

UPPER COLUMBIA-SALMON CLEARWATER DISTRICT
RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING

NOVEMBER 12 and 13, 2003
Grant Creek Inn
Missoula, Montana

RAC Members in Attendance: Troy Elmore, Doug Boggan, Ben O'Neal, Cora Patterson, Dennis Thornock, Jim Hawkins, David Nelson, Bob Barry, Cliff Osborne, Jerry Shriner, John Barker, and Mark Taylor.

RAC Members Absent: Louise Stark, Bruce Brewer, and Bill Barteaux

BLM Employees in Attendance: Fritz, Rennebaum, Lew Brown and Stephanie Snook

Fritz opened up the meeting explaining the organizational structure and location of the BLM offices in Idaho as well as the three categories of the RAC. John Barker is the elected official on the 15 member Council. In the past, an elected official had to be in attendance in order for Fritz to receive the council's resolution. This administration has relaxed that rule in that only a quorum is required and the elected official does not need to be in attendance in order for the Council to make a recommendation to BLM.

Fritz explained his and Stephanie's role in the Council and that members should feel free to speak their minds and represent their subjects.

Stephanie reviewed housekeeping and travel reimbursement issues. The RAC member list of names, addresses and phone numbers were reviewed. All RAC members have email so Stephanie will be sending most information out in this manner. If it is a large document she will mail it to those who request mail delivery (Doug and Bob Barry) John A.K. Barker noticed a misspelling of his last name on our BLM website. Stephanie will see that this gets corrected.

RAC notebooks were handed out to the new members and all RAC members were asked to please maintain the information in these notebooks. More information will be handed out throughout the meeting, including meeting minutes that should be kept in these note books. In a previous meeting it was decided that the out-going RAC members would turn their notebook back in for use by a new member.

The BLM's National RAC Coordinator in Phoenix, Twinkle Thompson, is preparing a national RAC orientation program or package. Stephanie will provide training for the new RAC members as soon as possible.

The meeting was then turned over to Doug Boggan, the vice-chairperson.

Doug said that he feels our RAC has been the most successful RAC in the state, possibly the nation. Doug thought the training has been very helpful. Issues that meant a lot to RAC members have been brought forward at meetings and discussed and he is impressed that it is an excellent way to get information to BLM.

Ground rules have been established for RAC meetings and were voted upon at the very first RAC meeting. Consensus generally will be sought for topics, however, if a vote is necessary, a quorum of three members from each group must be available to vote and pass a resolution. Keep an open-mind to all points of view. Common goal is the same but just reached in different ways.

Fritz said that the council has always asked that all subgroup recommendation be brought forward to the entire RAC for a vote.

Stephanie discussed topics that were listed as High Priority Items from previous meetings:

- The Role of Fire in Watershed Health which included
 - ✓ Fuel reduction and thinning
 - ✓ Role of prescribed fire
 - ✓ Cheatgrass/fire interaction
 - ✓ Smoke management
 - ✓ Economic development
 - ✓ Restore ponderosa pine habitat and many others . . .
- Service First Projects
- RAC member Reappointments. Concerns had been carried forward about the length of time that it takes to get the appointments made. Suggestions were also made to allow those persons wishing to be renominated to not resubmit the paperwork. No changes have been made nationally. Final selection of RAC members was not completed again this year until the end of September.
- Public Input Process – interested in BLM’s process.
- Endangered Species Act
- FS & BLM RAC’s work together.
- Other Topics, time permitting
 - Land use planning
 - Off-highway vehicle use
 - Vegetation treatments
 - Weeds
 - Mine waste clean up
 - Land exchanges/sales /acquisitions.

There were UCSC RAC meetings held in October and November 2000 and in March, June and September of 2003. In addition, the RAC Chairs met in Phoenix and Washington D.C. as well as attended RAC Chair meetings in Boise. The RAC Charter says the RAC will meet from two to four times annually.

March 2003 meeting minutes were handed out to discuss. Stephanie reviewed the highlights for those who were not in attendance at the March meeting.

