

(DRAFT Until Approved by RAC in April 2008)

Meeting Minutes

Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
November 16, 2007

Gold Dust West Hotel
Carson City, Nevada

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I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

7:35 a.m., Friday, November 16, 2007 – Meeting Called to Order by Chairman Gebhardt with the following members of the RAC present.

SIERRA FRONT – NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEMBER	RESOURCE/EXPERTISE	FRIDAY, 11/16
John Gebhardt – Chair	State Agency	X
Patricia Herzog – Vice Chair	Elected Official	X
William Bennett	Transportation/ROWs	X
Rochanne Downs	Native Americans	
Brian Doyal	Public-At-Large	X
Tim Dufurrena	Nevada Cattlemen	X
James Eidel	Wildlife	X
Charles Matton	Wild Horses & Burros	X
John Mudge	Mining	
Ernest Paine	Livestock	
Will Roger Peterson	Recreation	X
Steven Siegel	Energy/Minerals	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X
Lee Turner	Environment	X
D. Craig Young	Archaeology	X

BLM staff present – Gail Givens, Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office (WFO); Bryant Smith, Associate Field Manager, Carson City Field Office (CCFO); Mark Struble, Public Affairs Specialist, CCFO; Jamie Thompson, Public Affairs Officer, WFO.

Public present – Jim Kudrna, owner of Soldier Meadows Ranch and a livestock permittee.

II. Election of Officers

Chairman Gebhardt opened nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year.

Patti Herzog nominated John Gebhardt as Chair. Seconded by Craig Young. There were no other nominations. Nominations were closed. John Gebhardt was reelected as Chair by unanimous voice vote.

Jim Eidel nominated Patti Herzog as Vice Chair. Seconded by Sherm Swanson. There were no other nominations. Nominations were closed. Patti Herzog was reelected as Vice Chair by unanimous voice vote.

III. Summary of Motions Other Than to Approve Minutes

No motions were made at this meeting.

IV. Summary of Action Assignments

- 1.) Jim Eidel asked that the topic of grazing to reduce cheatgrass be kept on the RAC list of issues for the coming year. This was done at the conclusion of this meeting.
- 2.) Tim Dufurrena asked the Winnemucca Field Office for hard copies of the SOPs and the current RMP matrix. This will be done in early December.

3.) Jim Eidel asked that wild horse and burro management, as it affects private landowners, be included among the issues considered by the RAC in the coming year. This was done at the conclusion of this meeting.

4.) The RAC would like to have a tour and overnight stay at the Soldier Meadows Guest Ranch as part of its July meeting. This will be arranged with owner Jim Kudrna.

V. Minutes from the Meeting in Winnemucca, Nevada, July 11, 2007

Sherm Swanson asked that a correction be made by changing “Chapter 4” to “Chapter 2” in both places where it appears in the fourth paragraph from the bottom of page 6. This correction was made in the final minutes that will be posted on the BLM Nevada web site.

MOVED – Sherm Swanson to approve the minutes as corrected.

SECOND – Jim Eidel.

APPROVED AS CORRECTED – Unanimously

Discussion was held on the subject of grazing to control cheatgrass, the main topic of the July meeting. Jim Eidel talked about the use of temporary electric fences and wanted to know whether this was a practical option or not to make grazing down cheatgrass work. Tim Dufurrena said it was not practical. Gail Givens said that its practicality is very limited because most permittees do not have the personnel or resources to graze cheatgrass effectively. John Gebhardt said it was not practical on a large scale. Sherm said, like many new ideas, it would take time to figure out how to make it work, and that it was possible in some places and not in others. At this point Jim Eidel asked that this subject be kept on the RAC list of issues for the coming year. This was done.

VI. RAC Subgroup Reports

Black Rock NCA Implementation Subgroup

Will Roger Peterson reported that the Subgroup met in July to view damage caused by unauthorized OHV use and is considering ways to deal with the problem. There will be another meeting in January to work with BLM on its draft Transportation Management Plan and review proposed alternatives to be included in the Wilderness Management Plan.

Winnemucca Field Office Resource Management Plan Subgroup

Sherm Swanson reported that the Subgroup will be receiving the Draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in December and will hold a one-day, all-day meeting in the Winnemucca Field Office on January 11 to discuss the SOPs. The Subgroup members need copies of the matrix in advance, but will not propose changes to it since the timeline does not allow for that.

Nevada Statewide Recreation Resource Advisory Council (Rec RAC)

Brian Doyal asked that the RAC review the final Rec RAC protocols and, if the members approve, that Chairman Gebhardt sign them, indicating the RAC’s approval. This approval was given.

VII. Wild Horses on The Black Rock NCA

Jim Eidel presented a PowerPoint showing damage occurring to springs in the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area and Associated

Wilderness Areas. Most damage was caused by wild horses, but one spring included in the presentation suffered damage from cattle. The damage consisted of trampling of the soft ground around springs that can cause them to stop functioning as viable sources of water for horses, livestock, and wildlife. Jim also showed several slides of springs that had been successfully rehabilitated and protected by collaborative efforts of BLM, Jim Kudrna of Soldier Meadows Ranch, and several volunteer organizations. Rehab efforts shown included erection of buck-and-pole enclosure fences to keep horses and cattle away from spring heads while providing access to water outside the enclosure areas, and examples of springs where the heads were cleaned out and the water repiped to access points away from the spring heads. Jim Eidel said these efforts have been very successful and hopes that more springs in the area can be rehabilitated in a similar manner.

