

## tour route and schedule



Time	Activity	Notes
8:00 am	Meet in Las Cruces (RAC BLM; NRCS @ DAC Bldg)	
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Rincon DAC Firehouse - introductions	John/Zack (40mi frm BLM)
9:45 am – 10:15 am	Stop 1a: Rincon Arroyo downstream conditions	John/Zack (1.8mi to here)
10:30 am – 10:45 am	Stop 1b: Kit Carsen Rd. and Porter Farms	Zack/Connie (1.6mi to)
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Lunch at Jornada Del Muerto Point of Rocks Vista	Jessica (16mi to here)
12:00pm – 1:15 pm	Drive to Toby Hole	12.5mi (8.5mi rough rd)
1:15 pm – 1:45 pm	Stop 2: Toby Hole area restoration sites	Jack (upper area +1.2mi)
1:45 pm – 2:45 pm	Drive back to Spacesport road	8.5mi - rough dirt rd
2:45 pm – 3:30 pm	Stop 3a: Point of Rocks arroyo dam	Connie / John
3:45 pm – 4:15 pm	Stop 3b: Point of Rocks restoration site area	Connie (1.1 mi - dirt rd)
~5:15 p.m	Returned to Las Cruces	6.7mi to I-25, 35-40mi to LC

**SUMMARY MINUTES**  
**LAS CRUCES DISTRICT RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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**January 23, 2020**  
**Las Cruces, NM**

**RAC Members Present:**

John Cornell  
Jim Hyatt  
Michael Gaba  
Earl Greer  
Teofilo Holguin  
Robert Matulich

**Federal Official:**

Bill Childress, District Manager

**RAC Members Absent:**

Travis Day

**Public:**

Jerry Schickedanz, pending RAC appointment  
Dan Carter, Continental Divide Trail Coalition  
Katie Goetz, NM Dept. of Agriculture  
George Birdseye, Citizen from El Paso, Texas (interested in American Magnesium Project)  
Francis Birdseye, Citizen from El Paso, Texas (interested in American Magnesium Project)  
Michael Barsum, Southern New Mexico Trails Association  
Luanne Burke, Citizen from Las Cruces, NM (interested in Prehistoric Trackways)  
Tom Phillips, Citizen

**BLM Staff/Meeting Support:**

Mara Weisenberger, BLM LCDO Monument Manager  
Kendrah Penn, BLM LCDO Supervisor Cultural and Recreation  
Dave Wallace, BLM Las Cruces Assistant District Manager

**Scribe:**

Cathy Garber, BLM NMSO Communication Chief

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**CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME & OPENING STATEMENTS**

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The meeting was called to order by Earl Greer, RAC Vice-Chair at 9:05 a.m. Greer opened the meeting asking attendees to participate in “The Pledge of Allegiance.” Greer then asked the RAC members, BLM staff and the public in attendance to briefly introduce themselves.

**Presentations (Agenda Items)**

## Opening Remarks and Major Project Updates – William Childress

BLM Las Cruces District Manager Bill Childress briefed the RAC and public on the following topics:

- **Grazing permit renewals:** The BLM Las Cruces rangeland management staff processed 62 permits since the last RAC meeting in September. The staff is currently working on additional 13 permits.
- **SunZia Southwest Transmission Project (Lincoln, Socorro, Dona Ana and Pinal counties):** The SunZia Transmission, LLC proposes to construct, operate and maintain two parallel overhead 500-kilovolt transmission lines on Federal, State and private lands, extending from the proposed SunZia East Substation in Lincoln County, NM to the existing Pinal Central Substation in Pinal County, AZ. If approved, the length of the transmission lines would range from 460 miles to more than 500 miles, depending on which of the analyzed route alignment alternatives is selected. Currently, the BLM is working with SunZia on some rights-of-way amendments. **RAC member Jim Hyatt asked about the width of the proposed ROWs. District Manager Bill Childress indicated the width of these ROWs were between 400' for one line and 1000'\* for both lines.** (*\*Originally reported as 200-400', this figure has been corrected after further research.*)
- **Southline Transmission Project (Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo counties):** A 367-mile, 345-kV electric transmission line, Southline runs from southern New Mexico to southern Arizona. The approved route crosses 100 miles of public land administered by the BLM, with the remainder located on land administered by other agencies and state and private land. The approved route originates at the Afton Substation, south of Las Cruces, NM, and terminates at the Saguaro Substation, north of Tucson, AZ. The BLM Record of Decision was signed on May 6, 2016. In addition, the BLM Las Cruces District issued the Rights-of-Way Grant on August 22, 2016. Currently, the proponent, Southline Transmission LLC, is getting the required permits and designing the final transmission line. Currently, the BLM is working with Southline on some rights-of-way amendments. Construction on the transmission line is scheduled to begin later in 2020, with work to begin on the Arizona segment first. **RAC member Jim Hyatt asked about the width of the proposed ROWs. District Manager Bill Childress indicated the width of these ROWs were 200' wide.**
- **Copper Flat Copper Mining Project (Sierra County):** The BLM Las Cruces District released the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Copper Flat Copper Mine Project on April 19 and the Record of Decision (ROD) on August 23. The Department of the Interior made the ROD announcement that the BLM had issued the Record of Decision (ROD) on the Copper Flat Copper Mine Project (Project), approving Alternative 2 from the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The Project authorizes New Mexico Copper Corporation (Copper Corporation) to conduct mining activities in Sierra County, NM. The next step in this process is for the proponent to seek a bond.
- **Border Fence Construction:** The BLM is coordinating with DOD – Army Corps of Engineers to construct 46 miles of border fence. The construction is occurring inside of the 60-foot Roosevelt Reservation on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border. As of Jan. 23, 2020, 6.4 (14%) miles of the fence has been erected.
- **Dingell Act Implementation Update:** Mara Weisenberg, Monument Manager, gave an update on current progress in implementing the Act.

- 90% of the signage has been installed. The LCDO staff had a goal of reaching 100% by the end of February, 2020 so they are well-head of their deadline.
  - Staff are also developing brochures for the new wilderness areas.
  - The staff monitors 241,000 acres.
  - The science plan for Prehistoric Trackways is complete.
  - The science plan for the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument will be initiated within the next few weeks.
- **Tri-County RMP/EIS (Dona Ana, Otero and Sierra counties):** The BLM published a Draft RMP/EIS on April 12, 2013. The Draft RMP/EIS did not propose decisions relating to fluid minerals. Based on public comments received, BLM initiated a Supplemental Draft EIS on December 19, 2013, to develop allocations and management actions for fluid minerals and to re-evaluate potential lands with wilderness characteristics. The planning area includes approximately 9.3 million acres, of which 2.8 million surface acres and 3.98 million subsurface acres are administered by BLM. The major issues include recreation, lands and realty and special designations. Currently, the Supplemental EIS is on hold as other RMPs within the NM region are higher on the priority list. The BLM LCDO hopes to have public review and meetings this year.
  - **Rights of Way Renewal Backlog:** The current Administration is pushing offices to renew Rights of Ways. There is currently a significant backlog – hundreds of renewals were in the queue. The LCDO staff has done a tremendous job is getting this processed. Only about 20-25 remain.

#### RAC Discussion of Field Trip to Rincon Watershed Restoration Project – Facilitated by Earl Greer, RAC Vice-Chair

- Members of the RAC had the opportunity to do a field trip on Jan. 22. Members appreciated the opportunity to see watershed issues firsthand. Members were surprised to hear of the significant flood risk to farms, homes, and citizens. They also appreciated the collaborative effort, spearheaded by the Stormwater Coalition. LCDO Bill Childress informed the members that the BLM LCDO is currently performing a programmatic environmental assessment analysis (of the entire watershed) for potential action to allow more efficient implementation of remediation actions. Funding for BLM projects come from grazing fees. Funding for watershed projects must come from NRCS. NMSU is developing a Master Watershed Conservation program, similar to Master Gardeners program. Further actions include: more conversations with the NCRS concerning possible funding. Further discussions with local farmers/ranchers to determine who is willing to participate.
- SO 3331: Supporting Watershed Partnerships

#### Presentation on American Magnesium Proposed Mining Plan of Operation – Dave Wallace, Las Cruces Assistant District Manager

