

# Meeting Minutes

## Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council April 4-5, 2007

BLM-Carson City Field Office  
5665 Morgan Mill Road  
Carson City, Nevada

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## I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

9:05 a.m., Wednesday, April 4, 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	Weds., 04/04/07
<b>John Gebhardt – Chair</b>	<b>State Agency</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Laura S. Crane</b>	<b>Environment</b>	
<b>William Bennett</b>	<b>Transportation/ROWs</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Rochanne Downs</b>	<b>Native Americans</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Brian Doyal</b>	<b>Public-At-Large</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Tim Dufurrena</b>	<b>Livestock Permittees</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>James Eidel</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Jerry Hepworth</b>	<b>Energy/Minerals</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Patricia Herzog</b>	<b>Elected Official</b>	
<b>John Mudge</b>	<b>Mining</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Ernest Paine</b>	<b>Livestock Permittees</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Will Roger Peterson</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Vernon Schulze</b>	<b>Wild Horses</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Sherm Swanson</b>	<b>Academic</b>	
<b>D. Craig Young</b>	<b>Archeology</b>	<b>X</b>

**BLM staff present** – Gail Givens, Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office; Don Hicks, Field Manager, Carson City Field Office (CCFO); Linda Kelly, CCFO; Mark Struble, Public Affairs Officer, CCFO;

**Public present** – William Sibley, representing the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony; Brad Pratt of Amp Resources.

Chairman Gebhardt had everyone introduce themselves and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on November 3, 2006 – a motion was made by Jerry Hepworth, seconded by Brian Doyal, and the motion passed by acclamation.

Chairman Gebhardt then announced that RAC member Laura Crane could no longer serve as the RAC Vice-Chair because she has recently moved to the Los Angeles area to take a new position with The Nature Conservancy. He nominated Patty Herzog to fill the Vice-Chair position through the end of FY07 – this was seconded by Vern Schulze and the motion passed by acclamation.

## II. Summary of Motions Other Than to Approve Minutes

MOVED – by John Gebhardt to nominate Patty Herzog as the Vice-Chair of the Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC for the remainder of FY07; no further nominations were made.

SECOND – by Vern Schulze.

DISCUSSION – Laura Crane has resigned from the RAC due to a move.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

MOVED – by Jim Eidel that Jerry Hepworth be allowed to remain as the Winnemucca RMP Subcommittee after his appointment runs out at the end of FY07.

SECOND – Rochanne Downs.

DISCUSSION – Vern Schulze also volunteered to stay on after his appointment ends.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

MOVED – by Jim Eidel that the RAC accept the final Wild Horse & Burro Standards & Guidelines that were submitted by Vern Schulze on behalf of the WH&B Subcommittee, and that the amended document be forwarded to BLM State Director Ron Wenker with a cover letter to be drafted by Chairman Gebhardt.

SECOND – Rochanne Downs.

DISCUSSION – Vern Schulze gave a briefing on the process that the subcommittee has gone through to get to this point on the S&G's. Small edits were made last fall by BLM staff after meeting with Vern. The Winnemucca Field Office had some concerns with zeroing out some HMA's due to political concerns. Input also came in from several RAC members.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

### **III. Summary of Action Assignments**

1. Chairman Gebhardt asked during the field manager reports that BLM make every effort to submit the reports to the RAC members in pdf format (or Word format if the reports are not too large to e-mail) at least one week before each scheduled RAC meeting.
2. Jim Eidel asked for updated grazing monitoring data from the Carson City Field Office (Don Hicks will get Russell Suminski in touch with Jim).
3. Vern Schulze asked that out of forty-four range permit renewals for the Winnemucca Field Office, how many have had full range evaluations completed?
4. Jim Eidel asked about again seeing something concerning grazing down cheat grass (for the July field trip in Winnemucca).
5. The RAC asked the Carson City Field Office to be ready to discuss the composition of the Pine Nut RMP/EIS RAC subcommittee at the RAC meeting in Winnemucca on July 11-12, 2007.

### **IV. Minutes from the Meeting in Reno, Nevada, November 3, 2006**

MOVED – by Jerry Hepworth to approve.

SECOND – Brian Doyal.

DISCUSSION – None.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

## **V. RAC Subgroup Reports**

### **A. *Wild Horse and Burro Guidelines Subgroup***

Vern Schulze, Chair of the Subgroup, gave a briefing on the process that the subcommittee has gone through to get to this point on the S&G's. Small edits were made last fall by BLM staff after meeting with Vern. The Winnemucca Field Office had some concerns with zeroing out some HMA's due to political concerns. Input also came in from several RAC members. The RAC was told that the document is ready for a cover letter from RAC Chairman Gebhardt to State Director Ron Wenker.

MOVED – by Jim Eidel that the RAC accept the final Wild Horse & Burro Standards & Guidelines that were submitted by Vern Schulze on behalf of the WH&B Subcommittee, and that the amended document be forwarded to BLM State Director Ron Wenker with a cover letter to be drafted by Chairman Gebhardt.

SECOND – Rochanne Downs.

