

**Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2007
BLM Ely Field Office
Ely, Nevada**

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:

Larry Barngrover	(2) Wildlife
Sheri Eklund-Brown	(3) Elected Official
Vince Garcia	(3) Native American
Jon Hutchings	(3) Public At Large
Kevin Lee	(1) Transportation/ROW
Kirk Nicholes	(1) Energy/Minerals
Dave Tattam	(2) Wild Horse and Burro
Hank Vogler	(1) Federal Grazing Permittee
Jeff White	(1) Energy/Minerals

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:

Mike Brown	Public Affairs Officer, Elko Field Office
Stephanie Connolly	Associate Field Manager, Ely Field Office
Bill Dunn	Ely Field Office
Jane Freeman	Resources Specialist, Nevada State Office
Pat Gubbins	Branch Chief, Resources, Nevada State Office
Helen Hankins	Field Office Manager, Elko Field Office
Mike Herder	Associate Field Manager, Ely Field Office
Chris Maya	Range Specialist, Ely Field Office
John Ruhs	Field Officer Manager, Ely Field Office
Doran Sanchez	Chief Communications, Nevada State Office
Jerry Smith	Field Office Manager, Battle Mountain FO
Stephanie Trujillo	Administrative Assistant, Ely Field Office

Other Attendees

Pat Irwin	District Ranger, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Bonnie Waggoner	Public
Julie Thompson	Public

9:00 a.m. Chairman Vince Garcia welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Everyone introduced themselves.

I. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- Sheri Eklund-Brown sent corrections to Mike Brown of the January 18, 2007 meeting in Battle Mountain, Nev.

Sheri Eklund-Brown made a motion to approve the minutes with those corrections. Jeff White seconded the motion. All in favor.

II. SOUTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT ROUND 7 PRESENTATION

Pat Gubbins and Jane Freeman from the Nevada State Office gave the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) presentation. They gave a PowerPoint presentation and it is appended to the signed minutes on file at the BLM Elko Field Office. Pat Gubbins is the acting chair for the working group.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if ten percent of the revenue goes SNWA/ aviation.
 - Jane Freeman said, yes, that is the only area of aviation. They are allowable expenditures and this is where Lincoln and White Pine Counties fit in. The Lake Tahoe project received \$300 million, has spent \$150 million already. They were given \$37.5 million for eight years they are spending \$47.5 million a year.
 - Pat Irwin asked if that has a ten year limitation for hazardous fuels, so they can not get funding for more than 10 years.
 - Jane Freeman did not know the answer.
 - Sheri Eklund-Brown said there is a ten year limit on each additional plan and they can submit additional plans.
 - Pat Gubbins and Jane Freeman will look into it. Round 8 began March 1st and the call for projects is out. Subgroups, agency reps, working groups, and local governments (local reps, state reps) come up with a package. There is public review and preliminary recommendations. They provide comments to the executive committee staff from agencies.
 - Helen Hankins remarked that the RACs only meet quarterly and there is a timeframe concern, this should be looked at.
 - Julie Thompson asked if the nominations go to working group first.
 - Jane Freeman answered, yes and there is no reason for the RACs to look at beforehand.
 - Pat Gubbins said there is no reason to do so and there would just be a lot of dialogue.
- General discussion about the RAC's role in making recommendations and comments to BLM for SNPLMA projects.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked how many rounds can you go back and say the projects are still pending.
 - Pat Gubbins said that is another issue. We do not have control over the appraisal process anymore. Getting them out is a challenge.
 - Sheri Eklund-Brown noted there are a lot of outstanding projects.
 - Pat Irwin asked if the legislation refers to lands under the Secretary of the Interior. The Shoshone have lands, would they be eligible for funding?

- Jane Freeman answered that under hazardous fuels they would be. She added as a stand alone they are not but with the agency they would be - they can enter into grants and agreements with. There is Special Account Reserve. When final recommendations go to the Secretary there is an amount in SAR for these projects.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked is that for the agencies or for the applicants?

- Jon Hutchings asked if the feasibility studies are being funded that way.

- Pat Gubbins said there may need to be more clarification.

- Hank Vogler asked if there are any projects being looked at for the power plant. Is there a classification of priority? Do these have a higher priority than some project on the Eureka line?

