

STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
September 3-4, 2009
Frenchglen, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pam Hardy, Chair, Dispersed Recreation, Bend, OR
Michael Beagle, Vice Chair, Fish & Recreation Fishing, Eagle Point, OR
Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, OR
William Renwick, Environmental Representative, Burns, OR
David Bilyeu, Environmental Representative Statewide, Bend, OR
Fred Otley, Private Landowner, Diamond, OR
Stacy Davies, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, OR
Richard Jenkins, Recreational Permit Holder, Diamond, OR
Richard Angstrom, No Financial Interest, Salem, OR
Paul Bradley, Wild horse Management, Hines, OR

MEMBERS ABSENT

Brenda Sam, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, OR
Daniel Haak, Mechanized Consumption Recreation, Burns, OR
Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, OR

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL (DFO)

Kenny McDaniel, District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Hines, OR

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL ASSISTANTS

Christi Courtemanche, SMAC Coordinator, BLM, Hines, OR
Sheryl Drushella, Records Management Assistant, BLM, Hines, OR

FACILTATOR

Terry Morton, Klamath Falls, OR

PRESENTERS

Joan Suther, BLM, Hines, OR
Eric Haakenson, BLM, Hines, OR
Michelle Franulovich, BLM, Hines, OR

COMMENTING PUBLIC

John O'Connor
Susan Hammond

OTHERS PRESENT

None

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

Facilitator Terry Morton opened the meeting. Self introductions were made, housekeeping items were covered and the agenda was reviewed.

FIELD TRIP TO THE STEENS

BURNT CAR ROAD

Kenny McDaniel gave update –

Due to an upcoming horse gather and juniper cutting project, the BLM felt it was necessary to improve/maintain Burnt Car Road, Lauserica Road, Tombstone Canyon and the Tombstone-Burnt Car connector Road. The improvement spans approximately 28.3 miles. (Lauserica Road 14.2 miles, Burnt Car 7.48 miles, Tombstone Canyon 4.66 miles, and Tombstone-Burnt Car 2.04 connector Road 2.04 miles). The BLM did intrude approximately 542 feet into Steens Mountain Wilderness. Additionally, BLM widened the road prism from its original size of 15 ft to 30 ft, and re-routed portions of Burnt Car Road due to resource concerns (wet areas). Again, BLM felt this was necessary to provide access for equipment for the upcoming scheduled projects. This was a cooperative effort with Roaring Springs Ranch. Staff understood this project to be level 2 road maintenance. It has been determined BLM should have completed a survey and NEPA. Kenny felt mistakes were made due to inexperienced staff and if we had an opportunity to discuss it as a team, the road would have looked differently. Due to the condition of a portion of the road, BLM felt it was necessary to close a section of the road from public use. It can be accessed for administrative use only.

In late May early June ONDA filed a lawsuit. The solicitor, State Director, and ONDA are working on an interim settlement agreement. Kenny submitted a request to the State Director to form a fact finding committee for an external review of the project and the actions of resource staff and road maintenance crew. A copy of the report was provided to all council members. The report will tell you the Burns District did not follow the process within our own district.

As a result, Joan Suther was asked to provide an action plan to the State Director by September 15, 2009. The action plan will reinforce the policies the BLM has in place to ensure everyone has an understanding of the activities that are allowed in Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Joan requested comments and/or concerns from council members. Ramifications of the report will be to put together in an EA to address rehabilitating portions of the roads (e.g. the portion in the wilderness area).

Break

East Rim

- Dick Jenkins expressed safety concerns at the overlook due to rough terrain and extremely windy conditions.
- Members would like a wheelchair access trail from the parking lot to the overlook. Todd Curtis, District Engineer, was present and provided recommendations to the members. It was concluded, due to guidelines to construct an ADA accessible trail, the committee felt a more natural looking trail to accommodate wheelchairs would work.
- Large rocks/boulders should be placed as a natural barrier at the edge of the overlook to prevent someone from falling.

