

BLM RAC Meeting Minutes Draft  
January 20-21, 2009  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

January 20, 2009: New member orientation  
January 21, 2009, all members meeting:

Attending RAC Members: Tom Bassista, Wayne Butts, Chad Colter, David Farnsworth, Lawrence Fox, Jim Hawkins, Dino Lowrey, Dallan Nalder, Bill Schutte, Rick Snyder, Louise Stark and Gary Vecellio

Also present: Joe Kraayenbrink (Idaho Falls District Manager), Wendy Reynolds (Upper Snake Field Manager), Dave Rosenkrance (Challis Field Manager), Joanna Wilson (Public Affairs Specialist, RAC Coordinator and Facilitator), Bill Boggs (Upper Snake Field Office), Renee Snyder (Salmon-Challis National Forest), Bart Andreasen (Caribou-Targhee Forest), Blaine Newman (Pocatello Field Office) and Karen Rice (Idaho Falls Associate District Manager)

The meeting began with a welcome by Joanna Wilson, followed by a request for public comments, of which there were none. Since the RAC had new members, a quick round-table of introductions occurred.

Bill Schutte, a new member, has a lengthy history of teaching chemistry and physics, was employed at the Idaho National laboratory (INL) as a chemist, and worked in Washington, D.C. as a bureaucrat/consultant.

Joe Kraayenbrink, BLM District Manager for the Upper Snake, has been in Idaho for 14 years. Originally from Minnesota, he was drawn to the outdoor opportunities in Idaho.

Rick Snyder: Born in Idaho to a ranching family, Rick is a Lemhi County Commissioner who represents approximately 8,000 people. His interests vary from family, to hunting, motorcycles, and even golf. He recognizes that people want to use public lands, but is interested in how we can do this without abusing the land. Public access is an issue for him (especially with more and more newcomers), and he is adamant that we must keep land access open.

Jim Hawkins: Is a native Idahoan, lives in the Challis area and has been in Custer County for over 35 years. Chairman of the RAC for many years, he recently retired as University of Idaho-Custer County Agent. Jim wants to be involved in policy development and provide input, whenever possible, to assist with federal and state decisions on land management issues. He continues to have a strong interest in educating the public about noxious weeds.

Wayne Butts is a Custer County Commissioner (District 1) and is still a registered BLM Fire Marshall. His interest lies in the protection of the customs and culture of the rural

county. He has two kids and one is a counselor at Claire E. Gail middle school in Idaho Falls. He has lived in Idaho for 46 years.

Louise Stark: Co-owner of White Cloud Outfitters (based in Challis) since 1987, she is a public land grazer and has held horse allotments for 23 years. It is the mission of White Cloud Outfitters to facilitate the public's use and enjoyment of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in a manner that will have minimum impact on the resource while providing a safe, high quality outdoor experience for the public.

Chad Colter is a Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Member and has been the Fish and Wildlife Director for the Tribes since 1989. His degree in fish biology is from the University of Idaho, his primary interests are in fish and wildlife, and he would like to see their linkages (extended habitat) to remain intact for future generations. He has also worked for the Forest Service in the past.

Dino Lowrey, has been involved in cultural resource management at the INL for 20 years (and in the field as an archaeologist for over 35 years), and loves to kayak. She and her husband have lived in Idaho for 27 years and besides kayaking, they enjoy fishing and gardening.

Gary Vecellio works for the Idaho Fish and Game Department in the Upper Snake region as an environmental review specialist and inter-agency liaison. Most of his work deals with NEPA documents and long-range planning for federal agencies. He also coordinates agency responses regarding water projects, stream alterations, energy projects, hydroelectric applications, power lines and the like.

Dave Farnsworth is originally from Salt Lake City and grew up near a mining area. He has spent 33-34 years in Idaho and is currently living in Soda Springs where he works for Monsanto, and he is a board member of the Idaho Mine Association. His primary interests are family and protecting land.

Tom Bassista is a relative newcomer to the state having moved here moved in 2001. He has always been involved in fishery work, and now state water resource work. He is a member of Idaho Fisheries Society, and he is concerned with protecting riparian habitat.

