

Farmington District Resource Advisory Council Meeting

Summary Minutes – June 15 and 16, 2015 – Taos, New Mexico

June 15 attendees

RAC Members Present:

Norman Norvelle (Category 3)
Jude Gabaldon (Category 1)
Jerry Sims (Category 2)
Kathy McKim (Category 3)
Anthony Benson (Category 3)
Myke Lane (Category 1)
Martha Brown (Category 2)

BLM Staff /Support Present:

Victoria Barr, FD
Tim Wakefield, FFO
John Bailey, TFO
Ernesto Hurtado, TFO
Mark Kelly, FFO
Christine Horton, FFO
Jeff Tafoya, TFO
Pat Pacheco, TFO
Kyle Sahn

Visitors Present:

June 15 Morning Session (9:00 a.m. – 12 noon)

Call to Order, Introductions, Welcome to Taos Field Office – Myke Lane

RAC Chair Myke Lane called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. RAC, BLM staff, support personnel, and visitors introduced themselves. Minutes of the last meeting was approved by email. No further action was necessary. Chair Myke Lane welcomed group to the Taos Field Office.

Victoria Barr, District Manager, Speaks to RAC Committee

John Bailey would like the RAC group to visit Manby Hot Springs. He requested the RAC to write a letter of support for an acquisition of private land adjoining the Springs and send it to Washington. This is to get funding to purchase about 70 acres in that area for parking and right away agreement for the road (Tune Drive) that gets you to Manby Hot Springs. There is a lot of private land in that area. The current parking area that is near the trail that leads down to the Manby Hot Springs is an area that a private land owner has agreed to let BLM use. When signs are needed to put up or any other kind of development (example trails etc.), it is hard or impossible due to the limited ownership of land the BLM has. If BLM can purchase the land at market value with no develop on it then it won't be as expensive. That is why it is important to see this location with RAC group. John has taken Victoria out to see the Manby Hot Springs last week sometime. Christine can send the letter through email. John had drafted a letter by the afternoon that day. The RAC group each got a copy and they looked at it. It looked like they agreed that the letter need very little change if any at all. Myke mentioned something about an attachment of a map of the area so anyone who read the letter can see a visual of the area that is

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being proposed on the acquisition. Myke was concerned about getting the letter approved. A motion was made to draft a letter of support, and the motion was seconded. The motion Carried. Another motion was made to change the Tuesday field trip and go to Manby Hot Springs and seconded. The motion carried.

The BLM range Sage grouse habitat was discussed. Subsurface are not listed on maps.

Tim Wakefield is currently the Farmington field office acting manger until October 1st. The Farmington field office position is will be advertised for the next two weeks. The position is a GS14 and will be open for a month on USA jobs.

Sarah Schlanger is the going to be the new Taos Field office manager starting July 29, 2015. She use to work with the Escalante Monument one of the largest monuments also she has been associated with Navajo and Hopi and the Leadership academy.

There are changes with the Bureau. The Bureau is down several positions. Some positions are going to be filled: Project manager Lacey in 60 days, GIS, Range Archeologist, and there was a new Public Affairs position recently approved.

There is a proposal to merge state offices. If that were to happen, the New Mexico BLM office would be the regional office and the combined state offices of Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas would be moved to Santa Fe. All of the field office would report to the Santa Fe Regional office. The Secretary has concerns about the NM/AZ merge google to find out more, and stay tuned for more update. AZ focus is much different then NM. The purpose of the merge is not to lay people off. The reason is because it could save 1.9 million dollars. The will be more staff in ground positions with only one state director. Reassign positions might happen. Tony Benson has concern with congruity with the BLM since people are retiring. How long a manager wants to stay is up to them. The merger should not change managers.

How does RAC feel about the district up date that was handed out via email before the meeting? Do you agree something need to continue? The RAC members think the BLM website would be a good reference and feel that the District up date is useful and beneficial.

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Farmington Field Office Updates and Ongoing Planning Efforts

Aztec National Monument

RMA

Pipeline

Indian oil and gas

1992-1997 NASA imaginary of whole world

Looking for concentration methane

Swaps

Landfills

Mining

Hot spot in U.S. (This was the Hot spot)

Methane= .1% of overall global

BLM may be responsible for methane

BLM has had two leaks industries was contacted as soon as the leak where noticed. They came in and fixed the right away.

