

RAC Meeting Minutes
May 9th, 2006

Attendance:

RAC: Ken Sanders (Acting chair), Samantha Anderson, Debbie Dane, Joe Tugaw, Marc Brackett, Scott Boettger, Mike Tylka Sr., Denise Alexander, Mel Quale, Yvette Tuell

BLM: Howard Hedrick, Bill Baker, Rick VanderVoet, Chris Simonson, Erick Kurkowski, Aimee Betts, Lori Armstrong, Sky Buffat, Beckie Wagoner, Scott Barker

*Correction to last meeting minutes: Denise Alexander was in attendance.

Meeting was started at 9:00 am by acting chair Ken Sanders. Welcomes and introductions were made. Then Howard requested the GME team come in and speak with the RAC members prior to their executive session later in the day. The RAC agreed to the request.

Rick VanderVoet, JFOM, gave an update on the Jarbidge RMP:

We will be hiring 33 temps to work on this project they will be doing an ecological site inventory, vegetation inventory (last one was in the 1980's), and the species within the area.

We have special status species as well as many other watched or listed species such as: Bald Eagle, Slickspot Peppergrass, Bull Trout, Spotted Frogs, Sage Grouse, White Pelican, and the Tiger Beetle to name a few.

There will be a workshop with Forest Service, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes & the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, and Fish & Game to see what species and vegetation should be focused on more since there are so many.

All data must be collected this summer to meet the 4 year deadline we were given.

The permanent Field Office employees will be working on the annual grazing plan and the 28 grazing allotments we have.

Estimated cost for the RMP is \$3 million.

Aimee Betts, RMP Lead, gave a break down of the RMP: (folder with info given)

Two Teams will be working on the RMP, a core team which will carry the bulk of the work load and a support team that will help out and support the core team as needed.

Scoping comments for the RMP were extended until June 15th.

Several open houses were set up:

Twin Falls – Tuesday May 16th, 2006 (5 - 8 pm) @ Red Lion Hotel

Buhl – Thursday May 18th, 2006 (5 - 8 pm) @ 8th Street Center

Glenns Ferry – Tuesday May 23rd, 2006 (5 – 8 pm) @ History Center at Three Island Park Drive (entrance fee waived).

Three Creek – Wednesday May 24th, 2006 (5 – 7 pm) @ Three Creek School

RMP timeline:

May 2009 is planned finish date.

Draft EIS September 2007

Final EIS November 2008

There is a news letter that will contain the website with current updates that is being sent out. Currently BLM has a mailing list of approximately 350 people that we have taken from our other mailing lists such as Craters of the Moon National Monument, Grazing Permittee's, Elected Officials, RAC, etc... It is expected this list will grow as time passes.

The RMP website is: <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/id/jarbidge/>

Agencies that have requested Cooperating Agency Status (but we're still working on the MOUs, so they aren't official yet):

Idaho Dept of Fish and Game
Idaho Dept of Agriculture
Idaho Dept of Lands

Agencies we will be inviting to become Cooperating Agencies:

Other Federal agencies, such as EPA, Fish & Wildlife Service, etc.
Other State agencies
County and local governments

Tribal consultation has already been established with the Shoshone-Paiute but we are still trying to set up time with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

RMP subgroup previously established:

Ken (chair), Samantha, Mel, Joe, Marc and Denise

Ken suggested a tour of the RMP area, the RAC agreed to a tour. After some discussion it was decided a two day tour would be best and dates were set for June 27th – 28th.

The RMP is the District and States biggest priority right now, BLM is doing everything possible to stay on schedule and meet the four year deadline.

Elections:

9:30 Yevette Tuell joined us making a quorum and allowing us to elect new officers for the RAC.

Ken Sanders was nominated for Chair and second, the vote was cast and Ken was elected as the new RAC chair.

Mel Quale was nominated and second for Vice-Chair, the vote was cast and Mel was elected as the Vice-Chair of the RAC.

