

**Joint Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2011- Baker City, OR**

Business Meeting RAC Attendees:

CATEGORY 1		CATEGORY 2		CATEGORY 3	
X	Adriane Borgias		Aaron Killgore		Jeanne Burch
X	Terry Drever-Gee	X	Bill Lang	X	Patrick Dunham
X	Dan Forsea	X	Dave Riley	X	Vacant
	Mike Hayward	X	Tim Unterwegner		Patricia Gainsforth
X	Art Waugh	X	Berta Youtie		Vacant

CATEGORY 1		CATEGORY 2		CATEGORY 3	
X	Mona Drake		Anne Hiller Clark	X	Chad Boyd
X	Dick Leever	X	Mike King	X	Craig Foster
X	Wannie Mackenzie		Vacant	X	Stan Shepardson
X	Kevin Peterman	X	Diane Pinney		Vacant
	Jim Walls	X	Bill Renwick		Vacant

Quorum: YES

RAC Federal Official Attendees:

AGENCY	MANAGER		AGENCY	MANAGER	
BLM Prineville	X	Debbie Henderson-Norton	Ochoco NF		Kate Klein
BLM Vale	X	Don Gonzalez	Umatilla NF		Kevin Martin
Malheur NF	X	Doug Jones	Wallowa-Whitman NF	X	Monica Schwalbach
BLM Burns	X	Kenny McDaniel	BLM Lakeview	X	Carol Benkosky
Fremont-Winema NF		Fred Way			

Presenters: Carolyn Chad, Chris Knauf, Alison Kuehl, Christian Hagen

Visitors: Keith Georgeson (IP), Kathleen Cathay, Riley Bushue, Melissa Yzquierdo, Ted Davis

Designated Federal Official: Debbie Henderson-Norton

RAC Chair: Bill Renwick, Berta Youtie

Notetaker: Pam Robbins

Facilitator: Christina Lilienthal, Mark Wilkening

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Meeting Called to Order

Called to order at 8:05 a.m.

DFO Welcome – Don Gonzalez

Emphasized the contributions the BLM makes to communities and the great value of the RAC process to help the agencies bring the full spectrum of public perspectives to the planning efforts and project activities.

Member Introductions

Agenda Review: Minor changes in timing, content.

WSA-Wilderness Characteristics Inventory – Carolyn Chad

Vale District is updating their wilderness inventory as a result of litigation that began in Lakeview and expanded. Lawsuit at Louse Canyon prompted Vale to move out quickly on a full inventory of wilderness characteristics on the District. FLPMA requires that review, so defining the characteristics was essential. Criteria included are size, naturalness and providing the opportunity for solitude. Size must be 5,000 acres; if smaller, it must be adjacent to already protected wilderness area, able to be managed as wilderness, or is an island. Naturalness means affected *primarily* by the forces of nature; human impact must be *substantially* unnoticeable. Historic structures may be included; the untrained eye would see apparent naturalness of an ecosystem. Another measure is if a site is primitive, has outstanding opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation. That may be affected by size, topography, vegetative screening, and capacity for seclusion (separation for contact with other visitors). Characteristics don't need to be limited by whether it's used, whether it has convenient access or water or high/low risk. Supplemental values include features for notable scenic, ecological, scientific or geologic qualities.

Q: Is there an ongoing opportunity to update the status of these lands?

A: Yes. These were last done about 20 years ago, and if the agencies find qualities have changed, those characteristics get identified. When an action is proposed, the site-specific area would be reviewed as part of that effort.

Q: When the agency looks at a travel route, is there leeway to review a site based on local context to qualify as a route, way, trail, primitive route, etc?

A: The original inventory designated 'ways' and that designation cannot be used any more. The District reviews engineering records, maintenance records, or other activity.

Q: How could the RAC have a productive role in the wilderness considerations in this inventory process?

A: The RAC represents a broad enough spectrum of viewpoints that their input would be helpful to the State Director in decision-making. Having the full discussion within the RAC can give the agency a chance to see what elements may have full consensus in support of these things, and which ones generate broad disagreement. This is helpful in general and especially on a particular site.

