

Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2011
Sawtooth Best Western Inn, Jerome, ID

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present:

Kelly Crane, Chairman, Category 3
Hank Mayland, Category 2
Mel Quale, Category 1
Jeff Williams, Category 1
Mike Henslee, Category 1
Peggy Stanley, Category 2
Gerald Orthel, Category 1
Charles Howell, Category 3
Samantha Anderson, Category 3
Debbie Dane, Category 1
Afton Patrick, Category 3
Denise Alexander, Category 2
Yvette Tuell, Category 3
Scott Boettger, Category 2

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:

Bill Baker, Twin Falls District Manager (DM)
Jenifer Arnold, 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
Barbara Bassler, Planning & Environmental Coordinator
Amanda Nisula, Writer-Editor for Jarbidge RMP
Aimee Betts, RMP Lead for Jarbidge Field Office

Public Attendees:

Mike Mathews, Office of U.S. Senator James Risch
Linda Culver, Office of U.S. Congressman Mike Simpson
Marc Brackett
Jay Michaels, KMVT-TV news

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/twin_falls_district/meeting_minutes.html

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kelly Crane at 9:02 a.m. RAC members and BLM employees were introduced. Members of the public introduced themselves.

I. New RAC Member Orientation

Heather Tiel-Nelson directed RAC members to updates and the new RAC charter in the State and Local tab of their RAC notebooks. New members Mike Henslee, Peggy Stanley, and Afton Patrick were given notebooks. Heather then narrated a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Bureau of Land Management and Resource Advisory Councils. Shoshone Field Manager Ruth Miller gave a brief update on the recent Secretarial Order 3310: Wild Lands, issued in December 2010. Policy will include direction on how to handle lands with wilderness characteristics in land use planning efforts. The PowerPoint presentation included information on American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects completed during the past year. BLM Resource Advisory Councils were commissioned in 1995 by Interior Secretary Babbitt and combined the old multiple use and grazing advisory boards. Representation on the new RAC now reflects more closely the “multiple uses” of BLM. The presentation included information on the 2010 fire season, the Saylor Creek Wild Horse Herd, and energy projects (wind, natural gas, geothermal and transmission lines) which are ongoing or proposed on the Twin Falls District.

Public comment @ 9:15 – There were no comments given by the public.

Public Comment End @ 9:45

II. Subcommittee Report on the Draft Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Former RAC member and Subcommittee member Marc Brackett distributed a packet of 40 recommendations made by the Subcommittee that the RAC will consider today to approve, not approve or amend the recommendations. Mel Quale reported on input from the subcommittee’s review of the Draft Jarbidge RMP. The group went through each recommendation while appropriate maps were displayed on the screen. Mel initiated the process to go through the 40 Draft recommendations made by the subcommittee. (RAC member Scott Boettger arrived at 9:50 a.m.)

Results of discussion:

Recommendation 1, Reference areas: Motion made to accept, passed unanimously.

Recommendation 2, Wildlife tracts: Motion made to accept; passed unanimously.

Recommendation 3, Temporary fencing: Motion made to accept; seconded.

Discussion ensued whether this is to support management action 10 and 12 over 9 and

11. This recommendation would give flexibility to the BLM to build temporary fences after a fire. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 4, Wild horses and breeding status: Motion made to accept; seconded. There was discussion on whether this Saylor Creek herd is a herd with no unique genetic value. The management action would support management of the Saylor Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) for a non-reproducing wild horse population with a cap of 200 animals. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 5, Visual resource allocations: Discussion from some RAC members who do not support this recommendation. Motion made to accept and seconded. A majority of the RAC supported the recommendation with 2 opposed. Minority reasoning will be submitted by the 2 individuals opposing the recommendation and will be included in the official report from the RAC.

Recommendation 6, Non-Wilderness Study Area (WSA) lands: Mel Quale explained some of the rationale for this recommendation. Issue is how these lands with wilderness characteristics would be managed by BLM. Motion made to accept and seconded. Motion passed with 2 opposing votes.

