

**Coeur d'Alene Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2010**

Cottonwood Community Center, Cottonwood, ID

RAC Members in Attendance:

Category 1: Doug Boggan, David Brummer, Alan Harper, Linda Rider

Category 2: Tom Crimmins, Kimberly Brown, Jerry Shriner

Category 3: Randy Doman, Greg Taylor, Chris Goetz

RAC Members Absent: Ron Hood, Jerry Boggs, Jackie McAvoy, James Kingery, Aaron Miles

BLM Staff in Attendance:

Gary Cooper – Coeur d'Alene District Manager
Jeff Foss – Deputy State Director-Resources, BLM Boise
Stephanie Snook – RAC Coordinator
William Runnoe – Cottonwood Field Manager
Karen Hendren – Cottonwood Admin Assistant
Joe O'Neill – Cottonwood Recreation Planner

Other Attendees:

Mark Williams – Congressman Minnick's Lewiston office
Mike Hanna – Senator Risch's Lewiston office

Note to readers: A copy of each attachment listed in the text of, or at the end of these minutes, is on file with the official copy of minutes in the BLM Coeur d'Alene Office. Persons desiring to view attachments should contact Stephanie Snook at (208) 769-5004.

RAC Chair Linda Rider called the meeting to order and asked the RAC members and BLM staff to introduce themselves.

Other guests in the audience were asked to introduce themselves:

Ed Enneking – rancher
Chuck Mader – rancher
Pete and Hilda Johnson – rancher
Kevin Lewis – Idaho Rivers United, guest speaker

Agenda Items (Handout 1)

Old Business

- Minutes of the April 6, 2010 meeting minutes previously provided via email (Handout 2). Rider asked for corrections or additions. Kim Brown stated there needed to be an addition to page 8:
 - add wording regarding the Blue Creek Bay parcel and how sharing historic potential is part of the Mullan Road. Tom Crimmons moved to approve the notes as corrected; Brown seconded – all in favor.
- RAC Nominations
Four positions on the RAC will expire September 20th. As a result of many contacts, we received nine nominations which were reviewed by the Governor's office and forwarded to the Washington D.C. office for further reviews and prior to the appointments being made later this year.

New Business

Wild Horse and Burro Program Initiative (*RAC ADVICE REQUESTED*) (Handout 3)

Stephanie Snook gave a presentation on this program and indicated that the Secretary of Interior and BLM Director have asked for new ideas as the cost of this program has gone up and the money has gone down. They are seeking advice from the RAC. August 3rd is the last day for comments.

This topic generated extensive discussion with a summary of RAC comments as follows:

The public needs:

- *A broader view of all the issues (rangeland health, competition with wildlife for forage, damage caused by overgrazing, management of herd areas), including the budget constraints;*
- *a balanced view of taking care of public issues*
- *a cost comparison for all programs*
- *better communication/information about how WH&Bs are now being handled; what the issues are; what options are being considered; a clearly defined mission and an understanding that there are other demands for the public lands.*
- *to know that BLM funding for WH&B comes out of appropriated funds, away from other programs, and should be told programs give up this funding*
- *promote treasured herds (unique blood lines, e.g. group of mustangs in OR that are genetically pure)*
- *Establish preserves somewhere else*

Issues:

- *If more forage for WH&B is made available does this affect other grazing?*
- *Euthanasia needs to be an option: Slaughter is better for dying horses than just letting them die; folks don't grasp this*
- *Losing a way of life*
- *Education [about the program] is a critical component*
- *Recognize there is a very real emotional attachment to wild horses; wild horses were here first.*

- *Management issues need to be taken into consideration; not just emotional, romantic notion of wild horses*
- *Long term care – are they really wild horses – they live twice as long. Need to learn wild animals have different life span – predators.*
- *Numbers of WH&B will continue to grow – need to take this discussion seriously*
- *Half of the wild horses are in confinement living in feed lots*
- *Wild horses in long term facilities are very costly; are well taken care of and live longer; not a natural life.*
- *Horses destroy range lands – riparian areas, grassy slopes*
- *Wild horses seem to be managed differently from other species; compare with other species*
- *The general public can't comprehend the amount of money WH&B management costs.*
- *It's a dollars and cents issue. We're taking better care of horses than we do some people.*

Questions:

- *Communication – does BLM have a fact & fiction web site with hard cold facts?*
- *Should there be a public relations firm involved to help BLM?*
- *How do horses rate when considering sensitive species – trout, sage grouse?*
- *How many ranchers are going out of business due to horses taking over the rangeland?*