Echanis Wind Farm EIS Project Area can be seen over on the plateau located to the west of the East Rim overlook.

KIGER OVERLOOK

- ❖ Todd Curtis recommended an alternate trail from the top of the east side of the parking lot to the interpretive sign. It would be a gradual 3-4% slope with no cutbacks at the top of the ridge. It would be a straight and easy to maintain trail with adequate drainage. There will be a 4-5 ft wide trail with a 10' diameter radius turn around at the interpretive sign. The existing trail would still be available for use. However, once the new trail is constructed the vast majority of users should gravitate to the most convenient way to the sign. If we do the analysis within the CRP (Comprehensive Recreation Plan), this should not lengthen the document.
- ❖ Eric Haakenson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, provided additional information regarding the trail. He spoke with staff from Arthur Carhart Wilderness Center in Montana. Their recommendations state: we are not a national park; this is a wilderness area and we must leave the impression that man has not entered the area; if we construct a wheelchair accessible trail, we should not construct it to ADA requirements. We need to maneuver the dirt and rock around to make sure it is as natural looking as possible. Another suggestion is a stained concrete walkway with exposed aggregate with texture and boulders worked in. Todd was asked to provide additional input to the committee for future discussion.
- ❖ The parking lot is another area of concern. It is congested and anytime you get a motor home or large SUV in the area, they can have a difficult time turning around. Tourists have suggested a parking area located south of the road. There is a bowl-like area that could easily be turned into a parking area.

Lunch

Jackman Park

Michelle Franulovich, Recreation Planner, is currently working on a Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP). She welcomed any ideas or suggestions from the committee members. The purpose of this plan is to identify and develop the needs for:

- ✓ Campgrounds
 - Are we going to add additional sites?
 - Are we going to make group sites?
 - Are we going to identify specific sites as tent only sites?
 - Are we going to make a loop through the campground?
 - Are we going to leave it as is?
- ✓ Trails
- ✓ Winter Recreation

On average, campsites are at 80% capacity. Sites tend to be completely full during holidays, Steens Rim Run, and rifle hunting season. Michelle audits the visitation log monthly to determine date and time when visitors are arriving. The audit reports calculate the total number of campsites that are being used. Unfortunately, it does not break it down by the individual campground itself. There have been several requests to have a group site at each campground. It was suggested putting a sign indicating an overflow site and group camping are available at Pate Lake. There will be further discussions as to how the public would reserve a campsite.

There was a discussion regarding ONDA. The committee would like to invite ONDA to the table to discuss issues. The majority of the members felt with ONDA at the table this would alleviate potential legal issues. The committee also felt if an ONDA representative were to become a council member, he/she would need to work as an active, collaborative participant within the group.

Continued discussion on Friday

DAN JORDAN – COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

- The BLM and Dan Jordan have a cooperative agreement to allow access for public use of his property
- It's a great overflow area which accommodates large travel trailers. The site is around 40 acres, which includes Pate Lake
- Dan has requested assistance in helping manage and improve the area to include: Picnic tables, portable potties (temporary structure), fire rings, and trash receptacles
- It was suggested the sign located on the road be turned and modified to indicate this location as an overflow (public/private) campground and visitors are welcome
- Boulder placement may be necessary to restrict visitors from certain areas
- Dan would like to keep OHVs off the property

- Due to using federal dollars, anything installed on a permanent basis will require appropriate NEPA analysis

WJMA

New signs were placed temporarily about a week ago. Unfortunately, the signs have already been vandalized. The committee members brought up several suggestions to minimize some of the vandalism. To better inform the public signs need to be more specific with the most critical information in the first sentence.

- ✓ Display before and after photos
- ✓ Add scientific, ecological, biological, and wildlife message on each board
- ✓ Explore simplified message - Wildlife/Aspen, Sagebrush, and Watershed
- ✓ Relocate the signs back behind the fence or on the nature trail
- ✓ Install a comment and question book at every site (this may defer some of the public from writing on the signs)
- ✓ Secure a message box at each site
- ✓ Elevate the signs
- ✓ Place plexi glass over the sign for protection
- ✓ Install motion cameras in the trees
- ✓ All signs need to be placed together.
- ✓ It was felt if they were together it would put everything into context. Replace the signs with brochures at the other locations.