- BLM Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV) Draft Strategy and the Idaho Parks and Recreation Proposal for the proposed Challis OHV trail use
- Members of the public attended the meeting to present information about the fee demo project on the Salmon and Middle Fork Salmon Rivers. Each meeting has a public comment period and we don't always know ahead of time if someone will be attending.
- It was decided that Subgroups would be formed on an as-needed basis.
- RAC renomination process.
- Fire management program presentation by Bruce Martinek, BLM UCSC Fire Use Specialist, duty stationed in Coeur d'Alene.

Fritz stressed how important our RAC meetings are to the BLM in Washington D.C. and how they look at the RAC's recommendations. WO will provide feedback to the RAC on their recommendations.

Doug Boggan mentioned how K Lynn (BLM Idaho State Director) is well-known throughout the state and respected by many.

The June 2003 meeting, held in Challis, was discussed next. Minutes from the meeting were handed out for review and approval. A Motion was made by John Barker to approve the meeting minutes for June as corrected. Motion seconded by David Nelson. Motion Carried.

- Fritz talked about the field trip and the site to burn where there was sheep habitat. The burn was conducted this fall and considered quite successful.
- Visited the new Challis horse corrals. Reviewed the wild horse and burro program and discussed how it is run.
- Met with ranchers and grazing permittees in the area of the proposed OHV loop trail and discussed various issues, such as weeds, enforcement and other concerns.
- Visited Herd Creek and looked at an area where culverts will be replaced to improve fish passage. Also met with grazing permittee and discussed how the listing of salmon and steelhead have affected his herd size and requirements for grazing in the area.
- Discussed Rangeland standards and guidelines review.
- Grass stubble-height was discussed as Fish and Wildlife standards, not BLM's.

David Nelson thought it was one of the better meetings attended.

The September 2003 meeting was discussed and minutes handed out for review and approval. A Motion was made by John Barker to approve the meeting minutes for September 2003 as corrected. Motion seconded by David Nelson. Motion Carried.

- The primary purpose of the meeting, which was conducted via conference call, was to review and discuss the new Initiative entitled **Sustaining Working Landscapes**. As a result of this meeting, the RAC formed a recommendation that

supported the Initiative by saying we (BLM) are going in the right direction but the RAC had concerns about giving up control of public lands to grazing permit holders. The RAC felt government should still manage these lands.

- The second subject was the **National Sage-grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy**. Mark Hilliard, Wildlife Biologist for BLM, explained the national strategy and need for habitat conservation. Each state will also prepare a Habitat Conservation Strategy. Overall, the RAC supported this effort and would like to see changes made on the land, less planning and more doing. It was explained that a habitat conservation strategy is an attempt to improve habitat so that it will not be necessary to list the species as threatened or endangered.
- The final topic was the **Idaho BLM Organizational Refinement** which Fritz headed up at K Lynn's request. The RAC accepted the refinement proposal with some concerns. K Lynn and others participated in this portion of the conference call.

Fritz discussed the **Idaho Organization Refinement** process for the benefit of the new members. See the notes from the September 4, 2003 meeting for complete details.

Recommendations have been forwarded to the BLM Director, Kathleen Clarke. All RAC recommendations and resolutions for the refinement have been forwarded to K Lynn. The RACs have endorsed K Lynn's plans.

Discussion on Idaho BLM Refinement:

- A question was asked as to why the lines were drawn on State boundaries as opposed to FS regional management. The political reality is that BLM is organized by States with the few exceptions.
- A question was asked about what happens to this present RAC group with the reorganization. Fritz said there will be four RACs if the refinement is approved.
- RAC members were concerned with permits that could cross more than one Field Office. Would a permit be required with each new field office rather than just one or two field offices as it is handled now? Fritz said that District personnel could cross over into other field offices so there would not be more people for the public to contact for permit issuance.
- One RAC member suggested to hold off on nominating RAC members for the new District boundaries until the refinement is in place; rather than before the Districts are changed. He also asked why it takes so long to have RAC members nominated. Stephanie briefly explained the review process. Fritz said recommendations were made to WO to shorten the time for finalizing RAC nominees.
- A formal recommendation from the RAC may need to be made outlining suggestions on how to complete the next nomination process based on the new District boundaries. RAC members should live in the area where they serve. All this should take place when there are enough new members to newly organized RAC. There was concern that there may not be enough members living in the area to form each RAC. The charter requires the RAC members to live in the area they represent. Current RAC members should be allowed to be held-over

- (serving on one of the four new RACs) because they would provide the historical perspectives.
- If the refinement is approved by December 31, 2003, then we will need to look at the number of members whose terms are due to expire. Three people have to be in each interest group to provide a quorum. A suggestion was made to get rid of the quorum requirements and to work within residential areas for members. In September 2004, there will be five UCSC RAC members whose terms expire. The nomination process that takes place each spring should allow time for the four BLM Districts to recruit members within their boundaries. RAC Members who are now on the UCSC RAC and who will reside within the new Upper Snake River District boundary will most likely transfer to that RAC. The RAC Coordinators (Stephanie and others) are making some recommendations as to how this process can work best.

