

Meeting Minutes

Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
January 27-28, 2005

BLM Carson City Field Office/Nevada State Office
Carson City/Reno, Nevada

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I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

9 a.m., Thursday, January 27, 2005 – Meeting Called to Order by Chairman Roullier with the following members of the RAC present.

SIERRA FRONT – NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Council Member	Resource/Expertise	Thurs. 1/27	Fri. 1/28
William Roullier – Chair	Transportation/ROW	X	X
Larie Trippet – Vice Chair	Public-At-Large	X	X
Laura S. Crane	Environmental	X	X
John E. Dicks	Recreation	X	X
Rochanne Downs	Native Americans	X	
James Eidel	Wildlife	X	X
John Falen	Nevada Cattlemen	X	X
John Gebhardt	State Agency	X	X
Jerry Hepworth	Energy/Minerals	X	X
Patricia Herzog	Elected Official	X	
John Mudge	Mining	X	X
Ernest Paine	Livestock	X	X
Vernon Schulze	Wild Horses	X	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X	X
D. Craig Young	Archeology	X	X

BLM staff present – Vicki Wood, Acting Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office (WFO); Don Hicks, Field Manager, Carson City Field Office (CCFO); Mark Struble, Public Affairs Specialist, CCFO; Jamie Thompson, Public Affairs Officer, WFO; Nancy Thompson, Secretary, WFO; Terri Knutson, Environmental Planner, CCFO; Desna Young, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, CCFO; Tom Crawford, Pine Nut Land Use Plan Team Leader.

Public present – Bill Dart, Off-Road Business Association; Skip Canfield, Nevada Division of State Lands; Jack Ward, Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center, NAS Fallon; Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain; Dan Peterson, California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA).

II. Summary of Motions

There were no motions proposed or approved at this meeting with the exception of approval of the minutes of the October 2004 meeting and adjournment at the end of the meeting.

III. Summary of Action Assignments

1. BLM Winnemucca Field Office was asked to have someone from the NCA report to the RAC on the Soldier Meadows fencing project.
2. BLM Winnemucca Field Office was asked to have the Granite Fox Team give a presentation to the RAC at the next meeting.
3. BLM Carson City Field Office will provide Chapters 1 and 2 of the Draft Pine Nuts Plan to the RAC members several weeks prior to the April meeting.
4. Don Hicks told the RAC that the CCFO will produce a field office map showing wind energy project locations.
5. Action assignment for the RAC – Vern Schulze asked RAC members to review the WH&B Subcommittee Report and provide comments to him so that he can prepare a second draft for the April meeting.
6. Action assignment for the RAC – At the suggestion of Jim Eidel, Rochanne Downs will furnish a map of the Tribal geographic areas of concern to the Sierra Front RAC to the RAC at the April Meeting.
7. Action assignment for the RAC – At the suggestion of John Falen, the subject of the language and meaning of WH&B Sale Authority (Burns Amendment) was tabled to the April meeting.

IV. Minutes from the October Meeting in Las Vegas

MOVED – by John Falen to Approve.
SECOND – by John Dicks
DISCUSSION –
APPROVED – by acclamation.

V. Field Managers' Reports

A. Winnemucca Acting Field Manager Vicki Wood's Report

1. Written summary of the report was distributed.
2. Additional items covered orally.
 - a. There are lots of fire stats that you can read in the report. There is someone in the office who has 37 years experience in Winnemucca Fire and remembers all these stats.
 - b. Larie Trippet asked if it is still the plan to do the Winnemucca RMP with constituents. Vicki answered, yes.