Brochures are expected to arrive sometime in mid September. The new interpretive trail will follow the road up to the ridge. There is a great view. The trail loops around and is just under a mile. It was recommended WJMA signs be displayed along the trail.

Dinner will be at 6:30 at the Frenchglen Hotel
Meeting Adjourned at 5:00pm

FRIDAY, SEPT 4, 2009

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND AGENDA:

Facilitator Terry Morton opened the meeting. Housekeeping items were covered and the agenda was reviewed.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pam Hardy, Chair, Dispersed Recreation, Bend, OR
Michael Beagle, Vice Chair, Fish & Recreation Fishing, Eagle Point, OR

Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, OR
Daniel Haak, Mechanized Consumptive Recreation, Burns, OR
William Renwick, Environmental Representative, Burns, OR
David Bilyeu, Environmental Representative Statewide, Bend, OR
Fred Otley, Private Landowner, Diamond, OR
Stacy Davies, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, OR
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Sheryl Drushella, Records Management Assistant, BLM, Hines, Or

FACILITATOR

Terry Morton, Klamath Falls, OR

PRESENTERS

Joan Suther, BLM, Hines, OR
Matt Obradovich, BLM, Hines, OR
Eric Haakenson, BLM, Hines, OR
Michelle Franulovich, BLM, Hines, OR

COMMENTING PUBLIC

Susan Hammon, Diamond, OR
Julie Weikel, ONDA, Frenchglen, OR

OTHERS PRESENT

Tara Martinak, BLM, Hines, OR	Jeff Davies, Frenchglen, OR
Rhonda Karges, BLM, Hines, OR	Win Goodbody, Portland, OR
Michelle Franoulivich, BLM, Burns, OR	Micheline Hooker, Burns, OR
Chad Karges, Wildlife Refuge, Burns, OR	Dan Jordan, Burns, OR
Elaine Davies, Frenchglen, OR	Brent Fenty, ONDA, Bend, OR
Scott Davies, Frenchglen, OR	

CHAIRPERSON UPDATE

We have 4 members in which their terms expire October 2009 - Mike Beagle, David Bilyeu, Fred Otley, and Hoyt Wilson. Mike Beagle announced he will not be renewing his position. Additionally, there has been a lack of interest from tribal member, Brenda Sam. The next SMAC meeting is scheduled for October 21 and 22 in Bend, OR. The committee will not have a quorum; however, Kenny felt the upcoming meeting was too important to cancel and encouraged members, whose terms are expiring, to attend. The BLM is unable to reimburse these members at the per diem since technically they're not official members. Kenny assured them they will be signed up as volunteers and can be reimbursed at the subsistence rate. The department will not allow a temporary extension of appointments and according to Stacy Davis; the selection process can take several months.

The committee proposed that due to the urgency of the vacant positions, a letter should be sent to Ed Shepard at the State office requesting the Administration to expedite appointments for the 2009 members. Furthermore, Kenny will be contacting the DC office to expedite this process. With the amount of time it takes for the selection process, members proposed beginning the process of renewing the 2010 committee members now. There was discussion regarding Steve Purchase's position and if he has or will be resigning.

Pam Hardy suggested sending a letter to our Congressional Representative regarding Bill HR1014 (bill has already passed in the House) aiming for the Senate side. This bill would be an amendment to the Wild Horse Bill. The SMAC is proposing the Senate to veto this bill. Essentially, the biggest problems are: allowing the expansion of existing HMAs; reducing management options that federal agencies have; and in some cases it would even require them to turn back wild horses previously gathered. This would be detrimental to other resources and would overpopulate the area.

