

**Bureau of Land Management
Boise District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting
September 5, 2019
BLM Boise District Office
3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705**

MEETING NOTES

Boise District RAC Members Present

Michael Gibson, Rochelle Oxarango, Donna Bennett, Zach Funkhouser, Rick Raymond, Scott Nichols, Art Talsma, and Joe Merrick.

Public Attending

Charlie Lyons, Ted Hoffman, Garret Visser, Randy Fox, Braden Jensen, Dave Hayes and one other who did not sign-in.

BLM Advisory/Staff Present

John Ruhs, Lara Douglas, Mike Williamson, Jennifer Jones, Amanda Hoffman, Brent Ralston, Tanya Thrift, Marissa King, and Russ Babiak.

Welcome – John Ruhs, Idaho State Director

- Expressed thanks for the RAC members and their service. Shared his vision for the RACs.
- Nominations are currently being reviewed by the Governor's Office. They will then go to the Washington Office.
- Gave update of the Washington Office move to Grand Junction, CO and other locations throughout the West.

Procedures – Lara Douglas, Boise District Manager

- Welcome and introductions.
- Taking nominations for RAC Chair and Vice-Chair. Michael Gibson expressed interest in the Chair position, with Scott Nichols volunteering for Vice-Chair. No vote was taken due to lack of quorum.
- Staff updates: Marissa King is Acting Owyhee Assistant Field Manager and will be representing the Field Office for this meeting.
- Talked about the status of subcommittees. Current active subcommittees are for the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan and the Tri State Fuel Breaks Project. Discussed the goal of identifying future subcommittees on key issues of interest to the RAC moving forward.

Four Rivers Field Office – Brent Ralston, Four Rivers Field Manager

- Gave status on the development of the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan. Questions and concerns were raised regarding the timeliness of scoping comments and criteria for the disposal of isolated parcels of public lands. Talsma and Nichols expressed concern that land should be exchanged rather than sold off, and pointed out that public access for recreation is an important consideration. Currently, Four Rivers has many years' worth of land tenure adjustments backlogged and would follow a lengthy process including consideration of public interest before land disposals would occur.

- RAC members discussed concerns about irresponsible recreational shooting and the proliferation of trigger trash. Agreed things have gotten worse with the booming Treasure Valley population. The RAC intends to form a subcommittee dedicated to the issue.
- Four Mile Herd Management Area (HMA) Environmental Analysis public comment period to begin soon. The HMA's horse population is well over appropriate management level, but currently no funding is available to hold a gather.
- Update on the Ridge to Rivers trails decision. Currently under appeal.
- Bennett Mountain North grazing permit renewal final decisions to be signed soon.

Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) – Amanda Hoffman, NCA Manager

- Background on NCA and Idaho National Guard relationship. One major project currently being analyzed: Real Property Master Plan, Modernization of Infrastructure Improvements, and Improved Annual Throughput of Brigade Combat Team Training. Hopes to have the Master Plan out for comment this fall.
- Projects approved for the Idaho Army National Guard over the past several years include the Digital Air/Ground Integrated Range and Master Plan #1.
- Projects supporting the Idaho Army National Guard mission are the focus of the NCA over the next year.
- DVDs of the NCA 25th Anniversary interpretive film, Feathers and Frontiers, are available.

Bruneau Field Office – Tanya Thrift, Bruneau Field Manager

- Recently signed the Perjue Canyon Recreation Site decision, currently in an appeal period. Explained the decision and what improvements will be made to the site.
- Ongoing grazing permit renewals for BECO are still under a stay.
- Update and timeline on the Big Springs allotment. Hoping to have a decision for the Dickshooter Cattle Company use area out in October.
- Update on Tri-state Fuel Breaks project and projected timeline.
- Update on implementation of changes to wilderness boundaries enacted in the Dingell Act. One change will accommodate a commonly used camping area off Mud Flat Road. BLM will hold a Public Lands Day event to move a fence implementing this change.

Owyhee Field Office – Marissa King, Acting Assistant Field Manager

- Update on the Rockville grazing permit renewal (5 allotments); hoping to issue decision in the next month or so.
- Update on Silver City grazing permit renewal. Gave outline of the issues, the area is complex with several restoration issues.
- Bruneau Owyhee Sage-grouse Habitat (BOSH) project began implementation this year. Target is 34,000 acres completed by late fall.
- Question was raised about recent news reports of sage-grouse numbers being down. RAC members requested an agenda item on this topic at our next meeting.

Fire & Fuels – Russ Babiak, Boise District Fire Management Officer

- Well below average fire season this year for the District. Currently less than 10,000 acres burned this year, compared with the typical 90,000 acres per year. Have about 74 starts so far, with 100 being the average. Full fire season staffing will remain until the end of September.

- Trout Springs RX burn likely to begin Sept. 9. Gave overview of project and timeline for completion.
- Donna Bennett expressed appreciation for all the Rangeland Fire Protection Association work the District has done.

Next RAC meeting will be set for January 9, 2020.

General Public Comment Period

- Ted Hoffman and Charlie Lyons, local grazing permittees, gave a short presentation about their concerns with the proposed Four Rivers Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP). The spread of annual grasses and associated fire frequency is a major issue they feel are not adequately addressed in the RMP, including the use of grazing to address such issues.
- Garrett Visser, Idaho Wildlife Federation, spoke about the RMP and the proposal for a Backcountry Conservation Area in Bennett Hills, which IWF supports.
- Randy Fox, Idaho Conservation League, spoke about the RMP and concerns with the removal of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). He also called for parity in restrictions laid out for fluid mineral extraction and wind energy.
- Four Rivers Field Manager Brent Ralston gave further background into the RMP. While many scoping comments were received almost ten years ago, they have been reviewed with partners and determined to still be relevant. There is still time to provide comments before the final RMP is signed. Members of the RMP subcommittee talked about having a meeting, although there is not enough time for an official meeting and to submit comments as a subcommittee.

Meeting notes taken by Michael Williamson, BLM Boise District Public Affairs Specialist

Minutes certified by:

VACANT
BDO RAC Chairperson

Date

Y. DA
Lara Douglas
Manager, BDO

9/12/19
Date