

Bill Marlett, Oregon Natural Desert Association
Mark Sherbourne, BLM, Hines, OR
Tara Wilson, BLM, Hines, OR
Laura Dowlan, BLM, Hines, OR
Cam Swisher, BLM, Hines, OR

Doug Linn, BLM, Hines, OR
Dan Jordan, Burns, OR
Steve Dowlan, BLM, Hines, OR
Darren Brumback, BLM, Hines, OR

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

The meeting was called to order and self introductions made. The meeting lacked a quorum.

CHAIRMAN UPDATE

- Stacy noted they would probably not have a quorum Thursday or Friday. He asked that they think about the agenda and how they could best use their time. He said Karla will still listen, as the DFO, and they could possibly make some recommendations that could be ratified later.
- Stacy read part of a letter from Dick Johnson, Wildhorse Ranch. Copies will be distributed to SMAC members.
- Stacy welcomed the new members. His hope is with new members and a new start they can take the opportunity to make a difference. There is a lot of litigation on the Mountain. Stacy's hope is the SMAC could resolve certain issues, and keep it from going to litigation. If SMAC could make recommendations, this would help the BLM make decisions rather than letting judges make the decisions. What that means is, each member needs to come to the meetings with the ability to carry their constituents. When they make a deal, they need to go back to their constituents and help their constituents stick to that deal.
- He noted the Landowner Group has been working with the BLM on a Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA). The Landowner Group feels the Steens Act asks for, mandates, and sees value in a landscape-management concept. They really hoped the SMAC could facilitate landscape management and find opportunities for all landowners on the Mountain to work together to find solutions to issues. They also feel that has not happened as well as they would have liked with the SMAC, so they went outside of SMAC and created a CMA with the BLM. It is not signed yet, but it is nearly complete. The agreement will help communications between various private landowners and help accomplish the Steens Act purposes.

DFO UPDATE

- Karla gave a review on the operations of the SMAC and the role of the DFO.
- State Director Elaine Brong has announced her retirement, effective Nov. 3, and Ed Shepherd will be taking her place.
- She updated the SMAC on the Burns District organization. One of the things to change is all administrative processes within the Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA), including allotments which are right now being managed by the Three Rivers Resource Area, will be transferred to the CMPA (Andrews Resource Area) for management. This will give more consistency and information in management within the whole CMPA. The boundary line for the resource areas will

not change; there will be an agreement between the resource areas on the management. This has not been formalized yet, but will be soon.

- Karla let everyone know there are two vacancies on the Andrews/Steens staff. Evelyn Treiman has transferred to Arizona with the Forest Service and Erik Taylor has transferred to Roseburg BLM. She hopes to fill behind them, but at this time, they have not.
- She gave an update on the prescribed fire work and wildfires that occurred in the CMPA this year.
- The Wildland Fire Use Plan has an estimated completion date of May 2007.
- Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) Team came in to look at the areas burned this fall. Karla noted Jeff Rose, the Fire Ecologist, will be leading the tour this afternoon. She let the SMAC know they will be reseeding up to 10,000 acres of the 130,000 acres burned. They will be doing erosion control, cleaning out catchments and maybe constructing new catchments. There will also be some fences repaired that were lost in the fires.

FIELD MANAGER'S REPORT

Karla Bird reported:

- Cold Springs/Grove Creek springs development - BLM with their partners removed troughs from part of the no livestock grazing area. Some of the troughs removed had served as historic recreation resources. They are planning to replace the troughs and water systems keeping with what a wilderness situation should look like. Laura Dowlan has been working with John Witzel to try and come up with some designs that would work. ONDA suggested they may be able to help.
- There has been interest on new Special Recreation Permits for additional commercial overnight stays in wilderness. BLM will prepare a "needs assessment" before they work on an environmental assessment. This will take place if there is sufficient staffing over the next winter.
- Karla gave a short update on fence pulling statistics by volunteers. There will be more of an update on these activities on Steens at the December meeting. Laura will be looking at grant ideas and any suggestions are welcome.
- Trail maintenance - the BLM knows unless you maintain the trails, the grass will keep growing on the trail. BLM would like to work with the SMAC to find the best ways to accomplish trail maintenance. There are a number of volunteers willing to help.
- The Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan for the CMPA was an idea of the SMAC to be accomplished following the Resource Management Plan (RMP), which was completed a couple years ago. Staffing and funding dependent, BLM will try and start on this in 2007. Karla has approached the Harney County Court about helping BLM with a recreation use survey. The court has taken it under advisement, but has not yet responded. This will probably take a couple years to complete and they hope for full SMAC involvement.
- Karla updated the group on the use of Stonehouse Allotment this year and the plans for next year and the future.