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL UPDATE – Stroemple Exchange, WHB Legislation, CMA Energy/Resource group.

Kenny provided the following updates:

- Mr. Stroemple has been negotiating with Prineville District on parcels of land that he wants to acquire. Prineville District provided maps to Mr. Stroemple which identified the proposed properties. Kenny has not seen the parcels. The question came up as to if it was legal to transfer property from one county's tax roll to another. Yes, since it is only BLM land. At the beginning of negotiations it was believed Forest Service land was included in the exchange.
- WHB Legislation – Kenny thanked the committee for proposing to submit a letter to our Congressional Representative. As the agency in charge of managing the program, Kenny has concerns regarding the proposal. It would be helpful if the SMAC would provide a list of recommendations to the agency. Due to time constraints, Kenny suggested further discussion on the topic at the December meeting.

- A few suggestions from the committee:
 - Disposition of excess animals
 - Time limits in holding pens
 - Placement of horses back on the range, if they're healthy
 - Confirmation characteristics
 - Birth control
- CMA Energy/Resource Group

Kenny is the Management Representative for the Eastern Oregon region. The team is looking at resource values for sagebrush, sage-grouse habitat, pygmy rabbits, and mule deer data. He is working with the state to develop a map indicating areas of wind potential in addition to lower conflict areas. The BLM team is partnered with Tom Rassmussen, Field Manager in Lakeview District, and George Buckner, State Office Wildlife Biologist. George is working with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Biologist. They are compiling data throughout eastern Oregon, Wyoming, and Montana. Additional information will be presented at the October meeting.

*Continued discussion on Burnt Car Road:
Concerns/Recommendations:*

Paul Bradley – First Impression was the job was well done. He felt there needs to be regular maintenance to the roads. Only concern for the future is utilizing best management practices and following up with seeding.

Hoyt Wilson – The crew went in and completely renovated the road which was excessive. Rather than go in and just blade, they should have taken the dump truck to fill in the tracks.

Stacey Davies – The BLM has always maintained their roads. Doesn't understand why such a big deal is being made over maintenance of this road. It's consistent with the plans and prior history as to how the BLM maintains their roads. BLM staff and operators are confused. Stacy has spent 10 years inviting "the enemy" to his camp to work through a collaborative effort to come up with the best solution for the environment and long-term sustainability for use of the mountain. For the last 10 years every decision made has ended up in litigation. This particular action, in his opinion, is a much bigger problem. This is bringing a change onto the mountain based on the litigant's actions. Collaborative actions are being held hostage due to the amount of litigation. Landowners, permittees, and locals are being backed into a corner financially and socially. Stacy looked at the settlement: Why was South Steens EA put on hold until the current settlement is resolved? Why was the Burnt Car Spring brought into this settlement? Why is \$10,000 paid for litigation? Why is it that ONDA has elite access to that area when the rest of the public was shut out, including private landowners?

Dick Jenkins – Felt it was within the existing boundaries and was necessary in helping to manage the wild horse herd. It is extremely costly when going into these remote areas when gathering wild horses. Furthermore, it is hard on horses when you have to load horses into small trailers, move them out, and transfer them to larger trailers. The less handling you can do to the horse, the more humane it is. It's a large horse allotment and you need access to this

location. Dick would like BLM to address the reasons for having to re-route a couple of locations.

David Bilyeu – There is a disconnect between the level of work done and reasons for doing the work. There is no proof this level of work was justified for the reasons presented. There was no clear understanding as to what defined levels of maintenance. At best, it's a deep confusion. At worst, it was an overdeveloped project without authorization (public review).

Fred Otley – Concerned that annual watershed-friendly maintenance is not being done to most of the roads. If you regularly maintain them, you will not need to do the aggressive maintenance that was required on this road. Burnt Car Road has been brought back to its original standard. There is a responsibility under FLPMA for the BLM to prevent watershed degradation associated with development and conditions on public lands. Another issue, it's illegal for the BLM to ignore thick juniper encroachments associated with watershed degradation. According to history you will have massive soil losses whenever there is a large amount of rainfall. Fred recommends placement of a harder rock foundation to prevent ruts which will maintain the purpose and function of the road.

