

**Twin Falls District
Resource Advisory
Committee Meeting
Minutes
February 21, 2008**

Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
Red Lion Canyon Springs Inn, Twin Falls, ID.
February 21, 2008

Attendance

RAC: Ken Sanders, Samantha Anderson, Denise Alexander, Debbie Dane, Scott Boettger, Kevin Bell, Mel Quale, Hank Mayland, Dennis Crane, Marc Brackett

BLM: Bill Baker, Jenifer Arnold, E. Lynn Burkett, Heather Tiel-Nelson, Lori Armstrong, Rick Vander Voet, Scott Uhrig, Holly Hampton, Beckie Wagoner

New member training started at 8:30 am.

Meeting started at 9:30 with Public Comment Period; there was no public to comment.

Introductions and updates were then given; Jenifer Arnold is the new Associate District Manager and E. Lynn Burkett is acting Burley Field Office Manager (BFOM).

Jarbidge Field Office Update, Rick Vander Voet, Field Office Manager

Rick started off by providing answers to questions posed by the RAC previously in regards to the Resource Management Plan (RMP). He finished up by asked for feedback on the alternatives. Please see attachment.

RMP:

The Murphy fires will likely set the RMP schedule back a year. There is no State Director approved schedule yet, but the draft RMP/EIS should be out in late December. Next week a more developed matrix with revised conceptual alternatives will go out to the RAC RMP subgroup. A news letter will be coming out and BLM would like to see an article from the RAC subgroup in it.

China Mountain (Brown's Bench/RES):

Wind Power Project; formally assigned the ROW over to China Mtn. Wind, LLC, a subsidiary of Renewable Energy Systems (RES). This project is the largest wind energy project proposed on BLM land. The EIS process will start in late spring. This is an important area to the tribes. There could be up to 185 wind turbines, which could provide power for 200,000 homes. There are 30,624 acres in all; the break down is as follows:

- Idaho BLM – 15,257 acres
- Nevada BLM – 4,682 acres
- Idaho State – 2,000 acres
- Private land – 8,684 acres

The question was asked, “If pygmy rabbits are listed will it stop this project?” The answer was; everyone involved in the project knows how sensitive the area is.

The project proponents have entered into an agreement with a power company in Nevada to sell some of the potential power from the project.

There are multiple research projects going on related to the Murphy fire. The Livestock Fuels Workgroup put together by Tom Dyer should have a report available in mid March.

Burley Field Office Update, E. Lynn Burkett, Acting Burley Field Office Manager

Cotterell Mountain project is on hold because there is no buyer at this time; the ground has not been broke yet.

Range currently has four land transfers. The Range Administrative System is implementing a program so that the public has access to this information; no completion date on this yet.

The South Hills has a road closure that for the first time they actually locked the gates rather than just close them. The area provided secure winter range for mule deer as well as sage grouse habitat. It was suggested that the closure sign for this area be reworded to seem more informative then harsh.

Many eagles and pygmy rabbits have been sited in the Burley Field office areas.

New geologist was hired; a student working on their masters to handle mining.

Recreation sites:

Lud Drexler – developed in 1974 and was named after a sportsman who donated a lot of his time to developing the site. Most use on this site is from locals 22 – 35 years of age. There is a \$5.00 per night fee to use this site, no day use cost.

Milner – This site has historic value because of the Oregon Trail goes through it. There are 30 camp sites; most use is from people within 50 miles. There is a \$5.00 night fee or a \$3.00 per day fee. There has been some vandalism on this site, mostly dumping and graffiti.

Shoshone Field Office Update, Lori Armstrong, Field Office Manager

Snow Packs:

The canals are full of ice so nothing is going though right now. There is concern of flooding from what is on the low benches and also later from the snowpack. The Big Wood River drainage should be accommodated by Magic Reservoir for the most part, but the Little Wood River drainage will not be able to hold all the water. The Carey/Richfield highway is one area that could flood, along with Shoshone and Gooding.