COMMENT: The BLM has had to manage these WSAs as if they were wilderness, so they've been unable to actively manage. The invasive species are not treated aggressively, so they're able to spread across the WSA or onto adjoining private lands. Wilderness is a political designation, and the agencies

have to act under that direction on these places until the status changes. Each wilderness or WSA is unique.

Ecosystems exist in space and time. A pristine system will be challenged by the spread of vegetation, life cycle of species at every level, and pressure from other uses. Maybe adjustments to the Wilderness Act could incorporate *time* as a factor for wilderness, to recognize the probability of incursion of weeds or other expected changes over time. Designations might include provisions for limited management action to protect ecosystems.

Q: Is the BLM looking at continuity of wildlife corridors and other factors to provide for wildlife?

A: The boundaries are defined by the Congress; the BLM looks at it only from the wilderness characteristics, and for site planning, they consider those other values.

Q: How is the BLM dealing with the RS2477 routes?

A: If the county makes a claim on that route, the BLM will look at how that gets managed.

COMMENT: The SEORAC was approached about ONDA's request for a convener of a collaborative to look at potential wilderness designation for the Owyhee. While the RAC declined to be a convener, there is interest in how this develops. The process to do something about all this land is percolating with environmental groups and Congress, and the RAC can have a role in the discussion.

BLM's Vegetation EIS:

District status on their step-down plans: Lakeview is through scoping, and the field season has put the scoping on pause until fall; Prineville – ditto; Vale is re-initiating scoping. Input was scant and they would like more; Burns scoping closes in 10 days, and the ID Team will meet on September 12, 2011.

AECOM began managing the project at start of 2011. The contractor is current with the material submitted so far. Analysis is specific to herbicide, and no other control methods. Final plan will be detailed but give flexibility. Winter 2012 is the schedule for preparing the draft EAs; Final EAs are targeted for release for public comment in June/July 2012.

COMMENT: The statement says 'integrated vegetation management strategy' but then limits the agency to not analyzing other methods in detail. It will make a difference in some cases to use these new herbicides, but unless it is done in an integrated way, it is setting the agency up to fail. Unless there is a generalized approach to integrate an ecologically-based overall strategy, the agency may not be effective in dealing with invasives and general ecosystem function. The strong sentiment for this approach has not been woven into the over-arching Bureau plan or in the State level, and the district level is not broad enough. To reach the goal of rangeland health, the battle plan should come first, so the right tools can be employed productively.

COMMENT: The site-specific analysis will make it easier to incorporate all the tools.

COMMENT: The question was raised about whether the EAs will need to be reviewed in detail for each, or if they can be compiled for RAC review in those areas where there are variations. Manager

wonders about having the RAC's review inserted before the NEPA document is prepared, so that input can be included ahead of public review (in case there are big issues). Maybe the overall strategic view is (or should be) embedded into the overall RMP, while the Veg EIS looks specifically to the purpose of adding these herbicides to the toolbox.

ODFW Sage-grouse Plan: Christian Hagen

Plan was needed because of new considerations and the federal changes. Draft plan required some modifications. The sage-grouse has been a species of concern since before 2005, when Oregon released a conservation plan. Biologists agreed that conservation should be addressed at the State level, so all western states began developing their conservation plans. A Draft plan update was released in July 2010, but needed revision to incorporate the sage-grouse biology and voluntary management guidelines that can help implement conservation. ODFW is not regulatory, but advisory. The bird is a sagebrush-obligate, and requires the plant for survival; loss of intact sagebrush for winter range is critical to the birds' survival. Three life stages of this long-lived species: 1) breeding/lekking in traditional locations, 2) brood rearing, 3) winter fattening up on sagebrush across a wide range. They have a lower productivity, but longer lifespan than many range bird species, and show extreme fidelity to the same habitat sites.

Some of the issues biologists are seeing/trying to deal with: West Nile virus, habitat loss from fire, juniper encroachment, new development, habitat fragmentation, and the shift in Federal status. The ESA Threat Factors: Habitat loss & fragmentation, and inadequate regulatory mechanisms. Others are harvest/over-utilization, disease or predation, and other natural/manmade factors. The revised plan updated population data and the lek/brood route info. Climate change elements were included in the habitat section, and the feral horse/burro population effect on invertebrate populations. The guidelines & implementation sections emphasized the use of Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA), broader use of local knowledge, and including Counties in the voting membership of local & state teams. Teams are comprised of those persons with the highest stake in implementing this strategy. BLM manages about 2/3 of the sage-grouse habitat in Oregon.