Options/Solutions/Ideas:

- *Hire a public relations firm to help BLM get the information out and seek ideas/solutions.*
- *Sheep & goats are trained to eat weeds – let's train horses to eat weeds and cheat grass*
- *Put jacks with mare; studs with jennies – have infertile horses, reduce the herds this way instead of fertilization - could implement relatively inexpensively.*
- *Treasured herds w/burros – maybe*
- *Adopt mules – some folks want burros*
- *Cost of program is critical – how to figure cost of solutions*
- *Open it up for private and non-profit sectors to take on management*
- *Establish a Western Montana/Central Idaho herd area for horses to feed the wolves*
- *Address the euthanasia problem*

Gary Cooper:

1. Dollars to manage all resources are limited – if we have to spend more on WH&B there is less to spend on something else.
2. If the government has to pay for it – where does money come from? BLM brings in revenue; government money is public money. Is this what you want your money spent on?

Rider: The Boise RAC, due to lack of time to discuss and reach consensus, decided to submit individual comments to their RAC Chair who will consolidate and submit to the BLM. Do you wish to do the same?

Shriner suggested that RAC members also consider submitting any individual comments, not as a RAC member but as a concerned citizen, and to submit these separate from the RAC.

Suggestions to include in cover letter:

BLM continue to manage WH&B within existing policies; continue managing the range and herd so both are healthy; manage what the land can support for healthy ecosystems.

Agreement to support management of horses – what can we say problems w/budget

BLM needs to manage the land at all costs

Costs increase and are taken out of other programs

Numbers are growing – couldn't find them or no dollars

Need to stress removal healthy range land good; don't solve problem leaving them on the range

Doman moved to have the RAC Chair prepare a draft cover letter and attach the individual RAC comments provided. Brown seconded; no further discussion. Motion carried.

Send all solutions, options and opinions to Chairman Rider by July 16th and she will attach to a cover letter.

M3 Land Exchange Proposal – Joe Hinson (NW Natural Resources Group, LLC) & Bob Boeh (Idaho Forest Group) (Handout 4)

A PowerPoint Presentation was provided to outline the exchange proposal. “The concept is simple. M3 Eagle, the current owner of the 11,038 acres in Boise County as well as lands to the south of that property will exchange those lands to the BLM for 815 acres along Highway 16 that adjoins M3 Eagle’s planned community plus some 7-8,000 acres of scattered timberland parcels in North Idaho that the current BLM plans have identified for disposal. Once that exchange is completed, the Idaho Forest Group, Idaho’s largest lumber manufacturer, will simultaneously purchase those timberlands from M3 Eagle at their appraised price. For South Idaho, the benefits are obvious. Consolidation of lands in public ownership, limit development in a key wildlife and recreational area, encourage growth in an area where it is inevitable. However, we also know that these benefits, while important in the big picture, hold little allure to those in N. Idaho.”

RAC member questions with responses from Boeh or Hinson:

Shriner: Without appraisals, how does 11,000 acres equal the other land? How did you figure this?

Boeh: Have appraisals for southern parcels from a couple of years ago. Exchange has to be of equal value.

Doman: This is the first time I've heard about any land in Idaho County - where is it?

Boeh: Majority of land is in CDA area; 800 or so acres in ID County – 1 piece near Riggins, couple of others west of White Bird

Doman: Map of CDA district shows parcels not isolated; there are federal, state and other entities. May have access issues and there is a need for agencies to have access to get to their land.

Boeh: Need to make sure value is there to balance the exchange; will then delete some acres to achieve balance. Land was identified for disposal in the RMPs.

Snook: Land identified in the RMP will need to be looked at again to see if the disposal would meet the criteria in the RMP and to see if the parcels warrant further consideration for disposal.

Cooper: Will follow set criteria for disposals.

Crimmons: IFG said they will give public access to retain hunting and fishing access

Boeh: Tribal hunting/fishing treaty rights will also be guaranteed

Cooper: If the exchange proceeds, an EIS analysis will document the rights to be conveyed

Doman: Folks move on, concerned about guarantees into the future. Snake River Basin Adjudication /Nez Perce Water Rights Settlement was a south Idaho solution that north Idaho paid for - North Idaho lost public lands – have concerns about this.

Boggan: Riggins land includes two isolated pieces; one 80-acre parcel before Riggins – Slate Creek ridge to west; the other through Riggins, tall peak with elk ranch on top – section may not be exchanged even though in the pool of candidates it would remain in BLM for sustained forestry to Grangeville.

