

## RAC Meeting Minutes November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005

### ATTENDANCE

RAC: Kelly Adams, Samantha Anderson, Joe Tugaw, Debbie Dane, Ken Sanders, Mel Quale, Scott Boettger, Mike Tylka, Marc Brackett.

BLM: Howard Hedrick, Mike Courtney, Ken Miller, Zach Oper, Erick Kurkowski, Rick Vander Voet, Chris Simonson, Lori Armstrong, Scott Urig, Sky Buffat, Beckie Wagoner, John Aussenburg.

9:04 am meeting was called to order at the Red Lion Inn, Twin Falls.

Howard then gave welcome to the new members, reviewed the changes in BLM staffing and an overview of the meeting.

New RAC binders were passed out and gone over with the updates for the year, and new contact lists.

Kelly addressed the last meeting minutes, but due to lack of attendance they were not able to be approved. Elections were also put on hold pending more member attendance.

Howard then talked about Jake's vacancy and the fact that when a position is vacated it is hard to get it replaced before its term end, but we are doing everything we can to get approval for replacement to include going through our state director.

Kelly again addressed what needed to be done to get more RAC members to the meetings. Some suggestions included:

- ~letting missing members know immediately after the missed meeting when the next one is so they can plan ahead for it. (Howard volunteered BLM to do this).
- ~phone calls in addition to emails and letters of reminder of the upcoming meetings.
- ~a calling tree in where members were responsible for notifying each other of upcoming meetings.
- ~conference calls for voting for members physically unable to attend.

The calling tree was established for each category, one member for each category will start calling the other members in the same category to remind them of the upcoming meetings.

The calling tree is as follows:

- Cat 1: Mel
- Cat 2: Scott
- Cat 3: Ken

### **Blaine Co Airport Update: Lori Armstrong, SFOM**

Site selection was the main topic, site 10 and the original site 9 is the area they are applying for. Both sites are on BLM land with some state land on original site 9.

They will need to put up a weather tower for a time span of 1 yr to gather data to see if the site will work. FFA will be team lead for the EIS. BLM's role is as co-operating agency at this point. The Department of Justice has the final say on approval or disapproval of the land. Two things BLM is concerned with are: 1) Determining process of FFA, and 2) It's not in conformance with BLM land use plan so a plan amendment is required. There are potential environmental hazards which are: sage grouse, tribal treaty rights, scenic hwy, ACEC's (Handout provided).

### **Recreation RAC Update: Sky Buffat, Public Affairs**

RAC will become more involved in the recreation for both BLM and the Forest Service and possibly even the Park Service or any other agencies that set fees for recreation such as but not limited to camping, and usage. More information will be given as it is received (Handout provided).

### **JFO Resource Management Plan (RMP) Update/Outlook: Howard Hedrick, DM**

We have a settlement in response to the courts decision and order on Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. The settlement agreement provides that:

- A) BLM will prepare a revised Jarbidge RMP and supporting EIS, NEPA, and all other provisions of law; BLM will also issue site-specific NEPA reviews and 10 year grazing permit decisions for all JFO allotments based on the revised RMP and EIS.
- B) During the interim period until BLM has issued the revisions there are terms and conditions to govern grazing in the Jarbidge allotments covered.

The time frame to complete the settlement is 4 yrs with possibility of 1 yr extension. Sage grouse protection and restoration and their habitat are a high priority.

A handout was provided of the settlement agreement and the court decision. A subgroup was formed for the RMP:

Ken (contact person), Samantha, Mel, Joe, Marc, and Denise

### **Shoshone Land Exchanges: Lori Armstrong, SFOM**

Starting Jan 2006 we will start using a 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor for some of the exchanges (Handout provided).

Issues include but are not limited to:

~many open proposals since 1980's.

~the plan amendments process created renewed interest in the land tenure program and generated additional proposals.

~the workload surpasses the capabilities of the current available staff.

~many permits were issued pending disposal in the 1980 – 90's.

~time frames for processing vary from 1-2 yrs for sales and 2-3 yrs

Objectives:

~public interest including local community's needs for expansion

~eliminating trespass and undesirable uses on public lands

~protecting or enhancing natural resources

~consolidation and improved management of public lands

~reducing land use permits for agricultural and other uses

SFO is working towards decreasing the backlog of land tenure proposals.