Lawrence Fox has a background in agricultural technology and farming and lives in Preston. This is his first term as a RAC member.

Dallen Nalder represents grazing permittees and lives in Holbrook Idaho. He is the Chairman of the Bear River Advisory group and is an Oneida County Commissioner.

Joanna then called for the election of new officers, and in the spirit of change, Rick Snyder was elected Chairman (with the caveat that he could bow out if his regular work load prohibited him from adequately performing those duties), Chad Colter was elected Vice Chairman, and Dino Lowrey was elected Secretary.

A Recreation RAC discussion ensued and it was asked if the BLM and Forest Service have to publish the proposed changes in the Federal Register before the RAC comments on them? It was noted that only a few in the packet, presented to the RAC by Renee Snyder (Salmon-Challis National Forest) have been published. Jim Hawkins was concerned that we follow the correct protocol for public comment and input. Renee replied that the Forest Service first invites public comment, then takes their document to the Regional Fee Board (which looks at the fee structure to make certain it is appropriate and in line with other FS fees), followed by a trip to the RAC for recommendations, and lastly sends the information to the Federal Register. Renee mentioned that just because the RAC approves a change doesn't mean the regional FS will approve. Renee stated that they began their public involvement 2 years ago with notices in the newspapers, postings in campgrounds, followed by public meetings. Butte, Custer and Lemhi County involvement also occurred. The FS gleaned some useful information from the commissioners, but received very few general comments from the public. The Regional Fee Board reviewed their fee proposal in November of 2008 and forwarded a few suggestions such as, include a map and photos of the sites, explain your pricing structure and how it compares to nearby sites, and elicit RAC comments regarding your cabin and campground pricing strategy. She reiterated that they look at all Recreation sites across the forest for fee consistency and site type. Jim Hawkins questioned the math for several of the sites. Jim stated that the other sites seemed to be in line, but that the math appeared to be wrong for the aforementioned places.

Dave Farnsworth commented since many sites are in decline, is a \$10 increase in fee enough? He also commented you will probably see people complain more about fee increases today than a year ago, given the general economic conditions. Renee replied that budgets are tight (for the FS and for most citizens) and they plan to upgrade several outhouses (it's 20K for a drop in toilet). Lawrence Fox asked if Cabin Creek will bring in enough revenue to warrant service since it is a 2 mile hike in? The Cabin gets good use from hunters and Joe mentioned that the fees are complimented by appropriations. Dave pointed out that it did not appear that the Cabin would break even. Chad wanted to know what was the O & M budget, and the response was that it was hard to track, especially because there is a 30-40% drop in the FS recreation budget this year. Joe said there is never enough to go around, a perpetual problem with all the agencies. Wayne Butts commented that at Mosquito Flat, a well was installed, but the handle was removed and the sites were not prepared for Memorial Day. He had concerns about the condition of the campgrounds. Renee said that they did miss a weather window around that time and they need to sit down with District Ranger to work on better timing. Tom Bassista inquired if the FS experienced any theft of fees at no-host sites and was informed that a good design of fee tubes has prevented that sort of trouble. Gary Vecellio asked, will the public have a big heartburn with these minuscule fee increases? Louise Stark pointed out that most of the locals do not use these campgrounds, so the locals will probably not balk at the price increase. Gary urged the RAC to support the fee structure as presented in the packet. Jim Hawkins was still concerned about the "funny math" for several of the sites. Renee countered that the FS would like to an increase in fees by this spring. Rick Snyder voiced his concerns about waste disposal, the FS pays the county to dump trash, but Rick was worried about the county landfill capacity. Wayne Butts chimed in that our folks

would like to see more road maintenance. Renee answered that the new fees specifically are attached to the sites, the FS cannot mix and match fees to augment other projects, such as miscellaneous road maintenance. Chad Colter brought up consistency issues, fisheries issues, and the potential to charge Tribal members on land that they have been guaranteed access to (with no fee). Chad informed Renee that the Tribes have put out position statements on these issues.