- Jane Freeman answered that there are criteria that have been developed.

- Hank Vogler added that where these waters are being taken this should be used to mitigate for the canopy, the aquifers are in a negative situation now. Vogler suggested that he could get with Ely Field Manager on proposals.

- Larry Barngrover asked who is on the executive committee. The answer is that it is regional for all agencies.

- Helen Hankins stated that it is Ron Wenker for Nevada BLM.

- Pat Gubbins said that Round 7 is still pending and is going to the Secretary.

- Pat Irwin asked if the money, that has earned \$139 million interest, is allocated out?

- Jane Freeman answered yes. The Secretary approved Round 7 in August and the process is faster.

- Kevin Lee asked if TRPA got any of that money?

- Jane Freeman said they do not compete for that at all. 19% is for research and monitoring, large portion goes to the Forest Service.

- Pat Irwin asked if they can get money now through hazardous fuels.

- Jane Freeman responded yes.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked when minerals are withdrawn how they are conveyed.

- Jane Freeman said there is no known mineral resource on these properties.

- Vince Garcia asked where is the monitoring fund, when sold is there still carryover funding?

- Jane Freeman said the idea is to spend it.

- Hank added that every year there are 17 new schools built in Clark County. Vogler asked is there still the same demand for the land?

- Jane Freeman responded if you look at the auctions they have gone down.

- Dave Tattam asked if the price has gone down.

- Pat Gubbins added that the volume has decreased dramatically.

- Dave Tattam noted that they still have acreage. As fast as the economical level changes they may sell a lot again.

- Pat Gubbins added that the local government officials discuss the number of acres. The fear was the ability to influence the Las Vegas market. We work collectively as partners. There are marketing specialists that discuss this and try to predict the market. Out of Round 7, there were 8 bidders and 4 out of 11 parcels sold for \$12.4 million.

- Dave Tattam said there is a great job in making sure that fluctuations are taken into effect. The market changes quickly. Tattam has heard concerns from this RAC that the rural areas are being impacted with no benefit. A lot of funding is going to Reno (Tahoe/Carson) and they do not have the impact that these local rural areas have.

- Pat Gubbins said the other side of coin is that there is a provision under the White Pine bill that the dollars stay in White Pine County. Lincoln County is the same.

- Jon Hutchings noted that the process with lands bills and the follow-up process turn communities upside down; concern is that you do not know what will come out. Those in favor of writing these bills have forgotten the process. This congressional administrative process should have been fixed. Pressure is put on rural community. It loses its ability for bigger interests; need to bring back to original focus.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown added that the problem should have been done federally; now it has been put on the counties which is not right. It's not attractive to a lot of counties – particularly WSAs. Money going to projects is good. In 1991 recommendations for WSAs were done, it is just sitting there.

- Jon Hutchings added that the process was fully developed but has not collectively come to turns with ramifications of lessons, water is a prime example.

- Gerry Smith commented that SNPLMA was to keep dollars in Nevada not Washington.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown stated that she would like to see the funding spent on projects.

- Hank discussed south Spring Valley and putting acres in DLEs. Southern Nevada Water Authority chose Spring Valley because there is water. Riparian areas were moved up by ranchers, there is unappropriated water. They could have Diamond Valley water, there water is going down. Another impact is in the other valley, the proposed coal plant. Carson is far out of more water than Las Vegas. There is no place where you can go; other areas are looking at all areas in the west. The project should be to get water out of the ocean.

- Dave Tattam commented that that is being addressed.

- Hank Vogler added that if DLE's were proposed then SNWA might not have come.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown added that California opposes desalinization. California would never do it for Nevada to benefit and until they have a need it will not be done.