- The project is a 40-acre site dolomite quarry mine on BLM-managed public land in Luna County.
- American Magnesium, LLC submitted a Plan of Operation to the BLM Las Cruces District for its proposed Foothill Dolomite Mine Project. The company proposes to develop located 12 miles south of Deming, and estimates the mine would be operational for 20 years.
- Three cooperating agencies: City of Deming, NM; Luna County, NM; NM Mining and Minerals Division



- The BLM hosted a public meeting on July 25 to provide information on a proposed magnesium/dolomite quarry mine in Luna County, and to gather input in the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA). The BLM is currently reviewing the scoping comments – 20 formal comments were received; 174 issues raised. Three primary areas of concern: air quality, transportation routes, and milling site processing. BLM expects comments will be addressed by the end of March 2020. A 30-day public comment period will be held once the EA draft is ready to be released.
- The proponent is speaking to the city/county about transportation, water, etc.
- Analysis is underway but there is still a lot of necessary discussion with city, county, and proponent.
- If Dolomite mill sites are used outside of the US, the location must be determined and provided to BLM before ore can be mined.
- Potential decision on EA, summer 2020 (depends on work needed to address public comments.)
- Dolomite is mined primarily for magnesium (which is extracted from the ore). Dolomite has secondary uses in cement and kitty litter production.
- The nearest resident to the mine site is about 1.5 miles.
- The proponent expects to use 5,000 gallons of water per day; City of Deming says it can provide that amount.
- The mining operation and the milling site, will provide up to 500 jobs in the area.

#### RAC Introduced Topics/Discussion – RAC Members

- Grazing Regulation Meeting: Feb. 11, 2020; 4:30-7:30 p.m. at Ramada Inn
- Reviewed Secretarial Orders Relevant to LCDO. **RAC priorities: 3356, 3355, 3366, 3373**
- Roads: Roads outside of Monument – lots of options unless signs are posted, most roads are OK. During a plan revision, some roads may be reclaimed. Within the Monument, roads in place at the time of designation. No new roads unless necessary for the management of the Monument. A Monument Resource Management Plan will include Travel Management Planning.
- Las Cruces RMP, Monument plan, etc. needs to be updated. Many things have changed in the area and the RMP needs to be updated. Can the RAC develop a letter to encourage the Secretary to move on the plans? Would it be beneficial? RAC agrees to develop letter. **ACTION ITEM: Develop letter for Secretary.**
- Will there be a quorum at April meeting? RAC member approval updates: Waiting for approvals from HQ.
- USFS Fees updates: LCDO RAC serves Lincoln and Gila National Forests. When USFS is ready to propose fee increases, LC RAC will be responsible. Only in areas where RAC has jurisdiction.

#### Public Comment Period – Earl Greer, RAC Vice-Chair

**LuAnne Burke:** Very helpful to attend meeting. So many people in the general public who do not know what the BLM is. Lack of education about BLM and public lands. Encourage BLM to advertise and inform the public. Increase awareness and public support. Outreach to public schools. Facebook groups. Public comment platform for people share opportunities. Glow in the dark tiles available at the Habitat Restore. Might be useful to use the tiles to “light” the trails to help people way find, when the sunsets. Cost-effective.

**Dan Carter:** Introduced Continental Trail Alliance and Coalition is a not-for-profit works to complete, protect, and promote the Continental Divide Trail, which runs from Mexico to Canada. Major projects in LCDO area – Lordsburg and Silver City are priority projects. Working on signage and education. Working with SLO on easements. Shuttle service. **Update on SL easements? Would agree that management plans need to be finalized.**

**Continental Divide Trail Coalition:** The Coalition’s mission is to preserve and enhance trail opportunities; mostly non-motorized trails. New trails. Events including the upcoming Sierra Vista Runs. Local interest in increasing recreational opportunities in the area. Lots of synergy to create connections and access. Important to get in front of outdoor recreation tourism so trails are done right and used properly.

#### [Future RAC Meeting Dates and Topics – RAC Members](#)

April meeting date: April 1, 9-4 p.m.

Two SO to focus on: 3355 and 3356

#### [Adjourn Meeting](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.