Subgroup update:

Mel-chair, Joe, Scott, Debbie, Mike, and Denise

### **Update/Overview Craters National Monument: Rick VanderVoet, Monument Manager**

The Plan is completed; there was a clarification on Minidoka road requested. Three protests were received; once the protests are responded to the plan will be finalized. If protesters are not satisfied with the response they can go to court.

### **Fire Rehab: Scott Uhrig, Operations**

It was an average year for rehab crews with 17 plans and 3 bigger plans already accomplished. 13 other projects are in the works. To date a total of 79,788 acres are completed, approximately 12,000 will be done by next fall, but the area needs to be sprayed first. 340,350 miles of fencing left to build with 100 miles done, most of which is protection fencing. All protection fences will be completed by mid Dec this year.

1.1 million pounds of seed has been ordered with 800,000 pounds already in the ground. This has been the biggest year for drill seeding with 60,000 alone on the Clover fire area. BLM fire crews and contractors are working together to complete the project. Another 13,200 acres were drill seeded in the Rupert fire area by the BFO fire crews. The Ludlow fire will take 10,500 acres and is 75-80% completed, but had to be stopped due to the weather conditions. Four rehabs have had bitterbrush/sagebrush seedlings planted on them, there is a total of 20,000 to be planted, and will be finished up in the spring. Ariel seedings and sagebrush should be finished in Jan – Feb of 2006. Clover fire will be completed today; Rupert fire will be complete in approximately 2 weeks. The seeding is primarily a native mix.

### **New Sage Grouse Working Plan: John Augsburger**

The plan has been developed to speak to diverse audiences and to fulfill a range of purposes; to facilitate use by a variety of audiences.

#### *Overview:*

Identifies goals and conservation objectives, explains how the Plan should be used, and describes the relationship between the state Plan and the LWG plans. Outlines roles and expectations for LWG's, and provides specific tools and guidance to facilitate timely completion of LWG plans.

#### *Goals:*

Maintain, improve and increase sage-grouse populations and habitats in Idaho where possible while considering the predictability and long-term sustainability of a variety of other land uses; and do so in such a way that a healthy diversity and abundance of plants and wildlife species, and human uses are also supported. Establish LWG's in all SGPA's that currently lack them, foster and support LWG's and their activities, throughout the range of sage-grouse in Idaho. Foster and support coordination among state and federal agencies, tribes, and non-governmental cooperators to achieve the primary goal of this plan.

#### *Population objectives:*

Maintain, and increase the present distribution and abundance of sage-grouse in Idaho where possible. Reduce, eliminate, or mitigate the adverse impacts of human-related or unnatural disturbance to sage-grouse within or near breeding and winter habitat throughout Idaho.

#### *Habitat objectives:*

Maintain, enhance or restore sage-grouse habitat at multiple spatial scales. Manage Idaho's landscape to foster a dynamic sagebrush ecosystem that includes a diverse species composition of sagebrush, grasses, and forbs; and that incorporates structural characteristics that promote rangeland health in general, and sage-grouse habitat requirements in particular (Handout provided).

### **Slickspot Pepper Grass: Howard Hedrick, DM**

It is a plant that is randomly dispersed in the desert, we have found it around Mountain Home, Three mile area, and Jarbidge as well as both sides of the interstate headed towards Boise. The grass is found in small groups. It has a possibility of becoming listed by Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service needs to collect additional data to make a final determination. The seed can remain viable in the ground for 5-6 years making it hard to locate.

### **Wind Energy/Cottrell Update: Ken Miller, BFOM**

The draft EIS is out, comments closed on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 with 68 comments from 1– 40 pages each. In the process of building responses the past few weeks, both responses and comments will be placed into the draft. The final draft will be completed by Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at which time it will go to review. The final EIS is planned to be completed the end of March with intent to go to the public then for a 30 day protest period with a following of 60 day government review. The record of decision will be in July, 2006.

#### Concerns:

- impact on property acres
- Albion airport
- local wildlife

Meeting Recap was then given by Kelly.

#### Next Meetings Scheduled:

- Feb 7<sup>th</sup>
- May 9<sup>th</sup>
- Aug 8<sup>th</sup>