RECOMMENDATION

A motion was made by Ben O'Neal and seconded by John Barker: UCSC RAC recommends holding over existing RAC members, filling vacancies by 10/1/04, and allowing RAC members to change categories if necessary.

Discussion: In order to be more specific about why the recommendation is made, we should add that we recommend there be four RACs instead of three with the new BLM Refinement Proposal.

Jim Hawkins amended the motion to add: Recommend four RACs instead of three with the new BLM Refinement Proposal. Amendment seconded by John Barker.

BLM Refinement AMENDED RECOMMENDATION: UCSC RAC recommends there be four RACs in Idaho due to the BLM Organization Refinement and further recommends holding over existing RAC members, filling vacancies by 10/1/04, and allowing RAC members to change categories if necessary. Motion carried.

Fee Demo Subgroup Report on the Recreation Fee Demo Project for the Salmon River and Middle Fork Salmon River (Salmon-Challis National Forests) by Doug Boggan.

The Fee Demo project is for users on the Salmon and Middle Fork Salmon Rivers to pay a fee of \$5/day. The fee goes into a fund and is spent on various projects. Minor resistance was met for money spent for weed control.

Doug Boggan believes additional pre-planning for public involvement is necessary for better representation of public opinion.

OHV Subgroup Report by Mark Taylor

Mark reported on a conference call, July 31, 2003, with Terry Heslin and the other RAC OHV Subgroup members. He expressed disappointment in the way the issues presented by the UCSC RAC were handled. Only two topics presented by UCSC RAC were carried forward in some manner. During the meeting, someone said that weed management is not that important and OHVs didn't spread noxious weed growth. That

statement was taken as the final word and there was no further discussion of weeds as an issue for OHV use.

The OHV Subgroup membership needs to be reviewed since Bill Madonna is no longer on the RAC. After some discussion the following volunteered to be on this subgroup: Mark Taylor (lead), John Barker, Jim Hawkins, and Troy Elmore.

John Barker suggested that BLM give the RAC members more lead time about upcoming meetings. The OHV meetings had short notice and made it difficult for RAC members to attend.

OHV RECOMMENDATION: Mark Taylor made a motion to re-submit the OHV recommendation to BLM with a request for a written response on how the recommendations will be incorporated into Idaho BLM OHV management plan, and if not incorporated, why not? David Nelson seconded motion. Motion carried.

Sustainability Conference by Mark Taylor

Mark attended a conference last spring and reported on it during our June meeting in Challis. More information about Sustainable Northwest can be found on the website at: www.sustainablenorthwest.org.

The concept is quite simple and is something BLM gets involved in all the time: Community problem solving involving Environmental interest, people, and economic interest. The goal of SNW is community problem-solving with peaceful solutions involving a diverse group of interests and issues of the northwest, such as Lemhi watershed project or Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative. Idaho contingents wanted to bring this concept together to work out issues in the state.

Stephanie handed out a Sustainability Concept Conference paper. Efforts are underway to put together a conference to Southeastern Idaho, Northern Idaho and one in Boise which would bring the ideas from the first two conferences together to form resolutions to issues. Mark and Stephanie participated in a conference call to try and see what efforts are already underway throughout Idaho. A conference of this type takes a lot of planning and money. This information is being provided to you for your information only, no decision is necessary. During the Challis meeting, the RAC expressed interest in helping bring a conference to Idaho. Mark will add the RAC members to the email distribution list for additional information about the conference.

Meeting adjourned for the day at 5:40 p.m.

