

**LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO
NOVEMBER 20, 2013**

- 7:30 a.m.** **Meet at the Las Cruces District Office**
- 8:00 a.m.** **Travel & Tour West Potrillo WSA**
- **Review/discussion on Restore NM project**
 - **Overview/discussion on management of WSAs**
- 11:00 a.m.** **Travel back to Las Cruces District Office**
- 12:00 p.m.** **Arrive back to Las Cruces District Office. Start Lunch**
- 1:15 p.m.** **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions (Tony Popp)**
- 1:30 p.m.** **Review of Agenda and Approve Minutes (Tony Popp)**
- 1:40 p.m.** **Opening Statements and Updates (Bill Childress and staff)**
- Updates on Resource Management Plans (RMPs)
 - Updates on Major Environmental Impact Statements (EISs)
 - Administrative Details (Charter)
 - Other items
- 2:00 p.m.** **Land Tenure Presentation (Kendrah, Edward or Dave)**
- 3:00 pm.** **Public Comment Period**
- 3:45 pm** **Future meeting topics (Tony Popp)**
- Off Highway Vehicle use
 - Budget process
 - Tri-County Draft RMP-public comment overview (Jennifer Montoya)
 - PTNM Final RMP overview
- 4:00 pm** **Next Meeting(s): (Rena Gutierrez)**
- Date: _____
- Start time: _____
- End time: _____
- 4:00 pm** **Adjourn**

ATTENDEES

RAC Members Present:

Tony Popp
Billy Garrett
Tim Eastep
Jim Hyatt
Greg Magee
Michael Quintana
Paul Turner
Norman Walsh
Howard Bartoo
Tim Eastep

Absent:

Ed Boykin

Designated Federal Official:

Bill Childress

BLM Staff:

Edward Seum
Dave Wallace
Rena Gutierrez
Rico Smith
Kendrah Penn
Tom Phillips
Jim McCormick
James Sippel

Public:

Ben Brown
Matt Kenney, NASA
Angel Peña, NMWA
Catherine Green
Jim Bates, Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen
Joe Herman
Steve Henry, SCS

Morning Session--Tour West Potrillo WSA

The morning session of the RAC meeting was a tour of the West Potrillo Wilderness Study Area, with a review and discussion of Restore NM Projects by Las Cruces District Office Specialists and also an overview and discussion on management of Wilderness Study Areas by James Sippel, BLM New Mexico State Office NLCS Program Lead.

Afternoon Session

1:40 PM: Tony Popp – Calls meeting to order. The agenda was reviewed and approved with no changes. The previous meeting minutes (August 22, 2013) were approved.

1:42 PM: Council member and Visitors introduced.

Opening Statements and Updates

Bill Childress: Welcomed everyone and provided opening statement and updates. He also stated that the comment period on the TriCounty Plan has been extended due to the government shutdown. He also stated that the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument document is close to completion and will be sent to the State Office for review. Then it will be sent to Washington, DC and hopefully we will have an approved plan by the end of FY 2014.

Bill Childress: He commented on major projects underway, including work on several EISs. He stated that work will begin on a Draft EIS for New Mexico Copper in February 2014. Regarding the SunZia Project, additional studies are ongoing affecting the road study in Socorro County. He stated the Southline project is moving along well and explained the route plans for the project. The administrative draft is completed and it is expected to be released in January 2014. He said that he would be travelling to Phoenix, AZ to discuss alternate routes.

Question (Q.) – Tony Popp: This project has gone more quickly than SunZia. Why?

Answer (A.) – Bill Childress: Replied that it's a smaller project than SunZia. He stated that there are two (2) lines in the SunZia project and it skirts along military property.

Q.- Howard Bartoo: Was the New Mexico Copper project put on the back burner?

A.- Bill Childress: Yes, but it is back up again.

Q.- Billy Garrett: Does the scope of the road project affect the highway interchange?

A.- Bill Childress: He replied that no, it does not affect the highway.

C.- Bill Childress: He updated the council on Border Patrol issues concerning the Border Management Task Force. He stated that other agencies are represented and updated the council on the TACCOM sites. There are 3 proposed sites.