- She presented an update provided by Joan Suther on the Smyth-Kiger Allotment. She noted an allotment management plan is being developed and further work is necessary.
- Karla provide an update on two, large juniper treatment projects –
 - North Steens EIS, which is 330,000 acres, had a very large portion of the area burned this year. What that means is, because they have not completed the final environmental impact statement, they will be considering what happened with these fires as they build a final assessment. The EIS should still be out this next summer.
 - Five Creeks Rangeland Restoration EA - the EA was sent out for public review June 7. After a 30-day comment period, parties responded and small changes were made. Joan will issue a decision on the project by October 16.

MONITORING PLAN

Rick Hall presented an update on the CMPA monitoring plan. For the new members he provided a short review on the reason for the monitoring plan. He noted he had the maps (shown at the May meeting) hanging on the wall. Rick also noted he has the main body of the document and three tables drafted. Since the May meeting, he has added two more tables. He reviewed his presentation from May stating what monitoring is and why it is important. He also reviewed the new tables and what they contain. Rick stated he hasn't moved too far along due to field season but will continue working on it.

Monitoring is always subject to budget and staff. Karla stated this was more of an internal strategy about how to ask for money.

The group went on to discuss the topics in the document and the tables. Karla asked Rick where to find information in the plan that covered wildlife. He stated it was in the main document. The group will have another chance to review the monitoring plan as it will be added to the agenda for the December meeting. The group is to look through it, see if anything was missed, and decide what the priorities are for what is monitored first, with the little funding that is received.

Karla noted the BLM will be modeling a new website after the National Park Service. It is a web-based portal for interested researchers/scientists to propose research ideas.

Action Item: Provide SMAC with the National Park Service website the BLM will be using for its model.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Karla noted there was a sheet in the packets giving background information on the Travel Management Plan. The new goal date is March 2007.

Harney County Judge Steve Grasty was present to give an update on the County's involvement with the travel management plan. He noted it was not only the landowners, but numerous other individuals and groups that came to the County Court with concerns over the travel plan. Steve reviewed the reason why the county has become involved; he

believes the Court and the elected officials have a duty to the community to be involved. The Court has talked with BLM staff and have collected numerous maps, including old maps from the 60's, maps from landowners, current BLM maps and other maps available. The County GIS has put all map information into one map. Steve, Dana, County GIS and two different landowners spent 3 days out on the Mountain looking at the roads. He noted the thing that will be the most difficult is the terminology used for the roads. He thinks the work the County has done serves as the basis for the work ahead during the NEPA process. One of the goals of the County is to make the map showing every road on the mountain a permanent record. This would put something in the County archives showing every road that has ever been there.

Karla noted the travel plan schedule was on the bottom of the sheet handed out and there was a brief discussion on its schedule.

They continued to discuss what the SMAC would like to see happen with the travel plan. They would like to see a map for each alternative in the scoping document and it was also suggested the base map be the map the county has put together.

Motion made: Cindy made the motion the BLM, in the scoping document, have a map for each alternative plus the county map inventory map and the text. (Hoyt seconded) The motion passed (not a formal recommendation).

The Travel Plan will be added to next meeting's agenda.

Susie Hammond commented the Steens Mountain Landowner Group has put a lot of time into helping the County, and put a lot of time trying to put input into the SMAC meetings for the last 6 years. They are concerned they don't reinvent the wheel with the scoping and EA process. It is important to them the BLM goes back and picks up all of the comments they have had over the years. There are two things left unsaid in the road inventory they discussed with the County; one is private property access. They were hoping it would be dealt with in a priority manner, maybe as an overlay. Secondly, trail inventory as an overlay, whether it is a mechanized or foot trail.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MAY MINUTES –

It was noted on page six, in the middle of the third paragraph the word bizarre was misspelled and should be corrected.

On page 5, paragraph 1, it should say ten trails instead of ten miles.

Motion made: Rich moved they approve the May minutes with the contingency of the approval at the December meeting with a full quorum. (Cindy seconded)

TOUR OF WILDLAND JUNIPER MANAGEMENT AREA

The group spent the afternoon taking a tour of the Wildland Juniper Management Area (WJMA) and will discuss the tour tomorrow.

