

Bureau of Land Management
Arizona Resource Advisory Council
Final Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2011
BLM National Training Center
9828 North 31st Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

Resource Advisory Council Members in Attendance: Bill Brake, Elizabeth Buchroeder-Webb, Glen Collins, Eric Gorseger, Carolyn Loder, Richard Lunt, Maggie Sacher, Larry Snead, Frances Werner. Ty Kelly joined the meeting at 9:30 a.m.; Norman Perry was absent due to another commitment, but joined the meeting at 1:00 p.m. for the Forest Service's presentation on the Red Rock Pass Program and stayed to vote on the motions that were raised. Larry Howery was absent due to a family matter, but joined the meeting by teleconference to vote on the motions. Norman and Larry Howery departed the meeting after all of the votes.

RAC Members Absent: Laura Sagerman, Steve Saway, Carl Taylor.

Governor's Representative: Josh Avey, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Meeting Called to Order at 8:10 a.m. by RAC Chair (Frances Werner). Following the call to order, the attendees introduced themselves.

BLM Staff in Attendance: Jim Kenna, Ray Suazo, Angie Bullets, Scott Florence, Angie Lara, Tom Dabbs, Julie Decker, Ruben Sanchez, Steve Hansen, Joanie Losacco, Bill Coulloudon, Don Applegate, Kathy Pedrick, Dorothea Boothe, Maria Troche, and Colleen Hickman from BLM Arizona; and Josh Sidon from the BLM National Operations Center in Denver.

Presenters and Guests: Jennifer Burns, Heather Provencio, Sarah Tompkins, and Francisco Valenzuela of the U.S. Forest Service; and Cindy Wilmer, Dan Shein, Buster Johnson, and Sandee McCullen (members of the public).

AGENDA ITEM: BLM State Director's Introduction (James Kenna, BLM-Arizona State Director), Update on BLM Programs and Statewide Issues

Personnel Changes: Jim Kenna announced that he is being reassigned to the position of BLM California State Director and will be leaving in mid-September. The Arizona State Director's position has been advertised, and until a permanent selection is made, the following temporary changes were announced:

- Ray Suazo will be the Acting State Director of Arizona;
- Joanie Losacco will be the Acting Associate State Director behind Ray Suazo;

- Deborah Stevens will be the Acting Deputy State Director for Communications behind Joanie Losacco.

Mr. Kenna informed the group that Ray Suazo will bring a lot of experience to the role of the Acting State Director, with knowledge of the both Resources and Information Technology. He added that Ray has been a great partner to work with, and understands the value of the BLM priorities in Arizona. Jim said he is proud to have Ray as his successor and asked Ray if he wanted to add any comments.

Ray thanked Jim for his vote of confidence and the kind words. He mentioned that he has worked for the U.S. Forest Service prior to joining the BLM, six years ago and expressed his enthusiasm for the opportunity to continue the partnerships and the successes that Jim has established. Ray added that as the Arizona State Director, Jim has laid a strong framework for Arizona.

Following the personnel announcements, RAC member Glen Collins announced that the Forest Service would be presenting the Red Rock Pass Program proposal today. For the past three months, RAC member Steve Saway and the rest of the Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Working Group (Frances Werner, Maggie Sacher, Norman Perry and Glen Collins) have been working with the Forest Service to help them prepare their proposal regarding this program. The RAC members had discussed possibly doing a „straw vote’ during the Working Group Meeting on August 23, but decided against that so they could wait to hear the public comments on August 24. RAC Chair Frances Werner said that the RAC has tried to be extremely careful on how they handle this issue. Frances then turned the floor back to Jim Kenna for his State Director’s Remarks. Since this would be Jim’s final meeting with the Arizona RAC he opted to focus on recent news, and providing his long-term perspective, so the RAC could have the benefit of his views as they go forward.

RAC Nominations: Jim said he expects the RAC nomination process to be completed by the Washington Office during the month of September.

Land Use Planning: Jim announced that the Draft Lower Sonoran/Sonoran Desert National Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP) will be out soon for public review and comment. Last week, the BLM was given a nine-month extension (September 2012) to make a decision based on the RMP. He indicated that the BLM will be tied to that schedule as the RMP is under a court order. He feels the draft is well prepared and BLM staff worked hard to keep focus of its objectives. Jim also announced that the Ironwood Forest National Monument Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement is currently in print and will be open for comment soon.

Jim commented on how the BLM is starting to see a tendency to politicize the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) process in the public dialogue. While parts of the process are political, such as the public comment period and protests, the BLM will continue to be analytical, scientific, and very objective throughout the land-use planning process.

Sustainability/Water Management Issues: There have been three or four meetings on the subject of water management in the last few months. People in Arizona are concerned about water and they want living rivers and wildlife that go with it. A cooperative approach is

necessary, between all land owners and government agencies because maintaining Arizona's watersheds requires balancing use on all lands, including private, public, and state lands. The Upper Gila River and the San Francisco River are good examples of the cooperative process working very well. Simple goals that provide a good framework for the cooperative process are: 1) understand the problem; 2) understand the formal processes, which can be different based on the situation; and 3) look at how the actual problem-solving happens in partnership.

He went on to say that there seem to be two schools of thought now. There is one concept of the BLM as a cooperating agency, while others only see the lawsuits, and both of these views seem to have ideologies at their core. Jim said that what concerns him is that part of the theory around the view of the BLM as a cooperating agency is that it goes on the political side of the process. They are certainly entitled to that, but the BLM has to commit to protecting that part of the process. The concern that Jim has is when these groups try to politicize the analytical part of the process. However, he feels that the RAC, due to its interdisciplinary nature, has the ability to help educate people on the analytical side of the process and the integrity and level of public trust the BLM holds itself to. The nature of NEPA is analytical and fact-gathering, as well as soliciting for public comments. While the political process is important, we need to remember to look at all sides of an issue with integrity.