Richard Angstrom – The road was almost naturalized to the point it was unusable. There was a potential for the environmental interest to claim it as a WSA. Anytime you go into touch a road, it's going to be disturbed and you're going to see bare dirt. The practice is you have to make it less intrusive and make it blend back into its natural state as readily as possible. Did it have to be that intrusive? Richard thought it could have been a little more thoughtful with dispersing the windrows. On the positive side, the maintenance crew did push things back to where it was a little more watershed friendly by avoiding puddling on the road itself. There has to be an expectation that when you do road building/road maintenance that when you touch a blade to the road, you are removing vegetation. He has significant concerns as to how the BLM is handling the problem and how they are going to resolve it.

Daniel Haak – Upon first visiting the road his first impression was it was a bit excessive. BLM has placed themselves into a defensive position. There is now a trust and mitigation (visual impact) issue. He thinks at some level everyone is overacting. Seems as though everyone involved has different expectations and understandings as to what a level 2 road is and this may be a learning curve.

William Renwick – Concerned about not being told regarding the issues surrounding the road. A friend from Prineville called and asked Bill if he had an opportunity to inspect the project. Bill was surprised he had not been informed of the situation earlier. Furthermore, Bill was surprised about the amount of traffic now on the road. The level of maintenance has definitely increased accessibility, which is a major concern. There is high valued wildlife resources he fears are going to be severely degrading.

Mike Beagle – Initially it was an eye opener. Need to repair the wilderness boundary issue before winter. Mike suggested looking at a possible gate closure to only allow access for mountain bikes, hikers or equestrian use only. Mike is also concerned about the potential for fishing pressure in a pristine location. This also makes it easier for ATV intrusions, which will now require policing. With that said, after a year of rain, snow, freezing, thawing, and seeding the road will look much different than the previous day.

Pam Hardy – The biggest concern is it changes the dynamic of the trust relationship. This project went beyond the scope necessary for maintenance. There was confusion about the definition of what a level 2 road is. Pam read the definition, if assuming the project was legal, what this indicates is that a level 2 road is just above a road closure. Pam admits the definition of levels of maintenance 1 through 5 is unclear (specific statements). After being on this advisory council for years, we should have a clear and concise understanding. We are building history and relationships to operate at a much higher level. We need to have enough trust in each other and to be able to operate on a handshake level.

Summary (Burnt Car): The group was fairly divided as to whether the project was well done to grossly overdone. The process was upsetting and the lack of trust that was at risk, not only from the perspective of the Burnt Car issues, but how do we go forward. The core of the frustrations for many members comes from the South Steens EA. Members have invested a year and a half of time and energy on trying to find ways to hold wilderness values as well as supporting/sustaining a business and came up with a conclusion everyone felt was balanced. The South Steens EA is now threatened and put on the back burner which raises trust issues with the SMAC, BLM and ONDA. The SMAC felt distrust with the BLM and ONDA without being included in the decision to place the South Steens EA on hold.

All members, with the exceptions of Fred Otley and Paul Bradley, were in agreement to have Brent Fenty, ONDA, sit at the table for continued discussions regarding Burnt Car Road. Brent Fenty agreed to participate at the table with the committee members and the conversation was open to the audience. Fred Otley relented and agreed to an open discussion.

Brent - It is important to recognize ONDA's position and understand what they stand for. They focus exclusively on Oregon's high desert. Their mission is to protect, defend and restore Oregon's high desert. The Steens Mountain has long been a focal point of interest. ONDA has worked very hard with a collaborative effort to create the wilderness area, Steens Mountain protection area, and the geothermal withdrawal area and make them a reality. A lack of presence at the table is not due to lack of interest. ONDA has applied for several positions on the SMAC and has been denied a seat at the table every time. It is frustrating from ONDA's perspective to not be able to reflect their position or inaccuracies. ONDA has been largely ignored. The Travel Management Plan could not be supported by ONDA. The law was broken in many ways. The most obvious was construction into the wilderness area and the wild and scenic river corridor. ONDA's concern now is to rehabilitate the area that has been developed and return it to the character prior to construction.

