

**Arizona Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2009**

**Four Points Sheraton
10220 North Metro Parkway East
Phoenix, Arizona**

RAC Members in Attendance: Frances Werner, Norman Perry, Glen Collins, Steve Saway, Laura Sagerman, Carolyn Loder, Maggie Sacher, Matthew Hogel, Linda Kennedy, Richard Lunt, Thomas Kelly, Bill Brake, Cody Carter (for Josh Avey, Arizona Governor's Representative)

RAC Members Absent: Jan Holder, Tina Clark, Linda Binder

BLM Staff in Attendance: Jim Kenna, Michael Taylor, Julie Decker, Patrick Madigan, Teri Raml, Scott Florence, Deborah Stevens, Joanie Losacco, Pamela Mathis, Becky Heick, Emily Garber, Steve Cohn, Tom Dabbs, Don Applegate, Julie Decker, Matt Russo, Elaine Raper, Maria Troche, Len Marcea, Susan Williams.

Presenters & Guests: Trace Baker (Logan Simpson Design), Wayne Colebank (Logan Simpson Design), Mary Wilkosz (Logan Simpson Design)

Meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by RAC Chair Frances W. Werner and there was introduction of RAC Members, BLM staff and guests.

BLM State Director's Introduction Update on Legislation, Regulations and other Statewide Issues

BLM State Director Jim Kenna reported on personnel changes in the Bureau, Department and State:

- Bob Abbey was confirmed by the Senate as Director of the BLM,
- Wilma Lewis was confirmed by the Senate as Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management in the Department of the Interior,
- Teri Raml is now the Restoration Energy Design Project Manager in the BLM's Arizona State Office,
- Elaine Raper is currently the Acting Phoenix District Manager,
- The vacant Phoenix District Manager position has been advertised,
- Ramone McCoy is the new Lake Havasu Field Manager, and
- Al Burch is now the Project Manager for the BLM's study of the proposed withdrawal of public lands in the Grand Canyon area in northern Arizona.

Jim Kenna reported that BLM is close to announcing \$16.7 million for an estimated 58 local projects throughout Arizona funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This will help create numerous jobs around the State. Contractors interested in doing business with BLM are encouraged to become certified through the Small Business Administration. Instructions are available on the BLM website.

Jim Kenna presented the BLM Arizona Strategic Goals Diagram and explained how he sees the BLM Arizona Strategic Goals of (1) Enhancing Landscape Sustainability, (2) Stewardship of Heritage Resources, (3) Support Community Use, and (4) Enhance Operational Excellence fitting with the BLM National Priorities of (1) Improving Health and Productivity of the Land, (2) Cultivate Community-Based Conservation, (3) Respect, Value and Support our Employees, and (4) Pursue Excellence in Business Practice.

Arizona BLM will give priority to:

- Securing water for healthy landscapes in Arizona drainages so the next generation will see flowing desert streams,
- Strengthening the ties between communities and the special areas in BLM's National Landscape Conservation system so that communities will view the BLM National Monuments, National Resource Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas and other special areas as places that have value to their communities,
- Developing the solar, wind and other renewable energy potential of the BLM land, and
- Evaluating options for dealing with the controversial issue of proposed uranium mining in the Grand Canyon area.

He asked for the RAC's advice and help in dealing with these issues and wants the RAC to restructure its Working Groups and refocus its work plans and discussions on these new Arizona BLM priorities. Specifically he asked the RAC to help BLM develop a 10-year report card on BLM management of the NLCS in Arizona, and how BLM can better engage with local communities in both the stewardship and public interface with the NLCS units. Also he asked RAC members to suggest issues that the BLM should consider in preparing the report to the Secretary of the Interior on the proposed withdrawal of public lands in the Grand Canyon area from uranium mining.

RAC Recognition and Awards

Jim Kenna presented awards to five outgoing RAC members thanking them for their involvement and dedication to the RAC over the past 3 years.