White Pine County Act

- Pat Gubbins said there have been a number of amendments to SNPLMA.
- Helen Hankins commented that being able to use funding for restoration is discussed across Nevada. RAC members can write their congressman. The RAC is an advisory body for the BLM. There is that opportunity.
- Pat Gubbins added that there are pros and cons in all these bills. WSA does make it hard to explain if not included in the proposal. It takes 90 days to designate trails and two years to finalize management. There are 180 days to have surveyed Shoshone lands, specific language in the bill for no gaming - more to be used more for tribal purposes.
- Hank Vogler added that part is along the highway they are looking at storage of chips, etc.
- Pat Gubbins added that any issues for fuel reduction tribe can work with agencies.
- Larry Barngrover said there is improved management and better conservation and management.
- Jane Freeman added that some amendments with SNPLMA do address resources.
- Pat Gubbins said categories are P T N A (referring to PowerPoint screen); some parts are very specific and some are interpreted.
- Jane Freeman referred to Lake Tahoe and how they did environmental amendments.
- Larry Barngrover asked if an account could be set up for this.
- Jane Freeman answered no it comes out of the SMPLMA account.
- Helen Hankins added that money for Lake Tahoe is for Nevada and California basins.
- John Hutchings asked for a comparison of the White Pine and Lincoln County Acts and categories that come off of them.
- Pat Gubbins said we need local input. Subgroups need to take interagency approach for the process. Lincoln County Round 1 nominations are out of the Lincoln County Archeological Initiative (LCAI).
- Jane Freeman said the implementation agreement for Lincoln County and White Pine County is included in SNPLMA.
- John Hutchings said that proceeds go into accounts; the bulk is drawing interest which is used to fund projects. There is a base funding that is envisioned for White Pine as well.

10:50 Break

11:03 Resume

- Hank Vogler asked what White Pine proposes for Round 8. Answer - nothing has been submitted yet.
- Kevin Lee asked does it have to be within the park or can it just be a benefit to the park (interpretive center).
- Pat Gubbins said if it is a benefit of the park such as the interpretive center, it would be considered.
- Larry Barngrover asked about capital improvements, can they be range improvements?
- Jane Freeman answered, yes. There are new categories and agencies can nominate thru ENLRP. They cannot apply for money directly (ENLRP). It gives federal agencies granting authority.
- Pat Gubbins said that the Round 8 nomination package specific for ENLRP describes the criteria. Subgroups need to be set up for the two new categories. Recommended to the Secretary \$85.7 million for Round 7. Round 8 proposed to be same amount, possibly less. The executive committee takes public comments into consideration and was glad that it was submitted (submitted from RAC).
- Helen Hankins asked about the two areas, did it change the recommendation to have the letter of support from the RAC.
- Pat Gubbins answered no.
- Helen Hankins commented that the RAC needs feedback on it.
- Pat Gubbins stated that for Round 7 this was the first time everything was not funded. Gubbins discussed if there is a way to have a conference call with the RAC.
- Helen Hankins stated it cannot be done if not published in the Federal Register. There needs to be a process that accommodates the RAC schedule.
- Mike Brown discussed the public comment period that is set up at each meeting, having a conference call would eliminate that for the public (which cannot be done).
- Helen Hankins stated that the other RACs may not meet during these times for Round 8.
- Vince Garcia sits on the working group and stated that our concern is for fair representation. Question was asked if any projects have been funded in our county.
- Helen Hankins responded that there have been three.
- Dave Tattam added it is rural competing against the large city, we understand we want to be objective as possible.

- Vince Garcia added that the population is affecting our areas. There are other concerns that are being voiced.
- Jon Hutchings stated that we cannot blame the team if proposals are not submitted; there are a lot that are not interested.
- Vince Garcia asked about the Maggie Creek easement.
- Hank Vogler discussed when he went to the easement to look at the view shed and he was never out of sight of a building. Vogler asked why is this view shed worth money.
- Helen the initial asking price is set by the seller. Usually it is different than the appraised value. Hankins added that the idea is if there is no prohibition in that part of the valley you might see all these developments come in. The Trail Center location is designed to take advantage of the view.
- Hank Vogler asked aren't there land use plans that restrict the building there?
- Sheri Eklund-Brown responded that there is a flood plain and they can mitigate it.
- Helen Hankins said our fear is future development in the area which prompted the California Trail Center. Elko City and County have been contributors to the project, it is not just a federal project.

