



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
3170 EAST MAIN STREET  
CANON CITY, COLORADO 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
CANON CITY, CO  
January 25, 2006

**MINUTES**

**Group 1**

**Virginia Patton**  
**Gene King**  
**Jim Coleman**

**Group 2**

**Lucy Bambrey**  
**Josh Osterhoudt**  
**Larry Strohl**  
**Donna Murphy**  
**Aaron Clark**

**Group 3**

**Loren Whittemore**  
**Michael Bush**  
**Joe Duda**  
**Frances Mathews**

RAC Members not in attendance: Charles Rech, Rick Thompson and Jim Bensberg

**GUESTS:** Sal Pace, Congressman Salazar's Pueblo Office; Doris Morgan, Senator Allard's Pueblo Office; SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society; Evelyn Nelson from Swissvale;

**BLM/FS PERSONNEL:** Roy Masinton, Ken Smith, Linda McGlothlen, Mark Swinney, Dave Walker, Mike Cassell, Harvey Olson, Marilyn Schuyler, Denise Adamic.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS:** Loren welcomed new RAC Members Frances Mathews and Aaron Clark.

Council members had an election of officers. Loren Whittemore was elected Chair and Michael Bush, Vice-chair.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society is serving on the Arkansas Basin Roundtable and wanted to thank the BLM Office for keeping on top of the water quality issue on the Arkansas River.

Evelyn Nelson had concerns on rumors that the BLM had already approved the "Over the River Project" to have some land set aside for a storage building for their equipment. She also asked why they could not use the Roundhouse in Salida for the train and take people to see the project. She was also concerned with a statement the Artists made to her that they would have turnouts along Highway 50 to help deal with the amount of traffic.

**Roy Masinton** reassured her there was no merit to that rumor whatsoever. Cristo and Jeanne-Claude have met with the Union Pacific Railroad, BLM has not seen the documentation but was told they have permission to use the railroad right-of-way and

they anticipate putting a train back on the rails to haul in their anchors etc. if the project is approved. They expect to use the site at Texas Creek. That is not BLM or State administered land but on the railroad right of way. As far as positioning or pre-positioning material, BLM has not been approached on that subject. They would not work on the highway side during the height of the tourist season, but would work on the highway side to put in the anchors during the spring and fall. At any one time they are talking about not having any more than 200 yards of one lane of the highway closed and having professionals direct traffic during that time. Handling the traffic will be done by the Colorado Department of Transportation. To BLM's knowledge the artists are footing the bill for all cost connected with this project.

Frances Mathews asked if the RAC would be doing a resolution on this at some point? Roy responded that as a RAC they can do that at any time but as of now we have no environmental document to hand the Council to actually see the potential impacts. It is hoped an environmental document will be ready by mid- summer. If the project is approved, the earliest it could happen is 2009. When the Environmental Assessment is completed there will be another opportunity for the public to comment.

#### **MANAGERS UPDATE:**

**Mark Swinney, San Luis Valley:** Priorities for both BLM and USFS are the term permit renewals and the Recession Act. The USFS is dealing with renewals of the EA's and BLM is dealing with the Rangeland Health Analysis on the allotments as they expire and new term permits need to be reissued. Completion is still required before 2009. On the Rio Grande Forest the Recession Act was held up because of appeals on the Forest Plan. There are several timber salvage sales being attempted in various stages of development. There are a few prescribed fires they are hoping to conduct and a 400 acre fuels treatment project starting February 1 on the west side of Blanca Peak. There are also a couple of test towers for wind energy.

**Roy Masinton, Royal Gorge Field Manager:** At the last meeting the RAC passed a resolution concerning a situation involving commercial boater access at the Ruby Mountain Recreation Site in the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area. In November Roy signed a Decision Record (DR) for the Environmental Assessment. Mr. Jim Pike, an adjacent land owner appealed and requested a stay of the DR. On January 12, the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) affirmed the DR and the Request for a Stay was denied as moot. Mr. Pike is asking the IBLA to reconsider their ruling.

The **Black Hawk Exchange** is moving forward and the **Sipal Land Exchange** in South Park has closed. BLM is nearing completion of the land tenure adjustment for South Park and the RAC will be getting a final version of this plan amendment in the near future.