Core Areas became the focus for implementing the strategy: Criteria were roughly mapped to allow flexibility to include new information. The initial framework was too broad to allow any activity, so they begin to look at how to save the best-of-the-best and mitigate effect on parts of the range where projects could disturb habitat. Maps can be refined as new info emerges, but the criteria was adopted as a State rule. Mitigation policy would apply to any type of human development that would fragment habitat: subdivision development, transmission pipelines/lines, etc. Ninety percent of sage-grouse population resides primarily on 38% of the species' range.

Q: What impact does livestock grazing have on the grouse?

A: There are no study data that clarifies this. If the vegetation is grazed off, the sage-grouse population will be affected, but the data hasn't been gathered that can measure this yet.

Q: Are there examples of projects that have been denied because of the presence of leks or impact?

A: So far, there are no projects that have been denied for the sage-grouse. A couple projects have been approved with mitigation requirements based on expected impacts. The important goal was to identify the limiting factors and address those with funding, etc.

GARY: USFWS has enough info to show that the sage-grouse should be listed, but there are other species at higher priority. This year, FWS entered into a couple settlement agreements to deal with the list of candidate species over the next six years (251 species). Specific species are time-linked, including Greater sage-grouse in FY2015. In the interim for their decision, they will gather new related info that could show things getting better or worse, and that would influence the decision about whether to list/not list. There is great motivation to improve the habitat for sage-grouse so it doesn't get listed. If conservation efforts improve populations, there is greater flexibility to manage the species. Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) are being explored in many areas, so that it can define acceptable treatments. The potential listing covers 11 western states, and the desire is to preclude the need to list the species.

Q: If Oregon succeeds in conserving the species, can there be a partial listing?

A: Not really; that hasn't been successful in the past. If it's listed, it is range-wide, but the different state plans could affect how it's implemented.

COMMENT: The CCAA does not preclude legal challenges; Harney County has seen some issues. This is all a work in progress.

Public Comment Period: No public visitors in attendance.

Recreation RAC Considerations – Chris Knauf

The fee program has been unrelated to the eastside RACs in the past. FLREA created the RACs to advise agencies about fee implementation or changes in fee structure. The existing Rec RAC has not met since February 2010. There are pending fee proposals where all the pre-work is complete but they're pending RAC consideration. The BLM RACs can have the capability to review the fee proposals if their geographic jurisdiction is adjusted.

The RAC approval process provides for public input so that fee structures are keyed to the highest public priorities. Public notification is the beginning stage, and continuous throughout the process. A business plan is developed to compare a recreation site to similar areas or amenities, and how implementation would take place. If a request is approved by the State Director and the WO, they are scheduled for a presentation to the Rec RAC, with public participation & discussion.

The eastern Oregon RACs need to determine how they will take on this role if the charter is adopted to provide for it. Fees will go to recreation enhancement within the resource area, except for 15% for overhead costs.

DISCUSSION on how the RecRAC responsibilities would fit, how the RAC would accomplish the workload, and what Westside responsibilities would come with expanding the RAC jurisdiction.

Sensing of RAC interest in this role: Yes: 5 Undecided: 9 No: 5 Joint RAC consensus is to forward a recommendation that the appointment process obstacles be addressed and remedied.

Blue Mountain Forest Plan Alternatives – Monica Schwalbach

The Blue Mountain Plan team leader will be retiring at the end of September, so could not join us today. The three forests have been working together with a single ID team to compile documentation and interact with the public. A draft EIS has been in RO review and is expected to publish in Jan 2012. Significant issues are access, ecological resiliency, economic & social well-being, grazing and rangeland vegetation, old forest, and wilderness recommendations. There will be five alternatives, with common areas in the action alternatives: desired conditions that emphasize integrated lands management, new aquatic and riparian conservation strategy, and simplified management allocations. Focus is on restoring landscapes, their functions and processes, and creating resilient landscapes that are adaptable to future changes in climate. Emphasis for each alternative varies depending on the desired condition.

Q: Has a new team lead been designated?

A: Not yet.

Q: Has a preferred alternative been selected?