He also provided an update on the TIMMER Project, stating that there is an Environmental Assessment being done to improve road access in and around the border (54 miles). The road project is for the Border Patrol to do maintenance as needed.

Q. Jim Hyatt: He asked what the results of water testing in Animas Creek and Copper Mine were.

A. Bill Childress: He answered that results have not been received on the water testing.

Land Tenure Presentation

Dave Wallace, Assistant District Manager, Multi-Resources, made a presentation on the BLM and Land Tenure. He defined land tenure based on FLPMA, outlined the goals and objectives of the program, and the tools used to accomplish the goals and objectives of the program.

Q. Tony Popp: He asked about the number of agencies that had land tenure actions and if the general public is involved.

A. Dave Wallace: He answered that land tenure actions are discretionary and would be explained in the Process slide in his PowerPoint Presentation. He also explained that OVS stands for Office Valuation Service and SOL stands for Solicitors Office for Review.

Q. Tony Popp: (Looking at the Powerpoint presentation) asked if the land shown on the map is BLM land.

A. Dave Wallace: Answered that no, it is State land.

Q. Michael Quintana: Asked if the person proposing the offer set the market value of the property.

A. Dave Wallace: He answered that they must go through OVS for a fair market value assessment.

Q. Tim Eastep: How many recreation and public purpose leases are done in a year?

A. Kendrah Penn: She answered that 1 or 2 are done per year.

A. Dave Wallace: He said that there are approximately 6 on the books.

Q. Tim Eastep: He asked how many exchanges are done per year.

A. Dave Wallace: He answered that seven exchanges are done per year.

A. Bill Childress: He stated that the last exchange was done in 2010.

Q. Billy Garrett – He asked that when exchanges are done, is it dollar-to-dollar value.

A. Dave Wallace: He answered that yes, it is dollar-to-dollar to value. It's value for value.

Q. Billy Garrett – He asked if that is acted on by the Office of Valuation Service.

A. Bill Childress: He replied that yes, the valuations are done with the approval of OVS.

Q/C. Tony Popp: He asked if there is any way around this process. He also commented that in some ways this is good, but it's causing problems in terms of management of public land.

A. Bill Childress: He answered by saying 'yes and no'. The isolated parcels can be difficult to manage, but they can be good for the community growth and infrastructure. He said that our local governments are making good use of the parcels for facilities and infrastructure.

Q. Michael Quintana: He asked what happens if after the OVS process, someone builds a structure that increases the value of that parcel.

A. Bill Childress: Appraisals are good for 6 months.

Public Comment Period

3:00 PM: Tony Popp opens the floor for public comment.

3:15 PM: Public comment period ends.

Continuation on Discussion of Land Tenure

C. Tony Popp: He readdressed some of the issues with land exchanges.

Q. Billy Garrett – He asked if there are new ways of exploring land transfers and is there a more orderly way to do this where there is less cost for the public. He gave several examples from the local area. He also asked if there a way for discussions to be had on creative ways that are legal.

A. Bill Childress: He responded by saying that the starting point is identifying issues and concerns through the RMP process. He said that when it is time to move forward, BLM needs to reach out to the counties, cities and communities so that they may understand what the possible scenarios are and the results of a transaction. Comprehensive plans play a role in disposing of the land.

C. Billy Garrett: He stated that he has concerns with the process and thinks that it needs to be addressed; need for more coordination with agencies.

C. Bill Childress: He replied that sometimes when the county and city is aware of options, they can act on them.

Q. Paul Turner (to Dave Wallace): He asked, What if a parcel of land is being traded was a wilderness area within the state? Who would be liable for costs?

A. Dave Wallace – He answered that our focus is “Does it benefit the public?” Look at resource values. We then work with the State from that point.

3:25 PM: Dave Wallace completes presentation.

Other Items

C. Tony Popp – He asked for comments about this meeting and discussions. He then opened the floor for future meeting topics.

Q. Mike Walsh – He asked a question regarding the use of alternates on the council.

A. Tony Popp – He replied that as long as we can maintain a quorum, there should be no problem.

Future meeting topics are discussed:

1. Trackways
2. Travel management
3. OHV use
4. Budget Process

3:30 PM – MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT MEETING – NOT SCHEDULED AT THIS TIME (Discussion about maybe late January/early February).