Dave Farnsworth summarized that the locals are not really affected by these proposed changes, they camp elsewhere, and looking at the proposal from a broader point as citizens, we should support the proposal. Gary agreed that we needed to go for the long range view. Louise asked if the RAC approved the proposal, could we see the follow up results in one year, that is, what actually happened at the sites? Renee thought this could be done.

Joe K. asked for a summary of motion after much discussion and Dave Farnsworth proposed that the RAC support the fee package as presented with the caveat that within 15-30 days an amended package would be provided to RAC members for review with a more comprehensive math explanation for Williams Creek cabin, Bighorn Crags, and Ebenezer. Fee increase ranged from \$5 (no water available), \$10 (had 5 of 9 amenities including water), to \$40 for the cabins (and increase of \$20). Members would give their comments back to Joanna Wilson and she would forward those onto the chairman to see if everyone was comfortable with the explanation of fees. If the chairman felt that everyone was comfortable with the fee explanation then the fee package would be approved, but if the chairman felt that members were not comfortable or had disapproving comments on the fee package, then the group would ask for the SCNF to come back next year. Bill Schutte seconded the motion. The vote was not unanimous, with two nay votes. Joe was hopeful that the matter was just a software issue and the FS could clear up the math question within the allotted time frame. Rene also encouraged RAC members to check out the website for pictures of the sites and more information.

Bart Andreasen (Caribou-Targhee Forest) then presented his packet for new fees and increases. Members spent most of the time discussing the Driggs Bunkhouse/Cabin, which is located in the city center of Driggs. Bart called the cabin an urban experience. Used in the summer by the District to house forest employees, the cabin has flush toilets, hot showers, sleeps 12 to 16 people, but has no TV. Parking is limited and there is no fireplace. The proposed fee is \$100 per night (this will be a new fee) and the District hopes this will supplement O&M costs. A market analysis indicates that the \$100.00 per night fee is both reasonable and acceptable for this sort of recreation experience. It has been listed on the Federal Register since July 24, 2008, with no comments received for or against the fee. The cabin will be rented during the winter season (November 1 through April 30) to accommodate mostly skiers and snowmobilers. They have not received much comment from the general public in the immediate area (in fact, in three years, only one comment was submitted). Jim asked how will this affect your staff in time and effort, to maintain this place? Bart is not certain and stated that this cabin may be a success, or perhaps not. Chad noted that there is no deferred maintenance factored into the cabin site, and currently it is an administrative site but will become a recreational site that

requires some maintenance in the future. Bart replied that in last 2 years they have received funding to do deferred maintenance, but that money will go away this year, so they hope the fee will help with this effort. Bart closed by mentioning that there are some existing campgrounds that are currently feeless, but have been identified to change at a later date. These will come before the RAC in due time. Wayne Butts made a motion to accept the proposal as written (including fee increases for Warm River Springs Cabin, Squirrel Meadows Cabin, Bishop Mountain Lookout and the new fee for the Driggs Cabin), this was seconded by Dave Farnsworth and the motion passed unanimously.

Wendy introduced Bill Boggs to the new members as the man who excellently manages the Saint Anthony Sand Dunes. Bill presented the BML Business Plan for the Egin Lakes Access Recreation Site (the parking and camping area adjacent to the dunes) asking for RAC approval. Before discussing the Business Plan in some detail, Bill provided the group with general information. For instance, the Egin Lakes campground receives approximately 250,000 visits per year. Many who visit the dunes are from out of state or even from Canada (only about 30% of the total visitors are Idahoans). The St. Anthony complex is the number one destination in the US for ATVs and dune buggies. In 2008, campground fees were increased (A sites from \$30 to \$60, B sites from \$16 to \$30, and C sites from \$12 to \$25), and in April of 2010, a \$5/day use parking fee will commence along with a \$10 Dump Station fee, approved during the November, 2007 RAC meeting). Bill passed out a packet containing a table which displayed the fair market evaluation of campground and other fees within the recreation site. He mentioned that it cost \$150,000-\$165,000 to run the campground this past year, and use was down approximately 20% last year. He estimated that operating costs for next year would total \$201,000. Last year they had 3 seasonal workers at the dunes and hope to have 4-5 seasonals for this year. This plan states objectives for use of fee receipts (30-40% to manage the dunes, 60% for campground management), with deferred maintenance projects, labor costs and supplies at the top of the list. They are currently paving 10 shelters and a goal is to ultimately get covers for all shelters since there are very few trees for wind and shade protection. They are adding 14 shelters this winter that will be completed by spring and next fall will add another 8 shelters and a paved parking loop area. Fees are also utilized for visitor safety and compliance, with many signs and identification posts installed to designate routes and provide location information (when an accident occurs). Long term goals would be upgrading the sites to include additional electrical units and site shelters, provide more tent camping areas, landscaping, asphaltting the day use parking and developing the overflow area. The business plan follows BLM guidance.

