

**Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 9, 2009**  
**Battle Mountain, Nevada**

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

Larry Barngrover	(2) Wildlife
Jeff White	(1) Energy/Minerals
Neil Frakes	(2) Environmental
Vince Garcia	(3) Native American
John Winnepenninkx	(2) Wild Horse & Burro
Dave Gaskin	(2) State Agency
Patsy Tomera	(3) Public-At-Large
Kevin Lee	(1) Transportation/ROW
Tom Connolly	(1) Federal Grazing
Jon Griggs	(1) Federal Grazing
Cyd McMullen	(2) Archaeology
Martin Burdick	(2) Dispersed Recreation
Barry Perryman	(3) Academia
Sheri Eklund-Brown	(3) Elected Official

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:**

Ken Miller	District Manager, Elko District Office
Michael Herder	Associate District Manger, Ely District Office
Jerry Smith	District Manager, Battle Mountain Office
Schirete Zick	RAC Coordinator, Battle Mountain Office
Stephanie Trujillo	Acting RAC Coordinator, Ely District Office
Jill McConville	Administrative Assistant, Battle Mountain District Office
Steve Tryon	SNPLMA Assistant District Manager, Las Vegas District Office
David Wood	SNPLMA Program Manager, Las Vegas District Office

**Other Attendees:**

Jose Noriega	USDA Forest Service, District Ranger
Jerry Annis	Public at Large, Battle Mountain
Ruth	Member of Public
Donnie Hanson	Member of Public

**8:07 a.m. RAC Chairperson Vince Garcia called the meeting to order. Vince welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Introductions of those in attendance were given.**

## **I. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

- Review and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting: approved with Larry Barngrover's changes: the question on page 7, should read: "would the blades from the turbines impact deer or antelope?"

**- Jon Griggs motioned to accept the minutes with the changes; Tom Connolly seconded the motion. All in favor.**

## **II. SNPLMA ROUND 10 NOMINATIONS**

### **Las Vegas District Office (SNPLMA)-Steve Tryon and David Wood**

Steve Tryon conducted a presentation on Round 10 Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). Steve gave a copy of the report that is going to be presented to Congress.

Tryon stated that he would like to find a better way to use the RAC at the front end of the process for the proposed projects rather than after projects have been already decided upon. He asked the RAC to think about better ways to participate in projects. A recommendation letter is due to the State Director by May 6<sup>th</sup> with RAC recommendations.

The presentation highlighted Program Trends, Funding Trends, Amount of Land Acquired, Sales Projections, and Future Funding.

-Steve Tryon said the people involved with the SNPLMA programs are working to improve program accountability. Some of the ways that they are ways they are implementing the process are: expediting the program nomination process, improving internal business processes, improving BLM reporting to Congress, and completing closeout of projects. For more information on the program go to [www.blm.gov/snplma](http://www.blm.gov/snplma).

-Ken Miller asked if the money that is projected for Round 11 and 12 is already "in the bank" and does not include any "new money."

-Steve Tryon answered that was correct. Tryon said that there are \$30 million in (SAR) requests. (additional funding for projects that were already approved).

-Barry Perryman asked what would happen if a request was denied.

-Tryon stated that instead of denying a project, sometimes the projects were scaled down.

-Kevin Lee asked if the BLM SNPLMA funds are being withheld until the closeouts are complete.

-Steve Tryon replied that the BLM does not do that currently.

Steve discussed some of the Project Working Group's Recommendations. A handout was provided. Twenty five projects have been nominated. Nine were recommended for a total of approximately \$7.6 million. Priority #1 is the White Pine County Wilderness Restoration and Implementation project at a cost of approximately \$1.6 million.

-Neal Frakes asked if this was just BLM or if Forest Service was included.

-David Wood said that this was just a BLM Wilderness project.

-Steve Tryon highlighted the projects:

Eight Capital Improvement projects were nominated - \$7.2 million in recommended projects.

Eastern Nevada Landscape Projects included:

Restoration of 1.7 million acres burned in 1999

Noxious Weeds Infestation

-Tryon discussed the Great Basin Restoration Initiative (GBRI) and its objectives and the difference between restoration and rehabilitation.

GBRI Objectives include:

Protection of healthy landscapes

Restoration of degraded landscapes

Promotion of science and research

-Steve Tryon added that there is a large effort and ability to meet objectives.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if soil survey is to determine what restoration can be done?