- c. Vicki told the members that she attended an LCT meeting last week. There are some very interesting research projects being conducted throughout the tri-state area.
- d. Sage-grouse will not be listed as threatened or endangered.
- e. The Granite Fox Coal-Fired power plant is gearing up.
- f. The NCA is working on the RMP Implementation Plan. BLM WFO just converted a person to work on the Plan but that person will also have to work on District work because of budget.
- g. John Dicks asked about Soldier Meadows fencing. Jamie Thompson told him that the pipeline has been put in. There is a fence all around the sensitive area. John told the RAC - a lot of us stayed after the meeting at Reno last year and put together what seemed to be a well thought-out plan. I would like to see that succeed. Jamie answered this is just the first step. Maybe we could have someone from the NCA (Joey Carmosino) report on that more fully at the next RAC meeting.
- h. There was a combined Hazmat and Cultural programs effort to clean up the abandoned mining town of Tunnel Camp in the Seven Troughs Range northwest of Lovelock.
- i. Terry Reed, Winnemucca Field Manager since 1998, retired on Monday, January 3 following nearly 35 years of federal service. Terry also worked in the Battle Mountain Field Office during the late 1970s. He and his wife Suzanne plan to stay in Winnemucca for the immediate future. Friends and well-wishers attended a retirement celebration for Terry on Friday, January 14 at the Red Lion in Winnemucca.
- j. Arlan Hiner started on Monday, February 24 as the new Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources. Mandy DeForest replaced Gene Seidlitz as Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist. Mike Whalen has laterally moved into a Fire Management Specialist position in which he will be primarily responsible for the oversight of the Wildfire Support Group. Mark Ennes has been detailed into the Planning & Environmental Coordinator position (vice Harrison) for 120 days.
- k. Bill Roullier asked that the Granite Fox Team give a presentation to the RAC at the next meeting.

B. Carson City Field Manager Don Hick's Report

1. Written summary of the report was distributed.
2. Additional items covered orally.
 - a. The Pilot-Table Mt. wild horse gather will hopefully continue in February. If that doesn't happen, the gather will take place after the spring foaling season.

John Dicks asked if BLM expected some wild horses not to survive the current winter weather.

John Falen commented he would doubt very much if there has been loss from winterkill yet. Horses paw through the snow and are very mobile.

Vern Schulze commented that historically there has been winterkill but only on heavily grazed areas where the conditions were already poor.
 - b. A new fire management officer, Ken Smihula, has been on board for several months. He has just been elected vice-chair of the Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators.
 - c. The decision was made in October to transfer project management of the Yerington Mine cleanup to the BLM-Nevada State Office. BLM, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) and EPA have entered into a Section 106 agreement. EPA has the lead on the project. Don told the RAC that in theory, in the long term, citizens will be served better because we will be moving faster. CCFO is still responsible for site security.

Jerry Hepworth commented a small group of us with the Mining Association visited the site yesterday. It takes an incredibly long time to get anything done considering the complexity of the project and the dynamics of the group in charge of the project. They are doing a very good job technically. It looks like the transition from BLM and the state to EPA will go smoothly.
 - d. Sand Mountain - Leo Drum started in January as state-wide oversight for OHV. During the transition phase he will be working in the BLM CCFO. Don told the RAC he hopes Leo will serve as a link between the BLM CCFO and the constituents BLM serves in that area. BLM CCFO decided to develop an energy plan for the entire field office and pull Sand Mountain and Churchill County back as a geographic area requiring a separate plan. This allows the CCFO to work separately with the Friends of Sand Mountain and the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe on the possible listing of the sensitive species. Don said he didn't want to push or rush the process.

Larie Trippet asked if the concept of Sand Mountain Recreation area will be lost in the Churchill County Plan. Don answered that the County Plan will be the umbrella and BLM will address the specific needs of Sand Mountain.

Rochanne Downs asked how a separate Sand Mtn-Churchill plan is going to be funded when the energy plan is the one that was originally funded. Don answered BLM is going to do this with existing staff and existing funding. We have the benefit of what happened in the original Churchill County Plan: a lot of baseline information.

Jim Eidel asked for an explanation of the Churchill County Plan versus the energy plan. Terri Knutson answered the Churchill County Plan started out as an energy plan. Energy was the money pot. We had all the money to go forward with the Churchill County Plan, by doing a resource management plan amendment. We called it an energy plan, but it was always an energy plan for the entire field office. We should be coming out with a preliminary draft, we hope by March. It has turned out to be three plans where we at first had one. The overall energy plan is an EIS.

- e. BLM has met with several groups including the Pine Nut Planning group concerning the Ruhenstroth Emergency Vehicle Closure in the Pine Nut Mountains.
- f. Don told the RAC that he didn't think the draft Pine Nut Resource Management Plan read like an EIS level BLM document. He asked his staff for information on how the document was put together along with some other information. He then put together a GIS team. He told the group all of this has slowed the process, but I think it will be a better document. BLM will let the other groups work with us at this point rather than waiting until the comment period. He hopes to have the Draft Plan out in June.

