works on the science strategy list they can pass suggestions on to Jeff. The committee may need to prioritize their list. It is also an opportunistic list to help researchers

know what BLM and SMAC would like to have researched on the Steens and suggest tailoring their projects to that need.

SMAC DISCUSSION

The SMAC recommends that BLM include their brainstorming list in the Science Strategy Document with the modifications proposed in the following motion.

Stacy Davies made a motion that SMAC forward the list of research items suggested during the brainstorm session to Jeff Rose for inclusion in the Science Strategy document with the latitude to wordsmith as needed to “fit the document”, and with the following modifications:

1. Change the term ‘cattle’ to ‘livestock’ in bullet 5.
2. Delete bullet 14 about constituents and existing research.
3. Include items noted in today’s meeting.

Bill Renwick seconded the motion. *Motion passed by Unanimous Agreement.*

SMAC RECOMMENDATION

The SMAC recommends that BLM include the list of research items suggested during the brainstorm session in the Science Strategy document with the modifications noted in the motion. Jeff Rose should be provided the latitude to adjust the wording as needed to “scientifically fit” the Science Strategy document.

Roles of the Chair positions

The SMAC has established operating protocols. The Chair and Vice Chair roles will need to be reviewed within these protocols and then discussed at the next meeting.

Dana noted that the SMAC recommendation on the Smyth-Kiger RMP will be reflected in the proposed decision.

Richard Angstrom made a general suggestion that BLM staff could help define the issues for SMAC which would help direct and focus their discussions to make the most efficient and best use of their meeting time. A more detailed agenda or an addendum to the agenda could also help to focus the discussion.

March 14, 2008

INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order. Self introductions were not made as there were no members of the public in attendance.

The Committee held an informal discussion about the facilitator position, needs and preferences. Some of the various view points expressed during the discussion are listed below.

- Would like to keep facilitation style informal and felt the group does self facilitate on issues as needed.
- Bring in a professional during the difficult issues to help the committee get through the issues and learn new skills.
- A permanent facilitator would get to know the members, the flow of the meeting, and gain knowledge of the topics/situations so they would be more helpful during the difficult discussions.
- The SMAC has had one major polarized issue in the past and BLM input helped the committee arrive at neutral ground. Doesn't foresee any similar issues in the next 2-3 years to cause a need for a professional facilitator.
- The current SMAC works extremely well as a team now and doesn't have as much polarization between members. The free flow of thoughts might be inhibited with a professional facilitator.
- A facilitator should try to avoid expressing their proprietary views
- Could give current facilitator a leave of absence to deal with family health needs and bring him back later.
- A professional facilitator would add to the cost of the meetings.
- A professional facilitator could help the process, especially if the new chairman and vice chairman successfully encourage increased active interaction between the members.
- It is very helpful to have a neutral facilitator. The chairman will tend to have their own view on issues and so are less able to serve a dual role for the group.
- Would be good to have someone who is more aggressive to keep the discussions on track.
- The current facilitator has a lot of history with the group. He could be replaced on a temporary basis to allow him to take care of his family.
- Stacy Davis, Chair, suggested that BLM determine how to fill the Facilitator position.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

Richard Angstrom made a motion to approve the minutes. Bill Renwick seconded the motion. *The January 31, 2008 minutes were approved by unanimous agreement.*

STEENS ACT REVIEW – PURPOSE OF THE SMAC

The chairman reviewed the Act and the designated purpose of the SMAC to help members think about the Act and refocus on their purpose to determine whether they were fulfilling their objectives, as paraphrased below.

Sec.132 Advisory Role in Management Activities

The advisory committee shall utilize sound science, existing plans for the management of Federal lands included in the CMPA, and other tools to formulate recommendations regarding:

- 1) New and unique approaches to the management of lands within the CMPA*
 - 2) cooperative programs and incentives for a seamless landscape management that meets human needs and maintains and improves the ecological and economic integrity of the CMPA, and*
- a) Utilize sound science, existing plans and other tools to formulate recommendations*

The group feels the science committee is working well to help achieve the stated objective within the Act. However, limited funding is hindering the ability to recruit scientists to collect scientific data. Fred McDonald, BLM Recreation Supervisor, noted that a rigid science committee might not work as well as the current more casual cooperation between agency scientists. He believes the current direction is working well.

