

Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC)
Final Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2009

BLM Arizona State Office
One North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona

RAC Members in Attendance: Frances Werner, Steve Saway, Carl Taylor, Glen Collins, Norm Perry, Carolyn Loder, Linda Binder, Bill Brake, Thomas Kelly, Maggie Sacher, Richard Lunt, and the Governor's RAC Advisor Josh Avey

RAC Members Absent: Matt Hogel, Laura Sagerman, Jan Holder, Larry Howery

BLM Staff in Attendance: Arizona State Director Jim Kenna, Terri Raml, Scott Florence, Becky Heick, Helen Hankins, Al Burch, Angelita Bulletts, Pamela Mathis, Mike Taylor, Tom Dabbs, Lane Cowger, Joanie Losacco, Deborah Stevens, Davina Wilkins

Guests and Presenters: Dan Shein from the Arizona State Parks Department, Kitty Benzar from the Western Slope No Fee Coalition

AGENDA ITEM: Meeting Called to Order -- Welcome and Introduction of RAC Members (Frances Werner, RAC Chair)

DISCUSSION: The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m., and the RAC members were introduced. BLM staff and guests introduced themselves to the RAC.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: BLM State Director's Introduction, Update on Legislation, Regulations and other Statewide Issues (Jim Kenna, BLM Arizona State Director)

DISCUSSION: Arizona State Director gave updates to the RAC on several topics.

Angelita Bulletts has reported as the new Phoenix District Manager.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – Arizona has over \$700,000 worth of ARRA projects begun. Some of the work at the Hell's Canyon Wilderness area is being performed by youth working groups, which recently garnered favorable local media attention at the opening; Tom Thurman from Yavapai County was present at that opening as well. Work has also started on the Black Canyon National Trail and work on the Juan Baptista de Anza National

Historic Trail is due to begin in January. The BLM-Arizona ARRA goals are aggressive. The state received its funding in July, 2009, and has been actively moving to get the funds committed to projects and get the work started. The current goal is to have all BLM-Arizona contracts out for bid by January, 2010, and all contracts awarded by June, 2010.

ARIZONA STRATEGIES – Mr. Kenna told the RAC he has been out in the communities around the state speaking about the BLM’s Arizona Strategies. He came across “The Arizona We Want,” a five year survey conducted by the Gallup Organization to ask Arizonans what they wanted for the future of the state. Mr. Kenna noted that Arizonans held the natural environment as a high priority. This went well with the BLM-Arizona Strategies. Mr. Kenna gave a brief overview of the BLM-Arizona Strategies for the new RAC members using the chart as an aid.

Water Strategies – Mr. Kenna said the area with the most recent activity has been the San Pedro River, which was mentioned in a recent report to Congress. He recently signed a letter regarding a study of the area conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). He intends to convene community level dialogues to find out the exact issues that will need to be addressed, noting that issues on the San Pedro will be different from those on the Bill Williams, for example. He has discussed these issues with Herb Guenther, Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Mr. Kenna said some of the trends in the state in regards to water *use are not promising, and we must decide what to do about that.

Energy Strategies – Mr. Kenna said the RAC needs to have an in depth discussion on the topic of energy at next meeting. There are two complex systems side by side: the natural ecologic system and the energy system. Energy has to relate to supply and demand of energy flow. Approximately 15 – 20% of the Arizona energy load comes from the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant – uranium powered. He said the U.S. has a deliberate policy to increase renewable sources and to make the country independent of foreign sources. The question to talk about next meeting, he said, should be “what should be the energy footprint in Arizona?” He said he has spoken with the Governor’s staff and the Arizona Corporation Commission about this. He said it was important not only to decide the uranium issue in Arizona, but to frame the issue as well.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM (NLCS) – Mr. Kenna identified three areas of focus:

- 1) focus public attention on conservation values;
- 2) BLM must make certain it has community engagement. The system’s strongest asset is that it invites the communities’ involvement and participation into the process; and
- 3) create youth opportunities. Mr. Kenna said he places a high priority on handing off what has been accomplished to next generation. He said it is a worthy goal to instill interest and participation in next generation. It may make a youth’s interest into a career later in life.

TRIBAL RELATIONS – Mr. Kenna has asked his staff to put together a strategy to make government-to-government relations more effective in both directions for each party’s benefit. He is especially excited with Angelita Bullett’s unique background as having been a tribal administrator and worked for both the Forest Service (FS) and the BLM to be of help in this area.

OPENED TO QUESTIONS

RAC member Bill Brake asked whether all \$16.7 million of the ARRA funds received by BLM will be out by June and whether all of those funds had already been obligated. Mr. Kenna answered that the intent is to have all the money Arizona has available to be in a procurement process by January 15, 2010, and all of it committed and on the ground by June. He said he has asked that money not be used for internal administrative work, because the intent of the ARRA money is on-the-ground job creation.

