

Twin Falls District
RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)
MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2009 8:30 AM
Ameritel Inn

RAC Members Present:

Ken Sanders - Chairman, Category 3
Marc Brackett - Category 1
Yvette Tuell, Category 3
Hank Mayland, Category 2
Mel Quale, Category 1
Joe Tugaw, Category 1
Kevin Bell, Category 3
Gerald Orthel, Category 1
Denise Alexander, Category 2
Samantha Anderson, Category 3
Brad Brooks, Category 2
Debbie Dane, Category 1
Lynn Messman, Category 2

BLM Representatives Present:

Bill Baker – DFO, District Manager (DM)
Jenifer Arnold, Associate District Manager (ADM)
Lori Armstrong, Shoshone Field Manager (SFM)
Mike Courtney, Burley Field Manager (BFM)
Jill Ralston, Jarbidge Assistant Field Manager (JAFM)
Katherine Farrell, Planning & Environmental Coordinator
Heather Tiel-Nelson, Public Affairs Specialist
Beckie Wagoner, TFD Records Assistant

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Ken Sanders at 8:36 am. RAC members and BLM employees were introduced. The chair noted that the minutes from the previous meeting had been approved, and that the minutes were posted on the Internet.

Tiel-Nelson went over housekeeping; location of bathrooms, exits, breaks and how lunch would be handled.

I. Management Plan Training – Kathy Farrell, Planning & Environmental Coordinator

BLM planning has a hierarchy with laws, regulations, and policies. The two main laws are:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Section 202 directs the BLM to prepare Resource Management Plans (RMP). RMPs are important because they set the framework and criteria for the projects for years to come. In developing an RMP it is important to establish a balance between multiple use and resource protection. For an RMP, BLM sets up uses for different areas or zones. Some areas may have dispersed recreation while other areas may be set up for sage grouse habitat. When deciding how to use the land, BLM examines what the land is capable of and how it will be best used.

Section 309 of FLPMA covers the Advisory Council and Public Participation; this encompasses the RAC's role for the RMP as well as public comments. 43 CFR Part 1601 and 1610 gives guidance to BLM on RMPs. BLM Handbook H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook, provides additional information on use.

The second law is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This law and its regulations provide the guidance to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including the reasons why BLM is doing an RMP and what the effects will be.

Members of the RAC have already been involved some in the preparation of the Jarbidge RMP. The next step in the process is release of the Draft EIS. Since the RAC will be providing comments, following is some guidance on what is helpful and what is not helpful for BLM to receive as comments:

The most helpful comments are specific to areas, relevant to the analysis, and give reasons why the RAC agrees or disagrees. It is as important to talk about what you like and why, as it is to comment on what you do not like and why. The more specific the comment the better; general or broad comments are not useful unless you have supporting reasons. When writing comments, think about what you would do with them if you were the decision maker. The types of things BLM will use comments for are to modify or add to the alternatives, supplement or improve the analysis, and/or make factual corrections.

Comments that are simply votes or open-ended questions are not helpful. Comments that disagree with BLM policy or laws are also not helpful. This has been a fairly simplistic discussion of a complex topic. If you have any questions, you can contact Kathy Farrell at the BLM office in Twin Falls (208) 736-2357.

Public comment started at 8:45 - No public was present to comment

II. Nominations for chair – Ken Sanders

Sanders called for nominations for a new RAC chairman.

*Mel Quale moved to elect Marc Brackett as the new RAC chairman
The motion was seconded*

Marc amended the motion stating that he would be willing to serve as the chairman so long as Denise Alexander would be his vice-chairman.

The motion was seconded

The amended motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

*Brackett then assumed position as chair.

III. Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) – Samantha Anderson, Vice-Chairman

Anderson gave an overview of the RRAC meeting and what recommendations the RRAC voted for and against (minutes from the RRAC meeting can be found on the same website listed at the beginning of these notes). Anderson also mentioned that there were several members of the public at the RRAC meeting who commented on how they felt about the new fees and increases proposed by the Forest Service (FS). Wagoner read the motions from the RRAC notes on the proposed sites to the RAC members.

Public comment period ended 9:15a.m.