Jim Eidel asked how this fits in with sage-grouse planning. Don answered that we have modified our original document to reflect the new sage-grouse planning documents.

Sherm Swanson commented that on a tour a few years ago we became aware of vegetation reaching its ecological thresholds. Is that type of planning part of the document? Don answered that he didn't know whether it is there specifically, but said it will be looked at during alternative development.

John Dicks commented a couple of groups he is aligned with participated in the Pine Nut Plan. There's been a delay of at least a year in the development of the

Plan. He hopes BLM recognizes that there are some groups involved in this that are not friendly with each other. If one group, such as Douglas County, has seen the draft ahead of other groups it would cause some great concern with some other groups who have not seen it. This might be seen as special treatment for local government. He said he thought BLM should be aware of this. In another matter, in the second paragraph, third line of the information on the Ruhenthroth Closure it says "...residents riding out from the housing developments...". John said his experience has been that most of the people riding out there have California plates. He suggested that at best users are a 50/50 mix of residents and non-residents using the area.

- g. Jim Eidel asked what the interplay is between the applications for energy (met towers) and the Plan. Don answered that BLM is looking at what is already on the books and whether it is fitting with other parts of the amendment. Jim continued that he was concerned about the fragmentation of sage-grouse areas by rights-of-way accessing the met towers energy companies have applied to erect.

John Dicks asked what size the masts are. Terri Knutson answered that they are up to 199 feet. These are processed as Categorical Exclusions under NEPA. Don told the RAC that Ken Nelson, CCFO Realty, could do a briefing at our next session describing the details of the met towers and what would happen if the companies go to full development. (NOTE: This will be included in the CCFO Field Manager's report to the RAC at the April meeting.)

- h. Don told the RAC that he will keep members informed on the rest of the items in his report as they continue to move forward.

John Falen asked how many wild horses were currently at the Snows and Palomino Valley (PVC). Don answered PVC is almost at full capacity. John asked if CCFO has figures on the ages of the horses at either facility. Don answered the horses at the Snows are very young. He can get figures on PVC.

VI. RAC Wild Horse & Burro Subcommittee Report

Vern Schulze told the RAC that Susie Askew, former member of the RAC, prepared a Wild Horse and Burro Management Standards document last year. The document also covered the Mohave Southern RAC area. He said BLM State Office guidance is that we wouldn't have statewide goals for a while; that there's been a change in BLM policy to

not look at Wild Horse and Burro Standards at this time because BLM doesn't think it can get Secretarial approval. Vern said the RAC can deal with generalities but can't get into a lot of detail, which he thinks is a weakness.

We can use range habitat Standards to apply to horses.

Guidelines deal primarily with liability and reproduction of the horses.

RAC members should look at the document and bring concerns to Vern. He will prepare a second draft for the April meeting.

It's important to address the issue of horses that are removed. Age and sex structure of horses that are removed is considered to assure that herds still out there are viable.

Jerry Hepworth thanked Vern for taking this on and adding some insight. It seemed to Jerry that 2 or 3 years ago we had a talk by a BLM staffer that included a population model. Vern told him the model at the time looked at different control and fertility processes. He said he didn't know how it was being used as a tool. Jerry said he found the model quite enlightening on the dynamics of wild horses.

Vern told the RAC the next steps are to produce a document with Guidelines for the major techniques that should be used for management. Once the Guidelines are reviewed one more time the Bureau will have some input. He hopes Standards will be developed at some point. He said the Standards in the documents produced by the other two RACs were approved by the State Director but not at the national level. So the RAC can probably suggest some Standards but they will not be approved by the Secretary at this time.

Chairman Roullier said he would like to see the RAC have draft Standards so that if they can be approved at the national level the RAC will be ahead of the curve.

John Falen commented that livestock is managed, but the horses are not. There are repercussions when a livestock permittee doesn't remove his stock from the range. There are no repercussions when BLM does not reach AML. Vern answered that the Standards for habitat apply to the ground so they apply whether horses or livestock are there. The Standards for vegetation should be the same.

Ernie Paine commented he wanted to emphasize what John said, adding, it's strange to me that the lack of management on the part of the professionals is not mentioned. Vern answered that the resource should be managed the same no matter how the different animals are managed.

Ernie said there is a conflict out there between the Wild Horse and Burro regs and the Endangered Species Act. There is a strange silence out there on the lack of management.