Brummer: Who will contact adjacent landowners in area and what happens to the things like grazing leases?

Boeh: IFG does grazing leases also – IFG will contact all neighbors – EIS will address this

Brown: Trestle Creek parcel is how far from Lake Pend Oreille?

Boeh: Maybe 2 miles

Brown: Need to make sure not lost to public for future use – this is an important resource.

Hinson: this is just one example; won't know until analysis & appraisals are done – land has been identified this land for disposal

Brown: concerned that we only know about north Idaho, not comfortable with south Idaho parcels. Uncomfortable w/recommendation by BLM RAC; s. Idaho hasn't made recommendation yet. This land has never been proposed for disposal. Need info from Boise RAC workgroup.

Shriner: (1) Is it true that a letter from D.C. was sent to M3 not in support of a previous exchange proposal? 2) Boise BLM classified 815 acres for retention due to specific critical habitat – you said it was not critical. (3) Indicated M3 will pay for NEPA costs but what about the overhead & other BLM costs? How will they pay for this cost?

Hinson: (1) There have been no other exchange proposals. (2) Slickspot pepper grass is a threatened plant. There are occupied sites on BLM, but more sites on M3 land exchange parcel. BLM will gain more sites. (3) We've talked to BLM and offered to help with costs.

Doman to RAC Chair Rider – The BLM area in this exchange is 10% of the land base. The BLM will be 10% less efficient and will still need staff, even though there may be a cost per unit change. If legislation is proposed, need to look at proposing key land acquisitions. Can this be part of this exchange – legislation? There would be costs involved with reducing staff; marginal to keep resource area; not a time to have to explain to people that the costs per unit change. The

legislative proposal could look at proposing key acquisitions for efficiency – secure staffing. If the lands are surplus can we keep them and manage them efficiently?

Cooper: In FY 2010 this was an unplanned, unfunded workload. We do not have staff to support this [exchange] workload and would need to plan for it in out-years and we could look at other lands to acquire.

Doman: Legislative proposal not so much staff time and follow up but losing too many acres of BLM.

Cooper: No staff formally identified to work on this exchange and no staff increases in the future.

Boggan: BLM nets 3,000 more acres in southern Idaho, based on appraisals. North Idaho loses – South Idaho gains.

Shriner asked Cooper: Were the 9,000 acres in N. Idaho identified because we don't need these?

Cooper: Need to look at the disposal criteria in the RMP and if the exchange parcel doesn't meet these we will retain them. Criteria were developed to allow us to consider tenure land adjustments – generally meant for N Idaho. Also have to consider the public's interest.

Hinson: Don't lose sight that we don't know what parcels or appraisals will be needed to process a final exchange proposal.

Brown: Address the process for legislation or BLM planning; more comfortable with BLM process and details.

Hinson: Legislation would say IF this happens, then THIS happens. The Secretary could make it happen. It would shortcut acquisition of the 815 acres in S. Idaho instead of waiting until 2012 for their RMP to be done.

Hinson: If the exchange doesn't happen, M3 will exchange or sell their property to someone else. It will be an opportunity for someone and the ownership will change.

Brown: When assessing the trade, we need to ask if it is a fair trade; losing timber for property in S Idaho? Public access can change when the name on the deed changes.

Chairman Rider: Time is up for this agenda topic.

Lower Salmon River (LSR) Wild & Scenic River Proposal (RAC Info only)

Cooper: The RAC wanted more info on this proposal. No decision is to be made by the BLM or the RAC. A Wild and Scenic River designation can only be made by Congressional action. Presentations are for information only- Be respectful to the speakers and listen with an open mind.

Introduction of Speakers

Kevin Lewis - Idaho Rivers United (IRU) (Handout 5)
Darrel Bentz - NW Professional Passenger Vessel Assoc. (Handout 6)
John Barker - Friends of the Lower Salmon River (Handout 7)
Joe Riener - Concerned Citizen (Handout 8)

Kevin Lewis presented an overview of the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and gave members a handout of the slides. The lower 112 miles of the Salmon River includes two segments for consideration; the 59 mile segment from Long Tom Bar to Hammer Creek would be designated “recreational” while the 53 mile segment from Hammer Creek to the confluence would be designated “scenic.” Three steps are needed: eligibility, suitability and Congressional designation. The purpose is to protect the outstanding remarkable values. After Congressional designation a river management plan would be developed. He discussed myths, funding potential, and prior legislation.