San Juan area seems to produce methane there is a gas coal bed in county where methane is seeping out.

The four corners is has been identified as a methane hotspot google to find out more about this subject.

Houston pixel date management could of lead to it.

Extract safely from underground extract methane to extract coal safe.

Next fall meeting- up date

San Juan- leaking methane

Basin –multiple factors

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No health risk stay tuned.

PNM- Methane is mostly coming from coal mining not from oil and gas

Coal plus other things methane (number of other things)

Flux

Access what coming from outside studies

Litigation- can't comment on details.

Official cooperating agencies

Navajo

Bureau of Indian affairs

(Both of these agencies signed on to be cooperating agencies)

Taos Field Office Updates and Ongoing Planning Efforts - Ernest Hurtado

25 acting files

Reality has gain another specialist

NM Gas Company reroute scoping meeting late 2014 contractor is second alternative

Kit Carson fiber inside and outside of the national monument

Buck men shooting range N.M.D.O.G.F

Ohkay Owingeh – Ojo Caliente Chimayo

Break on trails until planning is complete. A plan is needed in order to have tools to move forward

Refer to TFO update

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Hunt power project – meeting held in state office

Tri-state – withdraw application for any kind of right away

Fee schedule is in place

Del Rio mineral sales-fee collected from

There are two classes of minerals

1 is locatable minerals- gold minerals of that kind.

1872 mining act BLM process permits

U.S. doesn't receive royalties

2 is the salable minerals- Sand and gravel minerals of that kind

U.S. receive royalties

County can get fee waived for these minerals

EA for sand and stone pits- Fees are collected salable commodity

Grazing fees- (EX- 10 cows \$1.63 x the number of months) that's how fees are collected.

If they don't suspend use, they are on cooperative agreement for range improvements.

Grazing and sedimentation = correlation

Restore vegetation- it is monitored and if it's getting over grazed trespass or specialist are not doing their job monitoring.

The challenge is monument has enormous use with elk herds that eat the grass use of grass prior to cows coming in that is the challenged

One option is to increase hunting permits if deer or elk are over grazing.

80 years later still signs of stress from over grazing.

Need to find out how to manage grazing and find out what the tools are.

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The grazing permit is responsible cattle guards or knocked down fences.

Oil and gas stipulations must utilize road and cattle guard.

Wilderness Study Sabinoso area has no access (someone asked if the private land owners are using it for private hunting.)

Work on monument plan #1 priority

Brad is the planning coordinator – plan effort 3

Screens

1st-consistent presidential- proclamation

2nd- consistent current management plan

3rd NEPA- committee resources

No decisions are made until all 3 screen processes are complete

- There are 6 maybe 7 cooperative agencies involved.

Since more have come on board

Cooperative agency meeting August 4th so Sarah Schlanger can be part of it.

They would like to have a conference call with all cooperative agencies sometime soon to bring everyone up to speed.

Less intensive management-scoping etc.

There are two alternatives hopefully they can come up with an alternative of a balance of both

Scenic quality inventory- bases how manage scenic land scape

Inventory of lands wilderness study characteristics

Question Brad= As cooperating agency help resolve internal differences.

Give cooperators much larger voice- John said

Should the development of range lands be a little or how much?

Cooperative agencies can help figure what way to lean.

Commercial Vs. Competitive---- are looked at very differently

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When is a landscape okay to leave alone and when do you intervene?

If you do intervene what way should you go with it.

AIM- (Assessment, inventory, monitoring)- have plots/ covering many plots data when conditions at site do what they do.

Previous vegetation strategies- not monitoring enough so AIM has been adopted.

Grazing EA's- standards

RAC

Rio Grande Coalition- Form friends group (grand research)

501 C3 organization-friend of the Rio Grande del Norte

Vacancies on RAC they should apply.

Highlights about the monument

Brochure- collision funded this to make public

June 2015 hikes and events

Over a 1000 emails are on the list to get the hikes and events schedule for each month

They would like to get herbalist experts to take the public on an interpretive hike.