A: Not yet. The Regional Forester selects the preferred.

Q: Is Bruce Countryman still on the team?

A: Yes.

COMMENT: There has been a very active restoration effort around John Day, and it has been a very positive effort. Would like that to continue if at all possible.

Q: Plans have had standards & guides in the past. Is that still the case?

A: PACFISH and INFISH have gone away, but within the alternatives, this plan defaults back to the 1982 Forest Service planning rules, so all of those are in this iteration of these plans.

Q: How does the travel management planning process tie into this plan?

A: The travel rule decisions will be incorporated into the RMPs for each forest. They do not have to move together.

ROUNDTABLE: Explore the potential for gathering the RACs from all the states with shrub-steppe environments to discuss the similar issues and brainstorm possible collaborative actions or solutions on this issue. It may be possible to have the specialists join the Oregon RACs to brief us on the latest science for that biome.

Q: Was there any response to the inquiry letter on ONDA's wilderness proposal?

A: Two letters, one with a flat refusal and one expressing interest and asking who will conduct it.

*****ACTION***** Carolyn to head up the managers for BLM/FS to get together to frame up their vision for integrated pest management relating to invasive plant species.

*****ACTION***** Pam Robbins will research the options for evaluating recreation fee proposals: can the existing PACs do it, or can our RACs limit their role for planning actions if they expand jurisdictional area?

*****ACTION***** The RACs will schedule separate briefings for energy transmission efficiencies, as the presenter could not make it to the September meeting.

End of Meeting Comments:

Appreciated getting the perspectives of the other RAC

Would be useful for the RACs to meet jointly each year as they have many shared issues

DFOs should probably engage the Congressional staff ahead of each meeting to be sure they know the agenda topics and might be up for interactive discussion.

Since the last meeting, the DFO helped convene a roundtable discussion of mineral issues that included agency, legislative, and the mining community. It might be useful to invite groups like that to a RAC meeting to help them understand what we're doing.

Very helpful to get that broad look at the sage-grouse topic, so RAC members have a more holistic view.

If this information could be shared more broadly and people could understand what they can do, it might help to keep the bird from getting listed.

Appreciate the gender diversity of this joint RAC meeting.

Wilderness designation has not been helpful in significant wildlife habitat because of the limits on active management, so it's essential to proceed with caution on any land status change.

Can the RAC help to shape any proposals in a way that allows management actions that can reach desired goals?

Locking up lands can be detrimental to the qualities that people are trying to protect. It removes tools from your toolbox.

What would happen if the RAC took on a WSA to decide the appropriate management strategy for it?

Joint meeting was fun and productive; an annual session could be most useful.

Appreciates the benefit of active discussion today; struggles with the whole issue of why wilderness is needed. Litigation is impeding the managers from actually managing the resource. The BLM has managed lands well enough to have them considered for wilderness while the WSAs have degraded since they were originally designated.

There are enough shared issues and topics that the RACs would benefit from joint meetings every year or in alternate years.

Much of the time in the meetings is spent getting briefed on subjects, but it might be a consideration that the RACs work in a mediator role to navigate through the thorny issues to find a consensus solution.

Suggestion to share the minutes and meeting notes for each RAC with their counterparts, also exchange electronic contact info, etc. to assure better coordination.

As we discuss what the RAC should be doing, it might be better for the agencies to focus clearly on what they would like to see the RAC doing. It is less useful to update the RAC on decisions already made than it would be to request the RAC's help ahead of a decision.

Many times the RAC has been advised of an upcoming effort where they are asked how they'd want to be involved, and the RAC has declined, or the timing of meetings doesn't afford much opportunity for involvement.