Mr. Brake went on to ask whether the BLM had any lessons learned from the natural gas drilling in Montana and Wyoming that could be shared with the RAC as a way for them to help with advice on Arizona's current uranium situation on the Arizona Strip. Mr. Kenna said there had been internal discussion on the subject of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and what went well and what had not. Mr. Brake said he was thinking specifically about the controversy that the placement of power lines can lead to within communities; he said they must have had similar difficulties in those northern states with the placing of pipelines. Scott Florence interjected that he had been working in Washington during those years, and their work had led to a whole network of planned pipeline and transmission systems.

Linda Binder asked the State Director how BLM-Arizona ARRA money was being tracked, and pointed out that the public was getting weary of hearing about ARRA being expended on projects without hearing the results. Mr. Kenna said there is a national tracking process that is fed by the recipients. He said BLM-Arizona has an internal process for tracking funds that is very rigorous. He receives a chart once a week that gives the status of every BLM-Arizona ARRA project. He went on to say that BLM-Arizona recently had an Inspector General's (IG) audit of its ARRA procedures and usage, after which he received a complimentary letter from the IG's office about how the state was doing. Maggie Sacher asked if BLM-Arizona was tracking the specific number of jobs created through its ARRA projects. Mr. Kenna said they had not done that locally, but it may be getting done on a national level. He pointed out that all Recovery Act information could be found at its website, www.recovery.gov.

Ms. Sacher went on to ask if streams and springs factored into the Water Strategies. Mr. Kenna said he didn't have an answer for that at this time, but did say that if they attempt to focus on every area, not as much can get accomplished. So, focus has been put on certain areas to begin with. Thomas Kelly asked if the focus was on sustainability. Mr. Kenna answered that priorities for the BLM are sustainability, heritage and community.

Steve Saway asked if both energy generation and transmission needs were being looked at together. Mr. Kenna thought it possible to convene a forum to look at all the moving parts. Possibly ASU or the Governor's Office should convene it.

Norman Perry said that earlier this year the California legislature passed a bill that by 2015 California would not import any electricity from any other state; however the bill was vetoed by the governor. He said 18 to 19% of Palo Verde's power is exported to California. He said these are things on a regional basis that must be looked at. The State Director concurred that to say energy, power and transportation are Arizona specific topics oversimplifies the issues. He said what struck him about the Dry Lake Wind Energy dedication was the number of contractors from all over the world.

Glen Collins commented that based on his 45 years of experience with the agency, the BLM ** in the past has been focused on protecting public lands from the public. He said priority has shifted now to protecting BLM lands *for* the public and that this was reflected in the NLCS. He said the NLCS are truly multiple-use lands and this is a better approach. Mr. Kenna said that in a way it was a return to the original intent, “common lands for common purposes.”

Richard Lunt said he noticed that there was a lot of pressure to put specific lands to specific uses. He said it was important to set good policy that will still be in the BLM’s best interest 20 to 50 years from now. There has been a lot of pressure recently to designate specific lands for specific purposes; he pointed to recent bills sponsored by Congressman Raúl Grijalva as examples of bad policy. He said one thing that makes BLM strong is that as an agency it has tried to adhere to its multiple-use mission.

ACTION: Make energy an agenda priority for the next RAC meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Questions on BLM District and Field Managers’ Reports (Consolidated Report on File)

DISCUSSION: Scott Florence said he needed to make a correction to his report. A lawsuit was filed over the Uranium withdrawal after he sent in his report. The lawsuit alleges three issues 1) The BLM didn’t do adequate environmental analysis; 2) Alleges failure to get feedback from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on Section 7 consultation; and 3) Didn’t do a valid existing rights determination.

Steve Saway noted the report about Anza Trail repairs. He suggested the RAC be provided an update as this had been an item of interest when the initial SDNM OHV closure was briefed to the RAC.

Bill Brake said due to increasing numbers of retirements within the agency there are a lot of new people taking over roles for which they may not have sufficient background. He asked if there was a mechanism for bringing back retirees to consult on projects, or other ways of passing knowledge down. Mr. Kenna used Pathways, the Bureau’s leadership training program, as one example of the Bureau’s attempt to inform newer employees of the history of the agency. He said the agency does hire retired annuitants, and referenced a recent change in law that will make it easier for retirees to be reemployed by the agency without suffering penalty to their retirement pay. Tom Dabbs said there is an allowed overlap of four to six weeks that a new employee can work with an out-going retiree to learn the new job. However, he said this must be used with caution as it has happened that a new person has been hired to take a retiree’s place, only to have the retiree change their mind. The agency is then left with two employees, but budget for only one. He also mentioned the SCEP internship as another way of training the next generation of workers. Angelita Bullets said if the retiree is close to finishing a project at the end of their tenure, they may be brought back as a contractor. Frances Werner also pointed out that many of the young people taking over jobs were coming from cities, rather than rural areas, and had to be taught basic survival skills that past generations may have brought with them into their careers.