Range and Working Landscapes: The monitoring of grazing permittees continues to be backlogged, some are in litigation. The BLM is trying to respond to areas where there is room for improvement. They are working to expand the University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension Monitoring Agreement across the state, which will provide the BLM with additional year-to-year monitoring data. There are some great opportunities on the horizon for us to work with numerous agencies, including Kane Springs Two Mile Colorado with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), Horseshoe Ranch, also with the AZGFD; Central Arizona Grasslands around Antelope; and Empire Ranch/Las Cienegas. Jim noted that improving the monitoring process will facilitate decision-making.

Jim made mention of a recent incident involving cattle ranchers working with the BLM to stop some abusive grazing patterns. He felt the association deserved some public credit and found this level of cooperation very encouraging. He added that the RAC can help by keeping dialogue going in this area.

Wilderness Policy: WO Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-154, issued July 24, directed offices to continue conducting and maintaining wilderness characteristic inventories, and to consider the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics in land-use plans. The IM placed BLM Manuals 6301, 6302, and 6303 into abeyance until further notice. Jim noted that the BLM Arizona sent out a letter from the Secretary of the Interior to local government agencies asking for their input on areas that could be designated as wilderness areas. Their responses were requested by August 22, 2011, and the BLM-Arizona staff will come up with a level of consensus and forward it to the Washington Office.

Restoration Design Energy Project (RDEP): Jim discussed the recent addition of the Agua Caliente Solar Project, north of Dateland, Arizona, for RDEP energy zone analysis. This solar photovoltaic (PV) field is considerably into development on private land. The question is whether or not the BLM should allow expansion of the project onto adjacent public lands. Jim expressed that there are many threads to the issue of renewable resources such as, meeting air

quality standards; Arizona's aging infrastructure, and the lack of suitable locations for facilities and utilities. These issues will need to be addressed over the coming years. Jim expressed that the movement toward using renewable energy as a co-dominant power source just makes sense, and the logical places to be having these types of projects are mixed ownership (private, state, and BLM land). He believes that the state that leads the way with renewable energy will be setting itself up for some high-paying jobs, and Arizona is well-positioned to become a big solar energy player, if managed correctly. Currently, utility companies, environmental groups, construction companies, state agencies, the Governor's office, and the Department of Energy are key players in the discussions. Although the ability to transmit the power it can generate doesn't exist yet, these issues are going to get more and more real. If you look at the international curve of renewable energy, it is going the same way as past energy sources. We do the innovation, usually in U.S. universities, and then the supply chain jobs go to Europe. Jim gave wind machines as one example, but he said that it doesn't have to be that way; the price curves and the cost curves cross within five years or less, and once that happens, there is a fuel with no cost. Arizona should position itself to manage that, and it is. The framework is there, and it would be important for BLM to be a part of that.

Uranium Mining Withdrawal EIS: Jim reported that the Final EIS is almost complete. The BLM has yet to make a Record of Decision.

Recreation: AGO - America's Great Outdoors and Youth Initiative: Jim announced partnerships are going to be the future of recreation, and the BLM is working with many great partners in the State of Arizona to improve recreation opportunities. Three projects came out of the Governor's Office meetings: (1) The Rio Salado project in south Phoenix, which involves Lake Pleasant and the Agua Fria National Monument; (2) the Vulture Mountain and trails projects in Wickenburg; and (3) the Lake Havasu project. These projects are going to be important to the state because recreation is a big part of public land use in Arizona.

Arizona's Fire Season Situation: Jim reported that the fire year has been rough, but there have not been significant injuries this year. The BLM fire crews have been under pressure for a long time and fire activity is still ongoing. He acknowledged and thanked everyone on the fire crews for their hard work this year.

Arizona Border Strategy/ROAM: Jim reported that later in the week, he and Ray Suazo, would be chartering the next year of Restore Our Arizona Monuments (ROAM) operations. In review, the BLM made significant, important headway on border issues. Overall numbers are improving; however, problems still remain in certain areas, such as the Ironwood Forest and Sonoran Desert National Monuments. The projects three goals are: 1) improvements in public safety, 2) improvements in protection of public resources, and 3) a cooperative approach. The third one proved to be very important and was key to our success, as we have been able to coordinate more effectively than ever before on border operations. Over 31 tons of trash, look-out points, lay-up sites, and a ten-mile smuggling route were removed with the assistance of the Border Patrol, DPS, and numerous volunteer groups. BLM law enforcement staff was involved in over 200 significant law enforcement incidents on the Sonoran and Ironwood monuments this year, most being agency assists. The cooperative spirit of this initiative contributed to the successes of the ROAM program. The situation continues to improve and the BLM will continue to work aggressively to get the Monuments into their desired condition.

NLCS: Jim concluded his remark period by addressing the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The State has some very beautiful landscapes and over 2,000,000 acres of these lands are in national conservation areas and national monuments in Arizona. NLCS is not simply another version of parks or refuges. The potential strength of the program is the opportunity to be very community-based. Each place provides its own opportunity, based on the unique landscape; therefore visitors don't need to be told what to do or see. Arizona's strategies have worked because they have given direction to the BLM, and their message has been picked up at the national level. There's a lot of different perspective and issues, and that presents opportunity as well.

Maggie Sacher commented that part of the reason that the Friends of Ironwood Group, and other Friends Groups, has been successful is due to the direction from the State Director down to the managers that support it. It's been a great partnership, and we thank you for that.

Frances Werner brought up the Desert Tortoise in the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The tortoise is on the brink of being placed on the endangered species list. If this happens, there will be much paperwork and research involved. In the past, BLM law enforcement rangers have accompanied the AZGFD wildlife specialists during research activity. Since extra officers have been patrolling, they have found three more tortoises. BLM rangers are an extra set of eyes, not just for law enforcement issues, but also for resource protection.