Howard Hedrick, Twin Falls District Manager, gave RAC/BLM member status update:

RAC:

Ken, Joe, Dennis and Debbie's nomination packages are in process.

Virginia's decided not to run again but we did get some other names to fill her category.

BLM:

Bud Cribley is acting state director; he comes from the Washington Office. BLM is looking at late fall for an actual state director appointment.

Lori Armstrong, SFOM, gave updates:

Blaine Co. Airport:

BLM has a copy of the Document and are in contact with FAA, and are in the process of scheduling a meeting to ensure that BLM understands the FAA process. Blaine County has selected a preferred site. There is currently no application to start the process. There are two grants needed 1) NEPA, 2) Engineering. BLM's assumption is that it will be a full airport with food, care rental, etc., but according to policy these services (private vendors) cannot be on public land, so we are unsure of the process at this point.

Woolgrowers/changing patterns of grazing: no discussion with Forest Service yet, so ability to do NEPA work is extremely limited (WWS lawsuit on grazing on Sawtooth National Forest)

Shoshone Sage Grouse Working Group: There was a meeting with only agency individuals. How to get outside interest was main discussion. There will be another meeting but we don't have a set date yet, the tentative date is June 22nd at Idaho Fish and Game. Preference is to work as one group rather than to split groups.

Craters of the Moon National Monument:

New manager is Holly Hampton.

The draft has been prepared and sent to Washington Office, it is waiting to be signed.

The solicitor wanted to look it over again for content.

Three protests so far, two have been settled already and the other remains open the protester is Watersheds Project.

Land Exchanges: BLM has met with the 3rd party contractor but is still committed to the program. It was suggested that we pick what we want the contractor to do, but not give it all to them.

Items we need to be aware of include being sure that requests for exchange land meet the Land Use Plan, if they don't we cannot exchange because we cannot have a net loss.

It will take approximately five years from the time the exchange is established once they meet the standards.

Scott Barker, BFO Review:

Wind Energy: 1st of March – final protest started, 1st of May – ended.

Eight protests on the plan so far, with a possibility of more to come. The next six weeks TFD will work with Washington Office developing responses to the protests. One comment letter on the draft was 40 pages long.

The concern is with the level of monitoring. They may want to see an expanded Sage Grouse monitoring period. BLM has not yet met with proponent to discuss this. BLM has submitted biology information on Grey Wolves and Bald Eagles; they are not likely to be affected.

In the preferred alternative there was a compensatory fund. It is still be determined who will be on the committee for that.

The possibility of putting out something to keep the public updated on the project was discussed.

Berger Fuel Project: none at this time. It is not feasible to burn sagebrush at this time.
Milner Recreation Area: (Handout provided) There is a lot of potential for development. There has been a lot of vandalism; people have been burning wire to sell the copper which causes problems due to the toxic/hazardous material from the burns.
 May is the planned start date for NEPA.

Rick Vander Voet, JFO Review:

2004 Memorandum of Understanding, Cooperative Monitoring application to the RMP:

- 28 allotments, many fall into the RMP area. Only one permittee has participated in the program so far.
- JFO has a good relationship with the permittees, so we are not sure why there is so little participation.

Ecological Site Inventory : 14-15 temps on this project. The week of June 5th, there was training for the temps to ensure everyone has sufficient knowledge before being sent out to gather data.

Training opportunities coming up are May 31st & June 1st; PFC workshop in Mountain Home at the Best Western, contact: Steve Smith, Idaho State Office.

*We were then joined by two General Management Evaluators; they introduced themselves and requested to meet with the RAC after the meeting.

Howard Hedrick, TFD update:

New Grazing Regulations – There are significant changes to when we wrote the EIS in June 2005. Some comments came after the comment period closed, so we were asked to amend the EIS which was completed in March 2006. BLM will continue to have consultation on key matters.

Howard will update the RAC as he receives information on the changes to the RAC.

Next Meetings:

Aug 8th in Shoshone

Nov 28th in Twin Falls