Chairman Roullier commented that the RAC can only come up with Standards and Guidelines and maybe with some recommendations for management.

Jim Eidel said a document was put together on the effects of horses on sage-grouse habitat by a former member of the RAC. Why not put together a document that is consistent with habitat for sage-grouse as well as cattle and horses and burros?

John Falen commented I want to make sure that when the resource is showing some abuse the proper culprit is identified.

Chairman Roullier said that comments by RAC members need to go back to Vern so he can move forward on Standards.

John Dicks asked Vern if he was familiar with the Bill that was just passed that allows for the selling of horses that are over 10 years of age or offered unsuccessfully for adoption three times. Vern said he talked to the people in the BLM national program office about a month ago and they hadn't come up with a way to manage it yet. The supposition is that some of the horses that are sold will end up at slaughter.

John Dicks asked Vern if he sees the Bill as having an effect on the Standards the RAC produces. Vern answered that the effect of the Amendment would only be to the extent that it allows the Bureau to remove more animals; that overall it wouldn't have much effect on Nevada. The big question is how much money does the Bureau have? Mark Struble commented the money (from the sale of the horses) would go back to the adoption program.

John Falen suggested that the subject of the language and meaning of the Sale Authority be tabled until the next meeting. He pointed out that the national BLM people were in Phoenix at the time working on a plan for this. Jerry Hepworth said he would support the tabling of the topic.

Sherm Swanson asked if there is a reason why the Standards we had before and these are not exactly the same. Vern answered they should be exactly the same, except I shortened some things in the document only for editorial content. Sherm stressed that he would suggest that this not be done.

VII. Native American Consultation Review

Rochanne Downs showed a short BLM video entitled "Sacred Domain – Honor Between Nations", Tribal perspective on federal management of public lands.

After the video she gave a short Power Point presentation to the RAC. She told the members that Native American culture is embedded in everything Indian People do. Being Indian is sacred and prehistory doesn't exist.

We respect all those around us and must speak for those who cannot speak for themselves (plants, animals, the environment).

Decisions are made for the good of all people. We do have Tribal politics, but the system we have now is not traditional. Society has a lot of influence on our culture today. In spite of all this the spirit of our people endures.

Tribal histories have been shared for thousands of years. Stories are told during certain times of the year and tell us everything. They tell us where we came from, how we care for things and why things are the way they are.

A sacred site is many different things – gathering places for food and medicines, ceremonial places, burial places, places for social events, mountains or springs.

Site visitation is daily, annually, seasonally, for a single use or never visited.

Tribes are distinct political entities. Sovereignty was not something that was given but something that we already had. There is state government, federal government and Indian Tribes: all three are included in the U.S. Constitution.

Consultation is defined as an effective ongoing process. It is really important that Tribes are brought in at the very beginning.

It is often thought that sending a letter is consultation. A letter is notification not consultation.

Jim Eidel asked what should happen if there is no reaction to the letter. Rochanne answered there should be another letter, a phone call. Persistence is very important.

Government to government is a unique relationship between Tribes and the federal government. Certain individuals in our Tribes and in the federal government come together for consultation. Consultation is a sincere good effort on a federal level to communicate with and receive information from a sovereign Tribal government on a meaningful and timely basis on any proposed action or proposed undertaking.

There are many issues that are equal priorities, but sometimes few people to deal with those issues. Each issue will be dealt with in time.

I am a representative on the RAC for our Tribe, but not for all Tribes. We have to stay focused on the geographic areas we are closest to. A position on the RAC does not fulfill consultation requirements. The many laws that require Federal agencies to consult include NEPA, NAGPRA, ARPA, and FLPMA. Tribes are not asking for special treatment, but only that federal agencies follow their own laws.

We all agree that our homeland (Nevada) is not a wasteland, but as we make decisions on these areas we need to compromise and develop plans that are proactive, if we fail and everything is eventually gone, the Tribes will still be here.

John Mudge commented that in his opinion consultation could be improved. He asked Rochanne if she had an idea of how it could be improved. She answered that in Idaho the Tribes and the agencies meet on a regular monthly basis. We need to look at how to make consultation better. Tribes need to meet with the specific agency person working on a specific project.