Glen Collins said that the mention of bodies found “south of the Lower Sonoran Field Office” in the Phoenix District’s report doesn’t explain where those bodies were found. He said it was another example of the need to give geographic names for blocks and areas of public lands so the public can readily identify referenced locations.

Carolyn Loder took the opportunity to thank the Phoenix District Office, particularly Patrick Brasington and his staff for the border tour they organized for the RAC which she and Steve Saway attended. She said it was particularly eye opening that the tour bumped into an active smuggling incident and was able to see firsthand the way law enforcement handled the situation. Ms. Loder also said the warning signs in the area were inadequate for letting visitors know the dangers they may face from smugglers in the area. Signs that read visitors “may” encounter smuggling activity did not let people know about the real dangers they could face. “I really did not like the signs,” Ms. Loder said.

Frances Werner wanted to commend the fire crew in Paria Canyon who rescued the woman who had suffered a heart attack. She said they really went above and beyond the call of duty, and they were featured prominently in the Flagstaff newspaper.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Update on Renewable Energy Development – 4-Tracks (BLM Staff – Mike Taylor and Teri Raml)

DISCUSSION: Mike Taylor discussed the renewable energy strategy. The strategy is divided into four tracks:

- 1) Existing application process – 33 applications that would cover 450,000 acres;
- 2) The Fast Track Project – accelerated review - Arizona has one;
- 3) The Bureau-wide EIS programmatic – there are a number of study areas. AZ has 3 of those covering 16,000 acres; and
- 4) Restoration Design Energy Project – lands previously disturbed being used for things like renewable energy projects. BLM-Arizona is unique within the bureau in focusing on that. ARRA funding is being used for the Restoration projects.

In identifying the three study areas in Arizona for the Bureau-wide EIS, the BLM collected information from the Arizona Game and Fish Department and other agencies to determine which areas would be of least conflict. Some areas drew concern because people developed the impression that Arizona was being shorted by not having more areas under consideration. The State Director and Teri Raml went to Washington, D.C. to clarify BLM-Arizona’s intentions with the four track priorities. There is an ongoing dialogue about increasing the number of areas for consideration, but that is uncertain at this time. The BLM-Arizona has engaged with Arizona State University (ASU) to put on solar forums to discuss all aspects of solar opportunities in this state. The BLM has had a number of discussions with ASU, and Maria Baier, the Arizona State Land Commissioner, has agreed to have her agency host the event. It would be an opportunity for the public to see various agencies working together. The date has not been set, but should be

mid January. RAC members will be invited.

Norman Perry asked if the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) had been consulted about towers in flight paths. Mr. Taylor said yes, to which Mr. Perry said that should be mentioned in discussions throughout the state as Arizona has many pilots.

Bill Brake said it was good to make presentations to the communities, but suggested that the Bureau not to forget to go back to those communities to update them on progress of projects. This would curb rumors that may develop in future. Mr. Taylor said that is part of the NEPA process that the Bureau adheres to, but more can always be done. Mr. Brake said there are roads going in and out of projects, and said the Bureau should make sure people stay on those roads to protect wildlife. Mr. Taylor said that the staff sits with people in the application process and lets them know what they will need to know and to consider as they move forward. He said most everything that had been mentioned is part of the permitting process. He said they try to work through and mitigate these things upfront.

Norman Perry pointed out that Arizona Councils of Government (COGs) are the largest groups of non-governmental entities in the state. He suggested that if the BLM could make presentations to the COGs, it would be huge impact by talking to 20-30 people. They represent the entire county. By working with the COGs, some of the negative reactions or rumors could be headed off before a project begins in the area.

Teri Raml presented the Arizona Renewable Energy Map and said there have been seven potential Restoration Design packages submitted. A contract has been awarded for the restoration work and they are now working on a statement of work for the EIS. Lane Cowger is a colleague in process and has given great assistance. Ms. Raml has been in meetings and calls to counties, COGs, and has sent emails with links to website to many people. She thanked Carolyn Loder for contact with the Arizona Rock Producers Association. Ms. Raml has been working with tribes and has met with the Intertribal Council. She is also working with SRP, APS, and Tucson Electric Power to make the projects feasible. Mr. Kenna and Ms. Raml went to DC and talked to both Arizona Senators and Representative Gabrielle Giffords about the projects. Both Senators were concerned about water and the projects' impacts on water. The BLM is also making a great effort to keep the website with the projects up to date to keep people informed.