Bill Brake mentioned the grazing issue that Jim Kenna had discussed earlier. He said that it was a difficult thing for Mohave County to report the grazing abuse, but they could not support poor grazing management. Jim said the cattlemen's actions were a credit to them and added that if we take an "us and them" standpoint, then we lose sight of what matters. Jim thanked them for their support.

AGENDA ITEM: Questions on BLM District Reports

Frances Werner asked if there were any questions on the District reports.

Elizabeth Buchroeder-Webb mentioned the protesting activity that occurred north of Vail, AZ regarding the SunZia Project. Jim Kenna responded that the BLM is aware that there are strong opinions about the project at this point and acknowledged that there is plenty of work to be done. The Draft EIS has not yet been released and there will be a significant amount of public dialogue yet to come. No one should be concerned that they are out of opportunities to comment on the issue.

Elizabeth asked if a person comes to the BLM with a right-of-way application, do they have to show that there is a need verses the environmental impact. Mr. Kenna explained that there are two types of transmission approaches, but the BLM does not process the application that way. The BLM-Arizona seeks to solve problems of energy deficiencies, but not only Arizona is considered. One is utility driven, where they look at the priorities across the state. This is driven largely by technical things, like load projections. Second, there are also merchant-driven lines, where there is a group of investors who are making a proposal. Jim said he felt that anyone who was knowledgeable wouldn't argue that there wasn't a need for improved transmission in the state, especially east-west transmission. Most technical people, including the utilities, would say we are sort of 'living on the edge' as far as transmission of power. There are three grids, and we

are in the western grid. They load the lines based on use, and how this is done affects a lot of things.

Technology for transmission has also changed. The Green Line Proposal is a direct current (DC) proposal, which will move large amounts of electricity via DC current versus alternating current (AC). However, because the transmission lines are put together in phases, you end up with lines that are not connected. That is not the best logic for a long-term result. This discussion is starting to happen at the national level - the Department of Energy and State of Arizona are beginning to look at some of these issues. Jim said he welcomes this, because it's time to take a look at the big picture, rather than project-by-project.

Tom Dabbs, BLM Gila District Manager, suggested that we add SunZia and South Line Powerline proposals to the December 2011 RAC agenda, because the Draft EIS should be out by then. If you consider the higher level of need that Jim just described, although nobody wants it, we may need to make a decision where it is the least impacting. Elizabeth agreed this would be a great idea. The companies involved could work together and the result would be positive for Arizona. She reported that South Line Power wants to be at the RAC meeting in December and suggested that SunZia be asked. Jim felt that it would be good and timely to look at the transmission part of the issue. Tom agreed that it would be ideal, because with the Draft EIS coming out, the group will have that current information. He was not exactly sure when the draft is coming out.

Eric Gorseigner asked if Green Line could be part of the SunZia and South Line package. Tom said the question really is: How do you get power into the grid? Jim said yes and he would recommend that Ray consider them together, because the result would be a lesser footprint in Arizona. Eric said he thinks that transmission is really misunderstood, but it has to be balanced at all times.

AGENDA ITEM: Arizona Water Strategy

Richard Lunt and the Water working group brought forward a recommendation regarding what they feel should be the top ten watershed projects for the BLM in Arizona. See RAC working group reports below for the minutes of the working group's meeting, the motions, and the voting.

Bill Brake mentioned a survey that indicated billions of dollars are spent annually on bird-watching and wildlife viewing in riparian areas. It is very likely that a rancher is actually the one providing most of the water for these animals. Frances Werner concurred and commented that water provided by ranchers to support wildlife is often forgotten.

Josh Avey, AZFGD, added that the numbers that Bill Brake mentioned seem to have come from a national 2006 U.S. Fish and Wildlife recreation survey. There are numbers that suggest \$3.2 billion, and there will be a new survey in 2012 (it is done every six years). The Arizona Game and Fish Department supports the ranching community and acknowledges that wildlife is very dependent on them. The Department has land owner relation programs to help subsidize the ranching community to keep those water resources in place.

Frances Werner asked when the full RAC should vote on the water strategy. It was agreed that all of the motions, including this one, should be voted on right after lunch when Larry Howery and Norman Perry may be available

AGENDA ITEM: Renewable Energy Projects

Maggie Sacher, Energy working group Co-Chair, presented the group's report. The group raised a concern that BLM permittees were not made aware of proposed projects in a timely matter. Permittees often hear about projects through the „rumor mill.’ The Energy working group feels that, since the BLM already has the permittees name on record, the bureau should notify them, as a courtesy. It should be sort of a heads-up call from the appropriate BLM department to the people of record to say that „there will be a project and we will keep you informed.’ Maggie posed this suggestion to Jim Kenna and Ray Suazo and asked for their input.

Jim said he thought that was a good idea, but the concern he had was that sometimes the issues are beyond the BLM's control.

Maggie Sacher explained that several issues had pushed this to the point of making it a motion. The Yuma Rod and Gun Club had been told about a proposed activity (Agua Caliente) involving a ranch; but the rancher had not yet been made aware of it. A problem arises when individuals who do not have an economic interest in a project or lease with the BLM, have more information than those who do. The committee would like to see that this notification be made a part of the application process. Jim Kenna said he believed that in this case, the area was not allocated for grazing, and there was no permittee. Bill Brake stated that when a valid permit is issued, lack of communication regarding proposed projects becomes an issue. If an individual has a lease review, and there needs to be a survey, the respective BLM field office should notify permittees so they are aware of what is going on.

Jim Kenna agreed that this was a good business practice, but expressed concern with creating an expectation that cannot be met based on the sources of external communications. Maggie Sacher suggested that the recommendation be rewritten prior to the vote. The group's concern is that those that have existing agreements remain in the loop as much as possible. Jim asked Ray Suazo for his input, and he agreed with Jim's view that it makes good sense as a general business practice.