III. NATIONAL ENERGY CORRIDOR PRESENTATION

- Pat Gubbins and Shane DeForest gave the National Energy Corridor Project PowerPoint presentation. It is appended to the signed minutes on file at the BLM Elko Field Office
- Pat Gubbins discussed energy corridors. An EIS was done in 2005 to alleviate foreign energy. Scott Powers is the project manager for the team. They looked at what level of NEPA would be appropriate for the fair amount of degrees of impact. There are compatible uses which includes ROWs analyzed under the EIS. They are streamlining the permitting process.
- Helen Hankins added this is a third party contract. It only covers transmission lines; if a pipeline came in it would require its own EIS. We still need to have our own NEPA document specifically for the power line and that is when sage grouse would be addressed.
- Jeff White referred to the proposed map and asked are potential uses being analyzed—all energy. Response was, yes.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown commented that some of this will have to cross private land and will have to have a ROW. She asked why Nevada is double to other states.
- Pat Gubbins responded they are trying to go through public land.
- Helen Hankins added that we need to look at what is being generated and where it is going. Will an EIS address impacts of use and potential use?

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if it goes through someone's allotment will they have to be fenced off.

- Helen Hankins responded that this depends on the ROW and how it is being analyzed.

- Kevin Lee added that some of these are existing corridors.

- Pat Gubbins said that the corridor width is in acres, and BLM will amend the land use plans. Looking at what is out there to lessen the impacts.

- Kevin Lee noted that on Map 1 the pipeline only goes into Wendover. Does it go to Utah? It shows that it stops in Wendover. Map was discussed.

Lunch 12:00

Resume 1:15

IV. OHV TRAILS UPDATE

- Jack Tribble gave the OHV update for the Ely Field Office and followed the handouts:

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Travel Management Planning

Need for BLM Travel Management Planning

1. Nevada's population is increasing faster than any state in the nation. The population in 2005 was 2,414,807, or up 20.8 percent from the 2000 Census. Nationally, the population increased 5.3 percent.
2. White Pine County is one of five Nevada counties classified by the USDA Economic Research Service as a non-metro recreation county. The classification is based on a number of factors, including employment and income derived from recreation-related activities, seasonal housing units within the county, and receipts from hotels and motels.
3. According to a Nevada Division of State Parks survey, there were approximately 425,435 off-highway vehicles (OHV) in Nevada in 2005, and the number was expected to increase. Utah in 2005 was expecting a 27 percent increase in OHV ownership, based upon registration figures (Nevada does not require OHV registration).
4. Observations at popular camping areas indicate that hundreds of OHV users travel to White Pine County to recreate, especially during holiday weekends. Most of the observed recreation occurs on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service-administered lands.

BLM Travel Management Planning

1. The BLM is focusing general OHV use on existing roads and trails. The BLM cooperated with user groups to complete the White Pine County Trails Plan. The BLM is cooperating with user groups to prepare a Lincoln County Trails Plan. The BLM Ely

District has an active signage program that urges OHV users to remain on existing roads and trails. The BLM is conducting public education and outreach to encourage public land users to remain on existing roads and trails.

2. The BLM is designating roads and trails in OHV active areas. The BLM is cooperating with White Pine County efforts to designate roads and trails that will direct OHV pressure in selected areas, such as Duck Creek Basin and south Steptoe Valley. The BLM is designing and implementing quality sustainable trails systems that will provide a positive recreational experience, and attract and help keep OHV users on trails systems and existing roads.

3. The BLM is monitoring resources and conducting public outreach. The BLM will utilize areas of focused OHV use to monitor usage and resource impacts. The BLM will utilize areas of focused OHV use to conduct public education and outreach, in addition to other already-established education and outreach methods

Ely District Travel Management Planning: Lost Ox Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail System

1. The Lost Ox Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail System is a managed, sustainable trail system designed to provide OHV enthusiasts with a quality recreational experience and protect public land health. The Lost Ox OHV Trail System will focus recreational OHV use on designated roads and trails, and help eliminate the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails.

2. The Lost Ox OHV Trail System is located in the south Egan Range, about 12 miles south of Ely. The 186-mile system, located on about 80,000 acres of public lands, would be comprised of 62 miles of existing roads and trails, and 124 miles of new trails designed to 1) relocate OHV users outside sensitive riparian areas, or 2) create loops to deter OHV users from creating roads and trails.