Mike Taylor said scoping meetings focusing on a wind energy development project proposed by British Petroleum Company began today in Kingman.

The State Director asked the RAC to look at energy issues and give answers to the following set of questions:

- 1) Do we have the major issues right around solar and wind energy?" and
- 2) "What are the alternatives?" "What should we be thinking about?" "What do we need to cover in these projects?" Look at them on a statewide scale and then on a more specific project-specific level

Norman Perry said that it has been said that by 2020 the Arizona population will double. He said

the electricity for that growth will have to come from someplace. Steve Saway requested a map showing where the proposed solar electric generating plants and transmission lines will be and where the gaps are. Mr. Kenna said the Corporation Commission has a map **showing similar details, but the problem is that this is a conversation about future policy. Linda Binder asked if Herb Gunther, **Director of the Arizona State Department of Water Resources, would be part of the conversations, because it would be bad policy to deplete water supplies by granting too many permits. Mr. Kenna said those dialogues are already underway.

ACTION: For the RAC members to answer the energy issues questions posed by State Director Kenna.

BREAK

AGENDA ITEM: Update on BLM Scoping Process and Comments on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Proposed Withdrawal of Mining in the Arizona Strip District (Al Burch and Scott Florence)

DISCUSSION: Scott Florence and Al Burch gave brief updates on the proposed Uranium Mining Withdrawal from the Arizona Strip.

Thomas Kelly asked how the boundaries were established. Mr. Burch explained that there were originally two pieces of proposed legislation, one in 2008 then 2009, that proposed the closure of a larger area. The current proposal is an administrative withdrawal by the Department of the Interior to close a smaller area of BLM and National Forest lands north and south of the Grand Canyon National Park. Mr. Kelly asked how the withdrawal will affect private land. Mr. Burch said this law does not apply to private land. It applies to the federally owned subsurface estate under BLM, National Forest and State Trust lands. In some cases, the state has surface rights and the federal government owns sub-surface rights. The proposed withdrawal only applies to federal public interest, not state or private.

Carl Taylor pointed out the negative impacts which mining operations could have on tourism which is a big factor in Coconino County's economy. He requested that the impacts of uranium on tourism be included in the socio-economic study. Mr. Kenna said the BLM's role is to be dispassionate and bring together a report on the many issues and concerns so that the Secretary of the Interior could make an informed decision about the withdrawal. Scott Florence said there would be upcoming public meetings on the proposed withdrawal and that he would keep the RAC informed about plans for the meetings.

Glen Collins pointed out that the federal government spends virtually no money to explore, evaluate and develop mineral resources. He said it should be noted that government depends on private industry to explore, evaluate and develop mineral resources through the mining and mineral leasing laws. He said part of the problem in mineral resources is that some of the information is company confidential, but that the BLM should use whatever information they can

obtain to develop a report that will protect the surface resources that everyone is concerned with. Mr. Kenna reiterated that BLM's job is to report the factual information.

Bill Brake said the subcommittee's previous day's discussion was good, but came down to mining and not mining. He said the Secretary was asking for two years to look at new claims. Mr. Kenna said the question is to withdraw or not to withdraw the land from mining claim location. We need the RAC's help in dealing with this issue.

Scott Florence passed out a Summary of the RAC comments on the proposed withdrawal. They had been discussed at the subcommittee meeting the previous day. Mr. Florence requested a full RAC recommendation by the end of the meeting.

Maggie Sacher said that road conditions in the area are not equipped to handle heavy mining trucks, and this should be added as a consideration. Mr. Florence suggested adding a bullet under the topic "Roads" on the Summary.

Mr. Brake said he hoped any withdrawal wouldn't be permanent, because situations change and that should be taken into account. He said earlier in the discussion the U.S. buying cheap Uranium from Russia was mentioned, but that treaty ends this year. Mr. Perry and Mr. Burch both pointed out that, as circumstances change, Congress and the Department have the authority to change restrictions on mining in the area.

Glen Collins suggested the title of the Summary be clarified to point out that the issue is about future mining claims, and that the proposed withdrawal does not affect current claims.

Mr. Burch suggested striking the word "mineral" from the title to lessen confusion.

Steve Saway suggested adding a smaller withdrawal area** as an issue to be considered.