It is the duty of SMAC members to obtain from their constituents new and unique cooperative approaches. Mr. Renwick believes the group has worked well together in their desire to do things out of the box. The science subcommittee has solved what was needed and presented a positive plan to assist the managers. They have a good working relationship with landowners and other groups to work towards a common goal. Due to the unique approaches they believe the group will have 95% consensus on most issues.

Richard Angstrom expressed concern that the purposes of the Act seem to be at odds which provides the group with incentives to make things happen. The group should review the Act and the purpose of SMAC frequently, especially when new members come on board. SMAC has the responsibility of helping advise BLM and find a balance in working through issues. BLM should identify key issues and let SMAC work on the difficult issues to help arrive at a solution.

Stacy Davies pointed out paragraph (2) of the objectives as noted above, especially in relation to meeting human needs and maintaining the economic integrity of the area. An opportunity to work on this aspect has come up with a recent issue where private landowners are being financially impacted by the Harney County farm deferred tax rules. They have lost their status due to the Steens Act No Livestock Grazing Wilderness Area and will have a large tax bill. How can SMAC help with this issue regarding the need for cooperative programs to meet human needs and the need to maintain economic integrity of landowners on the mountain?

GAO REPORT ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the report was to review collaborative resource management. GAO framed the problem and the issues through their interviews. The report will be used for inquiries from political sources. Dana informed that group that the report is an opportunity for self evaluation to consider areas for improvement as well as areas of success. GAO reports are typically highly politically motivated.

The TMP, Smyth-Kiger EA, South Steens Water Development EA, and Comprehensive Recreation Plan have provided SMAC the opportunity to consider additional alternatives to meeting objectives. The group has offered creative thinking and approaches that have been helpful to the district in how they consider projects in general. Creative thinking helped them

develop the crossing permit solution for one landowner and the current tax deferred issue is another opportunity to utilize creative solutions.

COOPERATIVE FIRE MANAGEMENT

Steve Morefield, FMO, and Jeff Rose, Fire Ecologist, briefed the group and provided definitions of Wildland Fire Use (WFU) and Appropriate Management Response (AMR). AMR refers to regular fire suppression and WFU refers to suppression with minimum suppression tactics. Wildland Fire Use requires an MOU or CMA and allows use of a different authority to manage a fire whereas with typical suppression they must put the fire out immediately. The BLM could designate the entire district for WFU and yet still conduct AMR whenever desired.

BLM has spent a lot of time developing skills for AMR but do not have enough certified staff to conduct wildland fire use to accomplish resource management objectives. OR/WA does have a WFU team for the first time in a many years with members from the OR/WA area. The team requires minimum of five positions. Burns District currently has local fire staff with the ability but not the certification for a WFU team. Jeff anticipates a three year time frame to establish a local team. Currently they must bring in an outside team similar to an Incident Management team. Burns District would probably always need to bring in people from out of the area for the team. Due to the fuels type on the district it is necessary to have a local team in order to be successful within the burning period.

SMAC Discussion

Fred Otley asked about the possibility of having a pre-attack plan agreement with the landowners for access, fire boundaries, etc.

Jeff Rose and Steve Morefield shared some of the issues for which BLM has been searching for possible solutions.

- Establishment of a focal point for landowners. Are there any organizations that would be available to serve as the focal point? Jeff has visited with the county about this.
- The CMPA and landowner group could serve as a starting point to develop a process which would eventually include a county wide area. BLM is looking for SMAC guidance on how to get this process to work.
- Permittees and private land owners adjacent to BLM land are the key groups to talk with so need to determine the best format and assure timeliness during fire situations.
- BLM fire staff has tried conducting pre-season meetings with the range specialists. They would like to provide additional training for resource advisors who are familiar with the permittees so they can communicate with the ICs during incidents.
- Would like to place communication and focal point responsibilities onto the rangeland associations.
- Would like to try evening conference calls as a means of receiving input and dispersing information.
- BLM is hired solely to protect public land. Permittees can voice their perspectives through the Resource Advisors and Incident Commander.
- The wildland fire associations which are made up of smaller land owners provide them the means to have a voice in the process.