November 13, 2003

The RAC meeting began at 8:05 a.m. with the same members present

WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM

Jim Hawkins asked how much weight the RAC would carry if they asked to discontinue or make changes in the Wild Horse and Burro program so it would be somewhat more

cost-effective. Fritz said RAC comments/resolutions do have an impact on programs and encouraged members to express their views.

Tom Miles joined the RAC on the conference call, introduced himself as the Idaho BLM Idaho Wild Horse and Burro Program Lead. He gave an introduction into the Idaho WH&B program. There are six herd management areas in ID with established Appropriate Management Levels (AML) which determines a population range for the number of horses to be maintained in each of the herd areas. Idaho has a team of people who work all of the adoptions. There are about 30 employees in ID involved in this program. K Lynn has instructed them to remove horses under 5 years of age for adoption while horses older than 5 would be released back on the range.

ID has 3 to 4 adoptions per year at various locations to try and reach the greatest number and variety of people to adopt them. We manage about 800 head of horses in Idaho.

There are six Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in Idaho, five in the Lower Snake River District (LSRD) and one in UCSC District (Challis). Four HMAs in LSRD were gathered last week and Challis will have a gather in August, 2004. Saylor Creek HMA has not had a gather this year where there are about 240 horses. On an average there is a 20-30% increase/year in the number of horses.

Horses are gathered within the HMA when the population gets to AML. It costs approximately \$400-750/horse to complete the gather and adoption process. If horses are not adopted, they are put in short-term holding facilities located all over the west. If they are not adopted out after three attempts they are sent to Oklahoma or Kansas where the long-term facilities are located. It costs \$4.00/day/horse to keep them in short-term care facilities where they are in corrals and have to be fed, watered, veterinary care, etc. as opposed to the long-term facilities which cost \$1.25/animal/day because the horses are out on irrigated pasture and there are less handling costs.

There are 11,500 horses in long-term care facilities which equals \$5,175,000/year.
There are 9,800 horses in short-term holding facilities which equal \$14,308,000/year.
The total annual cost is \$19,483,000

During the Boise horse gather, 75 to 100 horses will be gathered of which 50 horses, age 5 and under will be processed for adoption. Those older than 5 are returned to the range if in good health. All those six to nine years go back to the range.

Fertilizer control drug – PZP (Porcine Zona Pellucida) prevents eggs from being fertilized for the next 2 years. In LSRD all mares turned back to the range were treated with PZP and will be monitored to see how effective it is.

BLM is required to maintain 6 HMA's in Idaho and will as long as there is a healthy, thriving herd.

Most horses are not halter broken. Adoptees are required to bring their own halter. A Trainer is at each adoptions and he will gentle them a bit. He can gentle about 4 horses a day.

National effort: Currently there are 35,000 wild horses and 5,000 burros on public land. We want to sustain 28,000 horses. Most of them are in Nevada and Wyoming in the west. Of 10,298 horses removed from public land 6,275 horses were adopted out and another 4,000 put in long-term facilities. We needed to increase the adoption rate of animals from public land. That's why we now only keep and adopt out the younger horses.

The goals include: to reach AML by 2005; leave the older horses on the range if possible; use the PZP on all the mares returned to range; adopt out the younger horses. There is work being done on a 4-year drug to administer to mares. Monitoring is being done by aircraft.

The national average cost to BLM per horse for an animal that is adopted is \$1,400. The average cost for a gathering in Idaho is \$750.

Questions/Answers:

How often are horses turned back to BLM? It is not often that horses are turned back to BLM. Since last January 2003, maybe 6 out of 150 animals were returned.

Are there restrictions on what the owner can do with a horse, can they sell it? After adoption, the horse is basically BLM's property for one-year. You can't take the horse to slaughter during the first year. After a year and once the owner has received their ownership papers, the owner can do whatever he/she wants with the horse. Individuals are limited to adopting 4 animals per year. Horses are aged by looking in the mouth to check the horse's teeth.

What is Idaho's adoption rate? LSRD herds, 2,000 gathered and all but 17 adopted. Idaho has very good figures for adoption.

HMA's can increase as much as 20 to 30 percent per year. That's why the PZP program on the mares is so important.