Further discussion was postponed until after the Public Comment Period

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period

DISCUSSION: Francis Werner opened the floor to public comment. Kitty Bendar, from the Western Slope No Fee Coalition (P.O. Box 135, Durango, Colorado 81312, introduced herself to the RAC. She said her organization was concerned with fees being charged by the BLM and Forest Service charged for recreational uses on federal lands. Ms. Bendar gave a brief background of the Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) and the fees charged to visit certain public lands. She said her organization works against the fees in three ways:

- 1) Legislatively. Working with legislature to repeal or lessen REA;
- 2) Trying to work with law as it is. Setup committees to represent the public point of view. REA sets statutory obligations that must be met to charge these fees. Attend meetings like this RAC meeting to oversee compliance;
- 3) Work within the courts to fight the number of fee programs across the country not complying with the statute.

Ms. Benzar said she had read all of BLM-Arizona's RAC meeting minutes and has seen that the Arizona REA committee has worked hard and done a good job by not accepting all the fees put before them.

Her organization did a White Paper last year on the national REA process. Ms. Benzar saw from minutes of a previous Arizona RAC meeting that some members took offense at the report. She said she attended today's meeting to stand behind the accuracy of the report. She said she would be interested in getting RAC feedback in writing. She listed several concerns she had for the RAC:

- She was concerned that meeting minutes were not up to date (one link on the site leads to minutes from a 2006 meeting)
- RAC meetings are not well announced. There was a Federal Register Notice, but not a press release.
- Saw the mention of a letter being drafted about her organization, but never saw the letter.
- The June and September RAC meeting minutes were not on the web-site as of Friday.
- **The public cannot contact individual RAC members, even though they represent the public.
- The law says that there has to be six conditions in place in order for the federal government to charge a user fee, but that there are many fee areas which don't have the six conditions.
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In the discussion that followed the Public Comment Period, Ms. Benzar said that the law requires "general public support" for each fee proposal, the BLM and the Forest Service have internal guidelines for documenting "general public support", and her organization wants to make sure these are followed. In situations where few comments are received, the agency needs to demonstrate that a real effort has been made to inform the public of the proposal. Bill Brake said that he would ask questions, in future reviews, of fee proposals that he would have not asked if Ms. Benzar had not spoken. Deborah Stevens said that the minutes of the June and September 2009 RAC meetings had been posted on the RAC website as of last Friday.

AGENDA ITEM: Energy-Minerals Working Group Report

DISCUSSION: Carolyn Loder, Chair of the Energy-Minerals Working Group reported that, on the previous day, the Group had a two and one half hour discussion of the proposed withdrawal of 1 million acres of federal land (Forest Service and BLM) from the location of new mining claims for 20 years. The 1 million acres are located in the BLM Arizona Strip district and on portions of the Kaibab National Forest both north and south of the Grand Canyon National Park, and the federal lands are segregated from location and entry for mining purposes for up to 2 years while an environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared on the issue of whether to withdraw the lands for up to 20 years.

The discussion clarified the issue that the withdrawal is to prohibit all new mining claims, not just those for uranium. Furthermore the withdrawal does not impact the existing mining claims which already cover most of the known uranium deposits on these federal lands.

The Working Group reviewed the BLM staff summary of RAC comments and approved it for forwarding to the full RAC.

The Working Group had also discussed HR 2944, the Southern Arizona Public Lands Protection Act that has been introduced by Congressman Grijalva that would permanently withdraw certain federal lands in Pima and Santa Cruz Counties from mining and mineral leasing. Working Group members had concerns over the sweeping impacts which the bill could have on local economies and activities on the public lands.

12:00 p.m. Lunch

AGENDA ITEM: BLM/RAC Discussion on EIS on the Proposed Withdrawal of Mining in the Arizona Strip District continued.

DISCUSSION: Upon return from lunch, Frances Werner called the meeting to order again to pick up the discussion about the proposed mining withdrawal. The RAC and State Director recapped the changes to the proposal that had been discussed earlier in the day.

The following “Summary of RAC Comments on Proposed Withdrawal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) December 9, 2009” was distributed to the RAC members, and is included as an attachment to these minutes. It includes the issues of impacts on roads and tourism in Coconino County, and the option of withdrawing a smaller area that were raised in the morning discussions of the full RAC. It describes the issues which RAC members believe should be considered by the Arizona BLM in their report and EIS on the proposed withdrawal of federal lands in the Grand Canyon area from the location of mining claims.