Frances Werner added that times have changed with instant communication, and the „rumor mill’ moves much faster now. Jim Kenna recognized Frances' concern. He said that the BLM is going to have to work with it, and we are prepared to try and do that.

Eric Gorseigner said he thinks the issue is broader and the applicant has a responsibility to communicate as well. Maggie explained that the idea behind the recommendation was that the BLM could come up with its own process and that this recommendation was an attempt to help with this process. The group's other issues and recommendation will be in the report this afternoon.

DISCUSSION: Sonoran Solar Project and Restoration Design Energy Project (RDEP)

Jim Kenna asked if there was any discussion on Sonoran Solar or RDEP. Maggie Sacher said the group would like to defer Sonoran Solar to the December RAC meeting because the working group felt they didn't have adequate time to work on something so important. Jim said that the NEPA project will be closed in December and there will likely be a signed record of decision. If the RAC wants to act on this, they need to do something at the current noticed meeting. The RAC has expressed its concern; the BLM knows they have worked on it, and their work has

influenced the process. The question is whether the RAC approves of Sonoran Solar's Right-of-way application without further work.

Eric Gorsegner said he is ready to vote on it. He appreciates what Norman and the group have done, but he feels that there isn't anything here that can't be addressed at the staff level.

Elizabeth Buchroeder-Webb referred to item #8 from the Energy Working Group's report: "The cost and expectations of the parties involved will be detailed in the final EIS and the record of decision." Elizabeth said she feels that Norman had some valid concerns regarding this; however, it's difficult for her to make a decision since it won't be addressed until the final EIS.

Jim Kenna responded that the cost elements are dealt with under a national policy. The RAC is welcome to discuss it, but BLM Arizona will not have discretion in that matter.

Bill Brake recommended that the RAC vote on this today after lunch so Norman can participate. Glen Collins acknowledged the report and what the working group has put into this issue. He added that the RAC has been hearing about the Sonoran Solar Project for two years, he feels that they should concur with it. Maggie Sacher summarized the group's discussion and asked if now the RAC should approve or disapprove the recommendation. Carolyn Loder asked if the working group had voted on a recommendation, and Maggie said they had not. It was not discussed in the Energy working group meeting. Frances Werner said that since the working group did not discuss recommending it, she said that the RAC can make a recommendation. Maggie agreed with this. Frances reminded Maggie that the recommendation has to be in writing ahead of the vote. Richard Lunt suggested the motion be made at 1:00. Maggie said she will put this in writing so it can be voted on.

Jim Kenna clarified that someone will make a motion that they recommend approval of the Sonoran Solar Project. Maggie Sacher said that the Energy working group will have two motions, and Glen Collins reminded the group that the Red Rock Pass Program proposal is scheduled to start at 1:00 p.m., and the Sonoran Solar Project will come after.

Maggie concluded the Energy working group report and thanked Jim for his help.

AGENDA ITEM: Northern Arizona Mineral Withdrawal Draft EIS

Carolyn Loder, Mining working group chair, reported that Scott Florence gave them an update on the Northern Arizona Withdrawal Draft EIS; refer to the Gila District report. Carolyn mentioned that there are a number of political issues. This includes the introduction of the Bipartisan Critical Minerals Policy Act to possibly identify uranium as one of the critical minerals; DOI Secretary Ken Salazar's push to get BLM's land designated as wilderness; the economic caucus that was formed by Governor Jan Brewer in Tucson; and Congressman Jeff Flake's introduction of legislation to not withdraw. Since we did not have a quorum at the last RAC meeting and will today, we will just repeat the motion as it was in the last RAC minutes. Jim Kenna asked if it is process-appropriate to the time we are in and was told yes. He also said he appreciated Carolyn's point that a lot of things have happened since our last meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Glen Collins asked about the effect of Secretary Salazar's opinion on the Final EIS that withdrawal be the preferred alternative. Jim Kenna responded that the Secretary's comment has no effect. The FEIS will identify a preferred alternative, after it is published, there will be a decision. The Record of Decision does not have to adopt the preferred alternative. The EIS and the ROD are two different things - the preferred alternative in the EIS is a disclosure piece of the NEPA process and the ROD is what the Secretary decides based on the EIS. The Secretary has said what he prefers.

Scott Florence, Arizona Strip District Manager, agreed that a preferred alternative is just a recommended decision; the Secretary can do whatever he wants, as long as it is within the range of alternatives. Glen Collins expressed concern that for 18 months the RAC had been hearing that the BLM was trying to provide the Secretary with a report to make a decision; but it appears the decision has been made before the report is final. Scott Florence assured the RAC that the BLM is trying to provide the Secretary with the best information, prior to his decision, to which the Secretary will publish his final decision –which still isn't known.

Jim Kenna reminded the RAC that the BLM's obligation is to deliver an objective, factual EIS and he thinks the BLM staff will deliver that objective foundation. The RAC's recommendation will be taken to the Secretary.

Carolyn said that the group has been working on this and, with respect to the data, there have been a significant number of comments on both sides of the issue.

Glen Collins said that in the RAC's May meeting, we made two motions. The first was we would pass on our recommendations relative to the deficiencies in the report. The second motion, was making a recommendation for the decision to Secretary Salazar.

Scott Florence added that the BLM has addressed a number of the deficiencies that the RAC had noted in the report, especially in the economic analysis. Jim Kenna reminded the group that the option to make adjustments to the EIS has passed; however, it is very timely to question the decision part of the process.

Carolyn reiterated the RAC's motion in the May meeting was the endorsement of the „No Action' alternative in the EIS. The RAC feels that the BLM has the processes to require proper mining and reclamation actions and those processes should remain the standard.” The working group recommended that the RAC take this motion up at 1:00 p.m. today. This concluded the Mining working group's business.

Frances Werner asked if there were any further questions or comments on the working group report.