Recommendation 7, Reserve Common Allotments: Motion made to accept; seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 8, TNR allocations: Question on how the BLM uses Temporary Non-Renewable (TNR) use in adjusting Animal Unit Months (AUM). Rick Vander Voet explained how this has been used in the Jarbidge Field Office. Motion made and seconded to accept; majority passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 9, Big game winter range: Subcommittee member Samantha Anderson took over the discussion and explained this recommendation. Motion made to accept and seconded. No discussion. Motion passed with 2 opposing votes.

Recommendation 10, Forage allocation: Motion was made to accept and seconded. Member asked for rationale for replacing AUM allocation IV with II. This change would utilize more of the existing forage and thus result in an increase in AUMs. Question on how the forage allocations were determined for the preferred alternative. RMP Team Lead Aimee Betts explained how this was handled in the Draft RMP. The further question was how the preferred alternative was selected. Field Manager Rick Vander Voet explained that the BLM State Director makes that selection. Idaho's State Director chose Alternative IVb but that does not mean it will be the proposed alternative in the Final EIS. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 11, Group size: Discussion ensued to explain rationale behind this recommendation to improve this management action by requiring larger groups to obtain a permit, especially commercial groups. Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 12, Recreation, Balanced Rock Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and Little Pilgrim SRMA: Motion made and seconded. Discussion followed. Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 13, Salmon Falls SRMA: Discussion ensued. Motion to accept was made and seconded. Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 14, Bruneau-Jarbidge SRMA and Jarbidge Forks SRMA: Motion made to accept; seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 15, Deadman/Yahoo SRMA: Mel Quale clarified the rationale for this recommendation. Motion was made and seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 16, Jarbidge Foothills SRMA: RAC opposes recommendation of the Jarbidge Foothills SRMA(16). Aimee Betts explained that designation of the Jarbidge Foothills as a SRMA was proposed by The Wilderness Society, and precludes motorized use. Motion made and seconded. Motion passed with 2 opposing votes.

Recommendation 17, Canyon Lands SRMA: Motion made and seconded. Motion passed with 2 opposing votes.

Recommendation 18, Big game retrieval: Motion made and seconded. Discussion followed. Motion failed with 5 votes in favor and 8 opposing votes. Motion made to accept the recommendation proposed in the preferred TR-IV on this matter to support no retrieval of big game off designated routes, with provision to provide permit for disabled persons to retrieve game. Motion was seconded as amended. Motion passed unanimously. Original Recommendation 18 will be rewritten.

The group took a lunch break at 12:00 Noon. The meeting resumed at 1:15 P.M.

Recommendation 19, Travel designations: Denise Alexander continued leading the discussion of the Subcommittee's proposed recommendations. Mel Quale explained the history behind the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (OPLMA) that has restricted motorized travel on 63% of the Jarbidge Resource Area to existing routes only. This recommendation supports the No Action Alternative relating to off-road vehicle travel in the Twin Falls County, Elko County, and Elmore County portions of the Jarbidge Resource Area. Motion made to accept; seconded. Motion carried with two opposing votes; clarifying language will be added to recommendation.

Recommendation 20, Travel Management Areas: Recommendation proposes correction of Travel Management Area language to allow the creation of additional "play areas" in the three counties. Motion made and seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 21, Route designation: Discussion of rationale to replace language and replacing it with MA-8 Alternative text. Comprehensive Travel Management Plan will be developed outside the RMP to designate routes. Motion made to accept this recommendation. Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 22, Camping: Rationale to change this is to put off addressing this issue until the Comprehensive Travel Management Plan (CRMP) is completed. Accepting this recommendation would put this off until the CRMP. Motion made and seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Recommendation 23, Highway District Rights-of-Way (ROWs): Rationale is to expand the highway ROW to 300 feet versus the current 50 feet. This would allow BLM to be in compliance with the law and allow the highway districts to complete road maintenance. Discussion is that this cannot be done within the RMP, as ROWs are legal rights that are granted individually to those holding the ROWs. Motion made to table decision on Recommendation 23; seconded. Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 24, Wind energy development: Rationale was to leave BLM as much flexibility as possible on siting wind energy projects. This would have location of native vegetation as well as sage grouse habitat as considerations in siting projects. Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded to amend to remove the second and third paragraphs under the heading reasoning against the preferred alternative. Motion as amended passed unanimously.