Summary of RAC Comments on Proposed Withdrawal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) December 9, 2009

Issue Summary

Potential toxic waste hazards

Possible effects on fish, wildlife (including the California condor) and water (including contamination of ground water, seeps, springs and streams)

How development of approximately 8,300 existing mining claims (with associated valid existing rights) could impact surface and subsurface resources

Road Conditions and impact of ore truck traffic on local highways

Roads and dust (need for dust mitigation)

Removal of ore as a means to mitigate the potential for natural erosion/contamination of landscapes and water

Energy potential that would be foregone and the impacts of using alternative energy sources (if the proposed withdrawal was put into effect)

Economic impacts (both positive and negative), particularly on local economies and tourism

Need for full-scale mineral appraisal to accurately assess the sub-surface resources that would be foregone by a long-term withdrawal

Potential loss of significant energy resources

Potential Alternative Criteria Summary

Keep the mining areas as close to the communities that support mine development as possible

Consider one or two alternatives that limit the withdrawal to a smaller area, considering the following factors:

- Protection of natural and cultural resources
- Protection of wildlife habitat and special status species
- Protection of rangeland health and grazing forage
- Visual resource management classes
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)
- Air and water quality, aquifers, and hydrology factors including potential for groundwater contamination by mining activities
- Potential for surface disturbance, degree of existing access roads, and degree of impact of ore truck traffic on local highways
- Protection of sensitive ecological zones/riparian areas/springs
- Special recreation management areas, trail systems and recreation management objectives
- Areas with wilderness characteristics
- Location of existing land withdrawals
- Degree of potential mitigation measures needed to minimize resource impacts of mining activities
- Potential for successful reclamation of mining activities
- Location of existing mines
- Land with high potential for locatable minerals including breccia pipe locations (the EIS should fully consider the unique geology of the Arizona Strip which supports a favorable concentration of uranium)
- Socio-economic considerations such as health of the U.S. mining industry, support to local communities, job creation, etc.
- U.S. strategic interests in uranium and other minerals/metals production (DOE and DOD should collaborate)

No withdrawal from mineral entry but instead promulgate surface management regulations that are specific to this area to provide the desired level of watershed and other resource protection.

No withdrawal from mineral entry but aggressively pursue clean-up and reclamation of “legacy mine” sites

Withdraw and apply existing surface management regulations (43 CFR 3809-BLM; 36 CFR 228 USFS) to mitigate impacts of production of energy minerals from existing mining claims

Withdraw, but identify and locate alternative energy sources

Withdraw, but rely on foreign sources or domestic dependant (Indian Country) sources

EIS Process

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be taking the RAC/public/tribal/cooperating agency input and information coming out of the various studies and data compilation for development of the alternatives for the EIS. This will be done through a Forest Service and BLM interdisciplinary team and the contractor (SWCA).

Frances Werner asked if there were any other comments. When there were none, Richard Lunt made a motion to “Recommend to the BLM State Director and staff the “Summary of RAC Comments on Proposed Withdrawal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), December 9, 2009, with the additions and corrections, as attached”. Carl Taylor seconded the motion. After short discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

Regarding a related mining withdrawal issue, Steve Saway noted that the bill ** HR 2944 introduced by Congressman Grijalva would withdraw federal BLM and National Forest lands in Pima and Santa Cruz counties from mining claim location. He said recreation groups are concerned this could bar entry to those same lands for recreational use. That has been clarified by one of the sponsors. It is a concern and while the BLM can't take a position on it, if the RAC wants to say anything, this is our chance. Bill Brake said he is concerned that its "permanent" and he said he doesn't think the bill should remove anything from public lands permanently. Frances Werner said the bill, if passed, would block one of the hottest geothermal spots in the state to be tapped. Carolyn Loder agreed that the timing of the bill was really bad.

Glen Collins said that most of the RAC agree the legislation isn't appropriate, but he told the RAC they were putting the State Director in a bad position by discussing the political issue. Mr. Kenna agreed saying "it's not my place to take a position on a piece of proposed legislation. I don't think it's in the scope of the group to give recommendation on the legislation, but we can certainly talk about the subject matter." Francis Werner suggested the members write individually; she said she didn't think the person who wrote the bill understood federal law.

Richard Lunt said he viewed the proposed legislation was bad policy, because it restricted tracts of land from multiple use. Maggie Sacher asked Josh Avey, in his role as the governor's representative, what he thought he could do about the proposal. Mr. Avey asked if she was asking whether the governor had a view on the bill. He went on to say that he saw the RAC as having a voice and opportunity to give views on legislation important. He said at this meeting the members could provide direct guidance and he didn't think it would be as helpful to dance around the subject.

Bill Brake suggested putting a motion on the floor that would say the RAC strongly believes that there should be no changes in multiple use on public land without study as was done on the uranium issue. Several members agreed. Mike Taylor recommended the group go back to their charter to make certain any action taken by the RAC be within that scope. Jim said he was concerned that the RAC may become perceived as another than political entity. And, stated that he was not encouraging the members to go one way or another. Francis again suggested acting individually, and perhaps through each of their sponsors. Mr. Kelly quoted the charter as saying the role of the RAC is to make recommendations to the BLM on use of public land, which he believed fell under that mandate.