Budget black-out period coming, so if possible, submit travel paperwork before RAC adjourns on Thursday.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

***Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2011- Baker City, OR***

Business Meeting RAC Attendees:

CATEGORY 1		CATEGORY 2		CATEGORY 3	
X	Mona Drake		Anne Hiller Clark		Chad Boyd
X	Dick Leever	X	Mike King	X	Craig Foster
	Wannie Mackenzie		Vacant	X	Stan Shepardson
X	Kevin Peterman	X	Diane Pinney		Vacant
	Jim Walls	X	Bill Renwick		Vacant

Quorum: YES *(by telecom)

RAC Federal Official Attendees:

AGENCY		MANAGER		AGENCY		MANAGER	
BLM Burns	X	Kenny McDaniel		BLM Lakeview	X	Carol Benkosky	
BLM Vale	X	Don Gonzalez		Fremont-Winema NF		Fred Way	
Malheur NF	X	Curt Qual (Acting)					

Presenters:

Visitors:

Designated Federal Official: Don-Gonzalez

RAC Chair: Bill Renwick

Notetaker: C/Pam Robbins

Facilitator: Mark Wilkening

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Meeting Called to Order

Called to order at 8:35 a.m.

DFO Welcome – Don Gonzalez

Status of Conditions in the Malheur Resource Area – Pat Ryan

There are 2.1 Million acres in the Malheur Resource Area (MRA). Private land is mainly in the northern area and around Vale. The MRA has 123 grazing allotments and 147 authorizations. Some families have more than one authorization. With the increase in OHV users and closures all over Oregon, there is more pressure in Eastern Oregon. The MRA has 390,000 acres of WSA.

Idaho is still developing their management plan associated with the designation of wilderness. About 95% of the wilderness characteristics inventory for the MRA is completed. Please keep in mind that only congress can designate wilderness, and citizen review is part of the inventory process. The concern is that the criteria for wilderness and the definitions are not meeting the intent of the original bill. This

is directed from the Washington Office and if the RAC is all in agreement, they can write a letter to the Washington Office with your concerns and recommendations.

The internal ID Teams are operating and the District is putting a great deal of time into this. We are looking at everything we can so that when it gets to the area manager's desk he is assured that we have looked at all known issues. It's not the process of the BLM but the concern is with the broad paintbrush of the "no access" groups. Instead of having a conversation about if we found the right wilderness characteristic or not but what we wish to do with this information. The RAC's role is to suggest management options to the decision-makers. We need to focus on this aspect of things for this afternoon.

Please look at the BLM Website. Most of your questions are answered there. We have three Wild and Scenic Rivers in the MRA. The Owyhee River below the dam is heavily used by the public. People from all over come to fish this stretch of the river. We do not have a plan in place for this area at this time. We had started to work on the plan but other priorities arose.

Cultural Inventories on the Vale District – Diane Pritchard

Q: Regarding the Hole in the Ground Ranch what is the long term plan?

A: We need a large survey to help document the construction of the buildings so that we can rebuild if we want/need to. The District would also like to install an interpretive panel.

Q: How does the BLM acquire a ranch?

A: Congress could purchase the ranch and give it to the BLM to take care of. BLM could acquire the ranch through a land exchange. One could also be just given to us.

Q: Wind energy towers...what is the effort when one is purposed?

A: The process is identical for this as for any other project. In this case the adverse effects would be visual, but the process stays the same starting with making contacts and doing an inventory. Regarding Mining sites, the same hoops would apply. If a pit is designated as a community pit then it has already been surveyed. Within the BLM there is a five-acre rule stating that they can mine and disturb five acres without a survey. This is not the case with the Forest Service. There is no five-acre rule.

With NEPA, if the BLM is contributing a majority of the funding then the rule is that analysis has to be done. With cultural resources, any disturbance with funding from the BLM must be inventoried. Regarding the Native American gather sites, the only thing they have asked is that the County not spray the currants along road for some of their gather sites.

Q: When you do a survey what do you do?

A: Get a map of the area, walk the site in about 10-, 20-, or 30-meter increments looking for anything that is out of place (ie, stone tools and historic trash).

Regarding RX burn and potential damage to cultural resources, we would prefer to have some control over the temperatures and effects of the RX burn vs. an uncontrolled wildfire.

Regarding the public and cultural resources you can look, but if you put it in your pocket it is theft of government property. For some things, if you did this, it could be a felony. Artifacts on private land belong to the private landowner and you should have a letter from the landowner allowing removal of items.

For connected actions to a site, it would depend on who is the agency in charge. An example is the power lines, and we are conducting surveys because we are a sponsoring agency.

