



Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Council



MEETING MINUTES
3/15/2017

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) members present:

Category One – Commodity Interest

- Richard Austin
- Mike Henslee
- Greg Moore
- Brett Meyer
- James Wills

Category Two – Non-Commodity Interest

- Shell Howard
- Shauna Robinson
- Brad Ford
- LaMar Orton

Category Three – Public Interest

- Joseph Hawkins
- Tom Courtney
- Charles Howell
- Michelle Richman
- Hunter Osborne

Quorum Present: Yes No

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:

Michael Courtney - District Manager
Heather Tiel-Nelson - Public Affairs Specialist
Ken Crane - Burley Field Manager
Elliot Traher - Jarbidge Field Manager
Cody Martin - Shoshone Field Manager
Holly Crawford - Craters of the Moon Manager
Tommy Hayes - Twin Falls District Fire Management Officer
Jody Sherwood - Shoshone Administrative Assistant
Kasey Prestwich - Shoshone Realty Specialist

Public Attendees:

None

Note to readers: A copy of each handout listed in the text of, or at the end of these minutes, is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the BLM Shoshone Field Office. Persons desiring to view handouts should contact Jody Sherwood at (208) 732-7200, or by email at jsherwood@blm.gov.

Copies of certified minutes are posted on the Idaho BLM website at: [Click this link to obtain certified copies of RAC meeting minutes](#)

Item I: Welcome and Introductions

Heather Tiel-Nelson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Brad Ford and Shell Howard as new members of the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). She reviewed the contents of the RAC Orientation Handbook. She also went over the meeting folders and a handout, "The BLM: A Sound Investment for America 2016". Brad Ford and Shell Howard gave brief synopses of themselves. Heather delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the Bureau of Land Management. She discussed the importance of the Resource Advisory Committee.

Michael Courtney then welcomed everyone and emphasized the fact the Bureau of Land Management is one of the few federal agencies that creates capital. He then reviewed the handout, "BLM Idaho 2016 Your Public Land by the Dollars" and "BLM Idaho 2016 by the Numbers".

A question was asked as to where the BLM revenue came from. Mike Courtney replied that the "Public Lands by the Dollars" showed minerals, recreation, rights of ways, timber and firewood, and grazing were the primary means of income. He also stated that a majority of the funds were kept local.

At this time, Michael Courtney announced that the meeting would be open to the public at 10:15 a.m.

Item II: Election of RAC Chair/Vice-Chairperson

James Wills presided and graciously thanked Mike Henslee for all the work he had done as the RAC Chairperson. Mr. Wills opened the floor to nominations for a new RAC Chairperson. Tom Courtney nominated James Wills as the Chairperson. It was seconded. All approved. None were opposed.

At this time, James Wills asked for a nomination for Vice-Chairperson. Lamar Orton was nominated and seconded as Vice-Chairperson. All approved. None opposed.

Item III: Update RAC subcommittees

It was determined that the Wild Horse and Burro Management subcommittee was still needed. Charlie Howell will remain as the Chair. Peggy Stanley was removed and Brad Ford joined this subcommittee.

It was then determined that the Gateway West Transmission Project subcommittee was no longer needed. All decisions determining this project have been made and it is currently pending appeals.

The Cedar Fields Recreation subcommittee will continue with Shauna Robinson as the Chair. Tom Courtney and Shell Howard also joined the subcommittee.

The Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management subcommittee will continue. This is especially important due to the fact that there is much focus on livestock grazing. LarMar Orton agreed to continue being the Chair and Brad Ford joined this subcommittee.

Lastly, it was determined to keep the Wood River Travel Management Plan subcommittee. There were a lot of updates made last year with many more needed. There will be an open house meeting this summer. The RAC members were also invited to go out with the contractor to visit the sites. James Wills will continue as Chair. Shell Howard and Michelle Richman joined this subcommittee.

Item IV: Shoshone Field Manager update – Codie Martin and Holly Crawford

Codie spoke of three authorized aquifer recharge sites. He then told the group of the 14 additional recharge sites that right-of-way applications have been started that will cover 10,000 acres in the Milner/Gooding canal system.