- BLM constructed trails would be just over four feet wide, suitable for All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), motorcycles and non-motorized use only.
- Incorporated existing roads would be signed for shared-use, or use by ATVs and full-size vehicles.
- Non-incorporated existing roads in the project area would remain open to all vehicles, unless otherwise determined through future transportation planning.

3. The Lost Ox OHV Trail system would be constructed in three phases, depending on use and impacts to habitat. Phase 1 would manage existing recreational use. Total mileage for Phase 1 is approximately 55 miles. Phase 2 would accommodate and distribute additional use. Total mileage for Phase 2 would be approximately 55 miles. Phase 3 would accommodate and distribute additional use. Total mileage for Phase 3 would be approximately 60 miles.

4. The BLM would monitor the Lost OHV Trail System for unauthorized routes, noxious weeds and invasive species, and wildlife. Should monitoring reveal that impacts are occurring at unacceptable levels, the BLM would implement adaptive management strategies. Adaptive management strategies include the use of barriers and signs, limiting

use, the closing or re-routing of trails, and seasonal closures. Monitoring would begin prior to starting construction of Phase 1, and continue between phases.

5. The Lost Ox OHV Trail System follows Resource Advisory Council OHV Administration Guidelines for Nevada Public Lands.

6. The Lost Ox OHV Trail System adheres to the White Pine County Trails Plan, adopted in March 2004. The White Pine Chamber of Commerce, White Pine County Economic Diversification Council, City of Ely, White Pine County, Nevada Division of State Parks, Nevada Division of Forestry, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Ely Ranger District and Great Basin National Park helped develop the White Pine County Trails Plan, which recognizes the need for regional trails, and OHV trails systems.

Ely District Travel Management Planning: Lost Ox Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail System History and Other Trails Projects

Lost Ox Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail System History

1. The BLM began designing the Lost Ox OHV Trail System in January 2004, with assistance from the Great Basin Trails Alliance, White Pine Chamber of Commerce, White Pine County and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Ely Ranger District.

2. The BLM on Feb. 22, 2006, signed the decision to implement the Lost Ox OHV Trail System, beginning a 30-day public appeal period. The BLM on March 23, 2006, met with stakeholders and subsequently issued a second decision that emphasized trail construction phasing and monitoring. The BLM extended the public appeal period by another 30 days. The 60-day public appeal period closed on April 25, 2006. The BLM received no appeals.

3. The BLM on Aug. 25, 2006, received from the White Pine County Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Steering Committee a letter asking BLM to stop work on trail system development and conduct supplemental analysis to determine alternative sites.

4. The BLM responded to the White Pine County CRM request and on Sept. 26, 2006, held a public meeting to hear concerns and identify alternatives. Approximately 35 people attended the meeting, mostly sportsmen and OHV enthusiasts. The BLM on Sept. 30, 2006, conducted a field tour of the Lost Ox OHV Trail System location. The BLM provided the public until Oct. 25, 2006, to return with alternatives. The BLM extended the date to Nov. 15, 2006. The BLM received no new alternatives.

5. The Draft Lost Ox Management and Monitoring Plan is scheduled to be finalized the week of April 16, 2007. The BLM plan reflects 12 months of dedicated effort with assistance from the public and Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Other BLM Trails and Trails Systems in the Ely District

1. The Silver State Trail is a scenic byway that could eventually, through federal legislation, extend statewide. The Silver State Trail is designated in Lincoln County by an approximately 260-mile loop extending from Caliente north to the White Pine County line.

A study is underway to designate a section of trail in White Pine County. The study is expected to be completed by December 2009.

2. The Chief Mountain OHV Trail System, west of Caliente, is a marked, signed and maintained trailhead system, and first segment of the Silver State Trail. Chief Mountain would guide OHV users to one of three trailheads accessing a 350-mile system of existing roads and trails on about 117,000 acres of the public lands.

3. The Hell's Half Acre proposed OHV Rock Crawler Trail System, in the Hiko Mountain Range, northeast of Alamo, would provide a specific type of OHV user referred to as a "rock crawler," with a recreation site.