- Linda Kennedy (Academia Representative)
- Laura Pinnas (Transportation/Rights of Way Representative)
- Thomas Kelly (Federal Grazing Permittee Representative)
- Norman Perry (Public-at-Large Representative)
- Tina Clark (Archeology and Historical Representative)

RAC Questions on BLM District and Field Managers Reports

BLM Managers and staff members responded to RAC member questions and comments about:

- OHV uses in the Wickenburg and Table Mesa areas,
- Drug Smuggling and other illegal activities in the Sonoran Desert National Monument and the potential dangers to recreation users,
- Manganese dumping in the Dewey-Humboldt area, and
- Wildlife habitat in the Vulture Mountain ACEC.

Update on BLM-Arizona's Four-Tracks to Solar Energy Development

Julie Decker, BLM Group Manager for Lands, Recreation and Planning briefed the RAC on developments in the four types of solar energy activities in Arizona.

1. Three BLM land areas in western Arizona are included in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) being prepared by BLM under contract with the Argonne National Laboratory for BLM lands in six States (Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado). The BLM lands being studied in the PEIS were selected because they appear to be relatively free of major conflicts. The public scoping period for the PEIS closed on September 14.
2. Arizona BLM is working on over 30 pending right of way applications from solar energy applicants for BLM land areas where the applicant companies want to develop solar energy facilities. BLM has hired Logan Simpson Design to help with the evaluation of these solar energy proposals.
3. One right of way application from Sonoran Solar for a proposed solar facility on BLM land south of Buckeye is on a fast track toward approval with plans to break ground by the end of 2010.
4. The Restoration Design Energy Project is an Arizona BLM proposal for using "disturbed" lands for solar energy facilities which is gaining national attention.

Presentation on Restoration Design Energy Project

Teri, Raml, BLM Project Manager for the Restoration Design Energy Project, explained that the project is focused on finding sites for solar energy facilities on public and private lands that have been previously used for other purposes which have left the lands unsuitable or poorly suited for other public or private uses. The project is looking at BLM lands, State Trust lands, and private lands; 34 possible sites have already been identified and more are expected to be proposed through the scoping process. Abandoned mine dumps, hazmat sites, and abandoned citrus orchards are some of the sites that have already been identified as possibilities. Many federal State and local agencies are involved with BLM in the project, and the concept is receiving national attention.

RAC Annual Work Plan Modifications per BLM Arizona Strategies and Priorities

The Working Group discussions on the previous day included a review of the issues covered by the existing Working Groups, an evaluation of the need for continued RAC focus on these issues, and what changes the RAC needs to make to be able to give more attention to the emerging new priorities of water, NLCS, and renewable energy for BLM in Arizona. Some tentative conclusions from those discussions were:

- The procedures for Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration which the RAC originally helped develop and implement are in place, and the system is operating with periodic overview by the S&G Working Group.
- The process of updating the Resource Management Plans have been completed in most of the District Offices, the land planning workload of the Land Use Planning and Tenure Working Group has lessened.
- The planning emphasis will now shift to travel management planning.

- The Wild Horse and Burro program in Arizona is focused on maintaining the numbers of animals in herd management areas, and the most pressing problems in the Wild Horse and Burro Program are related to national issues that are beyond the scope of responsibilities of the RAC's Wild Horse and Burro Working Group.
- The Recreation Working Group has largely finished the task of helping BLM develop guidelines for OHV uses of public lands, and a Tourism and Recreation Strategy for BLM in Arizona. The emphasis which that Working Group has placed on promoting tourism may not be necessary, or appropriate in some areas.
- The Recreation Enhancement Act Working Group has completed the review of the initial backlog of the Forest Service and BLM recreation fee proposals in Arizona, and while difficult High Impact Recreation Area (HIRA) fee issues still lie ahead, the more routine recreation site fee workload is expected to decline.
- There has been disagreement about which existing Working Group should take on the renewable energy issues of solar and wind developments which BLM is bringing to the RAC.
- The names of the existing Working Groups give no recognition to the Renewable Energy, Water, and NLCS issues that are now priorities for BLM in Arizona.
- A RAC committee had met with Mike Taylor at the State Office on August 16 to discuss how the Working Groups could be restructured to better reflect new BLM priorities. The committee recommended that a new Working Group organization should focus on water, land health, heritage resources, renewable energy, and recreation, but no Working Group names were agreed upon. The committee also recommended that, because of the time constraints at RAC meetings, there should be no more than 5 Working Groups.