Manager's Updates

Burns-Kenny McDaniel

Litigation – Burns has three lawsuits ongoing right now. We thought we had an agreement and settlement reached but these were terminated when key points were unable to be reached including payment. We were granted \$250,000 of funding, and if we don't get this work done we are going to lose that funding. Two permittees are not grazing on the correct pastures that would allow the grass to grow so that we can do the RX burning in plans.

There is an amended complaint asking to restore the genetic and ecological damage to the herd. This was just in response to the gather that was just completed. The horses that were returned were returned intact.

The North Steens transmission line will have the North route that will be listed as the preferred alternative. Primary issues remain including mitigation for sage grouse. Wilderness characteristics inventories have been completed for the Steens but we don't have the same pressure that Vale does with the Owyhee area.

COMMENT: The big focus on Burns is the North Steens Transmission Line. The Ruby Pipeline project is an example of a large scale project that would be interested in hearing the story of the Ruby Pipeline and how it got started and what worked and what did not work well. (The trouble with a presentation like this is that you would have to take it with a grain of salt, everyone has a story to tell). How do we gain this historical knowledge then? We could give you the federal and state perspective but that is only a piece of it.

Lakeview – Carol Benkosky

At the Sand dunes, the helipads are fully paved and up and running for helicopter evacuations. At Tucker Hill, there is a mine there that has been going for about six years. During the planning time frame we planned for a larger area, so now that they wish to expand all of the surveys that have already been done. The expansion will not affect any cultural sites. (they have actually been mining here since 1998 but now there is a name change)

Wilderness Characteristic inventories situation is the same type of thing that Vale and Burns are doing.

Lakeview has received a proposal for a 700-mile trail. This would be guided via GPS; no posts in the ground or anything like that. Most of the concerns have come from search and rescue entities and the lack of water availability.

The Lakeview RMP alternatives will be put together and available for comment this fall. This includes the travel management plan. Since the last RMP, we now have a better inventory of caves (over 100) and we need to plan on how they will be managed. At Crump Lake, the planting of willows around the lake has caused sediment to raise the level of the lake about 10 feet. This has caused problems for local landowners on both sides of the lake.

Malheur NF – Doug Jones

The Forest received a notice of intent to sue regarding grazing exclusion. These were excluded due to critical bull trout habitat.

Roundtable

Craig Foster – Pass

Dick Leever – This is my last meeting; enjoyed the time, learned a lot

Bill Renwick– Nothing more

Kevin Peterman – Enjoyed the meeting; looking forward to the field visit. Glad to meet with the John Day-Snake RAC.

Mona Drake – Their club promoted a poster program for Lakeview to prevent vandalism. Tore down a snow shelter @ Mt. Bachelor and are building a new one. Harney Co Hi-Desert 4-Wheelers are helping maintain the Riddle Ranch Road.

Diane Pinney – Same stuff with Wild Horse & Burro: there was a recent lawsuit in Nevada because of the treatment of horses by choppers; the judge issued a temporary restraining order for helicopter use. A Sun Jay pilot has insufficient experience in horse gathers, so the court cautioned that there will be greater scrutiny.

*****ACTION ITEM ***** Pam will send the web links to BLM's social media and for the GIS database.

*****ACTION ITEM ***** Pam to send copy of JDS horse letter to Diane Pinney

Joint Session Topics

Wilderness Characteristics:

Initial discussion made it sound like there was no support for wilderness, but that perspective is not accurate. The *Greenfire* movie added great insights to the JDS RAC discussion. The 1964 Wilderness Act was primarily focused on roads, to keep humans and their technology out of the wild places. We've expanded the frame since then.

So What? The managers want to know if the RACs can help evaluate specific areas that have been found to have wilderness characteristics, and advise about whether they should recommend to the State Director about the best strategy for future management – whether they should be managed to preserve those resource values or not. Or if the RACs can develop a consensus

prioritized list of the essential factors that determine whether an inventory site should have those characteristics protected or not.

Potential threats to Shrub-steppe habitat over time from fire, juniper encroachment, annual invasives, etc. are not necessarily included in an assessment of wilderness characteristics. Ecological integrity in desert ecosystems may not be managed to their best outcomes if management actions are curtailed by a wilderness designation. If the toolbox includes the needed tools to address these threats and maintain the ability to respond over time, the designation won't matter.