There was a presentation at the last meeting concerning the **Salida Ditch Company** and what they did in the reconstruction of their ditch. Since then the Army Corp of Engineers has asked the Salida Ditch Company for an after-the-fact permit and they have complied. They have proposed to leave the fill where it is - RGFO staff is not happy and will make significant comments to make sure there is some stabilization of that half mile of river to

prevent hundreds of tons of material from being washed down river and having a significant impact on water quality as well as fisheries habitat in the river.

**Browns Canyon Wilderness** legislation has been sent to Committee. Loren Whittemore commented that an estimated 80% of the people in the local area want the area designated as wilderness. Private land is not affected.

**The Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (TMP)** is progressing and alternatives are being developed that will be put in the EA and will be sent out to the public. The RAC will have the opportunity to develop a resolution in support of one of those alternatives or develop an alternative of their own. The Arkansas River TMP sub-committee is made up of Gene King, Virginia Patton, Jim Bensberg, Josh Osterhoudt, Donna Murphy and Rick Thompson. BLM will get the draft out by the end of the year for everyone to review and then have another round of public meetings.

**San Luis Valley Issues; Mark Swinney:** Gave an update on Travel Management in the San Luis Valley. They are doing a TMP because of the huge increase and demand for recreation on public lands. They now up to 88 sub-divisions. There is a lot of demand in recreational vehicle activity and that will result in escalating levels of resource damage if it is not managed.

Basic goals are to provide public access to public lands, enhance the motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities and comply with public land health standards. There have been two sets of public meetings, the initial scoping and a scoping review. Public comments have been evaluated and used to develop goals and objectives on future condition and develop alternatives. To date a draft EA is being developed. A series of meetings will be held to review the EA. As soon as the EA is completed, it will be mailed to RAC members. The RAC sub-committee came down and we went through about 120 routes and came up with some recommended changes. The staff is now in the process of getting feed back on their recommended changes.

Gene King stated he was impressed with all of the detail of the 1600 routes. There are complete justifications for all of the roads and trails and what they are going to do.

**Potential issues for RAC Involvement, Roy Masinton:** Roy discussed several issues with the Council to see which ones they wanted to be involved with this year that would be of benefit to BLM.

**Access Policy to Public Lands** – This is an extremely controversial issue. The current Policy is if the general public does not have access through a given point to public land it will be closed to everyone. There are hundreds of sub-divisions and thousands of property owners next to BLM land who want their own access gate for motorized access. Often BLM does not have administrative access either. The RGFO has developed a written policy in regards to this issue.

**Arkansas River Travel Management Plan Alternatives** – At some point the RAC will be given the alternatives and will have the opportunity to select one of the alternatives and support it or identify an alternative of their own.

**Millsap Gulch** – This is an erosion problem with mine tailings at Millsap Gulch near Victor. These mine tailings erode and fill up irrigation ditches, streams and are spread across land downstream. A partnership has been put together between BLM, Cripple Creek and Victor Mine and Teller County. So far we have been unsuccessful in getting the money needed to go forward to remedy this issue. Support from the RAC would be very beneficial in helping us get the grant money needed to get this resolved. Fremont County has also sent letters of support in conjunction with the grant application.

**Need for new fine system** – When our Law Enforcement Officer gives someone a citation, generally that citation is for \$50. If the state or county issues a similar citation it is for a considerably larger amount. Our enforcement authority is not having the effect it could have if there were realistic fines in place. Potentially a resolution passed by the RAC could add some emphasis to this issue in our State Office.

**Additional Law Enforcement Officer** –The RGFO Law Enforcement Officer deals with over 400 cases a year and there is a need for an additional Officer. We have been unable to get the funding for an additional Officer even though year after year we have demonstrated the need. We would like to get RAC support and possibly a resolution in support of this issue.