RAC chair asked Julie Decker, DSD for Resources for BLM Arizona, if she wanted to comment on Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B), Rangeland Health, and Livestock Grazing. Julie wanted to answer question from Carolyn Loder the day before. She stated that the 11-year-old Jenny that was sold went for \$25.00 in Show Low and that burros are 10-years old and older.

Bill Brake asked what the ongoing process is for population control of wild horses and burros. Julie Decker responded that the population control relative to Arizona for burros is not effective

because burros are in season all year long. The BLM is looking for other options for control, such as sex ratio adjustment; but the agency will continue to gather the animals to try and reduce to appropriate management levels (AML) where possible. The BLM is also in discussion with AZGFD to take care of some of the nuisance animals at Lake Pleasant and doing an early gather in the fall. The BLM is over national AML and will continue programs to reduce numbers.

Frances Werner commented about the aggression of the burros at Lake Pleasant necessitating a constant reduction. Julie agreed that the area is the State's most immediate need. Steve Hansen said the BLM has a 100% rate of adoption.

Frances Werner brought up the topic of Rangeland Health and Livestock Grazing in Bill Coulloudon's report. She applauded the BLM's effort to step up monitoring through a program with the University of Arizona's grad students and noted that the program benefits both the BLM and the University.

Bill Brake mentioned the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the BLM, and other stakeholders have collaborated to obtain funding for monitoring. He indicated that ranchers (Cattleman's Association) would like to assist with improvements to the monitoring program.

Jim Kenna added that he would like to see the BLM continue work with the NRCS and the University of Arizona for monitoring assistance. Ray Suazo said the State Office has funded the monitoring agreement, because it is working. Angelita Bullets, Phoenix District Manager, said that the Phoenix District Office also has put funding towards an agreement with the University. Scott Florence remarked that the program has served their district well; because once data is gathered, it requires proper storage, analysis, being fed into the district's land health assessment process, and continued over time. The agreement provides more than the BLM can do on its own.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period

Frances Werner opened up time for public comments.

Buster Johnson, representing the Mohave County Board of Supervisors and the Utah-Arizona Economic Coalition, wanted to comment on the Proposed Northern Arizona Withdrawal. He said that they believe that the BLM's preliminary Final EIS is a thorough document, and indicates that mining is not a threat to the lands in that area. He said that it was good that the BLM left the Grand Canyon out of it because it is six miles from the National Park boundary. They support the decision of no withdrawal from public lands. Also, regarding wild horses and burros (WH&B), Mr. Johnson had written the BLM about the burro problem. The town of Oatman, AZ is in his area and the newspapers have reported that the burros are becoming so aggressive people have gotten hurt, and even had to go to the hospital. He added that burros are sometimes fed by people and are not solely to blame. He suggested that public education may be in order.

Frances Werner thanked him for his comments and mentioned a newspaper article about a car accident where a burro had been killed and the driver had been hurt. Buster Johnson was aware of the incident and added that the herd is growing in Oatman. He also mentioned that one of the babies of the herd was stolen, and the BLM, to their credit, tracked it down and brought it back.

Bill Brake asked Buster from his perspective, what is the general feeling of the community about the WH&B situation and the direction is it going. Mr. Johnson replied there has been an editorial about the need to control them, and the comments on it were pretty negative. He feels that these are often from visitors and not the local residents. He added that generally people think that burros are wonderful, until you deal with them and worry about the liability.

Carolyn Loder thanked Mr. Johnson for his taking the time to give feedback to the Mining working group.

LUNCH RECESS

During the group lunch Director Kenna recognized the outgoing members: Chair Frances Werner, Vice-chair Steve Saway (absent) , Gen Collins, Richard Lunt and Maggie Sacher and presented each with a plaque honoring their service.

The group reconvened at 12:45 p.m.; RAC member Norman Perry joined the meeting. The group agreed to make motions and vote at this time while a quorum was present. Below are the group reports, any motions that were made, and the votes for each one.

AGENDA ITEM: Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) Session

Glen Collins, Acting Chair of the Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) Work Group opened the RRAC meeting at 1:00 p.m. to consider the Red Rock Pass proposal from the Forest Service's Red Rock Ranger District in Sedona, Ariz.

Glen explained that about six years ago the BLM Arizona Resource Advisory Council took on the task of acting as a Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Advisory Council to review and make recommendations on BLM proposals for fees on BLM recreation sites on BLM lands. Since the BLM had a REA RAC in Arizona, the Forest Service asked the BLM REA RAC to provide the same service for the National Forest Lands in Arizona. So this meeting of the BLM Recreation Enhancement Act Advisory Council is a meeting within a meeting. This morning, we met as a BLM Resource Advisory Council to discuss a variety of BLM issues. This afternoon, we are taking a break from BLM business to deal with the Forest Service Red Rock Pass Proposal.

He stated that the RAC will not make the decision on the Red Rock Pass Proposal. The RAC only makes a recommendation to support or not support the proposal. The RAC recommendation is given to BLM State Director Jim Kenna who will forward its recommendation to the Forest Supervisor in the Forest Service Region 3 Office in Albuquerque for a decision which will be made by the Forest Service.

The Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Program was established in the mid-1990's on the Coconino National Forest in the Sedona area, and for over 15 years the Forest Service has been issuing Red Rock Passes and collecting fees for use of campgrounds and parking facilities at trailheads which serve a 160,000 acre area of the Red Rock Ranger District. The fee for the Red Rock Pass - \$5 daily, \$15 weekly, or \$20 annual - currently provides annual income of over \$900,000 which is used by the Forest Service for management of visitor use of the area.

In July 2010, a federal Judge dismissed citation issued by the Forest Service to a person who failed to display a Red Rock Pass while parked at a remote trailhead while backpacking in the wilderness. As a result, earlier this year the Forest Service began looking at ways to reconfigure the Red Rock Pass Program. In June, the Forest Service proposed reducing the Red Rock Pass Area from 160,000 acres to 11,000 acres, and to have either a Proposal A consisting of a combination of smaller areas with multiple sites, and single sites along the main travel corridors into Sedona, or a Proposal B consisting of single sites along the same travel corridors.