Discussion: It was reiterated that there was a lot of public comment at the RRAC meeting and the public reminded the RRAC that they are representing all of the public and need to take all factors and comments into account when voting on the fees. Double taxation was brought up several times. There were several negative letters that the FS received on the increase and new fee sites. Some expressed that this is not a good time to increase fees. Dispersed camping is available in the same areas with the proposed new/increased fee sites. Some members of the RRAC also felt that the increases are double taxation and coming at a bad time. When asked, the FS stated that they did not foresee any additional increases in the next five years.

IV. Rick Waitley –Dynamics of a Good Meeting

Tiel-Nelson introduced Rick Waitley. He gave a very informative presentation on the “Dynamics of a Good meeting,” using a power point presentation as well as scenarios and personal experiences. The presentation covered the traits of strong leadership. Waitley stated that the RAC’s membership diversity is what makes them an effective group. Waitley also went over the life cycle of a group or organization. During lunch he covered parliamentary procedures for meetings and went through scenarios for efficient meetings with the group.

V. Brad Brooks – Blaine County Airport Re-location Team Report

Brooks explained to the RAC how the airport team came up with the draft letter they presented; they had one meeting in person then several phone calls and email messages. The team discussed how the wildlife in the area would be impacted by the potential siting of an airport, and how those factors would be mitigated if the site was indeed selected. The team decided that they wanted to raise possible issues rather than support any alternative to the airport site as that seemed premature at this point. Noise impact was another factor that the team addressed in the letter.

Discussion: It was mentioned that the letter contained ideas that are already required to be addressed by the BLM, so rather than duplicating a requirement; maybe other areas should be

addressed. The team decided to address the concerns and wanted to be on the record showing that the RAC had concerns regarding possible impacts to the wildlife if this site is selected. It was suggested that there be modifications to the letter.

Quale moved that item one of the drafted letter be deleted and other items be renumbered and then make a short paragraph stating that there is a Wilderness Study Area in close proximity and to follow BLM's existing procedures to ensure it was properly handled.

The motion was second.

Discussion: There is a WSA nearby and there are concerns with the close proximity to the site and the RAC wants to be sure those concerns are addressed.

Sanders moved that Quale and Brooks take care of the changes then bring it back at the end of the meeting for review.

There was a second

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

VI. Brad Brooks – Castle Rocks Climbing Management Team Report

BLM is developing a climbing management plan to ensure there is proper use of the area. Some of the land is managed by Idaho Parks & Recreation (IDP&R). The two agencies are working together as there is no defining line from where one jurisdiction stops and the other starts. Each agency manages the land according to their guidelines and both have different missions. The team's recommendation is to endorse the climbing management plan.

Comments: The Castle Rock area is very special to the Tribes, and also has historic trails that need to be addressed. A multi agency meeting discussing climbing management in the spring of 2009 addressed cultural concerns as well as the bolting issues. It seemed that the agencies were striving for consistency throughout the park. Tuell requested changes to paragraph 3 line starting at "without in adversely impacting cultural resources" Bottom first page changed to: "The RAC encourages the BLM... Climbing plan"

Baker suggested that another section be added to the letter supporting extending the closure until the plan is completed. If the area is open to climbing, BLM cannot effectively protect the resources while the plan is being completed. A letter of support from the RAC would be helpful. Brackett suggested wording for the addition to the letter as follows: "The RAC supports the continuation of the temporary closure of the Castle Rocks for another year while the climbing management plan is completed."

*The site has had a temporary closure for the past six years.

Brooks moved to adopt the letter with the three suggested additions to the letter

There was a second

Motion passed unanimously by hand vote

Brooks moved to send the letter as modified forwarded to the BLM and other involved agencies.

Second

Motion passed unanimously by hand vote

VII. Nominations – Marc Brackett

Brackett went through the list of committee members who are up for re-nomination and asked each person if they wanted to re-nominate or were planning to end their terms. Brackett then explained that it was up to the member who was up for re-nomination to get their own letters of recommendation.

VIII. Unfinished Business

Quale and Brooks rewrote the airport letter as follows:

Mel moved to modify the airport letter to remove the following on the bottom of page one, “1. The potential for increased noise... Black Butte and Lava WSAs.” Add the following to page two after “We are concerned with the impacts... WSAs from this project.”