South Steens EA - Concerns about the development that was going to take place and associated road development/maintenance that was necessary; these two developments are tied together. The BLM does have an obligation under FLPMA to update its wilderness inventory. BLM was required to set aside Wilderness Study Areas. Unfortunately, Oregon's Congressional Delegation has yet to make a determination on the WSAs. ONDA will be represented at the next meeting in Bend. Additionally, ONDA is willing to be an active participant in order to work through management issues such as South Steens and North Steens.

Stacy - Burnt Car Road is a designated road with a maintenance category. Kiger Viewing Road is maintained every year through a similar process. Roaring Springs has bladed Kiger Viewing road the last 3 of 5 years due to BLM not having the funding. He is concerned there is confusion from all parties as to the definition of road maintenance. There is a need for water in the South Steens Allotment. We need to facilitate a plan so we're able to access the roads to get the equipment in as necessary. The RMP, North Steens, travel plan, are all under settlement discussions and if these are not resolved, they will move to court. We were not a party to the settlement agreement. There are a number of items in the agreement adversely affecting us. If we are included as a participant in the ongoing and future settlement agreements, he is willing to participate. However, if the current path is to shut us out, we will not have a choice as our legal rights are being infringed upon. The settlement agreement (Joint Stipulation) was then read by Stacy.

Paul Bradley – Welcomed Brent to the table and appreciated his participation in the discussion. Furthermore, Paul reminded members they are an advisory board. They are to make recommendations and give advice to the BLM. It is then up to the BLM to decide how or whether to carry out their recommendations.

Kenny –

- BLM employees work incredibly hard, they are professionals and take their jobs seriously. Everyone is working hard to gain the trust that was lost.
- Dislikes settlements; it takes away from due process where members of the public are not involved in the settlement agreement.
- The BLM recognizes there were unintentional illegal acts. With the litigation cost and the time involved, they felt it was necessary to enter into a settlement agreement.
- A decision will be forthcoming on South Steens hopefully October, possibly December.
- The BLM is hoping to delay litigation on the TMP until after they have had an opportunity to review the CRP.

Richard Angstrom - When a decision or resolution needs to be made, the BLM must notify the SMAC to give them an opportunity to respond. The SMAC's position is to help manage and preserve the mountain. Joan Suther expressed when the South Steens decision was rescinded; she forwarded rationale for rescinding the decision to Pam. It was then up to Pam to forward it to all committee members. There was no response from the members.

Bill Renwick – We should look at litigation as a punitive process. The Steens Act is vague. There is a lot of wiggle room and should be more defined (e.g. What is the definition of a level 2 road?)

Hoyt Wilson – Part of the road is for public access. Administrative access does not include permittee access, so in reality, the road is closed.

Dick Jenkins – What do groups like ONDA call nature? ONDA is trying to take management out of the piece of property. We altered it back then and the only way we can maintain it is to manage the land.

Daniel Haak - Where did the settlement agreement come from?

Kenny - It's a temporary 60-day settlement in order to avoid ONDA continuing on with their lawsuit. It gives us time to go into a more detailed settlement.

Lunch

Public Comment

Julie Weikel –

- Representing herself as a board member of ONDA and believes in the concept of SMAC.
- The public relies on ONDA to enforce the law so that they don't have to.
- The definition of a WSA is not clearly defined. It's unfortunate to the public that Congress has decided to leave these WSAs in limbo.
- Became a member of ONDA due to frustrations of public grazing and the way it's managed.
- Burnt Car looks bad and I could not defend it to the members of ONDA.