As part of this reconfiguration process, RRAC Work Group members Steve Saway, Glen Collins, Norman Perry and Maggie Sacher went to Sedona on June 29, for a Forest Service conducted tour of the Red Rock Pass areas and some of the sites, and to participate in a public meeting at the Red Rock Ranger District Office which included a public comment period. RRAC Work Group member Frances Werner participated by telephone in that meeting.

Thirteen members of the public offered comments on the Red Rock Pass Proposal at the June 29 meeting; 7 supported either Proposal A or B; and 6 opposed the Red Rock Pass Fee Program Proposal.

Following the June 29 tour and public meeting in Sedona, the RRAC Work Group continued to work on the issue through correspondence and telephone and teleconference calls between Work Group members and with the Forest Service. As a result of these discussions:

1. The Forest Service developed a revised "Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Program Proposal" dated August, 2011 which was posted on the BLM's RAC Website in early August. It proposes two standard amenity recreation pass areas (Oak Creek Canyon and Red Rock Scenic Road), and seven stand-alone standard amenity recreation pass sites (the Palatki, Honanki, and V Bar V Heritage sites which contain cultural resources, and the Jim Thompson, Boynton Canyon, Bear/Doe, and Baldwin Trailhead sites); and
2. The BLM REA Work Group prepared an August 11, 2011 "REA Work Group Report on the Red Rock Pass Program" which was also posted on the BLM's RAC website. The REA Work Group report recommends that the RAC approve the Oak Creek Canyon and Red Rock Scenic Road Areas and the seven stand-alone sites which are included in the Forest Service's August 2011 Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Program Proposal.

In addition, the August 11, 2011 REA Work Group Report offered advice to the Forest Service on a variety of other management issues including suggestions that the Forest Service:

- consider providing a free pass for parking in fee areas/sites for persons engaged in backcountry activities in the Forest,
- charge fees for the commercial tour buses which use the Forest Service fee sites as rest stops for their passengers,
- expand the number of "no fee" days,
- encourage and expand volunteer programs that will enable participants to earn free Red Rock Passes,
- provide a more seamless Red Rock Pass by eliminated separate concessionaire fees

for standard amenity fee sites,

- continue to ensure that fee expenses comply with the 15 percent limit on administrative overhead,
- establish a more diverse public group with balanced representation to provide a public forum for discussions on future fee proposals, and
- consider monitoring numbers of visitors on trails and establishing a daily visitor quota for trails that receive high levels of use, and encourage visitors to seek other, less intensively used, trails and destinations.

Copies of the Forest Service's "August 2011 Red Rock Pass Fee Program Proposal" and the REA Work Group's "August 12, 2011 Report on the Red Rock Pass Program" are posted on the BLM RAC's website and considered part of the minutes of this meeting.

Heather Provencio, District Ranger for the Coconino National Forest's Red Rock District, presented a briefing on the Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Program Proposal. She described the public outreach efforts the Forest Service had made to inform and get input from the public. The August 2011 Red Rock Pass Fee Program Proposal shows that 76% of the public comments supported the Forest Service proposals, including the comments from County and Sedona City officials, and many conservation and trails organizations who are pleased with the way the area is being managed. Many of the opposing comments objected to having to pay to use public lands and questioned the legality of being charged for parking for access to hiking and other back county activities. Heather pointed out that under the proposal the Red Rock Pass Area would be reduced in size by 93%, and that 38 sites currently in the fee area would become no-fee sites.

RAC members asked questions about procedural issues; there was discussion of the "advice" issues described in the REA Work Group Report; and concerns were expressed about the concession management of some of the sites, and the cost of using machines to sell Red Rock Passes. Frances Werner was concerned that the Forest Service had not made enough effort to publicize the proposal in the Phoenix and Tucson areas, and that the Forest Service outreach efforts had focused on groups who would support the proposal. Bill Brake wanted to make sure that the Forest Service will annually report on how much money is generated from the Red Rock Pass Program, and how the money is spent.

The Meeting was opened for public comment at 2:15 p.m.

One member of the public, Cindy J. Wilmer (aka Cindy J. Cole) a resident of Sedona, offered comments including:

- the Recreation Enhancement Act quite plainly prohibits an agency from establishing any system which requires the public to pay for parking or simple access to trails or undeveloped camping sites,
- use fees are a form of double taxation,
- the Forest Service has run around behind the public's back and during these proceedings and dropped unneeded amenities at several of the sites in an attempt to bring them into compliance with the Recreation Enhancement Act. The picnic tables at the Jim Thompson Trailhead site are an example. No one goes there to picnic, it is a

parking lot for trail access,

- the Forest Service assessment of the public comments on the Red Rock Pass Revision is not truthful in its portrayal of overwhelming public support for the current program or for fees in general,
- the Red Rock Ranger District claims to have worked closely with the Sedona community in constructing new plans for the Red Rock Pass program, but in her view they have only reached out to organizations from whom they have been assured of support,
- the addition of amenities to many trailheads is not only unnecessary and unsightly, but makes these locations ripe for concessionaire management in the future,
- overall visitation on National Forest lands has decreased since the implementation of the use fees, and
- why should we have to pay for, or work for, the right to access the federal land we already own.

She asks:

- for a GAO audit of the Red Rock Ranger District to determine if the fee collection program is being conducted in a way that is consistent with the requirements of current Federal law;
- that the Jim Thompson, Boynton Canyon, Bear/Doe, Baldwin, Cathedral Rock and Yavaipai Trailhead sites be removed from the proposed pass system because they are purely parking areas for trail access; and
- that the Forest Service give serious consideration to offering free "backcountry" permits.

After the close of the public comment period, Acting Work Group Chair Glen Collins asked for a motion on the Forest Service's Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Program Proposal.