Jim Eidel and Craig Young asked, can livestock permittees improve springs during droughts? Gail said they could when cooperative agreements are in place and disturbance remains within the approved footprint of the improvement, which has included appropriate cultural clearance.

Sherm Swanson asked whether, when horses move among several Herd Management Areas (HMAs), all affected HMAs shouldn't be gathered at the same time? Gail responded that we are working on that issue with the new field manager in the Surprise Office regarding adjacent HMAs on both sides of the boundary separating Surprise and Winnemucca.

Member of the public Jim Kudrna was recognized by Chairman Gebhardt and said, that when horses are damaging water resources on the range it isn't fair to limit grazing permits that have existed for years, and unfair to wild horses when permittees stop hauling water.

Sherm asked if adjacent HMAs were sharing horses in other areas. Gail said he thought most others in the state were already being managed as complexes.

VIII. Field Manager Reports

Winnemucca Field Manager Gail Given's Report

1. Printed copy of the report was distributed.
2. Additional items covered orally.
 - a. Correction – Gail said there is a correction in the last line of the second to last paragraph on page 3 of the printed report: June should be changed to August. This has been done.
 - b. Wild Horses and Burros – Sherm asked if NDOW could help BLM take horse counts under a long term contract. Gail and Chairman Gebhardt said it might be possible, but would be difficult to implement.

Gail said the Augusta Mountains gather has just been completed and 228 horses were removed. Jamie added that immediately prior to this gather, the Battle Mountain Field Office conducted its New Pass/Ravenswood gather right next door; this is an example of where adjacent HMAs in different BLM districts were gathered at the same time.

- c. Clear Creek SNPLMA Land Purchase Termination – Patti Herzog asked if it might be possible to reduce the amount of land involved, and whether there were any early discussions with the willing seller on that issue or other possible

solutions. Gail said the seller was informed early in the process that the government cannot purchase land for more than the appraised market value and that the amount of property really wasn't the problem. In this case the appraised value was about half of what the seller anticipated.

- d. Steve Siegel asked if Allotment Management Plan (AMP) renewals were a big issue on the WFO, and if so what can or should the RAC do to help? Gail said permitting is a perennial problem, but that he didn't know what the RAC could do.

Craig asked, weren't the RACs started to deal with grazing? Gail said yes, along with other issues.

Jim Eidel asked if the Congressional delegations were aware of the problem [of the likelihood that the 2009 deadline for renewing all fully processed permit renewals will not be met]. Gail said, yes, they are aware.

Sherm said proactive range management is required. Lee Turner said there aren't enough range cons to do the work. Sherm agreed, adding that on average there is one range con for every 750,000 acres.

Jim Eidel suggested that a list be put together of RAC members who could serve as part of a coalition to visit the Congressional delegations on this issue.

Carson City Associate Field Manager Bryant Smith's Report

1. Printed copy of the report was distributed.
2. Additional item covered orally.

Sand Mountain – Bryant went over fee revenues collected at Sand Mountain over the past year and said Churchill County has Question 1 (Q1) money for use there. Craig Young said his firm won the contract to perform the cultural surveys needed in conjunction with creating designated trails and has just completed its report. Patti asked if it might be possible that a Visitor Center might be built at Sand Mountain. Craig said that might be possible following discussions with the Tribe and other interested parties.

IX. FY08 RAC Issues/Priorities & Scheduling

During FY07, the Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin RAC met three times to provide counsel and advice to BLM managers on a variety of resource management programs and projects. This was the same number of meetings as in FY06, one fewer than in earlier years, but has saved money and thus far has proven to be sufficient.

Issues/Priorities covered in FY07 included:

- Winnemucca RMP (using a RAC Subgroup)
- Fire Rehabilitation and Prevention, including Grazing to Reduce Fuels
- Alpine County Plan Amendment
- Coeur-Rochester Expansion and Closure EIS
- Echo Canyon Limestone Mining Project
- Wild Horse & Burro Guidelines Finalization
- Renewable Energy Projects – Geothermal Power, etc.

It was agreed that the RAC would again meet three times in FY08, with the first meeting being this one, held in conjunction with the annual Tri-RAC meeting. The other two meetings in the coming year will be as follows:

April 29 & 30 in Carson City

July 15 & 16 in Gerlach and Soldier Meadows

The RAC will review and provide significant input to BLM on the following issues and priorities in FY08:

- 1.) SNPLMA Round 9 (review of R9 proposals and RAC-hosted public comment time for development of tri-RAC recommendations to the Executive Committee)
- 2.) Pine Nut Mountains RMP Amendment
- 3.) Sand Mountain Implementation of Conservation Strategy
- 4.) Grazing for fuels management (review of USFS sheep/goat grazing in hills around Carson City)
- 5.) Wind & geothermal energy proposals
- 6.) Wild Horse & Burro Issues (including how WH&B management impacts private landowners) & S&G Update
- 7.) Winnemucca RMP
- 8.) Black Rock NCA & Wilderness Areas Planning (field tour)
- 9.) Drought issues related to springs/water sources for wild horses, livestock & wildlife (field tour)
- 10.) Tour of Friends of Black Rock facility in Gerlach
- 11.) Overnight at Soldier Meadows

Note: Issues 1-6 will be discussed at the first meeting in Carson City, and issues 6-10 at the second meeting in Gerlach/Soldier Meadows.

X. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

XI. Meeting Adjourned at 10:55 am.

The RAC reconvened with the other two Nevada RACs for the concluding Tri-RAC joint session at 11:30 a.m.