- Encourage individuals to join the wildland fire association to help improve their effectiveness.

The SMAC chairman pointed out that any group or organization the BLM fire program works through will be empowered and so they will need to have sufficient knowledge of the land. The affected landowners will need to have a reliable source to go to. The SMAC also suggested posting a third person at a central information station to receive and disperse fire information. Station location and availability would need to be designated in a pre-attack plan.

Steve Morefield told the committee that the proposed agreement doesn't tie anyone to anything but rather expresses the willingness to talk when the need arises. It is not binding to anything. He also suggested and encouraged landowners to volunteer with the fire associations and talk with county officials regarding emergency management.

SOUTH ½ MAP

Tara Martinak noted that the August suggestions have been compiled and submitted to the members. She reviewed the prioritized lists and suggestions she had received from the December meeting and shared revisions that were planned for the map.

- Change the map title to 'Steens – High Desert Country'
- Provide descriptions of trailheads.
- The 10 trails recommended will be included on the map.
- Information about trails and general use will be included with a matrix.
- Disclaimer on map regarding trails will be in general summary form.
- The HDT will have a separate distinction.
- GPS points will be on the map.
- Will reduce text to general basic information.
- Include a "proceed at own risk" disclaimer.
- Info about SMAC and RAC could be added.
- The SMAC may need to help prioritize the messages to reduce text based on; 1) What must be conveyed, 2) What should be conveyed, 3) What would be nice to convey.
- Migratory bird information will be included.
- History items will be included.
- Refuge management may not be added as there is already too much text to fit the map.
- BLM will assure interaction with websites for better consistency.
- The newest draft was received from OSO last month and the map includes obscure routes.
- BLM will be quality checking the text and all portions of the map.
- BLM staff is working through discrepancies between BLM and USFS methods of displaying the roads to provide better consistency. They have removed sections of roads that were closed by the TMP.
- GPS points – A lat-long grid is already on the map (7 ½ minute/6 mile frequency). The SMAC could make a suggestion to increase the frequency of tick marks on the map if desired. (SMAC agreed that the sample map was adequate).

SMAC SUGGESTIONS for the South ½ Map:

1. List associated USGS maps so people know which detailed map to get for the area.
2. The Oregon Explorer website could be referenced on the map.

3. There is no value in revisiting roads shown on the map now because the map must match the TMP which is already in the review process.
4. Designate obscure routes with a different symbol.
5. Provide two maps; one to show all roads and whether open or closed to the public, and a second map to be used internally and by private landowners.
6. Deeded public easements need to be designated on the map.
7. Add a Disclaimer – “All public easements are denoted, other access across private land is not guaranteed and the road may or may not be available for public use”.
8. The TMP required that all routes be shown on the map. BLM could use different symbols to show the different type of roads on the South 1/2 map

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SOUTH ½ MAP - DISCUSSION continued:

The group reviewed the original map from the TMP, the types of routes that were designated, and the reasons for the designations. The TMP stated that obscure routes would be open to the public, but did not require that they be shown on all published maps. Historical routes are not open to the public. The South ½ Map is a travel map so all roads shown on it will be open to the public.

A motion was made by Dan Haak that all routes be clearly marked as open or closed to the public on the South 1/2 Map and show the BLM public easements, based on the TMP designations. The motion was seconded by Bill Renwick.

David Bilyeu proposed an amendment. Obscure routes should be de-emphasized and noted by a different symbol on the map to show that they are infrequently traveled routes. Pam Hardy seconded the amendment.

The group discussed the amendment prior to voting on it. Several questions and suggestions were noted including; 1) need to define “obscure route” on the map based on TMP definitions, 2) add a 4th level, noting roads that are not maintained, 3) highlighting or differentiating the roads on the map may draw more attention to the obscure routes, 4) people need a map that describes the territory rather than the political aspects of the territory, 5) the TMP reflects the original decisions that were made by the SMAC, 6) all roads that will be shown on the map will be open to the public.