The question of impacts, particularly noise and the traffic associated with an airport in close proximity to a WSA was raised, the Black Butte and Lava WSA’s are of special concern. We urge the BLM to provide proper consideration to the values contained in these WSAs and carefully follow all applicable laws and regulations in the planning process.

Then renumber the remaining numbered sections to reflect the correct numerical order.

Second

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote

Debbie moved to forward the letter to BLM and cc FAA

Second

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote

IX. Expectations of a Team – Bill Baker

Teams can help the RAC ensure BLM is following the NEPA process and that there is a full range of alternatives developed during the planning process. This can be done by providing BLM input on relevant issues and the development and analysis of alternatives. The RAC may submit a RAC preferred alternative for formal recommendation; provide feedback to the BLM from the constituents they represent, provide analysis on comments received, and provide input on the proposed decision in the form of a recommendation from the RAC. While BLM would like to keep the RAC engaged in fire/fuels, it is not sure what the teams can do to help at this point as there are no pending decisions in front of BLM currently. Sanders suggested that as a team they look at the previous fire records and make recommendations based on trends for the fire/fuels team.

**RAC members have unique privileges. Information provided to the RAC by the BLM may not be shared outside of the RAC or RAC teams, as it is proprietary. RAC members may submit*

comments individually, as members of the public, during formal comment periods. As individuals, RAC members may also protest final decisions.

**Lynn requested to be added to Fire/Fuels team

X. Formation of Energy Team – Marc Brackett

The RAC decided to separate out the energy projects into categories so as not to overload any individuals, the teams are as follows:

China Mountain: Lynn Messman, Gerald Orthel, Yvette Tuell, Mel Quale(chair), Ken Sanders, Brad Brooks

**Brackett reminded the RAC members that he has a financial interest in this project so will recuse himself from any voting.*

Gateway Transmission Lines & MISTI: Debbie Dane, Gerald Othel (chair), Joe Tugaw, Yvette Tuell

Orthel updated the RAC on Idaho Power's role. Idaho Power has identified all the dairymen that will be affected by Gateway and they have set meetings tentatively for April 14 & 15, 2009. These meetings will talk about effects on dairy cows as well as other perceived issues. Idaho Power will also send out letters to farmers and residents in the areas.

XI. Murphy Complex and More Workshop – Bill Baker

Scheduled for May 12-14, 2009 in Twin Falls. This workshop is being held to examine the changes and partnerships that have occurred since the Clover Fire of 2005. BLM encourages the RAC to attend the meetings and tour. Registrations for the workshop are due by April 30, 2009, and are available online at the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission website.

XII. Field Office Reports

Each of the Field Managers provided a handout with updates for the ongoing projects they have as well as gave a quick update on any new items.

XIII. Other Business

Upcoming RAC meetings - Oct 8th, 2009 and Jan 21, 2010

Summer Tour – tentative date set for June 12, 2009

It is Burley's turn to host the summer tour. Some possibilities are: Geothermal Project and Castle Rocks or N. Minidoka Rehab.

BLM needs to make sure that word documents are sent out in older version so everyone can open and read them.

An explanation of the minute's process was requested so that the RAC could understand why it took the amount of time it did to get to them. The process is as follows:

Wagoner types the minutes, then sends them to the speakers at the meeting. When all the speakers return their sections, Wagoner sends them to Tiel-Nelson for editing. Once she edits them then Baker reviews/approves them and then the RAC chair receives them for review/approval.

Ken moved to adjourn meeting
Second

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote

Meeting adjourned at 3:25

Handouts provided:

- Agenda
- Copy of previous meeting minutes
- Resource Management Plan Training
- Dynamics of a Good Meeting
- Suggested Team Letters for China Mountain and Climbing Management Plan
- Castle Rocks Interagency Draft Recreation Climbing Management Plan
- Major Energy Projects Proposed or Projected
- TFD BLM RAC Team Expectations
- Field Office Updates
- RRAC Summary for Fee Increases (handed out but not reviewed)

Minutes certified by:

/s/ Marc Brackett

9-16-09

Marc Brackett, TFD RAC

Date

/s/ Bill Baker

9-16-09

Bill Baker, TF DFO

Date

Minutes recorded by: Beckie Wagoner, TFD Records Assistant