He reviewed the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR)/Fuels information and added the fact that the Mule Deer Foundation matched the amount of sagebrush planted in the Flat Top 2 area. He also informed the group that the seeds collected are grown through contractors for the restoration projects.

Codie reviewed the Cold Springs Realignment/Upgrade information and added a map with the permit area. Finally, the grazing information was covered.

Holly reviewed the information for the Craters of the Moon National Park and Preserve on the summary. She emphasized that turning a State Preserve into a National Park has shown to increase tourism which has a positive impact on the local economy.

Item V: Jarbidge Field Manager update – Elliot Traher

Elliot reviewed his Livestock Grazing Permit renewals and recommended we create a subcommittee for this at the next meeting. The 'Contract Awarded to Next Contractor' timeline is in flux while the field office works with permittees. There will be weekly meetings resulting from this.

It was asked if the Jarbidge RMP Critical Goal of managing vegetation to restore the ability of the ecosystem to recover following a disturbance and reduce fragmentation of habitat for sage-grouse and other native species included juniper removal. Elliot replied that juniper removal had not been implemented in the Jarbidge area but that it was an effective way to deal with encroaching juniper. Juniper removal was a great advantage in restoring sage-grouse and other local animal populations.

Elliot told the group about a Glens Ferry tire dump cleanup that happened last fall and was completed in November. The tire dump was located south of Glens Ferry. Over 15,000 lbs. of solid waste were removed from public land and 100,000 lbs. removed from nearby private land. This was a serious hazardous material issue due to the possibility of fire in that area in the future.

Elliot informed the group of the Grand Opening of the Bruneau Canyon Overlook on June 1. The first phase of the improvement has been completed. The site now features an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trail to the overlook site of the wilderness area.

The Saylor Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA) is 95,000 acres. The Jarbidge Resource Management Plan proposed the creation of a non-reproducing herd of 200 horses within this HMA. This proposal has been litigated by the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign, the Cloud Foundation, Return to Freedom, and Virginia Marie Hudson to enjoin BLM from taking any actions to implement this proposal. BLM's reply to the summary judgement is due June 19, 2017.

In answering various questions, Elliot told the group that there were 4 or 5 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests last year. There was a FOIA for Slick spot peppergrass that ended up costing \$30,000. It was asked how much FOIA cost the BLM, and especially, Twin Falls District in the last year. Elliot responded that he would have to research that information and would present it at the next meeting.

Item VI: Burley Field Manager update – Ken Crane

Ken discussed working with the Bureau of Reclamation through the process of bringing management of the American Falls Archaeological District within the Cedar Fields area under the jurisdiction of the Burley Field Office. There are activities like rock climbing and motorized use taking place out there that are a grave concern to the Tribes. The Draft Environmental Impact statement is scheduled for internal review in April 2017.

Ken gave an update on recent emergency flood actions. The Oakley Reservoir is almost at full capacity and the Army Corps of Engineers is working on a floodplain report.

The Goose Creek Flood Control District proposed increased capacity to manage the flood water through a Right of Way authorization of additional sink trenches, Ken shared that this would be in the North Cottonwood area. 16,000 acre feet are to be prepared for a water dump with a 16 foot per mile trench for slow flow. This will work unless the snow melts too quickly.

Next, Ken discussed the Juniper Management Project that is now in the Burley Landscape Treatment phase 2. The first phase treated a total of 38,000 acres. Another 26,000 acres should be treated by the end of phase 2. This second phase includes removing invasive juniper, while being sure to use hand treatment around sensitive areas. The primary objective of this phase is to improve sage-grouse habitat. There is also a positive impact being shown for the mule deer population. The office is planning on planting Pinon pine in some of the newly opened areas. This pine is a native plant and is important to the local Native American tribes. When asked how long the juniper takes to grow back in the cleared areas, Ken answered that areas will be re-treated on a five-year basis.

