



United States Department of the Interior

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Glenwood Springs Field Office
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81602**



RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING #5

Wednesday, February 6, 2008 (5:00 PM – 8:30 PM)

Meeting Location: BLM Energy Office
2425 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs, CO

SUMMARY NOTES

Attendees: Steve Dahmer, Peter Dupont, Taylor Hawes (Colorado River Water Conservation), Michael Kennedy (Roaring Fork Climbers Coalition), Sherry Long (Encana), Larry McCown (Northwest RAC), Greg Noss (High Country 4-wheelers), Kurt Schultz (Colorado Outfitters), Steve Smith (The Wilderness Society), Tom Turnbull, Brian Hopkins (BLM), Steve Bennett (BLM), Marty O'Mara (BLM), Fred Conrath (BLM), Karen Conrath (BLM), Kay Hopkins (BLM), David Batts (EMPS, Inc.), Chad Ricklefs (Tetra Tech, Inc.).

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Riparian Resources (PowerPoint)
- Sample Recreation Goal & Objective for Working Groups (2/6/08)
- Special Recreation Management Area/Extensive Recreation Management Area Matrix
- Special Recreation Management Area (Market Strategy)
- Wilderness Study Areas (PowerPoint presentation)
- Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario for Oil and Gas (PowerPoint presentation)
- Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Elk Winter Range Map; Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Fisheries Map; Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Canada Lynx Range Habitat Map; Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Greater sage Grouse Map

WELCOME

Brian Hopkins (BLM) and David Batts (EMPSi) welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation. This was followed by a round robin of introductions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

- None.

RMP PLANNING PROCESS UPDATE

- David Batts (EMPSi) gave an RMP update. No major RMP milestones to note since the last meeting. BLM met with CDOW last week to gather their input. Continuing with mapping data to aid development of alternatives and travel management criteria.
- Handouts: Sample Recreation Goal & Objective for Working Groups (2/6/08); Special Recreation Management Area/Extensive Recreation Management Area Matrix; Special Recreation Management Area (Market Strategy)

- Brian Hopkins described the difference between recreation and travel management.
- Management in SRMAs will be directed at recreation activities. BLM will place comments and suggestions into the appropriate categories (i.e., SRMA, ERMA, travel management area, etc.) during development of RMP proposed alternatives. RMP process will look for unique recreation opportunities for SRMAs. Management activities for SRMAs will try and enhance the unique opportunities. However, doesn't mean that other areas not designated as SRMAs would be overlooked. Developed areas do not need to be within SRMAs always; "recreation sites" can be located outside SRMAs.
- Creating SRMAs does not mean that BLM will get more money. Funds from partners would not be tied to specific SRMAs but could be used across the board.
- SRMA doesn't mean ecological protection.

RESOURCE/RESOURCE USE DISCUSSIONS WITH GSFO STAFF

Wilderness Study Areas / Wilderness Characteristics and Visual Resource Management

- Handout: Wilderness Study Areas (PowerPoint presentation).
- Kay Hopkins from the BLM GSFO presented wilderness study areas / wilderness characteristics, and visual resource management.
- Four WSAs: two in Eagle (Castle Peak, Bull Gulch), one in Garfield (Hack Lake), and one in Pitkin (Eagle Mountain adjacent to Maroon Bells Wilderness).
- WSA is a road less area that was inventoried and found to have wilderness characteristics. Reported these areas to congress in 1981. Awaiting Congressional action on designation.
- Wilderness Act defines wilderness characteristics.
 - Naturalness
 - Outstanding opportunities,
 - Size,
 - Other values
- Managed under an interim management policy (IMP):
 - Do not impair wilderness values until Congress acts.
- Authority to designate wilderness study areas is provided for through FLPMA. BLM is no longer allowed to designate WSA via *Utah v. Norton*.
- Only Congress can release WSAs. Existing WSAs will remain managed under IMP.
- Pitkin County has placed ~3,000 acres of conservation easements around Eagle Mountain.
- Wilderness Characteristics Assessment: Under FLPMA, BLM can continue to look at Wilderness Characteristics and manage for those characteristics.
- There were eight wilderness proposals submitted by citizen groups. Some overlap existing WSAs.
 - Pisgah Mountain – 15,679 acres analyzed; Visual Resource Management (VRM) II and IV; limited travel to designated route; road maintenance issues; no leases.
 - Castle Peak – 16,263 acres analyzed as Wilderness Characteristics (12,237 acres currently a WSA), additional acres are to the north and east of the WSA; VRM II; non-motorized and non-mechanized;
 - Bull Gulch (same as WSA) – 15,155 acres analyzed; very remote; VRM II; very few trails; managed as a WSA; closed to motorized and mechanized uses.
 - Deep Creek – 4,422 acres analyzed; 2,470 acres managed as an ACEC; VRM II; ACEC closed to motorized; Wild and Scenic River eligible, suitability to be determined in RMP; recommended for withdrawal for limestone in 1984 (never withdrawn).
 - Thompson Creek – 8,171 acres analyzed, 4,286 acres managed as ACEC and SRMA; VRM I (ACEC) and VRM II; ACEC closed to motorized.
 - Maroon Bells-Addition – 316 acres analyzed; 330 managed as WSA; VRM II; open to travel; recommended by public as wilderness.
 - Flat Top Addition – 3,558 acres analyzed, 10 acres managed as WSA; VRM II; 3,100 acres are managed as SRMA for non-motorized activities; has deer and elk winter range; adjacent to US Forest Service lands proposed for wilderness; NSO on SRMA.
 - Gran Hogback – 11, 701 acres analyzed; fairly few roads; 15 active leases, has coal resources and right-of-ways; VRM Class II.
- BLM doing a separate assessment on these for naturalness and outstanding values.