The current inventory for wilderness characteristics is seen by the OHV community as fatally flawed; the very clear sideboards are not as clear as the 1964 Act set forth, and agency managers would be well-served to return to the criteria of the original Wilderness Act. Field managers must now view the inventory data with much broader criteria, and OHV stakeholders fear that those places will be locked up as de facto wilderness because active management would be prohibited.

If so many areas are designated with wilderness characteristics, the RAC would need to evaluate what the unique qualities would be, how rare is that quality in the given area, and what options are available to manage the resource. Public expectations that BLM is a productive land manager would not be met by the agency being a wilderness guardian.

The John Day-Snake RAC would be looking at areas in the Baker RA, and could probably go through the eight of those. The desert ecosystems would have to allow for active management.

Management would be a key question: how has it been handled in the past, what options would managers have to address current & future threats, and what are the public needs that those areas would most likely need to meet.

ONDA has a developed a paper on what would and would not be tolerable in terms of human activity. A designation would not necessarily preclude all activity, depending on how it's written. The BLM has full capability to manage for multiple uses of the landscape.

If the RACs will be formulating criteria, it is important to do whatever we can to conserve un-fragmented open space. The huge landscape we're in is not infinite, and we need to preserve a maximum amount of open space with the ability to intervene when/where necessary to assure overall health.

Can the RAC help develop an avenue that focuses on the desired outcomes for any given landscape? Congress can establish a wilderness area to accomplish clear goals for a place: retain present character; preserve a given species, feature, scientific opportunity, or other value.

A decision matrix would be helpful for weighing one outcome against a given threat or trade-off – if this, then this...

On private land, a conservation easement can be acquired to protect a given value or accomplish a set goal. Maybe the agencies could re-define a place.

In the 40 years since WSAs were designated, the acres set aside with that designation have been degraded, with great lost value. Agencies are considering more sites for hands-off management, when they are not funded and allowed to manage what is already out there.

Wilderness areas of less than 5000 acres are very difficult to manage, with fire, weeds and other factors. It poses a hardship globally as we lock up our productive capacity and extract from other places across the world. The balance of good stewardship is a challenge, and you can't fight Mother Nature.

Not in favor of more wilderness areas, based on what has happened to current sites. Would be most helpful to consider wilderness characteristics as a layer among all the values in a given site, where the site is managed to the most important values. Using current tools, it would seem more appropriate to protect these lands by managing them, not locking them up.

The RACs could discuss this with the array of viewpoints, and provide informed feedback; it would be useful to have them involved.

Call for JDS:

Do you want to evaluate the eight parcels for consideration? Yes; they will work through the Baker RMP sub-committee and get the info they need to know to make recommendations.

Call for SEOR:

Would you want to look at the units with special concerns?

Develop criteria to sort by? **Yes,**

Give to the BLM to use in their review?

The RAC will review the ones that met the criteria? **Yes**

Have BLM put the WCI ideas into their plan alternatives; RAC comments on EIS?

Focus on all WCI areas within ONDA's preference?

Do you want to focus on the areas adjacent to WSAs & WSRs?

Look at what the Malheur County proposal has and go with that?

Recreation RAC role:

The RACs do not want to adjust their boundaries to accommodate the duties of recreation fee proposals, because of other potential considerations. They choose to ask assistance in getting the FS Rec RAC appointments completed.

*****ACTION***** Pam will forward background material on the RecRAC situation to Craig Foster so he can revise the RAC's letter and forward to RAC members before sending to Forest Supervisors.

Recreation RAC role:

When the Veg EIS process began, the SEOR submitted a comment about using the chemicals as a part of an integrated pest management strategy. They have also submitted for the statewide step-down version. The NEPA document will look at just the chemicals portion, to limit areas of litigation. However, you don't need a NEPA document to develop a strategy to develop a strategy that implements IPM from the highest view as well as at the site-specific basis. BLM managers will meet with Chad Boyd's scientists to explore concepts to address that issue, and welcomes RAC members who are interested in this topic to convene with them and continue to work with the weed leads. This could expand to include fire rehab, technology transfer, and leveraging partner efforts.

*****ACTION***** Carol will talk with the DMs on their Thursday call, and give RAC members a timeline for convening interested members.

Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.



Bill Renwick
RAC Chair



Kenny McDaniel
Designated Federal Official