-David Wood replied yes.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked where we were at with the Seed Storage Facility in Ely.

-Mike Herder stated that BLM was preparing the paperwork to withdraw the land to reserve it for construction of the building, and noted that they were in the early planning stages.

-Tom Connolly asked who makes the decision to use Poa and Flax rather than Kochia when restoring land.

-Herder responded that those decisions were made on a project by project basis.

-Tom Connolly suggested that the BLM design the landscape to be more resistant to fires.

Mike Herder noted that the Resource Management Plan establishes what BLM uses, but the decision came down to project-by-project basis.

A short discussion followed on Rehabilitation vs. Restoration and what seed was used or could be used for restoration.

-Dave Wood gave a presentation on the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project (ENLRP). A map, showing what has been done to date, was handed out.

-Ken Miller asked what has been proposed for Round 10?

-Wood said there were two weed projects proposed for White River Valley at a cost of \$2.1 million.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked why there wasn't a contingency on any of these?

-David Wood replied that the sub-group didn't feel it needed a contingency.

-Sheri questioned if there was any match on these?

-David Wood replied that there was some match/partnership on some of these projects.

-Patsy Tomera commented that BLM seem to spend a lot on inventory currently when an inventory was completed 3 or 4 years ago. Why does this need to be redone?

-David Wood said that we needed to establish what is out on the ground now.

-Mike Herder added that inventory needs to be redone because we could treat a patch of weeds today, drive off and spread weeds to another patch. Inventory established what is out there now.

-Steve Tryon said that different areas were treated within in a larger area.

-Patsy Tomera asked how soon is treatment done after inventory?

-Mike Herder said that the herbicide being used will determine the most effective time to do the treatment, but it is always done as soon as possible.

Steve Tryon continued his presentation and highlighted Hazardous Fuels Projects and Land Acquisitions in proposed for Round 10.

Priority #2 under Land Acquisitions is the RLF Rock Creek Parcels. \$864,000 has been requested. Steve said that there are Western Shoshone cultural and ceremonial significance in that area. The acquisition would also protect sensitive species and other wildlife, perennial stream reaches, and habitat for migratory birds.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if this is part of the project that we nominated before?

-Ken Miller said that this was a new project.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown questioned how we can manage for Native American concerns.

-Ken Miller said that if we care for one specialty that the rest usually follows.

-Jerry Smith added that we can develop a Co-operative Management Agreement.

-Ruth (member of the public) asked if there would be some idea of hiring tribal people to help manage?

-Vince Garcia stated that he didn't know for sure.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if the area could be completely reserved for Native American Worship?

-Ken Miller said that we could say yes.

-Jerry Smith gave an example of how various uses are managed on Timbisha lands. Jerry said that we couldn't exclude anything 100%, but we can restrict use at certain timeframes for certain benefits.

-Ken Miller said that the tribes don't want 100% exclusion. They were looking for protection and access.

-Patsy Tomera asked if we are still trying to put a dam there?

-Ken Miller said that they were not, due to cultural and wildlife concerns.

-Steve Tryon added that they have no concerns with any of the projects that are recommended this year.

-Vince Garcia said that last year we wrote the State Director with concerns on the California Trail Interpretative Center and in support of the Seed Warehouse. He said that this year RAC may want to mention the RAC's concerns on fish and Wildlife Visitor Centers and the lack of projects in Northeastern Nevada.

-Garcia added that the RAC supports this year's nominations and suggested that the RAC might consider recommending that projects be completed before new projects are brought forward.

-Larry Barngrover commented that removal of private lands from the tax rolls is a touchy issue. He commented that there were a significant amount of land acquisitions in this round. Larry expressed concerns that the BLM doesn't have enough money to handle its current lands, but was adding more land with short funding. Larry also asked what constitutes sensitive lands. He suggested that we focus on current projects.

-Jon Griggs asked if it takes Congressional Act to change how money is spent.

-Steve Tryon said No, and explained that it was an administrative decision. Steve noted that that is one of the items we need to weigh in on.

-Larry Barngrover said that he is not against the land acquisitions, but he thought we need to scrutinize some of the projects more.

-Neil Frakes commented on the land acquisitions and said that a lot of them include riparian areas and natural resources. He noted that he is in support of some of these acquisitions.