Let people know what going on in monument.

If you could do it in monument before you can do it now.

Issues legislation introduced by Senators Udall and Heinrich

Cerro Uta, Rio San Antonio considered wilderness.

What is critical from study of wilderness?

Some kind of emergency to take in wilderness area

Exception-wildlife –chainsaw specific or letting something burn for good purpose.

No ATV in wilderness area they talked about making change.

Minimal tool requirement to maintain wilderness characteristics

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One more big issue to consider is the exchange with Ohkay Owingeh on site one of the most significant fossil sight can't dispose of the sights.

Tribe- cultural property to them It pitting two laws decide how to move forward for exchange

Have a site visit to the area

No fossil gathering plantation protection act.

No cultural sights etc so it is tacky has to be careful.

Village of Questa mine shut down work with them.

Competitive event take place in Questa

Visitor move down town

July 18th petcha cucha support local home ground efforts

Watershed- upper San Juan game and fish guide association

Refer to page 4 – Range improvements all employees jump in. Public service needs credit for it.

FOA emails need to be kept track of.

One request in 1976 to present

Farmington Field Office Updates and Ongoing Planning Efforts – Tim Wakefield

Question related to summary before Myke Lane starts to talk

RFD was completed late fall.

Resource management plan process

Fluid mineral releasing

Industry say Mancos has lots of water that is not currently environmental friendly.

Make sure you get point out of public that industry extract and they know they are leaving mineral resources behind-that number needs to be out to the public.

Wilderness – not include that understood when it is in this category you can't do this other stuff (observation)

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10 years ago nobody produce Menca

Not allowed to call area buffers

Wilderness area buffers- not allowed

10 mile buffer to mitigate for other reasons

Leasing something gives them the right to those minerals

Question should we do mineral leasing

Extract without disturbing the surface

How much of the surface can we change what is allowed and what is not allowed that is why NEPA is so important.

38% royalties asking public to give up.

Fuel taxes maintain highways

Sustainable transition from one economy to another

Brack's cactus (*Sclerocactus cloverae* ssp. *Brackii*)pg 5

A lot of miss identification

Brack Brachi- habitat, soil, badland,

Clovi- Some of that, sage brush habitats.

Argument if its genetically separate

Trying to get funding to identify

Lunch: 11:30 – 12:45

July 12 Afternoon Session (12:45 – 4:00 p.m.)

Oil and Gas Reclamation Presentation – Mark Kelly

FFO bare soil reclamation procedures

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4 years the way we drilled oil and gas sites wasn't working it was a two year process.

Since there has been a shift in how we do business.

Oil and gas operators at the San Juan Basin

Mission statement- reas

Agenda- felt we could do a better job.

There are three major procedures A, B, C, (final procedure is the abandon procedure)

Intro- oil and gas right away from the city of Farmington/Bloomfield

Signed by Dave Evans

Visual inspection- 3 people go out; you get 3 different opinions,

Refer to pictures in presentation to see what successful looks like.

The oil pads were reduced in size by .4 acres.

Specialist interpretation is made up of various opinions

Continued drought in west is something we can't control.

Flip side from prescription to motive bass.

Keep planting over

Operators is back with the burden to be accountable to replant surface that was destroyed and this involves getting seed mix.

Operators became part of process and the purpose for is so they can try to do better job.

If possible try to find local seed.

Reclamation procedure A= size

Reclamation B= drill new well, requires monitoring, cost recovery- on BLM to do monitoring

Two purposes- APD

Each vegetation community narrow it down to 8 instead of

Pinon is 15%

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After 5 years if not growing we will create remedy plan operator is involved

Veg monitoring technician

Photo points facing same direction- so they can see the progression of what is going on

Vegetation Cages

Implementation process

APD process

Obnoxious weeds inventory

2 years later annual monitoring

2 years after 5 year long term monitoring

Plug well or relinquish

Find out why lack of progress if so.