In the full RAC discussion, there was general agreement that the Working Groups need to be restructured and renamed. Livestock Grazing Representatives Bill Brake and Thomas Kelly recommended that the Standards and Guidelines Working Group needs to be retained because the health of the land depends on good management of livestock grazing.

After discussion, the following four Working Groups were proposed:

- **Recreation and Communities Working Group** which would deal with issues related to Recreation, Heritage Resources, the National Landscape Conservation System, Land Use Planning, and the Recreation Enhancement Act.

- **Water and Healthy Landscapes Working Group**

- **Energy Working Group** which would deal with issues related to renewable energy and minerals.

- **Rangeland Health and Livestock Grazing Working Group**

Glen Collins made a motion that the RAC approve this new Working Group structure and names, Bill Brake seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the RAC members in attendance.

France Werner will notify all RAC members of the change in Working Groups, and that the Working Group Meeting Session the day before the next RAC meeting will be devoted to a discussion of the issues before the new Working Groups. All members are encouraged to attend this session, and members will be given the chance to choose which Working Group or Groups they will participate in.

Public Comment Period

At 11:30 AM, Chair Frances Werner announced that it was the time set aside for comments from the public. There were no public comments.

Report from the Standards & Guidelines (S&Gs) Working Group

Mike Taylor reported on the information that Bill Coulloudon, Acting Chair of the S&G Working Group had given at the Working Group meeting on the previous day. BLM has completed the renewal of 159 grazing permits this Fiscal Year. Mike Taylor briefed the RAC on the litigation which Western Watersheds has initiated against BLM livestock grazing issues during the past year.

Bill Coulloudon would like to have some members of the RAC help in an evaluation of the operations of the Range Resource Teams in the District and Field Offices. Bill Brake, Maggie Sacher and Steve Saway volunteered to assist with this evaluation, and Bill Coulloudon will contact them and set up a meeting. A report will be given at the next RAC meeting.

Maggie Sacher made a motion that Thomas Kelly be made the Chair of the Standards and Guideline Working Group; Bill Brake seconded the motion, and it was approved by the RAC. Norman Perry then moved that Bill Brake be made Vice-Chair of the Standards and Guidelines Working Group. This was seconded by Thomas Kelly and approved by the RAC.

Report from the Recreation Working Group

BLM Recreation Specialist Don Applegate gave a report on recreation access issues.

- Arizona BLM is currently undertaking a huge effort to inventory (map) and designate a travel management system across public lands.
- The route inventory is the first step in determining where access exists and where it does not.
- Arizona BLM is also represented on the Land Owner and Lessee Sportsman's Committee with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. It is through this committee that sportsman's access issues are raised and resolutions are sought.
- Resolutions are found through a variety of instruments as applicable to a particular scenario/situation:
 - Easements
 - Rights of Ways
 - Acquisitions
 - Purchases
 - Exchanges
 - Cooperative Management Agreements

- Although Montana BLM was in a position to hire a full time access coordinator to their lands staff at their State Office, Arizona is not in a position to do so. Montana only very recently accomplished this and is currently in the process of determining how to apply the position's duties. The plan is to first determine where new access is needed (this is through coordination with partners and potential partners), then prioritize these needs, then work with local staff to attain legal access, then work with partners to manage the access sites.
- Coronado National Forest has taken the same basic approach - first an inventory of access points, an identification of priorities through working with partners, then undertaking actions to put appropriate instruments in place. They have been working with BLM on mutually beneficial access resolutions. Example: Goodwin Road in 2007 provided access to Santa Theresa Wilderness. Access from another side is now being pursued. Also currently working on Cross-F Road to provide access to Aravaipa Ghost Town area. However, CNF is one of the few Forests in nation that are able to work on this; it was discovered that of some 300 access points, only 100 were legal.
- Issue scoping through Land Use Planning efforts and Activity Planning efforts often identifies high-priority access issue areas, such as where conflicts between land owners and public land visitors is occurring. Once these locations are identified, actions can be taken to resolve them.