Joe Kraayenbrink inquired how the public responded to the plan? Bill said there was very little comment people are willing to pay more because the facilities are so good and the locals don't mind paying a small day-use fee (75% of day use is by locals). There was concern last year within the RAC about the fees not being increased enough to cover the demand and heavy use, and this year's RAC voiced the same concerns. Bill stated that you need management due to the large crowds and they do have law enforcement and campground hosts to help with that task. They have a small vendor at the site (for minor breakdown repairs) and use service groups, such as BYU, for clean up projects.

Dave Farnsworth asked, why the drop in participation this year? Bill answered, probably due to increased gas prices, no one wanted to pay \$4 a gallon. Bill mentioned that the weekends are always full, and the first sites to be utilized are the ones with electricity. He reiterated that eventually we'd like all the sites to have electricity to keep generator noise down. Tom Bassista asked, are there still a few free places to park? Yes, there are two free places to access the dunes and locals use these. Dave queried, are you breaking even? Bill, no, we sometimes do not do deferred maintenance or hire as many seasonals, but we hope next year will be better with lower gas prices. We also use grant money to try and stay a bit ahead. Dave commented, if St. Anthony can't break even (a show case place) how can we expect others to survive? Joe replied, we still get some federal appropriations so St. Anthony is reasonably healthy financially. Bill then extended an open invitation to the RAC to visit the dunes. A motion was made to accept the Egin Lakes Access Recreation Site Business Plan which carried unanimously.

Blaine Newman (Pocatello Field Office) introduced Chuck Patterson, the new full time Recreation Planner who came to Pocatello from Vernal, Utah. Blaine stated their RMP is near completion, so they really need Chuck. The Pocatello Field Office is separated into three distinct management areas, the Blackfoot River Special Resource Management Area (SRMA) being one of those. This area contains 14,720 acres of public lands along the Blackfoot River and Wolverine Creek. This 34-mile segment of river has become popular for non-motorized boating and fishing. At the Blackfoot Reservoir, Red Point Campground will see the implementation of a fee adjustment this year and we plan to provide Oneida Narrows future campgrounds with SRMA status. Tom Bassista asked why the boat ramp (at the lake) was blocked off last fall, because many people just used the ground next to it. He stated the ramp was blocked by the dock. Blaine said that was a good question and he will ask Pacific Corps about that. He speculated that they (Pacific Corps) usually pull docks seasonally (on a certain date), and last fall was very warm which evidently extended the season past that date.

Joe reminded everyone that our REC RAC is comprised of the full group, by choice, and the REC RAC can break down into smaller groups. Tom Bassista commented that having the campground and cabin issues lumped together makes it harder to make decisions, especially if we only receive information packets at the meeting. Louise mentioned that the Boise RAC went through the entities (campground, cabins, etc.) one by one.

Jan Parmenter (District Realty Specialist) led an energy discussion and gave members a handout of the BLM Energy and Mineral Policy. We were informed that 1/3 the energy we get in the US is managed by the Department of the Interior and the highest revenues are produced by public land at approximately 2.2 billion in royalties. They explained the designations of Section 368 energy corridors on Federal lands which stemmed from the Energy Policy Act (EPA) of 2005. This Act requires mandatory reliability standards for all market players. Bill asked, has the federal government quantified the term "reliability"? Yes, a 25% increase in electric power projection in the near future. Evidentially the Record of Decision for MISTI was approved last week for a corridor on I-15, thus sparing the Medicine Lodge area, but it is not mandatory that a company

comply and it is the preferred route. The BLM stands in opposition to the Medicine Lodge route.