- Need to assess how these areas can be managed for these values. This can be done by special designations (ACECs, SRMAs, VRM classes) or through stipulations or a special management prescription (e.g., special management plan for the area).
- VRM system identifies and evaluates scenic values to determine appropriate level of management. Assignment of the level of VRM has two purposes: provide basis for considering visual values in the RMP; and reflects the value determinations made in the RMP.
- There are four classes, and each class has specific objectives. Class I is most visually sensitive, Class 4 allows for most visual modification of the landscape.
- Proposed VRM Goal: Protect the open spaces, the natural aesthetics and scenic vistas that communities consider a social and environmental benefit.
- Proposed VRM Objective: Maintain visual quality and integrity in accordance with visual resource manage classes.
- Possible Action: Design considerations, BMPs, design techniques, and lease notices.
- Currently VRM Class II has NSOs on steep areas along I-70 corridor.
- RAC comment: Seems like there have been conflicts between vegetation treatments and VRM objectives.
- VRM should not be used as a tool to preclude activities but to minimize impacts and enhance design characteristics.
- RAC question: How is key observation points determined? BLM response: Key observations picked by areas identified by the public or other important areas. Visual contrast rating set up for areas with high concentration of users.
- RAC question: Does an area lose ratings if a scar can be scene? BLM response: Solitude does not have to happen everywhere in a unit.
- RAC question: Is Pisgah Mountain along the Colorado River? BLM response: Yes. VRM would compliment river corridor management. There are different levels of protection that can compliment each other. Can have multiple layers of protection.
- RAC question: How are existing roads handled in proposed WSAs? BLM response: Can be handled differently under different alternatives. Motorized use is generally closed to preserve the wilderness characteristics. There can be trails for mechanized use. There would be a conflict with mountain biking if wilderness (comment).
- RAC question: How is BLM handling military helicopter operations? BLM response: EA was completed and a permit was issued which was administratively appealed. Helicopter use has been occurring since the 1980s.
- Joint eligibility on Deep Creek with the White River.
- Currently a prescription for wilderness characteristics.

Energy

- Handout: Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario for Oil and Gas (PowerPoint presentation).
- Fred Conrath from the BLM Glenwood Springs Field/Energy Office presented energy development. See PowerPoint presentation.
- RFD is not a “decision document”. Information is used in the NEPA document.
- RAC question: Are there reclamation standards? BLM response: Yes, included in the COAs. Have been changed in the Roan Plan.
- Interim reclamation used during operations over a long period of time. Temporary measures used when companies forced off pads due to things such as temporary restrictions. Final reclamation when resource is depleted.
- RAC question? Are there spacing requirements? BLM response: Yes, varies by location (i.e., 10 acres to 160). Resource reservoir characteristics determine if directional drilling is an option.
- Water displacements; drilling water recycled and moved from location to location.
- Eagle area is a low potential development area because the basin doesn’t have thermal maturity like high potential areas.
- RAC question: How does RFD integrate activity on private land? BLM response: BLM must look at all lands in the management boundary (address cumulative effects). Restrictions on public land could put

more activity on private land. BLM is trying to analyze opportunities to remove timing restrictions if they may not be needed in order to reduce the number of times an operator needs to breakdown/setup operations.

- David Batts discussed how RMP needs to decide what areas are open or closed for leasing (includes non-fluid minerals as well.
 - Closed: WSAs
 - Open: Areas with typical lease terms (BMPs, etc.)
 - Can also use major stipulations (NSOs) and minor stipulations (CSOs and timing limitations). Oil and gas stipulations can be separate from other mineral stipulations and vice versa.
- This RMP will apply under different alternatives where major stipulations should be. Minor constraints brought in under environmental and socioeconomics. There are different phases of leasing. RMP covers compliance for leases. Additional compliance determined during development process. New stipulations could be added when a lease expires. Due diligence on leases are ten years.
- RMP can provide guidance for incentives for operators; specifics may not be appropriate.
- Standards terms of agreement in leases include 200 meter rule (BLM can move operator 200 meters within the lease) and can prevent them from drilling during a 60-day period. Most drillers work with the BLM to accommodate the BLM's request. These are BLM terms nationwide. The RMP can develop additional terms (i.e., Conditions of Approvals (COAs), etc.). RMP needs to include COAs to mitigate future impacts for leased sites. RMP can state that certain areas shouldn't have leases renewed due to COAs for specific resources that need to be protected. Alternatives could state that relinquished leases could not be renewed; however, the benefit of this type of statement needs to be considered.
- RMP needs to look at ways to improve operations on existing leases.