Fred McDonald asked SMAC to let BLM come up with a proposal to present to them for consideration regarding road designations and obscure roads.

Official Vote on the Amendment:

In favor: Pam, David, Bill

Opposed: Hoyt, Fred, Dan, Stacy.

The Amendment failed.

Official Vote on the Motion:

In favor: Hoyt, Dan, Bill, Fred, Pam, Stacy

Opposed – David

SMAC RECOMMENDATION (unofficial due to lack of a quorum)

SMAC recommends that all routes be clearly marked as open or closed to the public on the South 1/2 Map and show the BLM public easements, based on the TMP designations. (This is not an official recommendation due to lack of a quorum, it will be an agenda item in May.)

Karla Bird offered her staff's availability to work with a SMAC subcommittee for the Comprehensive Recreation Plan to create ideas to present to the group. The BLM will communicate in advance of the meetings to present proposals and options for discussion at the upcoming meeting. SMAC members did not feel the need for establishing a subcommittee at this time. They did however express their desire to receive ideas from BLM via emails to help frame the discussion by focusing on specific questions that need to be answered. Karla and staff will attempt to frame future discussions to assist SMAC focus.

BLM staff will have a proposed action completed by April 18 for the South Steens Water Development EA. It will be a skeletal proposal with analysis. Rhonda Karges will send a copy to SMAC members for review.

Stacy Davies made a motion that SMAC write a letter to the county court requesting more information about the tax issue on Steens Mountain to find out more about; 1) how they made the decision, 2) if there are other property owners in similar circumstances, 3) the minimum threshold for farm deferral status, 4) other alternatives to maintain farm deferral. The letter would also invite them to attend the SMAC meeting in May or to respond in writing. Dan Haak seconded. Motion passed by unanimous decision (not a quorum).

SMAC RECOMMENDATION (unofficial due to lack of a quorum)

The SMAC will submit a request to the Harney County Court for information regarding the tax issue on Steens Mountain based on the motion that was made and passed. For the purposes of this letter from the Chair, not a recommendation that BLM do anything, a quorum is not required.

SMAC CHAIRPERSON/CHAIRMAN ELECTIONS

Elections were held for the positions of chair and vice chair.

Richard Angstrom withdrew his nomination to the chair position and encouraged the group to support Pam Hardy as the new Chair.

Fred Otley moved and Bill Renwick seconded to pass a unanimous ballot for Pam Hardy as Chair.

Pam Hardy was elected by unanimous agreement to serve as the new CHAIRPERSON.

Voting was conducted by written ballot for the Vice Chairman position.

Michael Beagle was elected to serve as the new VICE CHAIRMAN.

General discussion regarding:

More specifically defining agenda and discussion/recommendation needs.

Pre-meeting communication and documentation needed from BLM.

SS Water EA – skeletal draft will be sent to members for review by April 18.

MAY MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

- ✓ Demographic presentation by Terry Slider from the USFS.
- ✓ Winter recreation – Define potential uses and conflicts.
- ✓ Recreation Plan update – Reflection and discussion of public input from the evening open house.
- ✓ Oregon explorer presentation by Janine Salwasser. (Friday afternoon)
- ✓ South Steens Water Development EA – Update rough draft (2 hours).
- ✓ In-holders within no livestock zone and Harney County tax changes – SMAC could intercede to 1) see if there are other solutions, 2) give input or guidance to the narrow scope of the access permit and what is allowed for trailing, 3) submit letter to county court.
- ✓ South Half Map Motion

- ✓ Protocol Update - Roles of Chair and Vice Chair (will be discussed at Sept meeting)

Next meeting date: May 1-2, 2008 in Bend.

Public Open House at COCC May 1, 2008 from 6-8 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

Minutes submitted by Connie Pettyjohn

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council approved the minutes as amended on May 2, 2008.

Signed by Pam Hardy, SMAC Chair: */signature on file/*