Working Group Chair Norman Perry discussed the comments he had collected from RAC members about issues they wanted BLM to consider in preparing the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Solar Energy Development, and asked that BLM forward these comments to Washington to be included in the information collected as part of the PEIS scoping process. Norman recommended that the Tourism and Recreation Strategy, which the RAC has helped BLM prepare, be revisited after the Working Groups have been restructured.

Report from the Land Use Planning and Tenure Working Group

Working Group Chair Glen Collins reported that, at the recent Annual Meeting of the Public Lands Foundation, the organization had the opportunity to tell BLM Washington Office Deputy Director for Operations Mike Poole about Arizona BLM's plan for giving distinctive names to BLM land areas to help facilitate public identity and support for management of the public lands. Mike Poole was very receptive to the concept. The Working Group encourages the Arizona BLM to continue with this naming project.

The RAC wants to have input to the Travel Management Plans being prepared by the BLM District Offices, and asks that BLM notify the RAC when the scoping process begins for travel management planning projects. Deborah Stevens will ask the District Offices to post the information on the Travel Management section of the BLM's web site. Mike Taylor stated that BLM will give the RAC an update on Travel Management Plans like the update on Land Use Plans.

Arizona Strip District Manager Scott Florence briefed the Working Group on the assignment his Office has to prepare a report to the Secretary of the Interior on the temporary withdrawal of one million acres of BLM and National Forest Lands in the Grand Canyon area from uranium mining claim location. The report needs to cover the environmental and other impacts of the proposal

to close these public lands to mining claim location for 20 years. The BLM is currently in the scoping process on this controversial issue. BLM State Director Jim Kenna and Scott Florence have requested RAC members to give BLM their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, criteria and advice on what the BLM should consider in preparing the report on the impacts, and in developing alternatives for the withdrawal.

RAC members are requested to send their comments to Working Group Chair Glen Collins by October 15. He will send the consolidated report of individual REA member comments to Scott Florence and Project Manager Al Burch. This issue of uranium mining in the Grand Canyon area will be an agenda item at the December RAC meeting.

Report from the Wild Horse and Burro Working Group

The BLM's Arizona Wild Horse and Burro Program Summary FY 2009 was provided to RAC members and indicated the number of adoptions (128 animals) and removals (147 animals) from the public and private lands during the year. Maintaining Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) in Herd Management Areas (HMAs) is a priority for BLM. Funding is a problem. The Arizona Department of Transportation and the Arizona Game and Fish Department contribute some funding for removing animals from areas where they are creating a hazard.

RRAC Session – see separate RRAC minutes

Discussion on Future Meetings/Locations/Proposed Agenda Items

BLM State Director Jim Kenna and RAC members discussed and decided on the following schedule for RAC meetings in this Fiscal Year, and agenda items for the December RAC meeting.

- The next RAC meeting is December 8-9, 2009.
- Additional meetings are scheduled for: March 17-18, 2010, June 16-17, 2010, and September 14-15, 2010. All locations to be determined.
- Proposed Agenda Items for the December 8-9 RAC meeting:
 - Energy and solar pre-briefing at the Working Group Meeting
 - Arizona Strategies (4 topics)
 - Suggested Speaker at a meeting: Mr. Robert Glennon
 - Presentation on the condor program and the lead shot issue
 - Presentation on the Yuma Crossing River Restoration
 - Continued discussion on Uranium mining withdrawal and Environmental Impact Statement issue

Meeting Adjourned at 4:00 PM

Notes submitted by Susan Williams