Energy projects (electrical transmission lines) being considered are:

- 1) Gateway West
- 2) Mountain States
- 3) Northern Lights

Due to the scope and size of each project, a manager will be assigned to coordinate crossing jurisdictions, and BLM will be the lead agency for NEPA documentation. It was asked if there would be a NEPA document for each project (probably), and would the impact to sage grouse be noted (certainly). It was stated that existing transmission lines will not be decommissioned, that new lines would be added. Dave asked if Idaho Power was talking about removing any dams with the increase of power and both Chad and Joe responded by saying no hydropower would disappear because of the actions. Wayne asked if this information has been presented to County government and some of it has, but Northern Lights has not submitted their proposal as of yet. To date, the gas lines are going through southern Nevada.

With the demand for electricity growing, naturally occurring and renewable wind energy is now being considered as an alternative source. The Upper Snake Field Office currently has an authorized wind power testing and monitoring right-of-way near the St. Anthony sand dunes. This authorization is issued to Ridgeline Energy for 4,100 acres. The BLM does not run the wind sites but owns the land. Several (3) companies are interested in wind generation, but it is first come, first serve for wind testing and monitoring, and the company has to prove up in 3 years or forfeit the permit. Tower rental rates run approximately \$10,000. Bill asked if there was any interaction with DOE on wind testing? DOE often has to go through the BLM to get tower land. Gary mentioned that the DOE released a U.S. plan for wind potential and the DOE can do research without interfacing with the BLM. The Upper Snake has another application from enXco (they are the largest 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider of O&M services for wind energy in the US and their parent company is EDF Energies Nouvelles of France) for 7,000 acres near Spencer, Idaho, for a wind testing and monitoring site. An example of a developed energy site is China Mountain. The Cotterel Mountain Wind Project in Cassia County was not built, they could not find a buyer for their power and sage grouse were also an issue. They have extended their right-of-way for two years. Joe commented that wind is not a reliable power in and of itself, but must fold in with other sources. Geothermal has some potential in Raft River, China Cap, Crane Creek, and Willow Springs, but the biggest success is in California. Hydropower has some potential but lies in the hands of FERC. BLM lands have been potentially identified to contain (as part of a National mix) 48.6% coal, 19.4% nuclear, 21.5 natural gas, 5.8 hydropower, 2.5 non-hydro renewable, and 1.6 fuel oil, so more BLM involvement is anticipated in the future. BLM funding to support these Category 6 projects (especially right-of-ways) is a big challenge to obtain, and it is a challenge to keep up with the work load. Dave noted that given the EIS would be a major effort (with 100% cost recovery) how would you get your money back? The Agencies will use subcontractors and some funding for BLM office review will be provided. Members wondered about the DOE's position on MISTI and what they will do

about the sage grouse preserve. Wendy, proponents of alternative energy systems are very aggressive and they want answers now and try to tap the BLM for information. The RAC can provide a voice on the West Wide Corridor and the RAC will have a say on MSTI, and we expect Tribal Council interactions.

Joanna then took the time to reiterate and summarized Action Items for Renee Snyder and the RAC as they pertained to the Salmon-Challis National Forest proposed fee increases: 1) Renee - correct or explain why funding/math does not add up for the 3 cabin sites previously discussed, (2) Renee - send the information via email to RAC members for review, 3) RAC members - comments back to Joanna, 4) Possible conference call or e-mail discussions may follow. Also, a guidance or recommendation was made for all REC presenters to have a power point to show for each site if possible, for clarity.