### **Public Comment Period opened at 10:00a.m.**

-Jose Noriega said he would be cautious about saying that we don't want to acquire land. He said he did not agree with all of the acquisitions. He added that the tax base was not always there and that project development should be focused on where we can protect development from wildfire.

A short discussion followed on tax income vs. where and why these lands are acquired.

-Ken Miller said that we try to balance land going from public to Federal ownership.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown stated that Nevada has more public lands than any other state. She said that we have many treasures here and added that there that limits the State to have a diverse economy.

-Barry Perryman added that acre per acre these lands may be more expensive to take care of and manage. He said that we can't save every species or build fences around every riparian area. Perryman also said that these purchases need to be scrutinized more.

-Tom Connolly asked if land that is designated for sale has been inventoried.

-Steve Tryon said that some has already been inventoried.

### **III. BATTLE MOUNTAIN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION**

#### **Battle Mountain District Office, Jerry Smith**

Jerry Smith gave a Resource Management Plan (RMP) update with a handout. Smith said that he would like to see if the TRI RAC would be interested in helping us scope and work on the RMP. Smith added that funding would start in 2010, and he would be interested in forming a sub-group from the Mohave Southern RAC and the TRI RAC to help on this.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if we have area in both of the RAC areas.

-Jerry Smith confirmed that we do. Jerry noted that the Battle Mountain District goes all the way to Beatty. Jerry said that it would be nice to have one person from each RAC and noted that he would like to visit the issue at the next meeting.

-Barry Perryman asked if there is a template in place with Ely's RMP and if it was Programmatic RMP?

-Jerry Smith said it doesn't have to be. He said that we could look at Ely's RMP as a model and noted that we also use Winnemucca's RMP as an example. "Both have some of the same issues as BMDO. By looking at those models we can save time and get some consistency," Jerry said.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if the RMP's address mine sustainability?

-Jerry Smith stated that we will take it a little further than the other RMP's. All RMPs were reviewed and did well addressing sustainable development and that he would like to expand on that.

#### **Ely District Office, Michael Herder**

Mike Herder gave an update on the ELY RMP, value of RMP, and process. A handout on a small section of the RMP Implementation Plan was given out.

Herder said that it takes decisions, goals and objectives and boils them down to categories. He said that the RMP tells what we are going to do year by year to accomplish goals in the RMP.

Mike Herder also added that the RMP establishes how BLM was going to get there. He added that when the RMP is finalized, copes will be available, possibly on the web. Mike said that NEPA discussions were at a generic level, and that a Site specific NEPA will be completed for specific individual projects.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked for an explanation on PEs?

-Mike Herder explained that they are “Program Elements” that tell us what type of work we plan to do. He also added that it tells Congress what type of work we plan to do or are doing by defining it within those Program Elements.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if the PEs are listed on the website?

-Steve Tryon said that they are.

-Eklund-Brown commented that most people understand the mission and flexibility to work with them.

-Mike Herder said that we would talk later about the Travel Management Plan and involvement of the public.

-Mike Herder mentioned the Travel Management Plan in the RMP, changed management of OHV Trail to larger area and Limit to existing roads and trails. He said that they will go through the process of designating roads or trails later.

-Mike Herder discussed Implementing Duck Creek, closing some, changing some and restarted South Steptoe Valley designation of routes. He said that all existing roads are open and we were making it as open as possible for public input. Herder said the he will have the public’s help with the designation of roads. He added that three categories were identified: Open, Closed, and Open with Mitigation.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if Mike planned to do anything out on the ground with the public, staff, work pictures.

-Mike Herder answered affirmatively.

A discussion followed on public involvement. Mike Herder said that the initial inventory was three to four years old. New roads have been created. He added that his District was filling in the gaps with satellite imagery and going out on the ground to look at those roads. Herder stated that they found that the old process didn’t work well and created a new one. He said that a list of alternatives was created: Closed unless reason to keep open, Open unless reason to close and a 3<sup>rd</sup> alternative.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if we have a normal collaboration of input and exchange through public comment.

-Mike Herder said that there was a pretty well defined process.

-Vince Garcia said that it would be up to the RAC to also make recommendations to avoid problems in the future.

-Barry Perryman asked that once we come to an agreement on what roads will be designated, would we enforce it and how.

-Mike Herder responded that in short, the answer was yes and that was considered in the process. Mike said that BLM could seek funding to physically close the roads.

-Barry Perryman asked if riding clubs were consulted.