ROUND ROBIN DISCUSSION/CHARETTE ON RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

- Handouts: Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Elk Winter Range Map; Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Fisheries Map; Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Canada Lynx Range Habitat Map; Glenwood Springs Field Office BLM Greater sage Grouse Map
- Alternative C: Emphasizes resource protection and sustaining the ecological integrity of habitats for all priority plant, wildlife and fish species, particularly the habitats needed for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The alternative would offer environmental, social and bequest (inheritance) outcomes achieved by sustaining relatively physically unmodified landscapes, areas with wilderness characteristics.....(protection of land values)
 - Recreational demand and uses
 - Stay on designated trails
 - Seasonal closures
 - Dispersed recreation emphasis
 - More non-mechanized activities in certain areas (zoning for mechanized)
 - Horses
 - Potentially fewer SRMAs; maybe have strategic SRMAs
 - Fewer trailheads; have more directional trails
 - Upland outfitters
 - Energy development
 - More closed areas
 - More stipulations
 - Utilize best available technology to minimize impacts
 - Incorporate evaporation ponds
 - Employee housing on federal lands
 - Fish & Wildlife (including Special Status Species)
 - Proactive with prioritizing for more species
 - Improve habitat
 - Use of treatments
 - Preserve riparian areas (waterways) and migration corridors
 - Implement seasonal closures (evaluate)
 - Vegetation (includes Forestry)

- Establish reference areas to use as control groups
- Control noxious weeds
- Active role to encourage healthy vegetation
- Revegetation
- Use grazing for enhancement
- Forage for wildlife
- Sagebrush habitat and sagebrush-dependent species
 - Implement treatments
 - Control pinyon-juniper encroachment
 - Establish reference areas
 - Use of wildfire
 - Proactive improvements to historical habitats
- Special designations
 - More special designations in Alternative C
 - All Wild and Scenic River segments
- Alternative D: Would emphasize a mix of multiple land uses. Management direction would focus on the direct use of public lands and their potential for producing commodities and offering services in an environmentally responsible manner. Ecological constraints may limit the extent of resource use and recreation activities in some locations.....
 - Recreational demand and uses
 - Less SRMAs because of multiple use (or more SRMAs?)
 - Promote recreation
 - More developed facilities
 - More trails, permits, guides
 - Active marketing of recreation opportunities (specific markets)
 - (may not be favorable for guided experiences)
 - Availability of river uses
 - More routes
 - May not be favorable for some types of guided experiences
 - Energy development
 - Combining multiple uses
 - Can't be all things for all of the resources
 - Fewer stipulations
 - More land open to leasing
 - Geographic designations
 - More opportunities for employee housing
 - Water treatment facilities (Mesa County)
 - Fish & Wildlife (including Special Status Species)
 - Provide more access points for fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing
 - Focus on general public use (vs. guided)
 - Preserve status quo
 - Include mitigation
 - Vegetation (includes Forestry)
 - Timber production
 - Beetle-kill harvest
 - Preserve status quo
 - Include mitigation
 - Reintroduce sheep grazing
 - More allotments or combine allotments
 - Use grazing tools
 - Maintain status quo
 - Sagebrush habitat and sagebrush-dependent species
 - Firewood permits for pinyon-juniper
 - Include mitigation
 - Special designations

- Fewer designations
- Target designations for certain areas
- No Wild and Scenic River segments

OTHER ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

- Riparian Resources. PowerPoint presentation was passed out to the group for their review. Comments can be provided to Brian Hopkins.

NEXT MEETINGS

- Wednesday, February 20, 2008 (5:00 – 8:30 pm):
 - Meeting will continue the round robin discussions on concepts for ranges of alternatives. Complete fields for Alternative B.
- Wednesday, February 27, 2008 (5:00 – 8:30 pm):
 - Meeting will focus on getting the group's feedback on range of alternatives.

ACTION ITEMS

- For future meeting dates, see "Next Meeting" above.
- BLM:** Post PowerPoint presentations on the ftp site "Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario for Oil and Gas"; "Wilderness Study Areas"
- Prepare handout for next meeting that expands on the ideas presented for alternatives C and D during the round robin discussions.
- Prepare draft concepts for Alternative B resource areas and provide at next meeting.

CRR – February 6, 2008