Wendy reported on the status of the Upper Snake District and began with Areva, whose request for BLM land surrounding their facility was denied. She then discussed the Community assessment work that has been conducted up front in support of the Resource Management Plan, recognizing that new regulations should consider community needs and that input from the community should occur early in the process to help accommodate public concerns and visions. With the help of University of Idaho (neutral) facilitators, in May of 2008, they targeted community leaders and solicited information. Mayors, city planners, political and social leaders were contacted in Arco, Ashton, Driggs, Rexburg, Rigby and Idaho Falls, and a priority list of needs was established, that included, but was not limited to: protection of open spaces, clean air, and ecosystem habitat, continued land access, establishment of trails, pathways, and greenbelt connections, encouragement of diversity, a family friendly and small town feel, and a guarantee of safety and security. These individuals also expressed the importance of maintaining a ranching heritage by keeping ranchers on the land, that cows were often preferable to condos, and that full mitigation of all impacts as well as rehabilitation should be required for BLM actions on public lands. A second group of people with diverse interests were interviewed or given written forms/questionnaires that focused on recreational activities, and they pin-pointed areas that they use on maps and what they do there. Wendy said that RAC members could check out the Website for ongoing information. Rick Snyder commented that County must also develop plans and work in conjunction with the BLM. Wendy added, this is new for us, we usually deal in black and white and this is a grey area. But it has been helpful because we learned where people go to recreate, what the form of recreation is, and the meetings brought together disparate types to discuss matters in a civil fashion.

Scott introduced Mark Harbaugh, who gave an excellent presentation on the three year Rattlesnake Canyon Goat Project for the Upper Snake (2008 - 2010). Partnerships have been critical for this project, and some of those involved are the BLM, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Flying A Ranch, Fremont County, and Goat Mountain Ranch. Goat Mountain Ranch is located north of Ashton Reservoir in fairly rough, steep terrain, and portions of this country were infested with leafy spurge and Canadian thistle. Because 4-wheelers were not the optimal vehicles for the steep canyons, they implemented an integrated weed management approach, spraying in mostly flat areas,

using beetle releases and goats for the more inaccessible regions. In the past, BYU-Idaho helped on projects (with beetle releases), but that money dried up. Mapping the area has been a major objective, but they quit mapping when they ran into wall-to-wall spurge. In conjunction with goat grazing, they also did two bio-releases (a 15 K bug release each time of *Oberea erythrocephala* and *Apthona nigriscutus*) near mouth of Rattlesnake Canyon. Pictures taken progressively over time showed a marked improvement in habitat. The State plans to only spray next year. Presently, they have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party monitoring the system. No matter the technique or techniques used, weed control is never a quick fix. Spurge have a tap root that can go 25' deep and seeds can broadcast 15'. A RAC member asked if the native grasses were able to come back after trampling by goats and the answer was yes. Mark pointed out that the beauty of goats is they can go where humans can't. The Rattlesnake Canyon Project was located on private land. We specifically looked for snags and pockets of spurge. We employed guard dogs because we had the potential for a big predator problem. At night the goats are penned, and they will eat almost anything and everything, including Canadian thistle when the plant is young. Someone wondered if the goats actually dispersed weed seeds, we were informed that a goats digestive system renders the seeds inert after passing through 4 stomachs. Louise inquired if the bugs over winter and the answer was yes. Many problems are involved with weed control for any given technique, such as, remote locations, timing, rough terrain, and a limited number of water sources which is essential for the goats. Their current goal is to expand the project to the east on to Forest Service land as weeds are marching up to Yellowstone. This would require bringing agencies together. We were informed that Fremont County saved \$85 K by using goats over Plateau. Mark reiterated that it takes awhile for the habitat to improve, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> year things look pretty good and after that, you use fewer goats and only spot spray. The cost to lease a goat about \$100. Jim Hawkins commented that in the Challis area, no goats can be brought in because of Big Horn Sheep issues.

Dave Rosenkrance presented a video on the Thompson Creek Mine land exchange, which has been in the works since 2006. The land exchange would convey approximately 5,000 to 6,000 acres of BLM land adjacent to the mine in exchange for high resource value lands within the District. The Upper Snake District administers 3.8 million acres of public land within the Challis, Salmon, Upper Snake and Pocatello Field Offices and all 4 Field Offices have been looked at for this exchange. At one point, the Big Flats area was in consideration, but they priced themselves out. The 780 acre Broken Wing Ranch is being considered, it sits along the main Salmon with 3 miles of river frontage. The BLM tries to balance the exchange value for value, and they also have 80 acres in the Pocatello area under consideration. The EIS on this exchange is still 3 to 4 years out. Dave informed new RAC members that the Thompson Creek Mine processes molybdenum, which is a key element in the hardening process of steel and is an additive to lubricants. Moly mining is a hard rock operation, and the mine is the largest employer in Custer County. He reiterated that the swap presents an opportunity to exchange BLM lands, which are rarely used by the public and which have been impacted by historical mining activity, for private lands that have high resource value such as fish and wildlife habitat and public recreational activities. The challenge for the Challis Office is how to manage the ranch, continue hay production, and who to contract or partner with to maintain good

