

*Draft*  
Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 16, 2010  
Sawtooth Best Western Inn, Jerome

**Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present:**

Kelly Crane - Chairman, Category 3  
Marc Brackett - Category 1  
Hank Mayland, Category 2  
Mel Quale, Category 1  
Jeff Williams, Category 1  
Kevin Bell, Category 3  
Debbie Dane, Category 1  
Lynn Messman, Category 2  
Denise Alexander, Category 2  
Yvette Tuell, Category 3  
Charles Howell, Category 3

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:**

Jenifer Arnold, Twin Falls District, Associate District Manager (ADM)  
Ruth Miller, Shoshone Field Manager (SFM)  
Mike Courtney, Burley Field Manager (BFM)  
Rick Vander Voet, Jarbidge Field Manager (JFM)  
Holly Hampton, Craters of the Moon National Monument Manager  
Heather Tiel-Nelson, Public Affairs Specialist  
Chris Simonson, Fire Management Officer, Twin Falls District  
Kasey Prestwich, Forester, Twin Falls District  
Barbara Bassler, Planning & Environmental Coordinator, Jarbidge Field Office  
Aimee Betts, Jarbidge Field Office Project Manager  
Amanda Nisula, Jarbidge Field Office Writer/Editor

**Public Attendees:**

Frank Florence, Twin Falls  
Jay Michaels, KMVT-TV, Twin Falls

*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 the minutes in the BLM Twin Falls District Office. Persons desiring to view attachments should contact Beckie Wagoner, (208) 735-2063. Copies of certified minutes are posted on the Idaho BLM website at [http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/res/resource\\_advisory/boise/meeting\\_minutes.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/res/resource_advisory/boise/meeting_minutes.html)*

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 by Chairman Kelly Crane. Members and guests introduced themselves.

*Public comment @ 9:15 – Frank Florence commented that he has a cabin at Murphy Hot Springs. He is definitely against the draft Jarbidge RMP proposal.*

I. Subcommittee Meeting on West Camas Environmental Analysis (EA).

Hank Mayland reported the committee met informally over the phone to discuss the EA. Members of the subcommittee appreciated the tour which gave them perspective on the project. Members believe that the EA meets multiple objectives. Mel Quale prepared a one-page comment sheet which he shared with the group. He is in support of the project. It is not clear at this time how the Bremner Creek Trail will be preserved as a single track trail once the project is completed. Mel wants to make sure that this trail is kept as a quality single-track trail; should be clearly marked and located to avoid having wide track vehicles travel on the trails. Lynn Messman agrees with Mel's comments. Denise Alexander remarked that the EA is very well written. RAC will revisit this when RAC has a quorum and make recommendation.

*Action item:* Marc Brackett moved to support recommendation from Mel Quale for West Camas EA; seconded by Lynn Messman. Motion passed. (10:45 a.m.)

II. 2010 Fire Season Overview & Fall Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans

Rick Vander Voet reported on the fires during the 2010 season, commenting that we are still in fire season. Temperatures remain high, with low humidity so there is still potential for more fires well into fall. The largest fire, the Long Butte Fire, burned over 306,000 acres. Rick referred to a handout with a map of the 2010 fires and rehabilitation efforts planned for this fall. Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) plans repair or improve lands damaged directly by wildland fires and rehabilitate or establish healthy, stable ecosystems in the burned area. Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) plans are implemented to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources. Long Butte Fire burned almost exclusively older cheatgrass seedings, so was very fast moving and not very hot, in comparison to the 2007 Murphy Complex Fire. Long Butte did not do as much long term damage; overall, no measureable long term effects can be seen from satellite imagery. ESR on Long Butte will be 30,000 to 40,000 acres of native grass seedings. There could be some green up this fall in lightly burned areas. There also could be some erosion issues into the fall with sediment running into the Snake River around Hagerman. There are several islands of unburned fuel. Some of the grass seedings within the Long Butte Fire area are expected to come back on their own, where these seedings were well established. Sagebrush seedings did not fare as well in burned areas.

Mike Courtney reported on the Mule Creek Fire near Jackpot, NV. The fire burned some premier habitat. BLM will replant. The Emery Fire, another lightning-fire,

burned juniper. BLM will do aerial seeding; terrain is very steep so there could also be erosion issues there. Rainbow Road Fire burned the No Mans Allotment grass bank that is normally used by those who have been burned out for grazing. Bear Trap Fire burned into the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. It is a sheep allotment; will put more sagebrush into area. Ruth Miller reported on four lightning-caused fires in the Shoshone Field Office area. The largest of these, the Laidlaw Fire, burned 5,048 acres. The North Bliss Fire was very inaccessible, burning 2,784 acres. Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation plans are planned for these fire areas.

Long Butte Fire cost \$5 million for suppression. The ESR plans are expected to cost another \$9 million, for a total \$14 million. Over 315,000 acres of Jarbidge Field Office has burned twice, and 130,000 acres of JFO has burned three times in the past five years. Fire potential is an issue that is being addressed in the different alternatives in the draft Jarbidge RMP, which will be considered in a later agenda item.