Discussion, after conference call with Tom Miles:

- Concerns over long-term effects of PZP on mares. Studies will continue.
- Gelding is more sanitary and permanent.
- Figure out a way to increase adoption rate rather than drugging the mares.
- Maybe drug could be given to poorer quality mares rather than generalizing the mares.
- Idaho may have more 'adoptable' horses than perhaps Nevada because of the quality of horses.
- Diminishing trends of recreational horses. More people want working horses.

-Saturation level of adoption program is being recognized. Adoptions were held in the East but that market is saturated as well. BLM is now trying internet advertising and adoptions.

-Salmon has best adoption rate in Idaho. It is rare to average a high percentage rate in the last few years. Fritz said that rates are around 35% in Idaho.

RECOMMENDATION: BLM should start reducing the total costs of this program and the total number of horses on the range within each state and nationally. Motion made by David Nelson, seconded by Bob Barry:

DISCUSSION:

The Recommendation should be more specific. A suggestion was made to reduce the herds to 25,000.

Mark made a suggestion: Re-evaluate the wild horse and burro program, including the laws that dictate it, to reduce the spending as well as reduce the impact of wild horses and burros on our native ecosystem.

Jerry Shriner felt that to be more effective, we need to be more specific about the program changes and suggested to focus on a part of it. He would like to see the RAC gather more information before making a recommendation. He would like to know where the long-term population is headed and the projected costs for long and short-term care as well as herd details such as size, confirmation, etc. In short-term care, if a horse isn't adopted the first-time, what is the likelihood of a second try at adoption?

Vote on Recommendation - Did not pass.

A Subgroup was created (David Nelson, Dennis Thornock, John Barker, and Jerry Shriner-lead) to gain more specific information and to make recommendations to the full RAC on what action to take next; what strategy to take and possibly send a recommendation to the National Wild Horse and Burro Program or other state RAC's. The other RAC's should be asked if they want to be involved in this issue. A Letter will be sent to other RAC's asking for involvement on this issue. This issue would be the Lower Snake RAC's. Upper Snake doesn't have horses now but should also be involved in order have state-wide RAC involvement.

WILD HORSE RECOMMENDATION: Notify other Idaho RACs regarding the USCS RACs concerns about the Wild Horse and Burro program and ask them if they are interested in joining the UCSC Subgroup for a State-wide recommendation. Motion made by Cora Patterson, seconded by Cliff Osborne. Motion passed unanimously

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Chair Nominations: Doug Boggan

Jim Hawkins moved on nomination, Jerry Barker seconded.

Voted unanimously for Doug Boggan for Chair for one-year term.

Vice-Chair Nominations: Jerry Shriner

Jim Hawkins moved on nomination, Dennis Thornock seconded.

Voted unanimously for Jerry Shriner for Vice-Chair for one-year term.

RECREATION FEE DEMO

Spike Thompson, Acting Salmon-Challis Forest Supervisor joined us on a conference call to discuss a recommendation that he had received from the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association regarding reducing the daily fee.

The FS has received a request/proposal to reduce the fee from \$5 to \$4/day. Concerns of amount of money spent on river patrol.

Reduce the amount of river patrol by \$100,000.

- public wants an open process of fee amounts. Good representation of different viewpoints before making decision. Doug Boggan encouraged Spike to run by all RAC members before proposing fee reduction.

Questions by RAC:

Q. If the fee is reduced and you still maintain the river patrol, which other program would be reduced? Is money taken out of the general budget?

A. We used carry-over from last year's budget including fire suppression money that was not used last year.

Q. What about next year? Where would the money come from next year? Which program would you be taking the money out of?

A. We are still considering reducing the fees to \$4 and would see how the FS budget can work into Fee-Demo dollars.

Q. How long are trips?

A. Most outfitters run on 6-day cycles.

Q. What does a trip cost to run a river?

A. Somewhere between the \$1200 to \$1500 dollar range. Each individual is charged, such as a family.

Spike said there have been concerns about what the fee demo money is being spent on. Some people believe that the FS may not be spending money in the most efficient way. FS wants to build the trust back and ask for public assistance on the whole fee system.

Q. Who have you talked with about this fee? How many private boaters?

A. There has been support from private boaters on \$4 or \$5 fee rather than the \$3.

Q. Is the opposition coming from groups who are just passing the fee onto their customers?

A. The bulk of the opposition is what the money is spent on and how receptive the FS has been to people providing input. People look at the fact that there is \$850,000 in the fund and we spend \$500,000. People are concerned there is a larger pool of money than expenses that need to be covered. The public feels that on-the-ground improvements have not been made with the fee money. Folks want more input and the FS to produce more with the capital investments (fees recovered). Spike is concerned there may be too much surplus money in the fund.