Exception request- if nothing was never growing anything then they can ask for exception on that

Determine something wrong

Refer to pictures- green refers to the total surface

Orange is the total surface being used after 20 to 30 years

Procedure C- (25000 outstanding wells waiting for approval)

Final abandonment is the most important procedure (this is the final chance to get this right)

Exempt any liability

Schedule online- pit sites fi find disturbance will know about it

You have to make sure dirt work is down, seeding down and joint inspection make sure everything is done correctly

Right away procedures

Pipeline-same thing (a lot of old pipeline)

Inspection- what work requirement are needed to be complete

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Pre-disturbance form

Benefits realized- www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/farmington_field_office.html

Questions

003 was date 2000 RMP was finalized every well that was drilled building standards some standards not all standards

Certain seed for each vegetative community

Southwest seed- is where seed comes from

How many wells are being plug? 250 a year

Tumble weed- write down

Surface private /can't dictate terms of that

Percent of re-vegetation – pertain to that particular community

What kind of plant will be stabilized in that soil.

Linear project work with photographs.

Native grasses - 1. sand drop seed

2. Indian rice grass- best to establish in drought

Colorado boarder-wheat grass

Crested wheat isn't native grass but it is used to eliminate soil erosion

Permit are given out for seed collectors

Buy seeds without weeds

Cheat grass- hopefully get out competed with native grasses

Crested-more moisture-dominate area with it

Decrease of crested will give the native grass a chance to grow.

Following presentation – Myke asked Mark Kelly if the BLM had an idea how much more it was costing operators to implement these new reclamation standards that were not required in the 2003 RMP and in APD issued prior to the recent implementation of the standards. Mark replied he had no idea. When

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asked whether the BLM should be concerned about the cost of additional regulation (especially after permits were issued), Mark replied that the BLM was not concerned nor should they. Victoria Barr, FDO Manager, confirmed Mark's comments indicating that it was the BLM position that the cost for O&G operators to develop resources on behalf of the public was not of concern, and would not be a consideration for future policy changes made in the District. Jus the cost of doing business.

Restore NM Summary Initiative (Refer to handout)

NN rose to the top getting work done

Largo- 44 miles Russian olives

BPS- budget procurement system

Funded= 2 main

Tank mountain

Cresol=south

Grease wood- North

Try to find out what the best tool is

Restore NM questions

Procedures go onsite plant community. Are you having conflicts prehistoric compare to now and how are you resolving that.

Depends on goal if it's for species

Achieve- 1st soil stabilization rest will come together

Native American want some plants for medicinal use BLM will consider that

Certain native plants will grow good even in disturbed soil.

How much does it cost operators to replant and make the surface back to what it was before it was disturbed?

Answer- they don't include it /Dust bowl- NY came planted crops/ Tax payers shouldn't pay that why responsible on operators.

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John explaining where Manby Hot Springs are located.

If you are coming in from the west you pass gorge bridge turn right to tune drive

Primitive parking area

Portable toilet

Trail to Manby Hot springs

Blackrock-west side drive

Buy guides to hot springs so people can come visit

Tune drive entire entire 5 mile length

Parking private land/ federal nexus 1984

Portion of land

70 acres total on rim go down to the water

3rd of distance to spring then you are on BLM land

Counters- to find out how many BLM or private land owners drive through there

Land owners- are okay with signs /but we don't have surface rights

Conservation land- Sarah Naranjo

Landowners need letters expressing on selling development rights

What percent of 70 acres have development rights

Aden Seidlitz present letter to state manger

Effective letter march next year priority purchase 2018

Acquisition for 2017 is on its way to Washington

Rio Grande River is one of the first eight to establish wild and scenic rivers

Trail used by people who wanted to visit hot springs

Dell Dubios- old videos of Manby Hot springs

When we did public meeting public wanted to talk about Manby Hot springs

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Try to convince the residence to transfer the road to the county so the county could maintain it.

There is 100 miles of historic route- Manby Hot springs is one of them

Funds are needed in order to be able to buy private land to have an area to park at when people want to hike down to the river.

Parking critical- signs could be placed and trails could be developed

Camp host at Manby Hot Springs---if we could acquire some property

Fees are not charged at John Dunn

Trail is the old stage road

Public Comment Period (Public Scoping)

Myke Lane Chairman

Felipe Martinez- El Rito residence (former county commissioner)

Land use ordinance

Oil and gas ordinance didn't have one concern from residence

Rio Arriba west side 20 per month being developed

I am here ancient purse development underground channels watering holes can extend from here to the moon.

1598 New Mexico

1579 Mexico City

Understand oil and gas jobs

Rio Arriba important Rio Chama

Rio Grande – provides 50-60 percent of water needs they are 3 of the 5 bodies of water that support the drinking water.

Abique, El Vado, Texas, Mexico

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Agriculture in Rio Arriba

Rio Grande Corridor

Listed above are all extremely important to the state that need to be protected because they are our life source.

Spanish colonial period Questa, Taos, Penasco, San Cristobal, where buffers to protect the center of Santa Fe capital.

Hispanic community was absorbed by Indian community

Spanish and catholic faith- Spanish culture

Areas that need special attention

Since they started drilling in San Juan the pools that they are disposing in the fences are getting torn down and the livestock are getting into them drinking the water losing their hair and dying.

No activity with drilling has happened east of Rio Chama and no intent is planned the area doesn't meet the requirements.

OCD- is one group that can help with the drilling

EPA- water shed protection act

La Cebolla- BLM purposed sale.

Toni Benson added that there is very little potential for oil and gas because the Chama basin is too shallow.

Udall representatives

Udall representatives came asking what we feel are the need to be funded for BLM?

Anything we think needs funding we should share with them so they could share it with the DC staff.

They would like to write a letter to secretary about wild horses asking if they could stop spending 40% budget on them.

That money could be used for something else. Look at issues critically

Public land is getting destroyed with the wild horses. The letter is a good place to start.

Issues split up between Geography and Martin Heinrich

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As a RAC send something that can get some feedback to find out where to get started.

If you want to submit anything to Martin Heinrich send an agenda that is aligned is better than a CC because when you send it as a CC it gets dealt with like a CC and aligned agendas is treated more critical.

When a letter is sent in they are acted and follow up on.

Adjournment

There being no more business a motion was made to adjourn, and it was seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

June 16 attendees

RAC Members Present:

Norman Norvelle (Category 3)
Jude Gabaldon (Category 1)
Jerry Sims (Category 2)
Kathy McKim (Category 3)
Anthony Benson (Category 3)
Myke Lane (Category 1)

BLM Staff /Support Present:

Victoria Barr, FD
Tim Wakefield, FFO
John Bailey, TFO
Ernesto Hurtado, TFO
Mark Kelly, FFO
Christine Horton, FFO
Jeff Tafoya, TFO
Pat Pacheco, TFO
Kyle Sahn

Visitors Present:

Martha Brown, El Salto FWA

June 16 Morning Session (9:00 a.m. – 12 noon)

Call to Order, Introductory Remarks

RAC Chair Myke Lane called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The field trip to Manby Hot Springs, Lunch, and a trip to the Ranch of Anthony Benson was discussed. It was decided they would hike down to the Manby Hot Springs, eat at a nearby dinner and drive on to the Benson Ranch.

RMP Amendment- to not drill near Chama close it to fluid mineral drilling

Water table- surface casing through shallow water has been demonstrated protecting water.

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New Fracking rules help with it.

BLM-Would like to get message out there meeting with industry to decide more factual information that is need

Limited source- is hard to make decisions

Go explore different

Get education and different points of views on fracking

John – put a draft of a letter together

Jude- put rules for public comment on agenda

15 min or less for each person for the public to come in and talk to BLM

The news release needs to specify that the public must sign up by 2:30pm (that should be a permanent part on the agenda)

If you put Refer to Federal Register Notice (FRN) – It covers all the rules about the public notice and the agendas.

Fire/Fuels Management Program Presentation – Pat Pacheco

Directional thought process how to go vegetation in new district monument.

Disturbance-

1. Bug Kill, Fire, mechanical, nature, floods (nature's way of rechecking cleansing itself)
2. Bug Kill- Throwing tree timber being pulled out of natural process.
3. Los Conch- Hila wilderness- most burn fire- crown firer spread

Hemephis- wilderness

Cerro Grande

Los Conchas Fire

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Two forest fires that burned 70% forest

Crown fires are harder to turn out

Ground fires

Fire and disturbance- Burrow forest

Crown firer

Juniper/ mixed conifer

Two types of fires

Flash firers

High intensity- burn quick

High severity- burns like a turkey cooking in the oven.

If the outside of the tree is burned it will kill the tree.

Double D fire high intensity fire

When started old wood cutting area so small branch's, lot of dead standing trees.

98% of fires are getting turned out

Recovery- nice grass views

Low severity

low intensity = little trees only everything on the bottom will burn

Ponderosas- water balancing tree

Every 2 to 6 years a fires is needed

Bark can tolerate heat up to 1200 degrees for over 40 hours

Smoke in the forest can be a good thing we have to get used to it and not turn out the fire right away.

Pinon and juniper don't like the heat they burn right away

When staff agree that fire going to keep burning

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Go in and manage action to get the result you wanted rather than letting it naturally burn and all the big trees you want to preserve

Sage brush- little forest underneath it burns only in extreme fires

sagebrush hard to burn -90% life fuel moisture

things can look ban when in transition but it is good for the environment

Whole unit is what needs to be looked at

When burned just want a desired outcome

Convince people have to look at big framework than just the front of the house

Politics get really involved

Can burn in scale we want or put as many people as they want.

Refer to presentation –GRAPH- where we are at now.

High intensity/ high severity- you will roast it slowly

We burn in our area because that how the environment cleans itself. In the other places the wood rots so that how the environment cleans itself.

Cooked trees slow with mechanical

Shredding trees lots of stuff on floor cooks trees

Fuel wood

Lots of people gather wood and sell it here it is a way of living

Dendrochronology- is the scientific method of dating based on the analysis of patterns of tree rings, also known as growth rings- (quantitative direct tree growth and water it in takes)

Fire scars on trees- Ex in a 400 year period you could tell that a tree had been burned 67 time

Count rings- firer happens every 22 years science proveable

From 1976-2000 have been the wettest thirty years in the last 2000 years

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We haven't seen a drought and we have had longer droughts this is wet compare to how dry it has been in the past.

We have to burn sometime and we need to decide when is a good time to do it.

Humidity- is lower in winter than summer here in our area

Depending on the vegetation- depends on the firer direction (standard deviation units)

East- geographic foot print

Very little change pine, pinon, and juniper

Pine- saves water wait till warmer to draw water so they don't freeze themselves

Firer weather date 10 years 2001-2011

Black= wind

Yellow=

April is a good time to burn that is when monsoons kick in.

Spring drought wind event- Fire natural in nature

- Thing of Red River and surrounding areas if we can get ahead of that then we can start burning and cleaning up.
- There is no way to take care of the land unless we get in front of the situation and start cleaning it up.
- Turned down 7 times politically- due to sagebrush
- Sage brush takes up a lot of water- nothing is at the bottom of the plant and nothing else can grow
- Dynamic should be constantly changing

Maybe writing a letter or state director and Myke Lane the chairman said to think about what they could do to help communicate this message.

In some cases we are killing everything to save one thing.

Committee Work Session Closing Comments – Myke Lane

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It is fine to collaborate letter on line

How many formal recommendations where made has to be marked in Christine's book.

Summary of statement needs to be included at the end of the letter.

Copy of map include with letter.

BLM gives letter to Washington.

Everything has to be justified so funding could be given.

In development this letter could be put on radar.

Have an idea of all the properties and pick the important ones.(this letter helps)

Land acquisition—Block out so RAC can

Development and effect to community with RAC meetings

We learn that we might need more time devoted to different things

Just improve meeting and learn as we go.

Priority for certain properties make it.

Myke Chairmen was motion to turn in letter or present it

A motion was made by Norman Norvelle that Myke Lane finalizes our basic letter of support for the acquisition of lands near Manby Hot Springs as a high priority acquisition for protection of significant resources. The motion was seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Any district updates let Christine know a week or two before the meeting

In order to post agenda in federal register notice have to have everything

45 days prior to meeting will be held in middle of August in Farmington

July 2nd Christine, Victoria, Michael, will get together and plan to set the next agenda and Federal register notice.

RAC Let Michael, or Victoria know so they can consider it on the agenda.

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RAC Meeting Adjournment

There being no more business a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by. Meeting adjourned.