Susan Hammond –

- Disagrees with ONDA's comment that they have been largely ignored. ONDA was a participant in the legislation along with several other environmental organizations and ranchers.
- The makeup of the SMAC committee was specific to keep one element from overruling the other. There were at least 3, not including the tribal seats, which were environmental state representatives and environmental local representatives. Several seats were held by ONDA.
- There are 2 water establishments (Ghost Springs and Cold Springs) destroyed by the BLM and environmental groups.

North Steens Transmission Line EIS

Joan Suther – The public scoping period officially ended August 26th. However, an additional meeting has been scheduled for September 18th, at 10:00am to Noon at Burns District BLM office. We have received over 100 comments. The BLM felt it was necessary to have an additional meeting because the first meetings were held before the Notice of Intent was published in the *Federal Register*. There have been conversations regarding an alternate route that does not cross the refuge. It starts off in the same direction then heads north towards Crane and then ties into one of the major transmission lines just outside Crane.

Matt Obradovich – The consultant for Columbia Energy is working on fall migration inventories along the transmission line. If the other line is considered, there may be additional work. The date originally set for the EIS to be completed; may be extended by an additional 6 months. The BLM has been in constant contact with Columbia Energy Partners. At the upcoming meeting there may be a new time line for the EIS. There has been a great deal of public interest in Diamond, Burns, Bend, and Frenchglen. Several cooperating agencies have signed on to become part of the process of developing the EIS including Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney County, and Burns Paiute Tribe. The Wildlife Refuge has concerns with the Proposed Route.

The second route crosses more private land. For a single development (Echanis) the proposed line would need to upgrade the existing lines. If there were multiple lines, Harney Electric would need to upgrade their line. According to Matt tying into the 115 kv line from Crane to Burns, which is developed, Echanis would need to go to the substation north of Crane and shoot across.

Bill Renwick - There has been discussion about tying into the PP&L line just to the North. It's 500 kv and that's what PP&L is using to transmit the power from their plant in Montana to Southwest Oregon and Northern California. As far as capacity of carrying power from Echanis or any another project, that is the most logical way to go. Another limiting factor is technically Harney Electric would not be able to accommodate due to such a huge investment. The proposal will be in the EIS. Maps should be finalized by October 18.

Joan Suther - American Recovery Reinvest Act (ARRA) includes 3 projects that have been selected for our area, 2 of which are located within the CMPA: 5 Creeks ecosystem restoration project associated with juniper cutting and burning and major maintenance on Steens Mountain Loop Road which includes developing 2 gravel pits. One of the pits is located about a mile into Lauserica Rd. The other site is located in the WJMA on the north side of the road. These sites were specifically exempted from the mineral withdrawal which was identified several years ago. There is a potential to remove rock from Butler Hill. Due to the location, it is not a preferred site. The first phase of the Steens Mountain project is to develop the gravel pits and crush rock. Once additional funding is available, the BLM will add rock to the road and improve the Rooster Comb area.

Five Creeks update – There are 4,813 acres within the ARRA project cutting area. Prior year's cuttings have allowed some of the fuels to dry out and burn. There is a large prescribed burn scheduled for this fall. It's approximately 12,000 acres and we should begin mid- September.

Field Manager's Report – Status of appeals (RMP, TMP, North Steens, South Steens EA); Home Creek.

- The RMP is moving to 9th Circuit Court.
- The TMP and North Steens are still in settlement discussions.
- South Steens is now placed on the back burner.
- Home Creek access is being actively worked on. Stacy confirmed he has the maps and has agreed upon trades. There has been significant progress. There will be additional discussions at the December meeting.

- There was a major case regarding categorical exclusions in Idaho. The case was settled. As a result, our permit renewals at issue were withdrawn and vacated and we will go back and complete the EA process. Washington office gave direction to the field that use the permit renewal categorical exclusion and 2 other fuels reduction and vegetative management are completely removed from authority. BLM asked the Administrative Law Judge to vacate and send them back to our district. We have a couple of options, write EAs for the current renewals or use Congressional language from the annual appropriations bill.