- Jack Tribble noted there is a population increase seen at KOA, Cave Lake, private camp grounds, state camp grounds, users are moving outside of the hunting season. They are seeing regular users. We're working on website, signs, schools in Lincoln County, fourth and fifth grade touching on safety; working on Lincoln County trail plan and working with the Forest Service on the Steptoe area. Duck Creek Basin is doing well, the signs have all partners on them. We are at 90 percent plus compliance in this area. Will be removing signs where there is re-growth. South Steptoe is in planning process, there are six areas in Area Four now. We're looking at reroutes and road closures.

- Vince Garcia asked are any of these areas being used as seasonal use.

- Jack Tribble responded that we are using administrative use (ranch) reroutes, and some seasonal areas.

- Helen Hankins added that the point is that road closures are not closing access, but rather helping to managing access - only closing some of the roads. This is an access-based process with the public.

- Kevin Lee commented on a reroute going on now next to Highway 50.

- Jack Tribble responded that we're working on the trail system with phases and it will have loop opportunities. Phase 2 expands for more trails. Phase 1 and 2 have 55 miles and Phase 3 has 60 miles. We will monitor for all issues. Working on management and monitoring plan with NDOW, it will be to the public this week. In 2004 we started the development plan. For the first year/year and half there were no appeals then CRM sent a letter stating concerns so we went through more meetings and comments. We gave another 30 days for input. The Silver State Trail is included in the Lincoln County bill. The White Pine County bill has study for it over the next three years. It is a scenic OHV trail.

- Dave Tattam asked if the input is from OHV users.

- Jack Tribble responded that the TRT is a working group that has many interested. Public meetings have been held.

- Pat Gubbins asked how many miles are proposed.

- Jack responded that there are 350 miles.

Vince opened public comment period from 1:30-2:00 p.m.

- Jack Tribble discussed that on Chief Mountain there are a few trails already marked used for 30 years directly west of Caliente. The Hell's Half Acre group would like it formalized just for rock crawlers. We're working with them. This is a huge boulder area outside of tortoise area. Battle Mountain and Ely are cooperatively working with Ely assisting on the Shoshone Range Trail. The EA should be out in the next month or so to the public. The Hickison trails is a non-motorized area. The EA should be out in two months; it has user group support.

- Larry Barngrover asked if there are any horse trails.

- Jack Tribble replied that on Sacramento Pass there are trails, the Field Office is working with local horseman. We are striving to provide quality opportunities.

- Jeff White asked on Hickison is there a mountain bike provision?

- Jack Tribble responded that it is not in it but it will work, they will be allowed.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if there is any marketing of the trail system.

- Jack Tribble responded that they have worked with Great Basin Trails Alliance but they have enough users now. It is a balancing act.

- Jeff White asked about the RAC Standards and Guides, are they working for you?

- Jack Tribble said that they are very effective and have been used through the process. OHV is a tough subject. There are those who have issues, it is controversial and the hope is we will have better success.

V. RANGE/GRAZING PERMIT RENEWALS UPDATE

Forest Service

- Pat Irwin discussed travel planning and the briefing paper on travel management. National regulations for Spring Mountain are complete. She also discussed the current situation of motorized trails and non-maintained (a new category). Next month we will be out with the first scoping letter and we have held open houses for the public input. The proposed action will allow the public another chance to provide comments. Duck Creek is an 80,000 acre parcel, and we have done an intensive study on it.

- Vince Garcia stated that motorized trails in wet months will become wider.

- Pat Irwin said when we went through the process those that were by streams were eliminated. Kerr Burn is at a high elevation and is planned to do this spring. All agencies are writing NEPA on the Range EIS. The last page gives the schedule for whole forest (referring to the handout). Ely is first on the west side, then east in 2009. We had four decisions to finish in 2006 and we're working on them now. Wildfire use authority will be approved by summer for Forest Service.

- Larry Barngrover asked is it a prescribed burn?

- Pat Irwin stated that it is a prescribed natural burn but cannot be manual emission. There is a safety concern for fighters going into the rugged terrain. There are 3.6 million acres in the Ely District under wildfire use. There are many changes with staff: Terry Chute is new ranger for Ruby and Jarbidge Ranger Districts. Diane Weaver has transferred, Tony Strauss went to Washington, and the wild horse manager moved to another job.