DISCUSSION – Vern Schulze gave a briefing on the process that the subcommittee has gone through to get to this point on the S&G's. Small edits were made last fall by BLM staff after meeting with Vern. The Winnemucca Field Office had some concerns with zeroing out some HMA's due to political concerns. Input also came in from several RAC members.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

### **B. *Black Rock NCA Implementation Subgroup***

Will Roger Peterson (“Will Roger”) gave a report of the January 20, 2007, Black Rock NCA Subgroup meeting. The revised NCA work plan for FY07 and a signage plan (“sign evaluation process”) were reviewed at the meeting – good progress was made. A draft is being written for a multi-resource site plan (20 sites) to streamline NEPA. Gail Givens mentioned that the sign evaluation process is a good move to provide documentation on where signs should go. The next subgroup meeting is scheduled for July 14, 2007.

### **C. *Winnemucca RMP Subgroup***

Subgroup Chair Jerry Hepworth told the RAC that he has interacted with field office staff on the alternatives matrix (which is now completed). Comments from the RAC subgroup have proved very valuable to BLM staff and they thank those who have served. A second edition of the RMP Newsletter was distributed to the RAC members.

Jim Eidel looked at the planning process schedule and asked if the RAC is scheduled to provide input between now and the 2008 deadline for producing a draft RMP. Gail Givens responded that the RMP team is about 90-180 days behind schedule at this point and that he is looking to consolidate some schedule reviews to save time. Gail pointed out to the RAC that former WFO RMP Planning Lead Jeff Johnson have vacated his position effective December 9 and that a WFO RMP Planning Lead wouldn't have a backup person to assume the duties.

No further RMP subgroup meetings were announced.

## **VI. Field Managers' Reports**

Written summaries of the reports for both the Winnemucca & Carson City Field Offices were distributed to the RAC members and added to the file for this meeting. Mark Struble said that the reports were not finalized until after March 30 so there was not enough time to mail the reports to RAC members ahead of time. Chairman Gebhardt asked during the field manager reports that BLM make every effort to submit the reports to the RAC members in pdf format (or Word format if the reports are not too large to e-mail) at least one week before each scheduled RAC meeting. Additional discussion items were covered orally. Questions were held until the end of both manager's reports.

Questions asked at the end of the reports:

Vern Schulze: A dry year is coming up; what are the field offices doing to address a shortage of forage? *Givens responded that he felt there were no real shortages of forage except in isolated areas.*

Ernie Paine: how close are we to dealing with wild horses found outside of HMA's? *Givens responded that the Winnemucca RMP is looking at consolidating HMA's and possibly eliminating some of the small areas with less than 50 horses.*

Ernie Paine: when field offices prioritize livestock trespass cases, is the information shared with other field offices? *Givens responded yes, and that the caseloads depend on the availability of the U.S. Attorney's Office.*

Jerry Hepworth: when conducting land disposals, does the BLM try to maintain equity between public and private property? *Hicks responded that the statewide BLM policy is to have no net gain of public lands in Nevada.*

Vern Schulze: out of forty-four range permit renewals for the Winnemucca Field Office, how many have had full range evaluations completed? *Givens responded that he did not know off the top of his head, but that he would get this information to the RAC.*

Craig Young: what is the current standing on the Vidler water case? *Hicks provided an update on the court case – construction is being allowed to continue with the trial set for July 2007.*

## **VII. Pine Nut Mountains Resource Management Plan Amendment/EIS Process**

Tom Crawford, Economist and RMP Project Manager for the Carson City Field Office, made a PowerPoint presentation (a hard copy of which was submitted for the RAC records of this meeting) on the continuing Pine Nut RMP Amendment/EIS process. He gave a rather extensive project history since a number of the RAC members are fairly new and have not had a briefing on the RMP in the past. The RMP area is 418,000 acres, with 101,000 acres being private and/or Indian allotment lands (mostly on the south end of the RMP area in Douglas County). The RMP area includes the 13,000 acre Burbank Canyon Wilderness Study Area, the 2,500 acre Prison Hill Recreation Area, and the 703 acre Silver Saddle Ranch within the boundaries of Carson City. The current planning effort started in 2001 to address recreation, land tenure, ACEC's, habitat for special status species and travel management issues. The public identified additional issues during the scoping period, including illegal dumping, BLM land disposals, designated routes for OHV's, and wild horse concerns.

Tom ran through the alternatives are currently proposed for the draft RMP Amendment/EIS. Program comparisons were presented under each of the alternatives (included in the handout).

RMP Amendment/EIS Timeframe:

- May 2007 – BLM to review the draft from the contractor;
- June 2007 – Notice of Intent to WO;
- June 2007 – contractor to receive revisions to document and produce a printable copy;
- July 2007 – Draft EIS to be available for 90-day review.

The RAC will discuss the composition of the RAC subcommittee at the RAC meeting in Winnemucca on July 11-12, 2007. No further actions or recommendations came from the RAC on this topic.

### **VIII. Break for lunch at 12:05 p.m.**

### **IX. Carson City Field Office Mounted Ranger Patrol Program**

Stan Zuber of the Carson City Field Office had the RAC meet across the street from the field office to show them “Koal,” the tamed wild horse used Stan in the mounted ranger program. The program has been very successful and allows BLM rangers to access areas where it is not practical to use patrol vehicles.