-Mike Herder said that there were representatives from the riding clubs on this advisory committee.

-Donnie Hanson stated that that included private land owners to help with enforcement.

-Mike Herder said that there is a member of the White Pine County Sherriff on this committee.

-Martin Burdick stated that some people won't be able to be stopped. Educating kids to respect the rules is the way to go. He said it would be a good starting point.

-Mike Herder said that he was impressed with the amount of public support as well as support of RAC members.

### **Elko District Office, Ken Miller**

Ken Miller said that his district will do the RMP in 2011. He added that Travel Management will be part of that. Ken said that he will address the Spruce Mountain Area sooner. He said that BLM made a point to be in meetings to avoid some things the Forest Service has done in the past and that he want to make sure we get good stake holder involvement at the beginning as well as good information at the beginning of the process.

Ken Miller also said that he was working to gather information to be used into an RMP and reiterated the focus on Spruce Mountain. Miller added that he would like to make the displays informational and understandable by the public. He said that perhaps it would be possible to get the stake holders to help us.

-Jerry Smith said that he will address travel management in the Battle Mountain RMP and that the public will be involved.

## **IV. OHV TRAILS UPDATE**

### **Battle Mountain, Todd Neville**

Todd Neville gave a presentation on the Shoshone OHV Recreational Area and handed out a map of the area. He said that the project was six years in the making and the area was approximately 25 miles South of Battle Mountain.

Todd said that the decision was signed on September 30, 2008, giving the "green light" to go ahead with the project. IBLA ruled that the project will not cause immediate and irreparable harm. Neville said that funding contingent, and he hoped to begin work on the project in the fall.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked what was next, if it was Federal court or District court?

-Jerry Smith said that it probably would not go to court and the IBLA decision will probably be it. Smith acknowledged that OHVs are controversial. He said that the district did work with NDOW and permittees. He also said that the project is done in 3 phases. He said that after Phase 1 is done, BLM will monitor the impacts on wildlife and livestock. He added that there will be extensive monitoring and that the district have had numerous public meetings for scoping. Jerry Smith said that the district have worked with the Lander County commissioners to be a partner in development.

-Jerry Smith said that there has been some debate with the new Commissioners because they haven't seen this process from the beginning. They needed to decide to be a partner or not,, and they were going to look into it one more time.

-Todd Neville said that he intends to take the Commissioners out on the ground to see the site.

-Jerry Smith said that if phase 1 was not successful then BLM will re-evaluate phases 2 and 3 and would consider closing phase 1. The project will be on the Recreation Map.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if it would be widely advertised?

-Jerry Smith said that that was not the original intent. He said that the district will hold off construction until we get a final ruling from the IBLA.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if we have some public concern

-Jerry Smith said that there is always some public concern. He added that expertise from Utah were invited to help design trails and spent a lot of time to make sure it is done right.

-Todd Neville continued with his presentation and noted the four "Es":

- Education – signing of it
- Enforcement
- Engineering – professionally groomed trails
- Evaluation- monitoring

-Neville said that this is a multi use trail meant for hikers, mountain bikes, and more.

-Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if some of it was designated as shared use.

-Jerry Smith responded that all of it would be designated shared use and reiterated that the area will be monitored closely to make sure it doesn't get out of hand.

-Larry Barngrover said that there wasn't a lot of interest in the past, but starting in the 1980s, interest in outdoor use increased steadily with the Off-road industry growing in business and popularity. Larry said that this brought more concern about the impact – the disturbance factor. Some of the species and habitats fragment easily which adds over time. Barngrover noted that this presents a significant issue especially in Nevada, and needs to be designed to be as inconspicuous as possible and managed to benefit the species in the area.

-Jerry Smith agreed. Smith said that the district spends a great deal of time with NDOW, wild horse groups, and permittees to design the trail to minimize or eliminate impacts. He said that the recommendations were to discourage use at certain times of the year and that the district will not be closing and restricting. He reiterated that the districts takes time to address all uses and will monitor this closely.

-Larry Barngrover said that there is no doubt that we can design for multiple use, and accommodate all the uses with minimal impact, but this will take time. He said that it may be a little tougher to do in Nevada.

**V. MINING UPDATE**

Jeff White noted that an update would be given in each vehicle while traveling to the Phoenix Mine Tour.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 a.m.

Date Approved:

Approved by:

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Minutes by: Schirete Zick and Jill McConville