

**AGENDA  
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT  
RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2012  
LAS CRUCES, NM**

- 6:45 a.m.**                    **Meet at the Las Cruces District Office**
- 7:00 a.m.**                    **Travel & Tour Prehistoric Trackways National Monument**
- 11:00 a.m.**                    **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions (Tony Popp)**
- 11:05 a.m.**                    **Review of Agenda and Approve Minutes (Tony Popp)**
- 11:15 a.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
- 11:30 a.m.**                    **RAC Elections (Tony Popp and Bill Childress)**
- 12:00 p.m.**                    **Lunch**
- 1:30 p.m.**                    **Open Discussion on PTNM (RAC Members)**
- 2:30 pm.**                    **Public Comment Period**
- 2:45 pm**                    **Break**
- 3:00 pm**                    **AML Program (Rusty Stovall)**
- 3:30 pm**                    **Future meeting topics (Tony Popp)**
- Fire (Wildfire & Rx Fire)
  - Off Highway Vehicle use
  - Restore NM
  - AML
  - Budget
  - Tri-County Draft RMP
- 3:45 pm**                    **Next Meeting(s): (Rena Gutierrez)**
- Date: January 16, 2013  
Start time: Meet and Greet 9:30 a.m.  
Call to Order 10:00 a.m.  
End time: 4:00 p.m.
- 4:00 pm**                    **Adjourn**

**RAC Members Present:**

Tony Popp  
Jim Hyatt  
Howard Bartoo  
Ed Boykin  
Rod Hille  
Billy Garrett  
Tim Eastep  
Greg Magee  
Michael Quintana  
Paul Turner

**Absent:**

Mike Walsh  
Ray Trejo

**Designated Federal Official:**

Bill Childress

**BLM Staff:**

Dave Wallace  
Tom Phillips  
Lori Allen  
Jim McCormick  
McKinney Briske  
Michael Downs  
Rusty Stovall  
Chris Teske  
Rena Gutierrez

**Public:**

Les Owen, NM Department of Agriculture  
Jim Bates, Local Sportsmen Groups Rep.

**TRAVEL & TOUR PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT**

The day began with a tour to the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, with discussion by BLM Staff Members—Lori Allen, Project Lead, McKinney Briske, Park Ranger, and Michael Downs, Park Ranger. See attached Handout #1.

**MEETING MINUTES****REVIEW OF AGENDA AND APPROVE MINUTES**

Tony Popp, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. The Agenda was reviewed and accepted. Minutes from the April 11, 2012 meeting were reviewed, accepted and set.

**OPENING STATEMENTS AND UPDATES – Bill Childress****PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT**

More discussion on the resources and issues being addressed in the Document is schedule for later this afternoon. The Draft RMP/EIS is still in the comment review period.

**TRICOUNTY RMP**

Have been working on project since 2004, but inching closer to perfecting a Draft RMP. Cooperating agencies (7) should be reviewing next month (October); possibly will have a Draft by Mid-November or December with a 90-day comment period. During this 90-day period, a series of public meetings will be held in Las Cruces, Truth or Consequences, and Deming. May be able to accommodate a field tour for the RAC; will email RAC members to solicit ideas for potential areas to look at.

### OTHER MAJOR PROJECTS:

- Alamogordo Regional Water Supply Project Final Environmental Impact Statement—Record of Decision issued; next month (October) Right-of-Way for the well site will be issued to the City of Alamogordo.
- Sun Zia – Comment period over; comment analysis will be conducted; numerous comments received. The final document is 6-8 months out.
- Southline -- Public scoping period on project has ended; currently working on analysis of comments and working toward completing a Draft document. Encourage RAC to attend public meetings in Lordsburg, Deming, and Las Cruces.
- South Road EA – Right-of-Way application (Sierra & Dona Ana counties) for a road to the Spaceport; currently working on an internal EA; completion date is next 30 days.
- New Mexico Copper – Two major actions; exploratory work, ground water pumping; hydrologic work; key for analysis in project EIS. Permits have been issued to conduct these activities.
- Restore NM – 16 EAs; new improvements/vegetation treatments (creosote); short timeframe for a lot of work; 3 year cycles; would like to give presentation on Restore NM to RAC at a future meeting.
- Permit Renewals – Standards and Guidelines; additional funding; contract to help in progress; Forest Service Enterprise Team, Jornada Range to help collect data and monitoring.
- Mining Plan of Operations—FreePort McMoRan; EA level.
- Joint Land Use Planning Process with Military – Holloman, White Sands, Ft. Bliss; regional effort; military activities/military encroachment tied in with Federal, County, and City.