Maggie Sacher made a motion that RAC recommend approval of the Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Proposal as presented at the August 24, 2011 RRAC meeting and as shown on the map included in the August 2011 Red Rock Pass Recreation Fee Program Proposal. The proposal contains two standard amenity recreation pass areas (Oak Creek Canyon and Red Rock Scenic Road) and seven standard amenity recreation pass sites (Palatki Heritage, Honanki Heritage, V Bar V Heritage, Jim Thompson Trailhead, Boynton Canyon Trailhead, Bear/Doe Trailhead, and Baldwin Trailhead).

Norman Perry seconded the motion.

Nine RAC members voted in favor of the proposal (Bill Brake, Glen Collins, Eric Gorsegner, Larry Howery, Carolyn Loder, Richard Lunt, Norman Perry, Maggie Sacher, and Larry Snead)

Bill Brake explained his vote by saying that he was not voting for the fee, but for the reduction in the acreage of the fee area and the reduction in the number of fee sites. Carolyn Loder explained her vote in the same way.

Two RAC members voted against the proposal (Elizabeth Buchroeder-Webb and Ty

Kelly).

One RAC member abstained (Frances Werner).

A quorum of RAG members was present.

Maggie Sacher made a second motion that the RAC forward to the Forest Service the RAC "advice" on managing recreation use in the Red Rock Pass that is listed in the REA Work Group August 12, 2011 Report on the Red Rock Pass Program. Norman Perry seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously by the 12 RAC members.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Working Group Reports

Water and Healthy Landscape Working Group Minutes - August 23, 2011: The following was provided by Richard Lunt, chair. Bill Wells (state office hydrologist) explained the step-down strategy of the BLM Water Strategy and led the discussion and review of the top BLM priority watersheds. The information was discussed further as an agenda item on the 24th and was put in the form of a motion for action. With a quorum present in the afternoon the motion was made by Richard Lunt and seconded by Bill Brake.

Motion:

- 1) Acknowledge the political process and the need to educate the legislature and the public.
- 2) Favor low water use facilities on public lands.
- 3) Under Strategy item #3 relating to working with community-based partnerships, be sure to involve present and future mining and agricultural water users.
- 4) BLM needs to ensure adequate staffing to support the efforts of water coalitions which are part of the Strategy.
- 5) Evaluate water rights that come up for renewal, to protect water sources.
- 6) BLM to take the lead in implementing a Healthy Watershed Plan in management to increase water flows.

The motion carried without opposition.

The following motion was made by Richard Lunt and seconded by Bill Brake.

Motion: The BLM RAC encourages the BLM to continue its focus on water issues in the future. The committee would recommend that the Las Cienegas Basin be considered in BLM Watershed Consideration List in the future at the proper time.

The motion passed with no opposition.

Energy Working Group on Mining Section Report: Regarding the Northern Arizona Mineral Withdrawal EIS, the write-up was provided by Carolyn Loder. The motion made by Richard Lunt and seconded by Bill Brake.

Motion: The BLM RAC endorses the No Action Alternative in the Northern Arizona Mineral Withdrawal EIS. BLM has the processes to require proper mining and reclamation activities, and there is good reason to let those processes work and we should not withdraw anything for 20 years. The votes were as follows:

Carolyn Loder	Yes	
Norman Perry	Yes	
Bill Brake	Yes	
Frances Werner	Yes	
Richard Lunt	Yes	
Glen Collins	Yes	
Larry Snead	Yes	
Ty Kelly	Yes	
Maggie Sacher	Yes	9 in favor
Eric Gorsegner	No	
Elizabeth Buchroeder-Webb	No	2 opposed

The motion carried .. Josh Avey, Governor’s representative, was present, but he is a non-voting RAC member.

Energy Working Group on Solar and Wind Report: The following are the minutes of the August 23, RAC Energy Working Group.

The meeting was called to order at 9:50 a.m. The RAC Energy Working Group received written responses to the “renewable energy comments and questions” which Co-chair Norman Perry presented to the BLM at the May 2011 RAC Meeting. Due to agenda demands on both the Energy Working Group and the RAC time schedule, the consensus was to defer discussion on the BLM responses to the working group document until the December 2011 meetings. Items in the response pertain to the process of installation and production phase of the project and deserve appropriate discussion time.

BLM Project Manager Kathy Pedrick gave an updated synopsis of the Restoration Design Energy Project (RDEP). Ms. Pedrick distributed a draft Q&A on renewable energy (RDEP and Solar Energy Zones). Electronic versions of the draft will be forwarded to all RAC members. Comments are due back to the BLM, kpedrick@blm.gov at your earliest convenience with an August 31, 2011, deadline. A finalized Q&A will be posted on the BLM AZ website to aid the public in understanding the RDEP and Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed Agua Caliente SEZ was presented. RDEP progress reports, including the SEZ will be presented at the December 2011 RAC meeting.

Eddie Arreola presented an update on active solar, wind, and transmission line applications.

During RAC discussion on the current application process, comments from the working group echoed comments voiced earlier during the Water and Healthy Landscape Working Group meeting. Based on the working group concerns regarding the application process, the RAC Energy Working Group submits this motion.

Motion: The Arizona RAC strongly recommends BLM staff seek to contact all persons, companies, or entities that hold permits, licenses, rights-of-way, easements, contracts, or are authorized to use BLM lands, be contacted by BLM staff upon initiating discussions regarding a potential application for a new land use.

The motion passed unopposed.

Motion: The RAC recommends approval of the Sonoran Solar Right-of-Way application, as amended, with appropriate environmental and other requirements to protect the public interests.

The motion passed unopposed.

Recreation and Communities Working Group Report:

Resource Management Planning Issues:

Gila District Manager Tom Dabbs announced that the Resource Management Plan for the Ironwood Forest National Monument would be released next month. There will be a 30 day protest period. He believes that the recreational shooting and “wild lands” issues which have delayed the plan for several years have been resolved.