**Public comment period ended at 9:45 a.m.**

Saylor Creek Wild Horse herd was affected by the Long Butte Fire as 100% of their “home range” was burned. The herd was gathered previously after the 2005 Clover Fire, taken to the Boise wild horse corrals, and then returned to their home range. On August 31 and September 1, District did an emergency horse gather and transferred 198 horses to the Boise corrals since there was not enough water and forage for the horses over the winter. Three horses remain on the range and have enough food and water to sustain them. There will be an Environmental Assessment done on the Saylor Creek Wild Horse herd to make a determination on how many horses will be returned. Kelly Crane commented that he believed the wild horses would move to a place where they can get forage; do not want to start a precedent of moving horses every time we have a fire. Rick commented that these horses depend on artificial water sources, and have shown in years past that they do not like to move away from their home range. The wild horse herd is addressed in the alternatives in the Jarbidge RMP.

Chairman Crane said perhaps the RAC could work to get more money for fuels projects, instead of spending the \$14 million for suppression and rehabilitation after the fire occurs. Lynn Messman asked how much money had been spent on the wild horse management of the herd in the Jarbidge Field Office.

Chris Simonson, Fire Management Officer, for the Twin Falls District, then reported on the 2010 Fire Season on the District. There were 55 BLM fires so far this season, which is not over yet. Over ¼ of these were human-caused and the rest were lightning. In prior years, it was more 50-50 human to lightning caused. Over 10,000 acres burned on human-caused fires. Over 300,000 acres burned in lightning-caused fires, in particular the Long Butte Fire, which was 306,000 acres in size. Most of these fires occurred in the Jarbidge Field Office. Over 30,000 acres of private lands

burned in the Long Butte Fire, plus military lands, Idaho state lands, and National Park Service lands. Another eleven fires were between 1,000 acres and 5,000 acres in size. The Long Butte Fire was similar to the 2007 Murphy Complex in that there were multiple active fires going on at the same time. Resources were stretched thin to handle all the fires at once, making it challenging to staff each fire. Weather conditions were similar--very hot and dry with low-moisture fuels. No temperature or humidity recovery over night. BLM and Incident Management Team held a public meeting in Hagerman on August 24 where local residents asked questions about the Long Butte Fire and suppression strategy.

Chris explained that the Twin Falls District has a very active fuels program. It is easier to obtain funding after the fires occur, but the District also strives to get as many fuels projects done as possible to prevent future fires. Fire suppression and rehabilitation is reactive. Fuel projects are proactive and may help to minimize the growth of large fires. District conducts after action reviews after fires; several improvements were made following the Murphy Complex (training of more dozer bosses, contractor signups in advance, and purchase of dozer and blade by BLM) that have helped with this year's fires. Efforts to improve communication between the local fire departments, BLM, and SIRCOMM are being worked on. Marc Brackett expressed support for the quick decision-making that has to be done in the first stages of these fires. Chris reaffirmed that firefighter and public safety in the number one priority in responding to fires. Debbie Dane commented on success of the Firewise communities, which are supported with funding from the BLM. She also commented about the superb job the BLM did training over 400 volunteers on the Auger Falls rehabilitation project that was done on September 11. Lynn Messman questioned why the National Guard could not be used to help in fire situation. Chris explained that the National Guard is usually only called out when there are multiple fires occurring throughout the country and all the regular firefighting resources have been assigned.

### III. Recognition of retiring members of the RAC

Heather Tiel-Nelson presented a short video program honoring the three RAC members who are retiring--Marc Brackett, Kevin Bell, and Brad Brooks. Retirees were given plaques in recognition of their service.

### IV. Overview of Draft Jarbidge Resource Management Plan

Aimee Betts, Project Manager, and Amanda Nisula, Writer-Editor, presented information on how the RAC can access the draft RMP, in particular how to navigate throughout the electronic files on the CD version of the three-volume document. The electronic document has bookmarks. The Table of Contents is also linked to specific areas of the document. The Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on September 3. The 90-day public comment period ends December 2.

Discussion ensued of how the RAC can make meaningful input and comments on the draft RMP. Chairman Crane noted review and comment on the document deserve the RAC's time and energy since the land management plan that eventually comes out of the planning process is the one that will guide the Field Office for the next several years. Individuals may make their own comments as well as form a recommendation from the Resource Advisory Council. Several RAC members brought preliminary comments they had prepared on the draft RMP.

The alternatives are based on comments submitted during the scoping process, as well as feedback from the Tribes, cooperating agencies, and parties to the Stipulated Settlement. There is a No Action Alternative and five Action Alternatives presented in the Draft. Crane remarked there are favorable parts of each alternative and that the RAC can pick and choose sections from any of the alternatives to make a recommendation. Amanda went through a PowerPoint presentation (Handout) that described the planning process, issues, and how to comment on the draft. Aimee pointed out that it is important that comments are detailed to show exactly which sections reviewers like in each alternative. This will be helpful in crafting the proposed plan. When asked about when the Proposed Plan/Final EIS would be released, Aimee said to expect at least a year from the end of the public comment period.

(Meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m. following lunch break).

Discussion of RAC comments on the Jarbidge RMP continued. Copies of individual comments brought by RAC members were provided to the RAC. Chairman Crane suggested the group discuss comments related to specific topics. Mel Quale and Marc Brackett discussed comments related to travel and transportation. Passage of the Owyhee Initiative banned all off-road recreation. Brackett suggests leaving Twin Falls County and Elmore County open and then consider other areas open for recreation on a site-by-site basis. There is a large amount of private lands that provide access to public lands; if recreation is restricted on public lands, it may push this use onto private lands--and then private landowners may fence off their lands to close them to the public. With regard to special designation areas, Rick Vander Voet pointed out that the alternatives treat these areas in different ways, and suggest that RAC look at each alternative and consider this when making comments.

Crane asked how to consider the comments. Lynn Messman suggested recording all similar comments and then distribute them to members for consideration for adoption by the entire group. Consistency in Marc and Mel's comments on travel recommend keeping areas open.

*Action Item:* Marc Brackett moved to support and submit Mel Quale's comments on travel and transportation, SRMAs, and lands and wilderness. Hank Mayland seconded the motion.

Discussion: Yvette suggested there be more time to consider the specifics. Debbie Dane also needs more time to peruse the comments before voting. Lynn Messman questioned whether the general public has knowledge of the ramification of released lands.

Marc Brackett and Lynn Messman withdrew the motion and second.

Crane agreed with Yvette that the RAC could consider some general areas at this time to comment on. Crane asked if the group could agree on supporting designated play areas in certain historic use areas. Denise Alexander commented that she feels it would be good to keep recreationists using the same area they are used to going to, which may prevent them from establishing new areas. Marc suggests that the group needs more time to look at the document and so should take this discussion up in the future.

Crane asked how the RAC feels about extending the comment period for the RAC as well as for the general public. It was suggested to request an additional 90-day public comment period. Jeff Williams asked for a plan to handle compiling the comments for review. Marc said in the past comments would be compiled into one document and then considered by the entire group. Heather suggested she put together a *Federal Register* notice announcing the Jarbidge Draft RMP subcommittee meetings for the next few months. Yvette suggested everyone bring forward their issues but realize specific comments would need to be submitted separately by individuals or groups. Marc asked for any other suggestions to his draft letter asking for an extension of the public comment period.

*Action item:* Marc Brackett moved that the RAC adopt the letter asking for extension of the public comment period for an additional 90 days, with additions from Yvette. Yvette seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

Crane asked when to send the letter. It was suggested the letter be mailed as soon as possible. Jenifer Arnold said she would inform the BLM State Director that this request for additional review time is forthcoming.

Marc Brackett suggested that the RAC move on to the poster presentations and defer further discussion on the draft RMP until time when the RAC members have time to review the document. Marc, Debbie, Samantha, Denise, Kevin, and Hank are on the subcommittee for Jarbidge RMP. Subcommittee will meet first and third Wednesday nights at 6:00 p.m., at Loong Hing Restaurant on Kimberly Road in Twin Falls.

Amanda Nisula suggested RAC identify big issues to discuss. Topics were selected as follows:

- Travel and transportation (October 13)
- Grazing (October 27)
- Special designations (Nov. 3)
- Land use and ROW authorizations (Nov. 17)
- Final compilation of comments (December 1)

Marc Brackett offered to continue to coordinate the subcommittee.

RAC members were encouraged to attend the public meeting on the Jarbidge RMP on Thursday, September 22 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the AmeriTel Inn in Twin Falls.

(Break)

V. Poster Presentations

Denise Alexander presented some details about her life during an “invisible” poster session. If you want to get to know her, show up at her house on Saturday mornings and bike with her to Fairfield. By the end of the day, you will certainly get to know her.

Mike Courtney showed a map of Idaho, indicating that he was born in Logan, Utah, and moved with his family to Twin Falls, where his father Tom Courtney is City Manager. Mike was first hired by BLM in Salmon, ID, where he spent nine years. Then, he came down to Jarbidge Field Office. He is currently the field manager for the Burley Field Office.

VI. The next full RAC meeting will be Thursday, January 27, 2011. Agenda items include reports of the Jarbidge RMP subcommittee and finalizing comments on the draft RMP. There will also be new member orientation for the new RAC members. Suggestions for next poster presentations are Jenifer Arnold and Mel Quale.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Minutes certified by: /s/

Kelly Crane /s/  
**Kelly Crane, TFD RAC**

October 4, 2010  
**Date**

Bill Baker /s/  
**Bill Baker, TF DFO**

October 8, 2010  
**Date**

Minutes recorded by: Barbara Bassler, Planning and Environmental Coordinator