Battle Mountain Field Office

- Jerry Smith referred to the handout. There are six permit renewals 2007, Dry Creek Ranch is first. We're working with those involved.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked on burn areas if there is only one being utilized.

- Jerry Smith said all are closed and there are two with permit suspension due to the burn.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked how AUMs are maintained.

- Jerry Smith said they're using different areas and substituting areas.

- Larry Barngrover asked if there is no grazing at all in areas, how is this maintained.

- Jerry Smith said we have made alternate arrangements. Most acreage is small; Moon Valley will be fenced off. For the minerals update - there are more and more; the Round Mountain expansion, Cortez Hills EIS expansion effort, Molly Mine is going, and Mount Hope. Tonkin is very active, working on cleaning up the infrastructure and BLM is expecting a plan. Phoenix doing well with copper expansion

- Dave Tattam asked about the monitoring program that was discussed last year.

- Jerry Smith stated that Art Gale was the cooperator but he has been bought out by the Molly mine. No other ranchers have volunteered to take his spot.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown stated that the schools are successful.

- Dave Tattam asked do schools provide you with a list of who has attended.

- Helen Hankins stated that she will write a letter requesting that information.

- Jerry Smith discussed energy. There have been four geothermal leases approved through the Nevada State Office and production in Nye County. The Bootstrap program is doing well; crews will be back on this spring working on sage brush habitat, thinning pinion/juniper and doing fencing projects. They will be expanding program to the Tonopah Office for weed treatment.

Elko Field Office

- Helen Hankins said the range permit renewal effort was impacted by fire rehabilitation plans. There are 55 to complete this year and monitoring field work for next year. There are 150 renewals complete by 2009.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked how can we send letter to be a cooperator with (Elko County- BLM).
- Helen Hankins suggested that Eklund-Brown should sit down with Shane Deforest and discuss.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown added that this might be a workload issue for the county with 55 renewals.
- Helen Hankins said the handout on allotments effected was given at last meeting. An Idaho group is interested in what we are doing they have appealed two fire plans. The Request of Stay was denied. There is an interest from Newmont for land exchange, but no capacity to do with workload, etc. Newmont will have to pay the whole thing, it is still under consideration.
- Vince Garcia asked if the exchange is at or around existing operations.
- Helen Hankins stated that the parcels are in several locations, for riparian base interest.
- Jon Hutchings added that the perception is different than BLM's.
- Helen Hankins suggested that she could get a summary report.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown added that a summary report would be great.
- Vince Garcia added that we do not need allotment by allotment, that can be a two edged sword.
- Jon Hutchings stated that to understand what it means in large context is all he was getting at.
- Helen Hankins added that the numbers should not reflect fire closures yet for Elko.
- Larry Barngrover commented that sometimes when you look at use figures you need to understand what is happening to the vegetation naturally. There are a lot of annual variations.
- Vince Garcia added that there are other costs of raising other than the AUMs; sometimes it is not feasible to the rancher to raise these.
- Jon Hutchings said that if the data is not accurately representing what is on the ground, then it should not be used.
- Helen stated that we could go allotment by allotment but we do not have the time to do that.
- John Ruhs suggested that it may be possible to pick representative allotments and review them that way.

Ely Field Office

- John Ruhs introduced Chris Maya who gave the Ely Field Office presentation. Maya distributed a handout. The primary workload in terms of permit renewals is 16 including 23 allotments. We're having meetings and making progress towards the Standards and the indicators of those findings. Public involvement is being done by an annual letter and their responses. Next month monitoring priorities will be set. Total will be 109 permit renewals by 2009, range meets one week and the identification team meets the next week.
- Larry Barngrover discussed the establishment of Standards and asked what if a term permit determined that livestock is not a causal factor but Standards are not met for the environment.
- Chris Maya answered that project improvements for riparian areas are being worked on.
- Larry Barngrover stated that this has to be accomplished in other ways.
- Chris Maya stated that there are the SNPLMA funds. Recommendations will be worked on, what are the factors and what are the tools being used.
- John Ruhs discussed fuels management - when looking at the projects these are mainly done through the watershed analysis. SNPLMA funding opens the door more.
- Jon Hutchings said Eureka County is heading the same way. He observed that management changes are resulting in changes on the ground - some are not significant changes. Hutchings also added that there are other factors; looking for consistency in 10 years, will they be better off down the road. The fear is that it will not be.
- Larry Barngrover said likely we will reduce and reduce until there is nothing to reduce.
- Jon Hutchings said that 99 % of folks want the same thing - improvement on the ground conditions and economically. How do we improve the process for this?
- Helen Hankins stated that out of 150 renewals 10 will be renewed without NEPA, they are meeting the standards. We should be able to say this many did this, this many did that, and use it as a basis on a landscape scale. Hankins stated that we should not wait until 2009, should do some this fall, need to look at trends and be proactive across Nevada.
- Chris Maya said the challenge is what we want to see on habitat.
- Jon Hutchings said that the effort has to be with the Nevada State Office reevaluating what they are trying to achieve.