Mule Deer Initiative – Stacy provided update

- The Steens Mountain Hunt Unit was declared a Cougar Management Unit. The goal is 50 per year for the next 5 years.
- An additional state game officer was hired. He will patrol several other counties in addition to Harney County.
- Oregon Hunter’s Association will be looking for funding to target their coyote control units.
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will be looking closely at habitat management agreements with private landowners in the Steens Mountain hunting units on mule deer projects.

Matt Obradovich

- There is a proposal to limit the amount of bow hunters in the Steens area by going to a draw system.
- The population numbers back in the 80’s were estimated to be around 11,000.
- Mule deer are at 25% - 35% of management objective level in the Steens Unit.

There was additional discussion regarding the committee members whose terms are set to expire in October. Pam and Terry drafted a letter to Ed Shepard and it was read to the committee.

Motion Made: Stacy made the motion for Pam to finalize, sign, and send the letter out as soon as possible to Ed Shepard.

Richard Angstrom seconded the motion.

SMAC members approved the letter

Action Items:

- ✓ Assessment for recreation uses, needs, etc., in the Steens area for the CRP: Ongoing

- ✓ Provide update on Steens-High Desert Country Map at future meetings until completion: ongoing
- ✓ Provide information on how/whether or not Special Recreation Permit holders fit in the CRP: Ongoing
- ✓ Put CRP discussion on the November 2009 agenda: Ongoing
- ✓ Consider Home Creek Access issue and whether or not to include it on future agendas: Ongoing and making good progress
- ✓ Provide update on Oregon Explorer Website at February meeting
- ✓ Draft a proposal for SMAC to consider/discuss at the February 2010 meeting regarding WHB program issues: Pam sent a letter to Wyden and Merkley's office. Paul will draft a letter to Walden's office for the meeting in December. Furthermore, Paul will gather information as to where we go from here.
- ✓ Howard DeLano dedication – Michelle informed the committee the family will be coming out on October 16 and would like to have the ceremony during that time. BLM is planning on installing the plaque before the dedication. The SMAC had discussed placing it in the Rooster Comb area or somewhere near the top. Michelle's recommendation:
 1. Where the first loop road sign is.
 2. On the sign near Page Springs (replace the map with the plaque)
 3. There is some nice rock near the top that it could be placed upon.
- ✓ Provide SMAC with data showing numbers of unauthorized grazing use and location by year within CMPA: Ongoing
- ✓ Is there a letter going out to the WHB advisory board this month? Pam will have a conversation with Mike about this.
- ✓ Letter to Wyden and Walden regarding the interpretation of excerpt in the Steens Act for the WHB position: Progress has been made. Joan asked about both letters: There will be two letters sent: one from the BLM and one from the SMAC. Pam and Mike will be composing a letter to the Senate. Wait a couple of weeks so there will be less confusion and keep the issues separate.
- ✓ Fred Otley requested the text for the WJMA as an action item.
- ✓ Recommendations for the rehabilitation of the Burnt Car project e-mailed ASAP.
- ✓ Gary Miller land exchange - Court case was settled in BLM's favor and the documents are at the state office awaiting finalization. Kenny added the project has been completed and was taken off the action item list.
- ✓ Christi will e-mail members the CRP for the upcoming meeting in October.

Establish next meeting's agenda

- SMAC's recommendation to the BLM regarding the disposition of wild horses. South Steens EA

Items tabled for the December Agenda

- Spring replacement Page Springs

Meeting Effectiveness

- There was enough information provided to have a good conversation
- The discussion was focused
- Participation was broad and balanced
- Accomplishments were meaningful and felt like they got to the “meat of the matter”
- A consensus of the members felt there were results

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm

Next meeting date: October 20-21, 2009 in Bend, Oregon.

Submitted by Sheryl Drushella

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council approved the minutes on September 17, 2010.

Signed by Pam Hardy, SMAC Chairwoman / *signature on file* /