Jim Eidel asked what Richard Harjo's position is. Rochanne answered he is with the Nevada Indian Commission. The Nevada Indian Commission is a state agency that would be a third party in the government to government relationship. Jim asked her opinion of the methods used by the Sage-grouse Commission to try to meet with the Tribes. Rochanne answered our Tribe and some others have been involved, but the plan should have been taken to the Tribal councils for official action rather than sending a letter. Jim told her that was done in every respect. Rochanne answered since she wasn't with the Tribe at that time she didn't know the details.

John Falen said the comment was made at the end of the film that "all the Tribes want is to protect their way of life and their culture" and that is all *any* of us want.

Craig Young said that communication links have been established in the last few years.

Patty Herzog asked how consultation is working with local governments. Rochanne answered it's difficult in many ways. It's getting better, but sometimes local governments don't realize that Tribes bring benefits to the local area. Tribal people pay government taxes like everyone else. Getting over the history is difficult. The main thing is making local governments aware.

Sherm Swanson commented that it struck him that many of the mechanisms for interaction are reactive. He asked whether Tribes have methods for pro-action. Rochanne said that Tribes have the ability to set their own water standards and are taking steps on environmental issues, but the steps are small and the issues are many.

Vern Schulze asked how the Tribes handle the issue of geographic boundaries. Rochanne answered I look at our geographic areas. There are many geographic areas and there are 26 recognized and two unrecognized Tribes in Nevada.

Jim Eidel asked if Rochanne could furnish a map of the geographic areas that concern this RAC. She said she could.

← LUNCH BREAK →

VIII. Training in Preparation for RMP Reviews

Terri Knutson distributed a draft BLM Land Use Planning Handbook to members of the RAC. She explained that changes in bold are the ones that are different from the previous draft.

The RAC will be asked to review several RMPs and RMP amendments in the next few years.

The Federal Land Planning and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) gave BLM its direction. Section 202 talks about some of the principles guiding BLM land use planning.

- Gives priority to designation of ACECs, but doesn't necessarily close anything.
- Scarcity of values – a scarce value is something that is important locally.
- Weigh long vs. short-term benefits.
- Comply with pollution control laws.

Things that BLM has to do

- Determine allowable resource uses (either singly or in combination) and related levels of production or use to be maintained
- Determine resource condition goals and objectives to be attained
- Define program constraints
- Assess needs for areas to be covered by more detailed and specific plans. BLM must do more planning.
- Support actions including such measures as resource protection, access development, realty action, cadastral survey, etc., as necessary to achieve the above.
- Follow general implementation sequences (i.e., propose a mineral withdrawal in a land use plan, then Congress would actually do the withdrawal).
- Set intervals and standards for monitoring. Should be done every five years.

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM land use plans

- Management Framework Plans (MFP). BLM still has offices that have MFPs. There was no NEPA law when these were done.
- Resource Management Plans (RMP).
- Combination MFP/RMP
- Broad scale decisions
- Two categories
 - Desired outcomes (goals, and objectives - quantifiable)
 - Allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes

If resources exist in the management area you must make a decision about them. Decisions made in a plan include special designations.

New in the list of natural, biological and cultural resources included in the second draft of the handbook are

- naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation
- cave and Karst resources

All resource uses that exist in the planning area must be analyzed. Resource uses include forestry, livestock grazing, recreation and visitor services, comprehensive trails and travel management, lands and realty, coal and oil shale, fluid minerals including oil & gas, tar sands, geothermal resources and coal bed natural gas, locatable minerals, mineral materials and non-energy leasable minerals.

Special designations can only be made in an RMP or an RMP amendment.

Congressional Designations

- National Monuments
- National Conservation Areas
- National Recreation Areas
- National Scenic and Historic Trails
- Outstanding Natural Areas
- Cooperative Management and Protection Areas

Administrative Designations

- Wilderness Study Areas
- National and Scenic Rivers (recommendation suitability)
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Backcountry Byways
- Watchable Wildlife Viewing Sites
- Wild Horse & Burro Ranges

Support includes cadastral, interpretation and environmental education, transportation facilities. Transportation means trails as well as roads.

NEPA does not mandate protection of the environment. Instead, it requires agencies to follow a particular process in making decisions and to disclose the information/data that was used to support those decisions. NEPA and planning are two separate things.