**Motorcycle Trials Events** – We have 3 locations in the Arkansas River Travel Management Planning (TMP) area where Trials events are held. These events are sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Trials Association and are held each year in a different location to give the areas a chance to rest. The Rocky Mountain Trials Association wants BLM to consider allowing the places where they hold these events to be opened year round so people can practice in these areas. Currently these locations are in “open” Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) areas. The problem is RGFO travel management planning is trying to move away from these “open” areas. We have also received input from various people who don’t think it is even appropriate that these events are held on public lands. Another problem is that where they do the event is almost solid rock so they are not causing any type of erosion, but in order to get to different staging areas they do create trails in areas where the soils are more susceptible to erosion. Consequently a lot of these trails get used between events so resource damage is beginning in some areas. The questions are; (1) should BLM continue to allow the Trials events on public lands? (2) if allowed, should BLM limit the number of areas that are currently permitted or should we consider additional areas (3) if permitted, should the area(s) be designated as “open” for Trials riding year round?

Gene King suggested this issue be put on the March schedule and invite a speaker from the Rocky Mountain Trials Association for more information. Jim Coleman suggested Dr Lund be asked to speak at the next RAC meeting. He is from Salida and involved with Trials events.

## **LUNCH**

### **Issues continued:**

Loren Whittemore stated the Motorcycle Trials Events issue should be brought forward to the March RAC meeting and the Access to Public Lands issue at the May meeting. For Millsap Gulch and the need for an additional Law Enforcement Officer, the staff can develop a draft resolution to be discussed at the March meeting. The Draft Resolutions can be mailed to the Members prior to the meeting.

Roy commented that the issue of a need for a new fine system may be more complex. He will talk with Dorothy Bensusan a Law Enforcement Officer in the State Office and if they decide it can be addressed with a draft resolution for the next meeting, it will be done that way. If not, he will ask Dorothy to brief the Council at the May meeting.

The Access to Public Lands issue is more complex and will be on the May meeting agenda.

**Statewide Special Recreation Permit Applications Fee, Harvey Olson (RGFO):** At the state level BLM is trying to get the Special Recreation Permit (SRP) Program uniform throughout the state. It makes it difficult when permits are handled differently in each office and the fees are not the same. They are trying to implement a statewide permit application fee, renewal fee and a transfer fee.

The proposal is a new application fee of \$100, a transfer fee for a permit of \$100 and a renewal fee of \$50. There are approximately 46 permits for the Royal Gorge Field Office. All of the SRP dollars come back to the agency. BLM is doing a lot of scoping across the state, talking to the permittees. There is a 30 day public comment period and a 180 day waiting period this year to let folks know what is going to happen.

The motion for a Resolution in support of the proposed SRP Applications Fee was made by Donna Murphy, seconded by Lucy Bambry and passed unanimously. It was decided that Ken would write the resolution and send it to RAC members for comment to Loren.

**Resource Monitoring, Mike Cassell (RGFO):** In the last 5 years BLM has been looking at Range Health Assessment. This is a process the BLM has come up with to assess the health of the land. With assessments you can look at a large area of ground and get an initial idea of what is happening on that ground. The RGFO has developed a quick and easy way for staff to get into the computer look at a piece of land and see what is going on. (Using a power point, Mike showed the RAC examples of the different links, photos, maps and data that staff can access in this program.)

**Black Hawk Amendment to Gold Belt TMP Workshop, Dave Walker (RGFO):** Roy explained BLM is acquiring, through exchange, some land north of Canon City and wants to have travel management planning in place when the acquisition is complete. This would be an amendment to the Gold Belt Travel Management Plan.

Dave said he is asking the RAC members to give him a critique or any concerns they might have with the proposed action or if there is another alternative that is not included in the EA. RAC Members were given a packet containing descriptions of the proposed action and alternatives that are being evaluated in the EA including maps and background information. There are 2 parcels involved in this exchange, the 320 acre Garden Park parcel and the 1,280 acre Shaws Park parcel.

Joseph Duda stated he did not have enough information to recommend a proposed action but he would say the range of alternatives seemed reasonable.

Roy Masinton stated that based on the discussion, BLM will proceed with the alternatives that we have and we will come back to the RAC for their input, once the EA has been completed and released for public comment.

The next meeting is March 15, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Roy L. Masinton  
Royal Gorge Field Manager  
Bureau of Land Management

Loren R. Whittemore  
Chairman  
Front Range Resource Advisory Council