Darrel Bentz read a prepared statement and gave members a handout

John Barker gave a handout of the Wild & Scenic Rivers legislation
Former RAC member, former Lewiston City Council member; member of the early 70’s study team; recommended legislation introduced by Senators Craig and Symms with no changes on second BLM management plan; been around a long time; not an environmentalist, active with Hells Canyon NRA and don’t want same mistakes made here. BLM manages differently than the Forest Service and made important changes to the river – BLM cleaned it up and lead by example; people followed and help keep it clean. Appreciates the Lower Salmon River – 3rd best river in US; no better day whitewater from Shorts Bar to Lucile; longest and biggest; continues what BLM is doing now. Barker worries about Southern California and Las Vegas coming after our water. W&SR classification would continue what BLM is doing now – keeping it the way it is is important. BLM recognizes this resource.

Joe Reiner gave a handout of his presentation and stated BLM is doing a good job balancing the uses on the river. He asked that Joe O’Neill (BLM Recreation Planner) be recognized for his continuing role. A questionnaire sent out in January came back with answers that did not paint a rosy picture. In 1970, there were no 4-wheelers so no mention in current plans. W&SR Act doesn’t create restrictions – it gives power to restrict and regulate. This W&SR classification has been proposed for 42 years – put it to bed – it is still not suitable. If it isn’t broken, don’t try to fix it.

RAC Discussions points:

Continuing BLM management of the river with State of Idaho (under a MOU); state management vs federal management for long-term; opportunities for additional funding if designated and included in the National Landscape Conservation System.

Public Comment Period:

1. Kim Friend: Riggins, ID outfitter with jet boating and rafting business

Active with Salmon River Jet Boat races, Chamber of Commerce in Riggins. Believe in economically sound decisions. The revenue is different for the Snake River than the Salmon due to restrictions. Initially on the Snake, the same promises were made but it opened the door to restrictions. During the Idaho County Commissioner's meeting Jim Rehder asked Idaho Rivers United – what's the hurry? The answer then was to save the river from being dammed; now it's to keep CA from stealing our water. IRU has one sided agenda. If it sounds too good to be true, it is. Don't fix if ain't broken – if broken fix it together.

2. Jim Rehder, Idaho County Commissioner: Thanks to the RAC for meeting here. We have a good relationship with Will Runnoe and the BLM. I represent a big constituency in Idaho County. Concerned about tying in the acquisition of the shooting range on BLM land near Riggins with the W&SR designation. Current BLM management works well on the river. Why change to establish regulations? Why sacrifice current practices for legislation? Continue working together. It if ain't broke don't fix it.

3. Charlie Weaver: I am a small dog in this fight. Over the years legislation granted rights on important issues; right to vote, civil rights, and repealed prohibition. Other legislation takes things away and adds restrictions. Cited an example on the Grand Rhonde River; BLM did a wonderful job but was pushed to enforce "pack it in pack it out".

4. Sue Weaver: If you think it [W&SR designation] won't affect things, talk to Terry Jackson on the Lochsa River. W&S will change; there will be restrictions. The BLM is strapped for money and has trouble enforcing the regulations now. A designation under W&SR will cause more work and BLM will be stretched further.

5. Bob Hayes: Worked w/RAC on fee demo issues with FS. Western Water Assoc. in the mid '70's there were 500 or more jet boaters. Yes BLM has resources out there, users take good care of the resource and it has improved immensely. Look at 30 years of W&S designation-Hells Canyon, user number– not performance base. There will be new issues to look at. Don't create additional costs, our children can't pay. Don't fix it, it's not broke.

6. Rich Vaughn, President Western Water Assoc. (WWA): Would like to make it clear that the WWA was never asked. Was told the purpose was to form a subcommittee for studying issues, same as WWA - oppose reclassification which the WWA board adopted unanimously. Have been involved with river issues since 1978. When someone tells you W&SR designation will preserve & protect what you have, nothing is farther from the truth. Moving jurisdiction to a federal agency from the state is a huge problem. The W&SR is all about people – squeaky wheel gets greased. Cited examples and concerns about traditional uses and use levels within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness; use of dynamite to clear log jam on the Middle Fork Salmon; commercial TV filming, etc. Encouraged a RAC subcommittee to do due diligence.