A plan revision is always an EIS. An amendment is some revision of an RMP and can be an EIS or an EA. An RMP covers an entire district.

Step 9 of EIS level planning steps, “publish Notice of Availability and provide comment period,” is when RAC members may comment. A report will probably be made to the RAC before the draft is given to the public.

A Notice of Intent is published in the *Federal Register*. The Notice of Availability is also published in the *Federal Register*. A Governor's Consistency Review is a 60-day period.

Protests go to the State Director first.

John Dicks commented that the presentation was very helpful.

Jim Eidel commented that a 90-day period is not really that long for comment by the RAC.

Don Hicks said he doesn't want the Plan Amendment to go to the RAC members at the same time it goes out to the public. I want the RAC to have time to discuss it.

Jim Eidel asked about the implementation group for the NCA. He hasn't heard anything about it. Jamie Thompson told him nothing has happened yet. Vicki Wood commented we are waiting for funding.

Sherm Swanson suggested that different actions for different alternatives should be discussed by the RAC before the alternatives are formulated. It would save a lot of money.

Jim Eidel asked if alternatives have been developed for the Pine Nut Plan. Don Hicks told him two alternatives have been developed. I'm not sure they are adequate. I don't feel that there was a reasonable context to move forward when the Plan was developed and that's why I have pulled it back.

Jim Eidel commented that it seems that since we are an advisory group and you need advice maybe we should see that amendment and we could help. Terri Knutson answered a lot of times an amendment comes about because of a change in policy. It's difficult to put together alternatives. Sometimes BLM gets so caught up in making the alternatives that we fail to see the whole picture. The RAC is a perfect group to help us see the whole thing.

This new planning handbook gives a format for pre-land use plan documents and land use plan documents.

The RAC should come in on EA level planning steps at the point of interdisciplinary plan review.

A plan is always signed by the State Director.

A member of the public asked when there had been scoping for Sand Mountain. Terri answered there had been two scoping meetings, one in Fallon, and one in Reno. Don Hicks commented that the CCFO Field Manager's report to the RAC has the dates for those meetings.

IX. Draft Pine Nut Mountain RMP Amendment Progress

Don Hicks told the RAC we have been talking about the Amendment off and on all day. There are clearly lots of issues on this topic. We had special management areas in the plan. I asked my staff what makes these areas special. Our staff has produced a good draft but it just wasn't enough for me personally. I want the Pine Nut Plan to be as inclusive as possible so that we will not have to do it over and over. I realize that I have upset the schedule but I believe we are getting there.

Tom Crawford showed the group a map of the Pine Nut Planning area. Where we see the majority of impacts is Douglas County because of the land ownership pattern. A lot of similar impacts are now occurring on the Lyon County side as people move into that area.

We are taking a couple of steps back almost to the alternative development point. We have three alternatives. The proposed Plan Amendment has a lot of new decisions on OHV and land disposal in the public sector. Increased resource protection has been put into the Plan Amendment taking all the land in Douglas County off the disposal list.

BLM could have Chapters 1 and 2 available for the RAC a couple weeks prior to the April meeting. Chapter 1 is introduction, history, etc.; Chapter 2 is what the proposed Plan Amendment is, the alternatives, and some of the prescriptive things for special management areas.

There has been no discussion to date by any entity about changing the boundary.

Jim Eidel commented that the RAC had a presentation by Emilyn Scheffeld at the Tri-RAC meeting in October that really shook us. He asked if population projection figures were built in. Tom answered yes and we see continued expansion. The RMP looks at population growth and what that translates into as far as rec needs in terms of diversity and the number of people who will be using it. It doesn't account for a lot of the California use. Jim asked if we are seeing so much more use, what alternative do we have to closing the area. Tom answered it is something that will have to be addressed to some extent, not only in the Pine Nuts but in all areas.

Larie Trippet commented that one of the issues we have addressed in the Peavine area is to close off some access. Is there anything being done in the Smith Valley area to address efforts by private land owners to close off access and how we (the OHV, biking, hiking community) can get involved to keep access open? Tom answered we are talking about not only Smith Valley, but the whole Pine Nut area. One of the prospective alternatives is to provide that land developers will provide easement access through their lands to the heart of the Pine Nut area.

John Dicks commented perhaps you could be very specific about what should be considered if this ever happens.

Jim Eidel said one way to solve it is to grandfather in all these changes. Is that a way that BLM could think? Tom answered that's a way we may go with the routes in the Plan Amendment.

Craig Young commented it seems like we're dealing with use inside the planning area and how things develop outside the planning area. Tom answered that BLM's intent is to work in conjunction with county trail plans.

Rochanne Downs commented that we need to focus on active planning, not reactive.

Laura Crane said she thinks it's important to think about ecological needs for access (wildlife routes to water, etc.), not just recreational needs.

Jim Eidel asked if BLM has taken into account the kind of law that says you can't fire a weapon within so many feet of a person. Tom answered yes. An urban interface area will be considered in the Plan Amendment.

Craig Young commented if we get Chapters 1 and 2 before the April meeting of the RAC will you have time to incorporate our comments into the next step? Don Hicks answered that he hopes to produce the next two chapters after the feedback is received from the RAC when it will still be useful and will fit into our time frame. Chairman Roullier commented we will need a substantial amount of our agenda to discuss the alternatives.

Desna Young, CCFO Planning and Environmental Coordinator, responsible for format for the Pine Nut Plan told the RAC she would envision them helping BLM with whether we have everything covered in Chapter 1. Do you understand the information? Do we need to look at things we haven't even thought of yet? Don Hicks commented when we come back to the RAC with Chapters 1 and 2 we will include a cover letter to the RAC that will focus what we are looking for.

Desna said at this point we are looking at the GIS map. We might include an agenda item for the April meeting that focuses on breaking into smaller groups. That has worked better for us in the past.

Larie Trippet complimented Don on his courage in being willing to take a few steps back.

X. Public Comment Period

Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain, informed the group that Brett Merrick is the new president of Friends of Sand Mountain. He asked if BLM had considered how many more OHVers would use the Pine Nuts if Sand Mountain were closed. He then said that Friends has decided to come up with more money for signs and fencing and is talking about some alternatives to signs and fences. The group is also working on more educational information. He said that before the next RAC meeting Friends would like to

take some of the RAC members to the dunes. He also told the group that April 30 is a cleanup day at Sand Mountain.

Bill Dart, Off-Road Business Association, told the RAC that his group appreciates Don's pro-active position with the Pine Nut Plan. Our organization wants to work with BLM and help to facilitate this as much as we can. We really appreciate being here and look forward to being involved with the process.

Dick Young asked if there has been any improvement in designating the trails at Sand Mountain. Richard answered that some of it has worked, but that fences haven't worked the way they'd hoped. He added that a lot of people are staying on the trails.

XI. Next RAC Meeting Agenda

The next RAC Meeting will be held at the Winnemucca Field Office on April 27 and 28, 2005.

Don Hicks told the RAC that BLM needs a half-day for comments on the draft Pine Nuts Plan.

The April RAC meeting agenda will include the following topics -

- Information on the Winnemucca RMP
- Echo Canyon (less than an hour)
- Granite Fox presentation (Mark will coordinate with Jamie)
- CCFO presentation on OHV route designation and inventory
- Update on Wildfire Support Group and Fire rehab
- Update on BLM Sale Authority and RAC Wild Horse Guidelines

The July meeting will most likely be at CCFO. The dates are changed to July 27 & 28. (**NOTE:** *Federal Register* notice was published on March 1 stating the RAC meeting would be at CCFO on July 28 & 29.)

Jim Eidel asked that information on how to find information in LR2000 be given to RAC members if even in an email. Mark Struble answered he didn't think looking at LR 2000 would benefit the whole RAC. The RAC had asked that wind energy application information be included in the Planning and Projects Reports. Jamie Thompson told the RAC members that this would be included in the WFO Planning and Projects Report, which should be out in April. Don Hicks told them CCFO can produce a field office map of these projects.

XII. Meeting adjourned at 3:34 pm.

MOTION - by John Falen to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND - by Dick Young

DISCUSSION -

APPROVED by acclamation.

NOTE: The Sierra Front RAC joined the Northeastern Great Basin RAC on Friday morning, January 28, at the Nevada State Office in Reno to hear a presentation of the Southern Nevada Water Transportation Panel – Hugh Ricci, Nevada State Water Engineer; Kimball Goddard, USGS; Kay Brothers, Southern Nevada Water Authority; Bruce Flinn, BLM contractor. The presentation concluded at noon.