### **RAC ELECTIONS (TONY POPP AND BILL CHILDRESS)**

General discussion on the term of appointments. Current Chairperson is Tony Popp. Current Vice-Chairperson is Tim Eastep. Bill Childress took over and called for nominations. Two candidates nominated, after discussions; unanimous decision to keep the existing Chairperson and Vice-Chair as is.

### **PUBLIC LAND ACCESS ISSUE (BILL CHILDRESS)**

State Director has asked District Manager to initiate discussions on the public land access issue through public outreach by January. Bring in partners, general public, and other users to focus in as an agency to help lay out issues, problems, and conflicts.

Bill used the example of the easement acquisition with FreePort McMoRan for 30,000 acres in Hidalgo County. The Alamo/Big Hatchet WSA is signed; gates are opened for public access; not a 2-wheel route; need a 4-wheel drive.

Question by Greg Magee: Did BLM buy easement?

Comment by Bill Childress: \$10.00; bought at Fair Market Value; acquired from State Land Department; legal access from physical routes.

Comment by Tony Popp: Has a CD with a database of County maintained roads; this is a starting point; determine the status of the road. Asked if the CD could be copied for BLM's use. CD copied; contains 2011/2012 data.

## **BREAK FOR LUNCH**

### **OPEN DISCUSSION ON PTNM (RAC MEMBERS)**

Tony Popp asked what the BLM wants from the RAC as it relates to the PTNM.

Comment by Bill Childress: Clarifying questions-not suggesting a resolution of sorts; each of the RAC members as individuals have the prerogative to provide comments. Comment period closes on 10/22/12.

Tony Popp reiterated that the handout highlighted the biggest issue and if there are other things this is the time to discuss.

Comments from Tony Popp: Preferred Alternative C; sign area; it will take years to develop as an educational resource; research; future development—sooner or later a visitor center; likes that there are few restrictions; the 4.4 closed miles of OHV, understand this and hopeful that another area can be found. Questions about uses being allowed; hunting and target shooting.

Lori Allen stated that target shooting is allowed in Alternatives A & B. Text of document did not concentrate on hunting—allowed in all alternatives. Focused on target shooting; hunting is allowed. NM Department of Game and Fish brought our attention.

Bill talked about other restrictions: mineral entry; retaining land in Federal ownership; split estate interest, would look at willing seller.

Tim Eastep asked about the timing of acquiring? who owns?

Bill stated the process would occur after the final is done; NM State Land Office is the owner.

Comment by Greg Magee: Preferred alternative is a good compromise and commended the staff. The Monument is a high OHV area; at first skeptical, but BLM did a good job.

Comment by Jim Hyatt: The location is a handy educational tool. However, for the elderly they would need a high profile vehicle, which is difficult for many. Is there a possibility of helping the disabled?

Comment by Bill Childress: Our goal is to provide universal accessibility; so everyone can experience the resource.

Comment Paul Turner: It's a task to figure out what's out there that one is looking at; having the staff interpret made it easier. Potential for the area to explode.

Comment by Bill Childress: Las Cruces Museum will help out with this; the exhibits will give the public a feel for the area.

Comment from McKinney Briske: Teachers are super excited about the area.

Comment from Ed Boykin: Been out there one time; not sure he could find the area; very worthy subject for protection; the Organs being the other; unfortunate that can't take everyone out.

Comments from Billy Garrett: Impressed; not aware of the importance of paleo layers; preservation by staff, resource protection and safety highly identified; not enough staff for closing off access. Need to rely on education and goodwill; not sure everyone has these values.

Comment by Howard Bartoo: Excellent staff tour. BLM responsibility for safety of public; where do you draw the line.

Comment by Tony Popp: Recognize and mitigate for sponsored events; permits; step up more; require insurance.

