

## **Minutes**

### **Idaho Upper Snake River Resource Advisory Council Meeting July 24, 2002**

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#### RAC Members Present:

Linn Kincannon, Ken Sanders, Kelly Adams, Steve Thorson, Pat Avery, Jeff Cook, J.O. Cotant, Bob Bronson, J Morgan Evans, Jeff Baldwin, Chris Christiansen and Dan Olmstead

#### Others Present:

Jim May, Bill Baker, Joe Kraayenbrink, Krista Green, Sky Huffaker, John Romero, Greg Schiedwachter via telephone, Michelle Commons, Signe Sather-Blair, Terry Heslin, Joe Russell, Andy Payne

No public comments.

#### Sage Grouse: Signe Sather-Blair - Idaho BLM Sage-Grouse Conservation Efforts - 2002

##### Overview from Idaho Dept of Fish and Game:

- >Reduction in sage grouse population 40 percent from the long-term.
- >Wildfire is the single greatest risk to sage grouse habitat.
- >Petitions to list the greater sage grouse have been filed with FWS- review and evaluate for threatened or endangered species list.
- >Strategy for BLM action - comply with laws, regulations, and policies that require BLM to evaluate effects of land uses on sage grouse, a BLM sensitive species.
- >Reviewed assessment framework for Standard 8.
- >Two parts of assessment - habitat planning maps (do not lose strong hold areas) and habitat evaluations - needed for conservation planning, WAFWA guidelines.
- >If Standard 4 is met then we have good habitat for sage grouse.

#### Michelle Commons - IDFG

##### Upper Snake River population studies:

- >Private land (agricultural) not sage grouse habitat.
- >Table Butte - SW of Dubois. High percentage of wintering birds. Possibility of losing a significant amount of sage grouse if butte were lost.

##### Greg Schieldwachter - Governor's Office:

- >Governor Kempthorne strategy based better conservation, therefore less problems and complaints.
- >Conservation plan, organize locally, statewide and regionally.

- >All working groups need to know situation and communicate with one another.
- >Removes need for sage grouse to be listed as an ES.
- >By the end of the calendar year, executive staff help needed, fund projects on a working group level.
- >Working Groups: Monitoring and management, ecological process, come up with projects to accomplish and operating guidelines. What could the RAC do? Review experts work - public has a real world view, make recommendations and review issues. There are five local working groups, are more needed?

John Romero - Idaho Cattleman's Association:

- >Conversion of rangeland to agriculture/urbanization add to loss.
- >Problems are regionally specific.
- >Guidelines are meant for what they are, guidelines. Local working groups are crucial in conservation planning.
- >BLM has turned guidelines into habitat standards. Framework has problems and need to be addressed.
- >Owyhee Local Working Group - 25 members/meeting. June 2000 working plan-support BLM mapping, winter habitat identification cards for sportsman, HIP dollar use, outreach and education support, artificial nest study, sage grouse harvest stamp.

Use of Erosion control Devices in Riparian Management: Steve Thorson/Joe Russell  
ELWD systems- small timber pieces and form large logs to make the structures. In rivers for stream stabilization and erosion control. Also a good salmon habitat. Flow check-three log device after fire for erosion control. Cooperation and Collaboration are a must in success and has provided job opportunities for many people.

Wildland Urban Interface Issues: Andy Payne

- > Congressional Funding 2002. Communities at Risk Program \$3-5 million dollars for training, prevention, fuels reduction projects in the urban interface.
- > 2/3 of all fires happen in the urban interface. Rural firefighters respond to fight 2/3 of wildland fires.
- > 85% of the time that rural firefighters respond first to the BLM fires and these fires will held to 100 acres or less, because of there close proximity.
- > Through the Federal Assistance Program the Government has trained and provided equipment to the rural fire dept.

Adjournment 5:00 PM

July 25, 2002

Tour Sun Valley Wildland Urban Interface project.

Report from Executive Session:

What can we do to be effective?

- >Encourage diversity in the RAC. It is not useful to discuss grazing or other issues without conservationists at the table.
- >Be more proactive-communication-more conversation.

- >Goose Creek Allotment, need more info.
- >Develop interaction throughout the field offices.
- >Will breaking into sub groups help the RAC be more effective? Then report back to the full board.
- >Possibility of another meeting before the November meeting, if needed.
- >Schedule a field day: Aug. 20, 2002 for S&G, possibility of meeting in Burley, Jim May will send final info.
- >Meeting in Phoenix, AZ in the Fall, Oct. 28-29, 2002? Need to send a representative of the RAC.

OHV: Terry Heslin

Look at the Colorado Model.

People want to do the right thing if they knew what the right thing was.

BLM has nearly 12 million acres in Idaho and half of that (6 million acres) is classified as "open" to cross country vehicle use.

Intensive inventories need to be done, are in the process.

System of designated routes, challenge in ecosystem is the vulnerability of the landscape.

Work on education to the public.

Collect Data as to where the trails exist and where OHV users ride.

Initial Draft to RAC by the end of August if possible.

Blaine County is a high priority area for mountain bike/OHV use.

Send current OHV designation maps out to RAC members.

Talk to Dept of Ag about noxious weed control.

Look at single-track trails as unique and preserve.

Educate and enforce existing Idaho vehicle noise statute.

Let people know it is illegal to use public lands w/o a state sticker on an ATV (4-wheeler, etc), public notice in the paper.

District Manager's Update: Jim May

State Director Position - uncertain - 5 states open (9 of 11 states will have new State Directors).

Pocatello Field Office Manager - decision should be made w/in next couple of weeks.

Pleasant View - Western Watersheds/ICL lawsuit against BLM.

Let BLM know if our communication is not up to par. Encourage RAC members to feel free to call him or Field Managers at any time.

Works in Progress: Shoshone Land Use Amendment Plan, Fire Management Direction Plan, Craters of the Moon, Pocatello RMP, Blackfoot River and Wild Scenic River.

Five RAC appointments are up in September. Thanked departing RAC members for their support and participation.

Craters of the Moon National Monument: Rick VanderVoet

Completed formal scoping period. Open houses in gateway communities (Shoshone, Boise, Burley, Hailey, etc...) to Craters. Way to communicate w/ the public.

Mailing List-newsletter. Another newsletter in about 3 weeks. Focus around roads and transportation.

Form letter available on the web for comments.

Next step: 3 day meeting to piece all alternatives and take management actions.

Not too much feedback from the cattle industry.

Laidlaw Park largest allotment 92,000+ acres-temp. short term renewal of permits.

Willingness to create a RAC sub-group for the Crater's issues. Additionally, Jeff Baldwin, Kelly Adams, and Steve Thorson are willing to work on the Science Symposium.

USRD Updates:

Fire Management Plan-Andy Payne

FMDA-amend all land use plans for fire guidance. 2004 new fire plan for the District is required.

Identify rehabilitation priorities.

Public Meetings-attendance 20 people/area. Diverse amount of comments.

Team working on fire management-cause and effects analysis. Contractor EIS portion based on comments, issues, draft plan Jan. or Feb.

Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Grazing Request-Joe Kraayenbrink

Native American with their own cattle.

S&G is for everyone.

An MOU with the Tribes references this.

Land Use Amendment Plan-Bill Baker

Middle of 60 day comment period. Land tenure adjustment, 10 nominated ACEC's.

Final decision hopefully in first part of December.

Next Agenda items:

Update on # of acres of fires in the District and subsequent rehabilitation.

Update on appeals throughout the District.

Pending litigation filed.

Wind Farms

Adjournment 12:15 PM