Bill Brake said that he took from Mr. Kenna's comments that the RAC has a lot of work to do and should focus on that important work, as to not "shoot ourselves in the foot" on those issues we can be of help on." Glen Collins agreed saying the group shouldn't damage their credibility on the issue. Norman Perry suggested waiting until March, at which point it may not even be an issue.

AGENDA ITEM: Recreation and Communities Working Group Report

DISCUSSION:

Steve Saway, Chair of the Recreation and Communities Working Group, summarized the following topics discussed during the previous day's meeting.

- Land Use Planning (see handout: Arizona Land Use Planning Update, December 2009). Julie Decker gave the group an update on various plans in process. The following plans are coming up for the RAC's review: Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument, Ironwood Forest National Monument, and Aravaipa Ecosystem Management Plan. The group discussed and re-affirmed the value of the RAC's perspective and involvement in these land use plans.

- Travel Management Plans (see handout: Quarterly Report, Travel Management Plan Development, 12-9-09). Bill Gibson summarized various plans in process. In the Yuma Field Office, the La Posa plan will be out soon for public review. Individual RAC members will be able to comment on this plan via email and a full RAC review is planned for the March 2010 RAC meeting. Other travel management plans (TMPs) that will need a RAC review include the Ironwood Forest National Monument, Aravaipa Ecosystem, and Gila Unit. The work group offered suggestions on ways to improve public outreach to ensure the public is better aware of these plans. Also, the work group requested a copy of the Arizona BLM's adoption of the OHV Guidelines the RAC had developed back in 2007. During discussion of the Gila Unit TMP, a concern was noted about roads on BLM lands that are blocked by private lands. Various views were expressed on how or if these roads should be shown on maps. Bill Gibson will give the work group a briefing on the BLM road inventory protocol.

- OHV Ambassador Program (see handout: FY 2010 OHV Ambassador Program Update). Bill Gibson summarized the program's accomplishments during September 1 to December 1, 2009. Good news: the program has funding to continue for another 18 months.

- Heritage Resources. Mike Taylor gave the group some background of how stewardship of heritage resources fits in the State Director's priorities and strategies (see the "bubble chart"). The tribal relations component is the current focus and tracks with an effort by Department of the Interior to develop a new tribal consultation policy. Angie Bullets has drafted a first cut at a tribal relations strategy for Arizona BLM. This is becoming more important as demonstrated by issues affecting tribal relations (shooting range, chromium contamination, etc.) Receptiveness of BLM to improve tribal relations is important as well as recognition that BLM decisions affect tribal governments. He also discussed some examples of actions taken to improve tribal relationships. Emphasis on mutual respect and good relationships is key.

- National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). Mike Taylor discussed a recent NLCS workshop which was attended by Carl Rountree, who is the national BLM lead for the NLCS. It was a productive session. The Arizona BLM is focusing on a three-pronged strategy: monument objects, engaging communities, and getting youth involved. This will drive funding requests. In 2010, BLM will host a variety of events to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the NLCS. Mike also mentioned a study by the NLCS Foundation regarding name recognition of the NLCS. It appears more work is needed to educate the public. Frances Werner cited the work of the Friends of Agua Fria National Monument as a great example of community engagement and partnership. There is a national effort to develop a scorecard for the NLCS and the group discussed how the RAC might help. About 5 years ago, a report was issued by some

environmental groups which gave their views and a scorecard of BLM's NLCS management. There is also an annual report done by each NLCS unit manager.

- Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Sub-Group. Members of the REA Sub-Group took action on the following business items:

-- voted to approve minutes of the REA Work Group meeting held on 9-16-2009.

-- discussed plans for scheduling a future meeting to review two fee proposals from the Forest Service: Hull Cabin, Kaibab National Forest; and Kent Spring Cabin, Coronado National Forest. Steve Saway has sent an email to Jeff Saari to see when these proposals will be ready for the REA Sub-Group's review. More details will be provided as they are known. It is likely a February phone conference meeting will be needed to prepare for the March RRAC meeting.

ACTION: Bill Gibson will get the RAC members copies of the Arizona BLM adopted OHV guidelines and will update the RAC on travel management plans ready for RAC review. A date and time needs to be set up for a REA Work Group meeting to discuss cabin fees at two national forests.