Comment by Bill Childress: Individual responsibility; keep in mind when we are developing resources; visiting public has option to file tort claims.

Comment by Billy Garrett: The most vulnerable are school groups to stay safe.

Response by Bill Childress: Schools require permission; take initiative by providing a ration of chaperones to kids.

Response by McKinnery Briske: BLM has safety messages at the beginning of the talk; provide adequate staff in the front, middle and end of group.

Comment by Tim Eastep: Legislation states No Later than 3 years to finish.

Response by Lori Allen: Doing good. TriCounty ongoing for 10 years. McKinney Briske currently working with scientists; developed 10 videos on the area; Mike Downs has showcased the area on BLM Facebook page.

Michael Downs stated that formal presentation at 50-60 events for about 5,000 to 6,000 people have occurred; presentations to over 20 schools at all levels. McKinney Briske added that 9 teachers have developed school kits and curriculums into their classrooms (STEM) because of busing issues.

Summary by Tony Popp:

- Pleased
- Tending toward Preferred Alternative
- Encourage educational development and use
- As quickly as possible—getting interpretation to see value.

Comment by Bill Childress: Very proud of Park Rangers; fortunate to get staff involved; monitoring; developing educational programs; interact very well with staff; work weekends; really appreciate.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

### **Jim Bates, Representative for local Sportsmen Groups.**

Was in attendance to see how the RAC works and to introduce himself. Interested in access issues; better access to public land that we own and use recreationally.

### **Les Owen, NM Department of Agriculture.**

Thank the staff for the tour.

### **AML PROGRAM (RUSTY STOVALL, CHRIS TESKE)**

Power Point Presentation—see Handout #2.

#### **OVERVIEW:**

NM AML Program Objectives

Mining Districts

Inventory

GIS and AMSCM

Fencing

Reclamation Projects

AML Inventory started in 2010. There are over 140 hard rock mining districts in New Mexico. Las Cruces District contains 68 hard rock mining districts (BLM land only). New Mexico currently has an inventory of 7,049 abandoned mine features on BLM, State and private lands.

Question from Rod Hille: How is the inventory conducted? Mostly visual?

Response by Chris Teske: Yes.

Question from Tim Eastep: What is a typical budget?

Response from Chris Teske: Anticipated \$1.2 million for FY2013 (970,000 for closures). Currently have 5 term positions for inventory. The closures are worked through an assistance agreement/contractor. State of New Mexico has been helping with closures; must go through NEPA before closures.

Comment by Bill Childress: Established partnerships to help with remediation; flexibility to do it ourselves or a combination. Coordination for more efficiency.

Comment by Chris Teske: There is a national agreement to do Bat Studies.

Question from Tony Popp: What are you finding as far as bats?

Response from Chris Teske: 25% of the shafts have bats (seasonal); other wildlife issues are Javalinas.

Comment by Bill Childress: Las Cruces District is the lead for the State; majority of mining districts are in this area; 4 term positions to inventory/UTVs/travel; 1 student entering data; bureauwide recognition that it's the way to go. Release the crew a month at a time to other areas of the State.

### **NEW TOPIC –NATIONAL MONUMENT PROPOSAL**

Jim Hyatt asked about consideration of the 6,000 acre National Monument Proposal as a topic of discussion for the RAC. Asked if BLM has a position; he doesn't know about it and it's hard to talk to people; the board should know what's going on. Additional questions by other members: why off-limits to RAC? Can it go on the agenda?

Bill responded that it is a sensitive and complicated issue. BLM doesn't have a position on the Citizen's proposal—not legislative; suggested that until there is a position, that it would be inappropriate to engage in discussions.

Bill will look into this issue and get back with the RAC.

1. Can Las Cruces District RAC discuss the proposed Citizen's proposal for National Monument (all 3)?
2. Can board take action/resolution concerning the proposal?

### **FUTURE MEETING TOPICS (TONY POPP)**

- TriCounty—Tour? Think about areas?
- Restore NM/Prescribed Fire
- National Monument (?) – dependent on answers to questions above
- Additional:
  1. Permit Renewals
  2. Land Disposal Process
  3. Energy & Mineral Development

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: JANUARY 16, 2013**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:00 p.m.**

**APPROVED BY RAC ON:  
APRIL 23, 2013**