Phoenix District Manager Angie Bulletts announced that the Draft Resource Management Plan and EIS for the Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument is finished and is being released for public comment. Copies are being sent to each RAC member. The 90 day public comment period ends just before Thanksgiving, and several days before the next RAC meeting on December 1 and 2. While the RAC will not have the opportunity to meet and discuss the draft, and make official RAC comments, individual RAC members are encouraged to comment during the 90 day period.

The BLM will hire a contractor to analyze the public comments received on the Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert RMP. RAC members advised that the BLM should hire an independent contractor, and not one who has an interest in the outcome, as was done in the situation involving the Aravaipa RMP.

Americas Great Outdoors (AGO) Projects:

Phoenix District Manager Angie Bulletts and Colorado River District Manager Angie Lara and Kirk Koch of that District described projects which the Phoenix and Colorado River Districts had submitted to help implement the America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative. The AGO Initiative is designed to get the Nation’s young people out doors and involved in natural resource projects, and BLM partners with local governments to provide projects for the AGO.

The Phoenix District has worked with the Maricopa County Parks Department, the Cities of Phoenix and Wickenburg to get youth involved in land restoration projects along the Salt River,

in monitoring on the Agua Fria National Monument, and trail construction in the Wickenburg/Lake Pleasant area.

The Colorado River District has a plan for a Bluewater Trail System on Lake Havasu and plans to train and use a Youth Construction and Conservation Crew to build and maintain associated facilities.

Travel Management Planning:

Bill Gibson, BLM Travel Management Planning Coordinator gave the Work Group a status report on Travel Management Plans in the State, and distributed an August 22, 2011 Draft of an “Arizona BLM Travel Management Plan Public Participation Process” which describes the procedures Field Offices should use in getting the public involved in travel management planning, and which also includes examples of how the process has been handled in the several Districts.

Bill asked for RAC comments on the draft. In the next 30 days, Glen Collins will circulate the draft to all RAC members, collect comments and send Bill Gibson a summary of RAC member advice on the proposed procedures.

The Recreation Working Group report was approved.

Frances Werner reminded the group to please comment to Kathy Pedrick on the materials she presented on August 23, the website Q&As for the Restoration Design Energy Project. We are sort of the ‘trial group’ to see what might be missing or needs to be added to the website material.

Wild Horse and Burro Working Group Report: No report submitted as chair Larry Howery was absent on August 23.

Rangeland Health and Livestock Grazing Working Group Report: No report submitted.

AGENDA ITEM: Future Agenda Items

Angie Lara requested an agenda item be added to the next RAC Working Group meeting for the Colorado River District to make a presentation on its travel management plan. They have a full-time person working on it to help ensure consistency on communication and processes throughout the district. They have been developing a plan to cover all three field offices.

Tom Dabbs from the Gila District requested an agenda item to discuss transmission lines.

If there are any other items, submit them to Dorothea Boothe within the next month.

Glen asked for clarification of how the RAC should pass along the report they did on the Red Rock Pass to Jim Kenna so that he could forward it to the Regional Forester, Corbin Newman. Maggie Sacher said she would write up the second motion on the advice portion. Jim agreed that a package should be put together for Corwin Newman. Glen said that he and Maggie would write a letter to the BLM, who would then forward it to the Forest Service.

Jim asked if all the energy issues were covered today. Maggie Sacher said there were others to go through, and the Energy Working Group did want to set up time for today. She

acknowledged that the RAC received responses from the BLM on the comments and questions from Norman Perry at the last RAC meeting. However, due to the time that was required today for the Red Rock Pass issue, and the fact that the RAC felt these were items that needed whole discussion, there was a consensus to put this off to the December 2011 RAC meeting. She suggested that they be sent out electronically.

Maggie Sacher also pointed out that on the comments to the website that Frances mentioned earlier for Kathy Pedrick, the deadline is August 30. She also said that members should look at this website as a member of the general public and not a RAC member who is already familiar with these issues (SEZs and RDEP). Frances also added that the group did vote on Sonoran Solar, so they did address the two items on the agenda.

Jim Kenna added that the BLM has a key meeting in December on RDEP. The BLM is working to come up with the best case footprint for the state of Arizona for renewable energy and are in very close coordination with state lands, the major utilities, a variety of state agencies, the Governor's office, Arizona Game and Fish. Within 12-18 months, the state of Arizona could come to a consensus on what is possible with renewable energy. The transmission issues are going to take a little longer; but now is a really important time, because in the next five years we are going to see a move for renewable energies to come into co-dominance for the long term. He felt the RAC is a very thoughtful group that comes prepared for thoughtful discussion, and as we move into the public participation part of this process, the BLM benefits from these thoughts and advice.

Eric Gorseigner expressed his concern with how current the maps were in light of the fact the energy locations are constantly changing. He wanted to know if the latest map in the RAC members' packets brought together information from all the involved government agencies. Kathy Pedrick responded that the packet does contain the latest data. The state is finishing their mapping, and a joint dataset on the BLM website is planned.

Maggie Sacher asked if the dataset would include energy on private property, or would it only show state lands and public lands. Jim replied that the mapping that the BLM has done includes major projects on private land and the Arizona Corporation Commission also has an energy generation map.

Richard Lunt added that he is President of the Arizona Electric Power Cooperative Board, so before the RAC discusses things like transmission issues, he will always declare that to avoid the impression of a conflict of interest.

Frances Werner announced that for anyone who is interested, on October 8th and 9th up on the Agua Fria, the Arizona Game and Fish is having an event with quail hunting and things for children. Josh Avey said that the event is the Game and Fish's annual conservation workshop weekend. It is limited to the first 200 people, and the registration fee is \$50.00, which is all-inclusive.

The dates of next RAC meeting are December 1 and 2, 2011. Frances adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.