Q. Why isn't the work done on-the-ground instead of reducing the fee? Are you providing more infrastructure use or patrolling more than necessary? Is the fee right but the work is just not getting done?

A. We do need to do a better job in getting our planning done to finish improvements. Part of the history of the fees in general is a contention that if we charge a fee we will slowly reduce our appropriated dollars that go into that. There wasn't a big problem of river patrols. To meet the issue, let's take a look at it because we do have the money this year and give us a chance to supplement the fund and pay the administrative costs this year and see if there are any adjustments to make.

Q. Where does the BLM RAC fit into this right now?

A. It is my understanding that we try to work with the RAC to help us facilitate meeting with the public and getting input. Consider the RAC a big part of what he does. Hopefully getting input from RAC members will help reach a resolution on all of this. The BLM RAC is a big part of the process.

Q. If the RAC were to make a recommendation, some of the members feel they might have not received all the information from the players. Only a couple members have been on the river.

A. I know there are several new members. If there is anything I can do I will provide information. What do you think about the proposal to reduce the fee or leave it the same?

Q. \$100,000 is not used for river patrol, can it be used for other recreational fees?

A. It can be used for other programs such as trails and other recreational programs that need the money.

Q. What are the improvements along river?

A. A new boat launch and improvements at Boundary Creek.

Q. How many total dollars are left for capital improvements?

A. We have been using around \$500,000 (average) for administration, river patrol, and maintenance. We saved about \$100,000 in river patrol so will have \$400,000 available for capital improvements.

Q. As of this date, have there been any contracts on the boat launches?

A. Some capital investment work has been done; toilets, camp site restorations and various repairs. We will need another \$500,000 to do more in the future.

Q. Your intention was not to reduce the river patrol even if money is reduced? Is your long-term objective to reduce river patrols?

A. No, the river patrols now are about the right amount. We are reluctant to reduce river patrols if the fees are lowered. At this time, the public is happy with the amount of patrols done. The licensed outfitters think the Forest Service should pick up a lot of river patrol costs.

Q. Of the money collected, what percentage comes from commercial operators and what percentage comes from private individuals?

A. My guess is the groups are similar to contributions made, perhaps 50/50 or 40/60. I don't have the numbers at hand at this time.

Q. If the RAC were to make a recommendation to reduce the fee to \$4 or whatever and 50% comes from private and 50% from outfitters, would it be a fair assessment that the lower fee favors outfitters?

A. Outfitters are the only ones he's heard from that want the fee reduced.

The UCSC RAC was not comfortable passing a recommendation if the FS only heard from one group, the outfitters.

Spike: Private boaters are supportive of the \$5 fee. He is not sure if they would, or not, support the \$4 fee.

Q. What kind of time frame are you looking at for the RAC recommendation?

A. We can delay because we want to get it right. If we delay too long, however, the public will be very disappointed that it wasn't resolved more quickly.

The conference call ended and the RAC further discussed what to do with the fee recommendation. John Barker will not participate in the FS fee demo discussion because he is an outfitter.

Cora suggesting leaving the fee at \$5/day.

Cliff asked what the FS would do with the rest of the money - any capital improvements. Stephanie: Read a portion of the fax from Spike and then passed it around to the members. This shows a break down of what improvements have been made since the fee demo money has been in place.

Jerry Shriner made a motion to leave the fee at \$5 per day until additional public input is heard. Jim Hawkins seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jerry: Why reduce the fee when they will spend the same amount of money for policing no matter what the fee is. I think that if the fee remains at \$5/day and they maintain the level of capital improvements, policing, etc., they may find out there will be

overwhelming opinion one way or the other after that year. If they are going to maintain the same level of service then they should maintain the same level of fees until they investigate further.

David: I want to add to the motion that they use all excess monies for improvements; specifically weed treatment.

Troy: I agree with Cora, the FS needs to hear from more public interests.