stewardship of the ranch. The BLM has considered 3 alternatives on how to manage the ranch: partner with Boise State, Idaho Parks and Recreation, or maintain as a Boise State Field Station. The joining area is mostly public land and Lyon Creek water rights would stay with the ranch. Wayne stated, Custer County is upset because they thought the BLM was looking for land in SE Idaho, and now we hear it will be the Broken Wing Ranch. We don't think active stewardship will occur. We are afraid that Western Watersheds might buy the project and not protect the ranch. Joe reminded everyone that this will go into a NEPA action much later, it is not a decision that has already been made, so other alternatives may arise. Dave said they have been very actively looking for property for some time and will continue to look at viable options. Wayne asked, how can the BLM guarantee how the ranch will look in five, ten, or twenty years? Dave replied that the final agreement will have language to protect the customs and culture of Custer County, and BLM expectations will be in writing. Wayne wondered if the land could be managed by the county. Karen stated, there will be several alternatives, and it will be 3 to 4 years before a decision is finally made. It is important to remember that the mine can expand on 5,000 acres and does not have to do a land exchange. Right now, this is a goodwill effort, because they can legally just expand. Lawrence Fox asked, how many public acres will become available if this exchange takes place, and the answer was approximately 4300 acres. Joe mentioned that the Forest Service is on their own track, they have land on the other side of the mine, but they are much slower. Wayne hoped to be better informed at the city level (about possible transactions), and reiterated that maintaining a county feel, preserving the rural aspect of ranch, and good management practices were important to his constituents. Bill Schutte queried, can you transition the land into natural state say over a 20 year period? Because the ranch has not even been selected as of yet (and the decision is so far out), it would be premature to speculate on its future condition.

Joe Kraayenbrink, District Update: We are in election transition and don't know how things will pan out, but we don't expect much quick change. The budget stimulus package should provide the BLM with infrastructure improvement funding, although the budget looks tight with a 1.1 million deficit so far this year. Seasonal work is the first that is squeezed out the door, we were lucky to only give up only one job this year. RAC participants viewed a short video on a new Secretarial Order, authorized by outgoing Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorn, on January 16, 2009. This Order names approximately 256 million acres of BLM land in 12 Western states "the National System of Public Lands". The Order "authorizes the BLM Director to allocate resources that support the processing and permitting of renewable energy projects on public lands; to develop best environmental practices for these projects; to recover costs in the processing of renewable energy applications; to improve coordination with other Federal agencies; and establish coordination offices (termed the Renewable Energy Coordination Offices) to expedite the permitting of wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal projects, along with needed electrical transmission facilities on BLM managed lands". Hazard fuels funding is going mostly into weed control. A 300 million litigation concerning the Smoky Canyon Mine is pending in the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit. Western Watersheds has pulled several grazing appeals but has sued the BLM nationally across several western states claiming sage grouse management plans are insufficient. Western Watersheds has also made

several FOIA requests to review every stream that has been touched by a cow. The RAC acknowledged that frivolous lawsuits cost the BLM (and hence, the taxpayer) an exorbitant amount of money and takes away precious time from real work.

Prior to adjournment, the previous meeting minutes were approved and discussions held on possible future RAC tours along with where and when the next meeting might be. A meeting in Challis could include the Thompson Creek Mine, the Broken Wing Ranch and L & W Stone, plus discussions about the upcoming Wild Horse Round Up. The Challis meeting was set for June 23 and 24, time to be determined, but probably between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. at Dave's office. Pocatello was suggested for September 22 and 23, possibly touring the Smoky Canyon Mine, Blackfoot Bridge new mine, and various recreation areas. The meeting was then adjourned.