7. Dennis Green: cited recent incident with 4-wheelers in the Hells Canyon NRA; new manager with new agenda; closed off and changed width restrictions so you can use a car but no 4-wheelers; Hat Pt. closed to 4-wheelers and Rim road closed to all. This was never the vision of the original plan – to have more restrictions. I don't understand politics but I love the river.

More restrictions on the Salmon River would be a travesty. Don't know what will happen in 2 to 4 yrs – when there is new management.

Cooper: Thank you all for providing presentations and addressing the RAC. We appreciate the good comments about the BLM and the staff that work hard. Also appreciate that the users take care of it; watching out for the resource.

End of Public Comments

The RAC discussed further concerns and questions about the M3exchange proposal:

- *Answers from presenters seemed vague. Where did info about deer and elk come from and have studies been completed? The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation provided some information – in support of land consolidation to help with elk herds. No studies have been completed. Relied on Idaho Fish and Game statement that the S. Idaho parcels are “valuable”. No studies for the north ID parcels.*
- *Michael Borkoski in the BLM Boise office said the 815 was identified for retention by BLM because of the slick spot pepper grass habitat, not wildlife values. From BLM's perspective, the M3 parcels provide similar wildlife habitat and there is no need for more land in this area. If homes are built, the area is steep and would limit the number of houses and it would still be used by wildlife.*
- *When asked about previous or similar exchange proposals, presenter was unaware and didn't follow up to ask for clarifying information. Cooper clarified that there had been two previous proposals, one in 2005 and one in 2007 – both included the 815 acre parcel and both proposals were denied. The 2007 proposal was sent all the way up to the Secretary of the Interior level and denied because they were starting their RMP revision.*
- *There will be a cost to BLM to process the exchange even if M3 does the NEPA. Contracting, review and oversight still take time and money. Workload, staffing, funding, other projects won't get done.*
- *Briefing paper and exchange process outlined provided to Boise and CdA RACs.*
- *# of people brought up uncertainty with IFG support; that they might not own the land later. Environmental groups concerned about uncertainty w/everything – not environmental concerns.*
- *If the lands are of equal value why trade? M3 can't or doesn't want to subdivide/sell and if they can use the north Idaho parcels to trade to IFG for cash, M3 unloads the property and gets cash in the pocket.*
- *Need to determine advantage to the public, not M3.*
- *Need to present analysis to BLM- legislation would speed up process*
- *Legislation means out of our hands – folks still upset on other deals w/Boise Foothills Exchange, Lochsa Exchange; Arkansas Potlatch exchange.*
- *Appraisals will consider highest and best use of the land, access, encumbrances, etc.*
- *Possibility of gaining land in N. Idaho? Perhaps add to legislation to make it more palatable for N. Idaho. May need more land to equalize values.*
- *Federal land ownership in N. Idaho is huge, mostly Forest Service. Encourage healthy dialogue with all parties.*
- *New appraisals are needed, after analysis, so parcels dropped aren't appraised. In theory habitat & wildlife in big blocks are better.*

- *What guarantee is there that IFG won't just log the parcels and then sell the land?*
- *Have to go thru process and address neighbors and Tribal concerns*
- *Who has Joe Hinson talked to? M3 needs to be up front.*
- *Boise RAC is also gathering info; 815 acres is a manageable block for Boise BLM*

The April 2010 letter from the RAC recommended following the normal exchange process – value for value – not legislative; fully daylight the process, involve the public, tribes, etc.

The RAC work group will meet at 8:00 am 6/24 and have a conference call with the Boise RAC work group regarding the M3 exchange. No agenda yet, if interested meet at the BLM office in Cda or get phone number from Stephanie.

Shriner emailed a Draft report from the work group to the full RAC. If there are there questions, let Jerry know.

Next Meeting Date: Sept 14, 2010

Location: Idaho Job Service Center in Moscow, ID

Agenda Topics:

M3 Land Exchange

FS Recreation RAC proposals (if any)

Meeting adjourned 5:08 pm.

June 22 – see agenda for field trip location and topics.

Minutes recorded by: Karen Hendren, BLM Cottonwood Field Office

Minutes approved by: /s/ Linda Rider, Chair

Date: 7/19/2010

Handouts:

1. Agenda
2. RAC Meeting Minutes from April 6, 2010
3. Wild Horse and Burro Program Initiative
4. M3 Land Exchange Proposal - PowerPoint
5. Idaho Rivers United (IRU) (Handout 5)
6. Darrel Bentz Statement
7. John Barker – W&SR Legislative proposal
8. Joe Riener - PowerPoint
9. BLM Briefing Paper and Land Exchange Process