Jim: Weeds are a problem in the fee demo areas. Extra money should be spent on weed control more than launches and toilets. (re: extra \$100,000)

Doug called for a vote on Jerry's motion: Motion carried with John Barker abstaining.

FEE DEMO RECOMMENDATION: Jim Hawkins made a motion that the RAC suggest to Spike that the \$100,000 intended to be taken from the General Fund, to offset river patrol, be used for improvements along the river and, more specifically, on integrated weed control. Motion seconded by David Nelson. Motion carried with John Barker abstaining.

Doug said the RAC needs another person on fee demo subgroup since Kathy is no longer on the RAC. Bob Barry volunteered.

UCSC RAC Annual Work Plan:

Fritz asked the RAC members to review the handout entitled BLM Initiatives and Opportunities and asked the RAC where does BLM need to be for 2006 as far as out-year planning? Every RAC is being asked if the Administration and Congress/Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are emphasizing areas that the RAC also thinks are important. Fritz asked for the RAC's general impressions about these topics and to give some thought on where you see, even via news media, this administration is proposing to fund or pursue initiatives.

For instance, fire and fuels management was emphasized partly because of California fires. There is no consideration to reduce fuels budget and the fire budget may be increased. The issue of weeds is part of fuels management. The Administration is asking the RAC to tell BLM if we are off-base or not?

Discussion took place regarding which program areas should be emphasized. One RAC member said that Resource Protection stood out and would seem to be a high priority because it includes a variety of issues including weeds management, T&E species, riparian management, wildlife, recreation, land use planning, and OHV

Fritz asked if this RAC says to adhere to a resource protection plan, should each item be emphasized or should some topics be taken out of this heading and put under a heading of their own, such as weeds, Endangered Species Act, etc.? Several members thought OHV

is one of the biggest issues and should be a priority/emphasized. Another RAC member thought energy development within previously undeveloped lands, forest thinning methods, fire suppression which will not benefit that forest for long term, and OHV and road closure in areas of BLM lands were important.

Fritz said it would help to name the components that need emphasized or strengthened. The Administration is emphatic about hearing from RACs. The Bureau will sit down at the Interior level on budget strategies. The RACs' thoughts will then be meshed with other considerations.

Other suggestions included:

- Preventative measures rather than repairing what has occurred;
- Issues causing the most problems such as BLM's lack of route or travel plans
- Lack of road inventories,
- No OHV designations,
- Weed treatment on BLM lands
- Refinement of the OHV plan/strategy
- Energy Development and the importance of the NEPA process so damage won't occur. This effort is being undertaken to reduce the backlog of applications (coal bed methane and oil and gas development in Montana).

A motion was made by Doug Boggan to table this discussion to a later date. The motion was seconded by John Barker.

Jim Hawkins said he thinks, based on discussions at this meeting, that the RAC already has an annual work plan i.e., weeds, wild horse & burro, fee demo and OHV. John would be interested in adding salmon recovery to the work plan list.

Doug suggested the RAC members e-mail their suggestions for annual work plan items and this will be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Stephanie suggested that each RAC member e-mail these items to her and she will consolidate and categorize them to help with preparation of the annual work plan.

Cora Patterson made a motion to:

- 1.) Accept Mark's suggestion of Resource Protection along with weeds, T&E, and OHV for today;
- 2.) Have each RAC member email Stephanie with suggestions on dealing with the list of BLM Initiatives and Opportunities; and
- 3.) Have each RAC member email Stephanie with topics to discuss for the development of the annual work plan at the next meeting.

Motion seconded by Bob Barry. No further discussion. Vote: 3 Nays. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

John: I would like the RAC to send a letter of appreciation to the State and National Directors of BLM for Fritz's outstanding role and leadership of the UCSC RAC over the years. Doug will write the letter and send to Stephanie for a final check.

Travel Authorizations were signed, travel vouchers completed and turned in to Stephanie.

NEXT MEETING: March 4 and 5, 2004

The next meeting will include a presentation by Ken Sanders on vegetation management. There is a part of the RAC Charter that requires the RAC members to receive some training on rangeland health. This training will meet this need and will take 3-4 hours at our next indoor meeting location. After the training we would then have the regular RAC meeting.

John Barker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. David Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:44 p.m. on November 13, 2003.

Minutes Recorded by: Victoria Roth-Davis

Minutes Approved on: March 4, 2004