Airport:

Last week FAA had meetings on what it takes to sponsor an airport. Interested parties needed to respond by the end of March. They are re-evaluating feasibility studies on all 16 proposed sites. If it is decided not to go with the preferred site they will determine what action to take next with the airport sponsor. By summer, the alternative sites should be known.

Blaine County Sale Proposal:

Blaine County submitted a formal proposal to purchase public land adjacent to the existing Ohio Gulch Transfer Station on April 23, 1992. They asked to put the proposal on hold not long after submittal and requested BLM again work the proposal in 2007. The land would be used for expansion of the transfer station. This expansion would accommodate a larger recycling center, compost operation, location for monitoring wells, continued provisions for sewage disposal, temporary storage for automobiles, tires and white goods as well as a spreading area for air treatment of contaminated soils.

Auger Falls Bridge:

The bridge crossing the Snake River at Auger Falls has been deemed no longer safe and must be removed. April 2, 2008 there will be a meeting at 1:30pm on the south side of the river by the bridge to discuss removal and disposal options. IDT is the lead for this project.

District Rehabilitation update, Scott Uhrig, Supervisory Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation (ES&R) Specialist

ES&R is a three year program. The stabilization actions must be taken within one year following containment of the fire and rehabilitation actions within three years after containment.. There are 13,000 acres of bitterbrush seeding scheduled for this spring on the Murphy fire area. To date we have put 1.2 million pounds of seed into the ground. Plans for this spring include weed control on burned areas and treatments as well as building temporary fences to protect the new seedings. Kochia is good for weed control and provides good forage for wildlife.

Bill Baker added that we are working with Fish & Game to get volunteers to build the fences to help defray costs.

Energy Projects within the Twin Falls District, Bill Baker

There are currently several proposed energy projects within the district. Jenifer Arnold, Associate District Manager is the point of contact for these projects. A folder with specifics on each project was provided.

Electrical Transmission Projects:

- ✚ Gateway West – Wyoming to Melba, Idaho
- ✚ Hemingway – Murphy, Idaho to Northeastern Oregon
- ✚ Mountain States Intertie (MSTI) – Garrison/Townsend, Montana – Southern Idaho
- ✚ Northern Lights – Montana to Wyoming across Idaho to Nevada
- ✚ Southwest Intertie (SWIP or SWIT) – Shoshone, Idaho to Las Vegas, Nevada

Gas pipeline projects:

- ✚ BRONCO
- ✚ RUBY

Wind Energy Projects:

- ✚ China Mountain (Brown's Bench)
- ✚ Windland – Cotterel Mountain
- ✚ Five potential wind farm sites in southern Idaho – City of Pocatello, Glenn's Ferry/King Hill, Kings Crown, Red Hill, and French John Hill

Geothermal Projects:

- ✚ Raft River – US Geothermal
- ✚ Potential Future Geothermal Energy Projects – China Cap, Crane Creek, and Willow Springs

Bill asked the RAC how they want to be engaged on these projects. The public meetings will start in the spring for these projects: China Mountain, SWIP, Gateway West, and Mountain States. The West Wide Corridor is the only one that has an ESI out.

Mark Brackett reiterated what Rick covered on the RMP update, the subgroup is meeting weekly to go over changes and new proposals.

Mel Quale Update on the Craters Travel Management Plan

Scoping is done and approximately 100 comments were submitted. The next step is to develop alternatives and present them then a new comment period will start once the alternatives have been presented.

Mel suggested a field trip to Craters to at the roads and area towards the end of May.

Proposed Joint Tours:

- ❖ With Elko RAC in June
- ❖ Murphy Fire with Society for Range Management & IRC in the second week of June (recently scheduled for June 14, 2008)

Future Agenda Items:

- Livestock Fuels working group - June
- China Mountain – June
- Recreation Fee Sites – Lud Drexler & Milner

Approved by: /s/ Bill Baker May 8, 2008
Bill Baker Twin Falls District Manager Date

Approved by: /s/ Ken Sanders May 8, 2008
Ken Sanders RAC Chairman Date