October 13, 2006

INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order and self introductions made. There was a quorum.

Stacy added a chair update on the land Dan Jordan owns on Steens. He noted Dan has filed a measure 37 claim, and is trying to work with a couple different agencies to be able to receive some type of compensation for his land being used by the public.

RECAP OF WILDLAND JUNIPER MANAGEMENT TOUR

The group discussed the possibility of being able to and the process of getting signs put up in the WJMA to help explain the area. There were many suggestions on where to put the signs, what kind of signs, and what information to have on the signs.

Motion made: Rich made the motion the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) design and build a pullout road in the juniper management area designed for the types of traffic and uses expected in the management area that, for example, could include two large turnouts for recreation vehicles designed in a manner that accomplishes public safety goals in the area and a fence being placed far enough back from the turnout road to allow for future work. The site plan should be brought back to the SMAC for review.
(Paul seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) design and build a pullout road in the juniper management area designed for the types of traffic and uses expected in the management area that, for example, could include two large turnouts for recreation vehicles designed in a manner that accomplishes public safety goals in the area and a fence being placed far enough back from the turnout road to allow for future work. The site plan should be brought back to the SMAC for review.

Motion made: Stacy made the motion the BLM put in four gates that allow for easy access to the demonstration area. (Bill seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: The BLM put in four gates that allow for easy access to the demonstration area.

Motion made: Fred made the motion the BLM makes sure to treat the top of the hill to allow for the historical snowdrift pattern to occur. (David seconded)

Unanimous Agreement: The BLM makes sure to treat the top of the hill to allow for the historical snowdrift pattern to occur.

SMAC ISSUE – PUBLIC INFORMATION

Cindy gave an update and provided background information on the issue of signs. She noted they wanted to have two kiosks at the main entrances of the Steens and also a very nice brochure (almost magazine like) with information and a map showing the different types of roads.

Karen Moon from Harney County Watershed Council was present to discuss a grant they have submitted for 2 portal signs, 1 at the south end of the WJMA and 1 at the north end. She discussed the other types of signs they would like to see. They asked for seven signs, 2 larger, and also a brochure explaining the WJMA. They would like to see, and the people giving the grants would also like to see, the Crane High School agricultural students develop the brochure. They would like a trip to the Steens for the kids to see the Mountain, then have them go back and design the brochure. They would also like to have a questionnaire available for people on the WJMA. The grant they have applied for is for \$49,000. The group discussed the grant and placing of signs on the Mountain.

It was suggested they have anyone from the SMAC that would like to be involved in the BLM's working group form a sub-committee. It was decided Bill, Paul, David, Fred and Cindy will be working with the BLM's working group to come back to the SMAC with information for the whole body to make a recommendation.

PURPOSES OF THE ACT

The group went into discussion on the purposes of the Act as they did at the May meeting. The group discussed the points and talked about how they each viewed and understood what the Act states.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND Q&A

Susie Hammond, Landowner Group and Hammond Ranches Inc., stated she is really encouraged about their discussion. She encourages, on behalf of all landowners and people who own land, they go forward with the rereading of the Act and people's interpretation of it. On the conversation of the WJMA, she said to Fred on a break, that it would be a focus if they could have one small sign as an introduction to the WJMA and focus on the Aspen regeneration. What stops that is you put pressure on that permit and the people that have an economic interest. She thinks, if the SMAC committee would look at an alternative to the management restraints they put on it by fencing it or whatever they decide to do, it would be the most educational thing on the whole site. It would be telling the general public, when they get up there, they are going to see all the different things that can happen - right there is a spotlight on why that place is developed. She's not recommending they do that. She doesn't think they can with fairness to the people that have the permit in there, if you don't allow for some kind of replacement of forage. She would like them to keep the landowner group in mind when they do the signage and the brochure. They would like to take a look at those. She is encouraged by the stuff the SMAC is doing.

SET DECEMBER'S MEETING AGENDA

- Recreation Report (1/2 hour)
- Public Information (2 hour)
- Fire Ecologist Rehab Update (15 minutes)
- Fire Management Use Plan Update (30 minutes)
- Monitoring Plan (2 hours)
 - Editing

- Prioritizing
Travel Plan (2 hours)
 - SMAC members come prepared
- Page Springs Weir
Set future meeting dates
DFO-WJMA update
Purposes of the Act #6 – Rich

Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by Amy Freitag

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council approved the minutes as amended on December 8, 2006.

Stacy Davies, Chair

Date