AGENDA ITEM: Energy-Solar/Wind Working Group Report

DISCUSSION: Norman Perry, Chair, reported that: Eddie Arreola had made a presentation on existing solar applications. The applications totaled 34. It was agreed that future project lists would include totals for acreage, megawatts, and est. water usage would be included in future. There was a period of questions from RAC members.

Teri Raml, made a presentation on current restoration plans and progress being made. Teri reported that 43 potential sites had been identified and were under consideration. 50% of the sites under consideration are located on BLM managed lands. There was a period of questions from RAC members. Mike Taylor gave a general overview of renewable energy projects and answered RAC questions.

The Chair reported that he would not be present for the March meeting and that Maggie had agreed to take the Chair for that meeting.

State Director Kenna has asked the RAC for advice on the renewable energy issues for both solar and wind energy which BLM is dealing with in Arizona. The Working Group will be asking RAC members to respond to:

1. What are the major issues BLM needs to consider in analyzing Renewable Energy in Arizona? and,
2. What kind of things should BLM be thinking about for the alternatives to be considered?

Individual comments are requested from RAC members, and members are encouraged to go to the organizations they represent and get their opinions as well. Members should send the comments to Norman Perry and Maggie Sacher for them to compile and send to the State director, whose staff will compile the results and have them ready for discussion at the next RAC meeting.

Francis Werner said getting feedback from outsiders may prove difficult because many people in Tucson, her area, don't know who the BLM is. She said that came out in the State Director's talk at the Rotary in the area. Mr. Perry said seeking out the opinions from the public shows that BLM cares about their opinions. He said even if an organization is against everything the BLM does, at least that will be heard and documented.

ACTION: Eddie Arreola has been asked to have total acreage covered by current applications and the estimated water consumption per project. The RAC members have been asked to send lists of their thoughts and those of their organizations about questions that need to be answered regarding solar projects in Arizona. After group discussion, it was decided that the RAC comments would be due back to Mr. Perry and Ms. Sacher by February 14, 2010.

AGENDA ITEM: Rangeland Health and Livestock Grazing Working Group Report

DISCUSSION: Working Group Chair Ty Kelly reported the following information received from BLM Range Staff member Bill Couloudon:

A. Quarterly Update Permit Reviews: reviews planned for 2010

The BLM Field Offices are scheduled to complete 64 permit renewals this Fiscal Year. Last Fiscal Year, BLM issued 135 grazing permits, and fully processed 36. Forty-one Land Health Evaluations were completed.

B. Status of Lawsuits and appeals

The Range program is currently working on one lawsuit and two Appeals filed by Western Watersheds Project (WWP). The Appeals were filed on Permit Renewal Decisions. In addition, WWP has filed 35 protests statewide pertaining to grazing permit renewals.

C. Schedule for Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) Training for 2008 and 2009 RAC Appointees

The March 2010 RAC meeting was proposed by Frances Werner as a possible time to conduct the next RAC S&G Training for new members. March is not a good date for Bill Couloudon because of work schedule conflicts. April would be a better month.

RAC members discussed where best to have the next RAC meeting to get the Standards and Guidelines Training done at the same time. Maggie Sacher asked if those needing it could get training in their local offices instead. Ms. Werner pointed out there are new field managers who might also benefit from the training. Mike Taylor said there would be a rangeland program meeting this year, and that might be a good time for new managers to go through the training.

AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on Future Meetings/Locations/Proposed Agenda Items

DISCUSSION: Frances Werner said there was a recent Federal Register Notice that the Black-tailed Prairie-Dog won't be listed as threatened. She said part of that can be attributed to the success of the re-introduction at Las Cienegas.

She said that may have major implications on the Arizona Geological Survey's \$17.8 million

dollars received for geothermal projects. The Energy department just gave them an extra two million.

Maggie Sacher announced that the first weekend in March will be the annual condor release on the Arizona Strip. The last release drew 500 people. She also reminded everyone that buying state lottery tickets gives money to the Arizona Game and Fish department.

Jim Kenna announced that Al Burch is retiring in January. He said he wanted to thank Mr. Burch for his long career. He said Mr. Burch is a very talented scientist in the geology world. He has done a very good job for the BLM at launching the “uranium withdrawal project” and keeping the discussion about science and helping to prepare a report and EIS that will be the basis for an informed decision. Mr. Kenna said he is very thankful to him. Scott Haight from Lewiston, Montana will be taking Mr. Burch’s place in heading up the report and EIS on the uranium withdrawal project. Mr. Haight has a good science background in the geological science arena. Mr. Kenna said the program is staying on track to deliver the report and EIS within the two year period.

AGENDA ITEM: Meeting adjourns.

DISCUSSION: Francis called for adjournment. Linda Binder made the motion, Steve Saway seconded it. It was a unanimous vote.