Recommendation 25, Development of sage grouse leks: This recommendation was also developed to allow BLM more flexibility in granting approval for wind energy projects, communication sites, transmission lines, etc. Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded. Motion passed with two opposing votes.

Recommendation 26, Land tenure: Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded. Motion passed with two opposing votes.

Recommendation 27, Geothermal: Supports expanding the area under consideration for further development for geothermal development. This recommends more flexibility for BLM to manage geothermal resources. Motion made to table this recommendation; seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 28, Mineral allocations: Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 29, Highway District gravel pits: Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded and passed unanimously.

Recommendation 30, Salmon Falls Creek, Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC): Area already designated as a WSA and eligible Wild and Scenic River segment. Motion to accept; seconded and passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 31, Sandpoint ACEC: Supports the designation of this ACEC. Motion to accept was seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 32, Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC: The OPLMA superseded this ACEC. Motion to accept this recommendation; seconded; motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 33, Jarbidge Foothills ACEC: Goals and management actions for this ACEC can be accomplished without the special designation of an ACEC. Motion made and seconded. Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 34, Inside Desert ACEC: Motion made and seconded to accept the amended version of Recommendation 34 to remove the first paragraph under the heading "Reasoning against the preferred alternative, if applicable:" Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 35, Lower Bruneau Canyon ACEC: Moved and seconded to accept this recommendation. Motion passed with one opposing vote by proxy.

Recommendation 36, Sagebrush Sea ACEC: Recommendation opposes the establishment of this ACEC because of its size and other reasons. Motion to accept was seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 37, Middle Snake River ACEC: Recommendation opposes the establishment of this ACEC. Motion to accept was seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation 38, Wild and Scenic Rivers: Motion to accept recommendation with amendment to strike the first sentence in the first paragraph under "Reasoning against the preferred alternative, if applicable:" was made and seconded. Language will be inserted about location of proposed transmission line to cross Salmon Falls Creek and allow for consistent management on both sides of the creek. Motion passed with one opposing vote.

Recommendation 39, Fire prevention: Recommendation supports adding language that addresses large fire prevention and suppression actions. Suggestion was made to combine this recommendation with Recommendation 40. Motion to accept Recommendation 39 as originally written was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Recommendation 40, Wildfire general: Motion made to accept this recommendation; seconded and passed unanimously.

Recommendation 19, Travel designations were revisited. New language was proposed to be modified by discussion earlier in the day. Motion was made that corrections be added to clarify Recommendation 19 to reflect the intent of the RAC. Motion was seconded and passed.

Recommendation 23 will be rewritten to allow flexibility to provide materials to the highway districts. Motion was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Proposed Cover Letter for RAC comments on the Jarbidge Draft RMP:
Yvette Tuell drafted a cover letter which will be signed by Chairman Kelly Crane and submitted with the Recommendations. RAC members reviewed the letter and accepted it as the cover letter.

III. Poster Presentations

Jenifer Arnold presented a "virtual" poster presentation to allow the other RAC members to get to know her. Mel Quale presented his story on a poster with pictures giving insight into his life and personality. Next poster presentations will be Rick Vander Voet and Gerald Orthel.

IV. Other business

Recommendations for future agenda items: China Mountain DEIS, Gateway West DEIS, Field Manager Reports, Location for field tour, new RAC nominations, update RAC teams, possible Wild Horse & Burro strategy and possibly Highway District issues.

V. Calendar for RAC Meetings in 2011

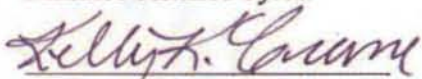
Thursday, April 27, 2011 (Jerome); RAC field tour, Tuesday and Wednesday, June 21-22, 2011; Thursday, September 15, 2011 (Jerome)

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Handouts provided:

Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Council Comments on the Jarbidge Resource Area draft RMP, January 2011

Minutes certified by: /s/


Kelly Crane, TFD RAC

02 FEB 2011
Date


Bill Baker, TF DFO

2/4/2011
Date

Minutes recorded by:

Barbara Bassler, Planning & Environmental Coordinator