No actions or recommendations came from the RAC on this topic.

### **X. Renewable Energy Programs in Nevada**

Linda Kelly, Assistant Manager for Non-Renewable Resources in the Carson City Field Office, made a PowerPoint presentation on the “green energy” programs that the office is involved in (a hard copy of the presentation was submitted for the RAC record of this meeting). Dan Erbes of BLM and Brad Pratt of Amp Resources also contributed to the presentation and answered questions. The presentation concentrated on the variety wind and geothermal energy developments in western Nevada.

Geothermal energy developments on BLM lands are producing 24.2 megawatts of energy on 58 producing leases; in Nevada there are 9 power plants; there are 8 pending geothermal applications and CCFO and WFO have established 2 positions to work on the upcoming workload for geothermal (zoned between the two offices). A geologist and planner are now in place.

Brad Pratt gave an overview of the Stillwater Geothermal Plant Project as a preview to the RAC field trip planned for April 5.

No actions or recommendations came from the RAC on this topic.

## **XI. Three-Tier Organization for BLM in Nevada**

Don Hicks made a PowerPoint presentation to explain the geographic-based office structure that BLM is moving toward. All field offices have been directed by the Washington Office to move toward a structure of State Office/District Office/Field Offices. This will provide consistency among all the states, improve career ladders for management and staff positions, and keep decision making as close to the ground as possible. No major shifts are proposed between the existing field offices in Nevada. Don showed the RAC the two field office boundary line proposals currently for Carson City; Gail did the same for the Winnemucca Field Office. Proposals are due from all Nevada field offices in the state office by April 13.

No actions or recommendations came from the RAC on this topic.

## **XII. Public Comment**

One member of the public presented comments to the RAC. William Sibley of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony was concerned about the Hungry Valley area of Washoe County and whether or not it is a priority for the BLM-Carson City Field Office. Don Hicks responded that the area is a priority for the recreation and lands programs. Mr. Sibley then said he hopes that BLM will look at hiring staff to replace retiring personnel because having enough staff to consult with the Tribes is critical. He is also concerned that trash dumping in areas around Washoe County's North Valleys needs an interagency task force. He would also like to see a larger public role on public lands around the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony.

## **XIII. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.**

## **XIV. RAC Attendance on April 5 Field Trip to Churchill County**

**8:00 a.m., Thursday, April 5, 2007** – a field trip was taken to public lands in Churchill County with the following members of the RAC present:

### **SIERRA FRONT – NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

<b>Council Member</b>	<b>Resource/Expertise</b>	<b>Thurs., 04/05/07</b>
<b>John Gebhardt – Chair</b>	<b>State Agency</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Laura S. Crane</b>	<b>Environment</b>	
<b>William Bennett</b>	<b>Transportation/ROWs</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Rochanne Downs</b>	<b>Native Americans</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Brian Doyal</b>	<b>Public-At-Large</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Tim Dufurrena</b>	<b>Livestock Permittees</b>	
<b>James Eidel</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Jerry Hepworth</b>	<b>Energy/Minerals</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Patricia Herzog</b>	<b>Elected Official</b>	
<b>John Mudge</b>	<b>Mining</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Ernest Paine</b>	<b>Livestock Permittees</b>	
<b>Will Roger Peterson</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Vernon Schulze</b>	<b>Wild Horses</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Sherm Swanson</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>D. Craig Young</b>	<b>Archeology</b>	<b>X</b>

**BLM staff present on the field trip** – Gail Givens, Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office; Don Hicks, Field Manager, Carson City Field Office (CCFO); Linda Kelly, CCFO; Mark Struble, Public Affairs Officer, CCFO; Dan Erbes, CCFO Geologist; Desna Young, Sand Mountain Coordinator; Stan Zuber, Ranger.

**Public present** –Brad Pratt of Amp Resources led the first field trip stop; numerous visitors were present when the RAC stopped for a briefing at Sand Mountain.

## **XV. RAC Stop at Stillwater Geothermal Plant**

Brad Pratt of Amp Resources made three stops at facilities managed by Amp Resources, including injection well sites and the main geothermal power plant. This was a follow-up to the renewable energy presentation made on April 4 to the RAC. No actions or recommendations came from the RAC during this field trip stop.

## **XVI. RAC Stop at Sand Mountain Recreation Area**

The RAC was briefed by Desna Young and Stan Zuber on the status of fee collections and expenditures at Sand Mountain; on the implementation of the Sand Mountain Conservation Strategy; and holiday weekend patrol activities at the dunes. The RAC was also addressed by several members of the public. Other than this short presentation, the interactions at the dunes were informal. RAC members were given the chance to ride in the BLM dune buggy and tour the west side of the main Sand Mountain dunes to see the vehicle restriction area.

No actions or recommendations came from the RAC during this field trip stop. The group headed back to Carson City at approximately 3:00 p.m.

## **XVII. RAC Adjourned at Carson City at 5:00 p.m.**