VI. FIELD MANAGER AND DISTRICT RANGER REPORTS

John Ruhs said the Final RMP will be out this summer. We have a lot of large projects going on and referred to map which shows wind energy projects, there is no pod yet. The project list for Ely is:

TITLE	ACTION
DOE Rail Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft out Mina re-route being reworked west side of state.
Holly Energy Gas Pipeline EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings in late Spring 2007
Sierra Pacific Coal Power Plant/Ely Energy Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping report mid-March. • Main work will start in July 2007.
SWIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comm. plan finalized in mid-March.
Toquop Energy Coal Power plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Draft Review #3 mid-March.
WP Energy Station Coal Power Plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft EIS to public by March 22.
Bald Mountain Mine Expansion EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third party contractor hire by April 1, 2007. • Scoping in mid-May 2007.
Kane Springs Pipeline EIS (Lincoln County Water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin draft #3 Review mid-March.
LCLA Pipeline (Lincoln County Water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Draft #1. • Review in mid-April.
SNWA Pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not restarted Technical Reports being completed. EIS to start again late Spring.
*Wind – Egan (LS Power/NV Wind)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan of Development expected August 2007. • EIS next fiscal year.
*Wind – Mt. Wilson / Table Mountain (Horizon Wind/NV Wind)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan of Development expected August 2007. • EIS next fiscal year.
*Spring Valley Wind/ Spring Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan of Development September 2007, Next fiscal work year.
*Note: All three potential EIS projects are asking to go forward, now. We asked that they delay until August/September 2007, due to workloads with current EIS.	

- John Ruhs discussed that for OHVs - White Pine County has resolution that was approved yesterday. There are three wilderness plans that are in process for signatures (Lincoln County).

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked how this process is being handled.

- John Ruhs responded that we are meeting with permittees. Looking at the Bill and cherry stem roads, number of the areas that have multiple roads will be looking at taking out roads. This is in the planning stages now. We are working with cooperators for these projects. The Weed program is moving forward and we're working with Tri-county.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked what the impacts are.

- Suggestion that there be a presentation on wilderness planning at the next meeting. How they were originally designated and the public process they went through, with discussion on impacts of what you can and cannot do.

- Helen Hankins said there is a difference in the criteria of 1964 and the Wilderness that is designated in Nevada.

- Larry Barngrover discussed what the Forest Service went through last time and NDOW participated after the fact. There is quite a bit that you can do and still maintain central integrity for those that live near.
- John Ruhs said some are identified in the language. Our RMP will have wildfire use - that is one of our tools to get the vegetation back where it belongs.
- Helen Hankins stated that once it is established it is up to the agency to develop and engage in how it is managed.
- Jon Hutchings asked about the BLM wild horse priority - where are we now with holding facilities and what changes need to be done.
- Dave Tattam stated that this is a state wide level issue.
- Helen Hankins added that BLM is at AML in Nevada.
- Doran Sanchez said that we have specialists and suggested that Joe Tague could provide insight and we'll invite him to the next meeting.
- Dave Tattam added that BLM has a lack of sale staff.
- Mike Brown discussed the next meeting and agenda. May 10th is set as tour day and the 11th is meeting on fire rehab areas in Elko, and July 26 -27 tour in Eureka for the Ruby Hill Mine.

Dave Tattam moved the meeting adjourned and the motion was seconded by Sheri Eklund-Brown. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Date Approved:

Approved by:
