

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 1, 2008
Conference Room A, BLM So. Nevada District Office, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr.
Las Vegas, Nevada

Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:

Dr. John E. Hiatt, Chairperson	Wildlife	Category 2
Douglas Baker	Transportation and ROW	Category 1
Don "Skip" Canfield	State Agency Representative	Category 3
Joni Eastley	Elected Official	Category 3
Julie Von Tobel Gleason	Wild Horse and Burro	Category 2
Elise McAllister	Dispersed Recreation	Category 2
Greg Seymour	Archeology/Historic	Category 2

Resource Advisory Council members absent and category represented:

Kenny Anderson	Native American	Category 3
Tim Carlson	Mineral Development	Category 1
Ed Higbee	Ranching/Grazing	Category 1
Steven Mellington, vice-Chairperson	Public at Large	Category 3
Dr. Peter Starkweather	Academic/UNLV	Category 3
Claire Toomey	Permitted Recreation	Category 1
Gracian Uhalde	Ranching/Grazing	Category 1

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:

Jeremy Brooks	BLM Las Vegas District SNPLMA, PTNA
Nancy Christ	BLM Las Vegas District SNPLMA, Conservation Initiatives
Sarah Clark	BLM Las Vegas District SNPLMA, Graphic Artist
Chris Hanefeld	BLM Ely District Public Affairs Specialist
Michael Herder	BLM Ely Associate District Manager
John Kerrigan	BLM Las Vegas District SNPLMA, Capital Improvements
Hillierie Patton	BLM Las Vegas District Public Affairs Specialist
Mary Jo Rugwell	BLM Las Vegas District Manager
Tom Seley	BLM Tonopah Field Manager
Nancy Taylor	BLM Las Vegas District Office SNPLMA, Conservation Initiatives
Steve Tryon	BLM Las Vegas District Office SNPLMA Assistant Field Mgr
David Wood	BLM Las Vegas District Office SNPLMA, Fuels Lake Tahoe

Public

Brad Hardenbrook Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW)

A copy of each attachment is listed in the text of or at the end of these minutes and is also on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Ely Field Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to review said minutes should contact Chris Hanefeld, public affairs specialist, at (775) 289-1842.

There is no quorum because a majority of the council members of each interest group are not present

- 1 p.m. Chairperson John Hiatt called the meeting to order and introduced BLM Las Vegas District Manager Mary Jo Rugwell, formerly of Kemmerer, Wyoming, BLM office.
- 1:05 p.m. Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely District Public Affairs Specialist, reviewed the information necessary to provide for timely reimbursement of RAC travel expenses.
- 1:15 p.m. The RAC reviewed and approved the January 2008 meeting minutes.
- 1:30 p.m. Identify subcommittee to work on Battle Mountain District Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision in coordination with a Northeastern Great Basin RAC subcommittee, Thomas Seley, BLM Tonopah Field Manager:

Tom Seley asked that the RAC form a subcommittee to review and provide BLM input in coordination with a subcommittee from the Northeast Great Basin RAC. He said the RMP would primarily address lands and recreation, and that livestock grazing would not be affected by the new land-use plan.

The RAC suggested that BLM consider amending the current RMP instead. Seley said development of the Battle Mountain RMP will probably not begin until FY2010 because of funding, noting that pre-planning efforts had already begun when it was determined that funding was not available sooner. The RAC suggested requesting that Nye County help to fund RMP development to protect their interests. Seley said he would follow up.

- 1:40 p.m. The RAC reviewed a draft letter to BLM Nevada State Director Ron Wenker re: Solar and Wind energy project applications (attachment 1).

The RAC suggested that BLM prepare a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide standard criteria for prioritization and processing. There was brief discussion re: the hazards of a programmatic document, e.g., the implication that all necessary/required studies have been completed prior to publication. It was suggested that clarification be made that the programmatic EIS is step-one of a multi-step process.

The RAC suggested involvement from other federal agencies to minimize conflicts.

The RAC discussed establishing a standard procedure for prioritizing applications to prevent placing further limits on county and community economic development plans. It was suggested that application processing be on a first-come, first-served basis. Cost reimbursable accounts should be established for projects requiring a significant amount of BLM staff time to alleviate the workload and reduce the processing time. It was noted in the discussion that the practice of "stacking" applications will not be permitted by BLM in Nevada. The RAC asked if a project proponent could "lock up" public lands prior to filing an application. The BLM responded that agency specialists meet with project

proponents early in the process to help them to make an informed decision on whether to proceed, as well as to explain the National Environmental Policy Act process and requirements. The RAC discussed stressing on a large-scale the economic impacts, as well as impacts to the public lands.

2 p.m. Special Legislation Update and past-Performance Review, Steve Tryon, BLM Las Vegas District, Southern Nevada Public Land Management (SNPLMA) Team; Hillerie Patton, BLM Las Vegas District Public Affairs Specialist:

Steve Tryon initiated the discussion, suggesting grouping portions of the topic with the SNPLMA Round 9 agenda item, which follows. The RAC agreed, upon which Hillerie Patton provided an update on legislation, i.e.:

- Safe Accountable Flexible Equitable Transportation Act (SAFETY) would provide for high-speed rail service along a corridor from Las Vegas, Nev., to Anaheim, Calif. Congress has approved \$45 million annually, through 2009.
- HR816 – Orchard Detention Basin. HR816 would release land near/on Sunrise (Mountain). The BLM is scheduled in two-plus weeks to meet re: a parcel of land outside the Detention Basin that is needed for instant study area.
- Nevada Cancer Institute Conveyance would provide for the Alta and Hualapai conveyance of land to the Nevada Cancer Institute. This has moved to the senate. The BLM is requesting that Nevada Cancer Institute pay fair market value (FMV), if the land is conveyed.
- HR Mesquite Land sale would allow BLM to convey parcels of public land in Clark County to the Virgin Valley Water District. The legislation was introduced in October 2007.
- S1608 Southern NV Readiness Act would convey 35-50 acres of so-called CAN lands for use by the National Guard. The legislation was introduced into the Senate in June 2007.
- S1377 SNV Limited Transition Area Act would convey 502 acres of the public lands to Henderson, Nev., for non-residential development near Henderson Airport.
- Clark County draft legislation to convey a limited number of acres of the public lands in the area of Nellis Dunes, but no bill has been introduced.
- There was a Washington Office call to amend the Mesquite lands bill to include special protection for Gold Butte.

- Hiatt recessed the meeting at 2:15 p.m., reconvening at 2:35 p.m. –

2:35 p.m. SNPLMA Round 9, Steve Tryon, SNPLMA Assistant Field Manager:

Steve Tryon distributed maps highlighting upcoming sale parcels and fuels treatment categories, and a printed copy of a Power-Point presentation outlining

SNPLMA (attachments 2, 3 and 4). He then introduced the SNPLMA team: David Wood, representing Fuels Lake Tahoe; Nancy Christ, representing Conservation Initiatives; John Kerrigan, representing Capital Improvements; Jeremy Brooks, PTNA; and Sarah Clark, Graphic Artist.

Tryon provided the RAC an update on SNPLMA. He said SNPLMA would celebrate its 10 year anniversary in October. The SNPLMA team is currently preparing a 10 year report for Congress. He said that, to date, the legislation has provided \$3 billion project dollars.

Tryon talked briefly about the Santini-Burton legislation, and the discussions that took place in the 1980s and 1990s regarding the privatization of federal lands. The legislation utilized funds to acquire scattered parcels around Lake Tahoe with the intention of preserving natural areas. Tryon said that SNPLMA, 1) provides for an orderly process for the disposal of the public lands, and 2) provides funding for projects in Nevada. He briefly reviewed the statistics and discussed disposal boundaries. Tryon noted that SNPLMA has so far reserved 1,200 acres for teachers and workforce housing.

Tryon said an undetermined number of acres in the upper Las Vegas Wash Conservation Transfer Area (CTA) could be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and disposal through sale.

Tryon provided a brief on land sale results. He said that BLM conducted one of its largest-ever auctions in 2005, which resulted in the Aliante, Inspirada and Mountain's Edge properties. He pointed out the coordination with, and noted the cooperation by, local government, which is necessary for such successes to occur. He said that with the exception of the Henderson legislation, most land sales would, for now, remain in the 50-100 acre category.

Tryon provided a brief update on land exchanges. He said that BLM has exchanged 35 thousand acres of public lands and terminated the acquisition process on 80 thousand acres.

Tryon noted that SNPLMA directs funding to public education (5 percent), and Southern Nevada Water Authority (10 percent) to support development of water infrastructure. The remaining 85 percent is directed to a special account for public purpose projects, which includes the costs of managing the program.

Tryon said SNPLMA authorized 8 categories, i.e., Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas (PTNA); Clark County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), Land Acquisition, Lake Tahoe Restoration, Capital Improvements, Conservation Initiatives, Fuels Treatment and Reduction, and Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project (ENLRP). He said the nomination process can take up to 12 to 18 months to complete, partly because of ranking/review processes. Tryon provided a brief outline and purpose of the 8 categories:

- Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas (PTNA): Development of open space and connectivity at the local level. Centennial Hills on U.S. Highways 95 and 215 is an example of PTNA, as well as the Springs Preserve.
- Clark County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP): Development and implementation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for 78 species in Clark County. Discussions are ongoing with the county re: improvements to the process.
- Land Acquisition: Acquire environmentally sensitive lands to serve the public interest. Termination of these acquisitions is based on appraisal of value or process. There is a preliminary estimate of value which will provide buyer and

seller an idea of what the property will sell for. This provides a more accurate value based on current value.

- Lake Tahoe Restoration: Provides funding for the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, under the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The program has so far allowed up to \$300 million for Lake Tahoe restoration efforts. Funding is nearly depleted.
- Capital Improvements: Provide federal recreational facilities to support visitation levels.
- Conservation Initiatives: Promote resource protection, habitat restoration, species management, environmental education, volunteerism and site stewardship. Conservation Initiatives first became available in Round 4. Projects nominated in Rounds 4 and 5 are beginning to close out, as they are completed.
- Fuels Treatment and Reduction: Development and implementation of 10-year comprehensive, cost-effective, multijurisdictional hazardous fuels reduction plans. The category first became available in Round 8. Eligible areas are 1) the Lake Tahoe Basin (\$250 million projected), 2) Carson Range (\$89-150 million projected), and 3) Spring Mountain NRA (no intra-jurisdictional plan yet; funding will be available in Round 10). Tryon said he anticipated nominations for projects in Lee and Kyle canyons, in Clark County. He said a fuels plan is expected to be completed in late fall and that the CWPP and counties would be incorporated into the plan.
- Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project (ENLRP): Ensure resilient and healthy ecosystems by restoring native plant communities to a natural landscape. Projects submitted have been on the smaller scale.

Tryon told the RAC that all the Round 1 projects have been completed. He said Round 2, 3 and 4 projects are nearly completed. Round 7 and 8 projects are ongoing. Tryon and the RAC briefly discussed accountability. Tryon said SNPLMA staff focuses on timelines, funding and potential additions to existing projects. He pointed out that future project funding will be distributed on a quarterly basis, not up-front as it is currently. He said that site visits are now required for all SNPLMA projects. Tryon told the RAC that SNPLMA has injected more than a billion dollars into the eligible counties.

Re: SNPLMA Round 9, Tryon said the public comment period will be open through June 2. He then provided dollar figures for each of the available categories:

- PTNA – \$19 million
- Fuels - \$7.6 million
- Land Acquisitions - \$11.1 million
- Capital Improvements – recycled / repurposed old money
- Conservation Initiatives – \$7 million
- ENLRP – \$3 million
- Plus, the Special Account Reserve (to be used for under-budgeted projects) – \$4 million

Tryon said that SNPLMA and FLPFA are approved via the same processes and that current projects are under Conservation Easements. Under SNPLMA, he said that Ranch Number 1, in Douglas County, Nev., is up for approval in Round 1. He said the Quilici property on the Carson River is up for approval for the second time. Under FLMFA (???), he noted the Hutchinson property in Calico Basin (Red Rock), Horse

Chute in the Spring Mountains NRA (Nye County) and Dagget Pass, located near Minden and Gardnerville, Nev.

Tryon turned the SNPLMA presentation over to John Kerrigan for discussion on Capital Improvements. Kerrigan said five federal agencies are allowed to participate in the Capital Improvement category, i.e., National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He then provided a brief description of the following projects:

- Boulder Beach Visitor Facility Enhancements (NPS)
 1. Development and renovation of visitor areas for Historic Lake Mead Overlook and Hammond Way Harbor
 2. Stabilization of barrier walls
 3. Upgrade facilities
 4. Install interpretive displays
 5. Replace curbsides and sidewalks
- Administrative and Maintenance Facility Construction at Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge (FWS)
 1. Replace trailer bought in the 1960s
 2. Provide safety of visitors to facilities
 3. Upgrade facilities to meet code
- NV Spillway House Rehabilitation and Restoration – in Lake Mead (BOR)
 1. Restore and preserve Historic Landmark
 2. Provide ADA restoration, rehabilitation and compliance
- Ward Mountain Recreation Area Renovation (FS)
 1. Reconstruct campgrounds
 2. Reconstruct picnic tables
 3. Compliance with ADA requirements
 4. Replace water systems
- Eastern Nevada Restoration Seed Warehouse (BLM)
 1. Construct regional seed warehouse in Ely
 2. Seed provides emergency restoration and rehab in burnt areas
 3. NV, Utah and AZ would benefit from this warehouse
 4. This warehouse has a green design
- Phase II Great Basin Interpretive Facilities and Visitor Access (NPS)
 1. Funded in phases to allow meeting of budget
 2. Opens up areas of this National Park that are currently not open to the public for recreation
- Phase 2 Ash Meadows Wildlife Refuge
 1. Visitor center
 2. Boardwalk
 3. ADA compatibility

Kerrigan turned the presentation over to Nancy Taylor for an update on Conservation Initiative projects. She said four projects are located in Clark County, two are in Lincoln County, and two are in Nye County. They are:

- Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest – Wilderness Implementation – Phase II (FS)
 1. Boundary marking
 2. Trailheads
 3. Maps for the public

- Environmentally Responsible Closure of Abandoned Mine – Safety Hazards in Lincoln County, Phase II (BLM)
 1. Funds needed to complete
 2. Remediating 120 abandoned sites

- Meadow Valley Noxious Weed Control, Phase II (BLM)
 1. NEPA for Salt Cedar treatments

- Spring Mountain Butterfly Life History and Autecology Studies, Phase II (FWS & FS)
 1. Allows for no lapse in field work

- Implementing Service First in Southern Nevada (BLM, FS, FWS, NPS)
 1. Expands projects for development of one strategic service first project
 2. Outreach thru website SNAP.gov

- Interagency Law Enforcement/Resource Protection (BLM, FS, FWS, NPS)
 1. LE funding through 2012 for 2 LE positions: 3 special agents and 1 “LRPLS”

- Interagency Science and Research Strategy Implementation (FWS, NPS, FS)
 1. Implement strategy

- Implementing the Conservation Agreement for Bonneville Cutthroat Trout in the State of Nevada (NPS)
 1. IA Project
 2. Implement specific tasks
 3. Evaluates state of science and research

Taylor turned the presentation over to Jeremy Brooks for Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas (PTNA). Brooks told the RAC that 23 projects were submitted, of which 12 have been recommended for funding. They are:

- Wetlands Park Trails Program Phase II (Clark County)
 1. Secures funding for southern area
 2. Allows for closure

- Whitney Mesa Preserve Phase II (Henderson)
 1. Secures funding for additional trails
 2. Protects springs in area
 3. Provides for open space for community

- White Pine County Regional Park Upgrades (White Pine County)
 1. Development of restrooms
 2. Provide shade structures and benches
 3. Addresses ADA compatibility
- Mesquite Regional Park and Trails System Phase I (Clark County)
 1. Development of turf play area
- Lincoln County Park Upgrades (Lincoln County)
 1. Rachel and Pinaka upgrades
 2. Development of restrooms
 3. Provide shade structures and benches
- Preston Community Center (White Pine County)
 1. Development of turf area
 2. Development of restroom areas
- White Pine County Courthouse Park (White Pine County)
 1. Shade structures
 2. Benches
 3. Restrooms
- Floyd Lamb Park Trail Amenities (Las Vegas)
 1. Landscaping
 2. Irrigation
 3. Benches
 4. Interpretation
- North Ely Park (White Pine County)
 1. Relocation of park for safety
 2. Restrooms
 3. Turf
 4. Benches
- Horseman's Park improvements (Clark County)
 1. Repurposing exterior of facility
 2. Landscaping
- Craig Ranch Play Area (North Las Vegas)
 1. Building infrastructure
 2. Dog Run
 3. Parking
- Echo Canyon State Park (Lincoln County)
 1. Addition of two new camping areas
 2. Repurposing of site

David Wood presented the nominations under the category of Fuels Treatment and Reduction. He said 13 nominations were received, of which 7 have been recommended for funding. They are:

- Clear Creek Multi-jurisdictional Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project (FS, NPS)
 1. 1800 acres coverage
- Lake Tahoe Basin Interagency and Integrated Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program (NV Fire Safe Council)
 1. Private lands around Lake Tahoe Basin
 2. Treats private residences
- North Washoe Ecosystem Underburning and Fuels Treatment Project – Phase I
 1. Finishes project
- Tunnel Creek Prescribed fire
 1. 100 acre prescribed fire
 2. Restoration of Riparian corridor
- State of Nevada Urban lot Fuel Reduction
 1. Treats urban lots in Southern Nevada
- Lake Tahoe Urban Forest Restoration and Fuels Reduction Phase III of IV
 1. Continuation of treatment of federally-owned lots
- Lake Tahoe Basin Prescribed Fire Underburn project
 1. Provides for three prescribed fires in Lake Tahoe Basin area

The RAC discussed briefly biomass utilization as part of these and future proposals.

Wood presented the following Round 9 nominations under the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project (ENLRP) category:

- Ward Mountain Restoration (FS & BLM)
 1. Assessment and identification of treatment need on 120,000 acres
- Kern Mountains and Blue Mass Scenic Restoration Plan – Phase I (BLM)
 1. Restoration of 320 acres
- Snake Valley Invasive Weeds Project
 1. 788 thousand acres
 2. Inventory
 3. Treatment
 4. Restoration
 5. Education
- North Schell Restoration Plan
 1. Identification
 2. Treatment
- Landscape Level Vegetation Management Plan
 1. Identify Forest Conditions

- Camp Success Fuels Reduction
 1. Fuels Reduction

Tryon talked briefly about sales and revenues, and criteria for the land to be disposed of. It was noted that Henderson, Nev., may nominate 500 acres for sale. Master development plans for area communities indicate other lands that could be identified in the future. The drop in interest from generated revenues was discussed briefly.

Tryon said a sealed bid auction is scheduled in June. He said BLM anticipates the sale of one parcel, at a minimum. He said 9 parcels would be auctioned. Bids are due to BLM five days before the sale, he said.

Re: Lake Tahoe Restoration, it was pointed out that no statutory requirement exists to provide \$300 million for restoration and noted that Lake Tahoe is proposed as a self-contained category in SNPLMA Rounds 11 and 12.

Tryon asked the group to provide input on SNPLMA Round 9, in particular their areas of interest. There was a brief discussion re: reserving parcels of land for renewable energy use.

12:50 p.m. Hiatt adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED BY:

Date: _____

 John Hiatt, Chair
 Mojave-Southern Great Basin
 Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Olivia Sierra, BLM Las Vegas District Office -

Attachments:

1. Draft letter to BLM Nevada State Director Ron Wenker re: Solar and Wind energy project applications BLM Tonopah Field Manager's report
2. Map highlighting upcoming sale parcels
3. Map highlighting fuels treatment categories
4. Printed copy of a power-point presentation outlining SNPLMA BLM Ely District Office Wind Energy Projects (power point)