Item VII: Other Business

Next meeting will be June 14, 2017 at the Shoshone Fire Ready Room at 0830. Jody Hawkins will give his poster presentation. Codie Martin will look into a Bald Mountain tour.

The fall meeting will be September 27 with Charlie and Tommy having poster presentations.

June agenda topics to include: water damage from spring flooding, sage-grouse implementation effect on travel planning and grazing permits, and a North Rim update by Charlie.

Item VIII: Open Discussion

Fuel breaks have a slow growth and require patience.

Litigation is a huge workload and is limiting time spent on other projects. It also limits public interaction. The BLM is learning not to accept time sensitive agreements.

What changes are being seen with the new Administration? There was a hiring freeze implemented at the first of the year. It lifted slightly to allow hiring of emergency personnel (fire) and then more recently seasonal and Pathways intern hiring. We can only speculate on future decisions.

BLM is focusing planning efforts on outcome-based grazing efforts. This is a change from past grazing in that the BLM is looking more at the outcomes of targeted grazing.

The Mule Deer Foundation and their partnership with BLM to rehabilitate several thousand acres within the Twin Falls District was spotlighted in an article of 'Outdoor Life'.

There needs to be more public awareness. There also needs to be more visual aspects shown to the public; most usually accomplished through social media. Remember how blessed we are to have public land. Idaho has a large amount of public land. Surveys show large public support in Idaho. The more publicity of BLM results in increased support. The public would enjoy hearing BLM stories. Unfortunately, publicity can also have a backlash. The public needs to be educated.

Tommy Hayes reported that the Twin Falls Fire and Aviation Management has tested various equipment. Twin Falls Fire has now purchased an Osh Kosh. It is a Type 3 water monitor. This was made possible with sage-grouse funding for fire suppression.

Item IX: Idaho Department of Water Resources Overview of Water Recharge efforts and the Surface Water Coalition Settlement – Wesley Hipke, IWRB Recharge Program Manager

Mr. Hipke gave a Power Point presentation titled “Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer Issues”. (see PowerPoint slides)

The Snake River Plain is about 10,000 square miles. There has been a constant decline of water levels in the aquifer since the turbine pump was developed in the 1950’s. There is a direct relationship between the level of water in the aquifer and the amount of discharge at Thousand Springs. The aquifer decline has been especially significant from Blackfoot to the Minidoka Reach. The aquifer level has continued to decline even during ‘wet’ years with high precipitation. Aquifer health affects stream and river health.

Water rights are dependent on hierarchy. Most of the oldest water rights are ground water. These oldest rights must be met first. Most wells are not metered; causing difficulty determining that needs and rights are met. The lack of sufficient water affects agriculture, industry, and town growth. Communities need water to grow.

If the flow and reservoir of water is short, junior ground water users make up the difference. Constant adjustments cause much frustration. There have been negotiations to create long-term solutions. The goal is to return the ground water level mark (determined from 1991-2001) by 2026. There was legislation created in 2014 to collect \$5 million fund from cigarette taxes by 2019.

Aquifer recharge from natural flow will not meet the goal. Idaho Water Resources does not have the right to recharge the aquifer until the Minidoka Dam and American Falls priorities have been met. Therefore, there are usually only off-season rights (no agriculture irrigation). Storage water can be bought to assist with the aquifer recharge. There has been construction to increase recharge capacity.

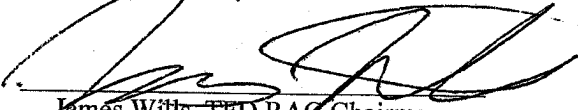
Item X: Field Trip to View Water Recharge Site at Milepost 31, Shoshone Idaho

Handouts Provided:


- 1- **The BLM: A Sound Investment for America 2016 (1p)**
- 2- **BLM Idaho 2016 by the Numbers/Your Public Land by the Dollars (1p)**
- 3- **Wild Horse and Burro Program (1p)**
- 4- **National Conservation Lands Summaries (1p)**
- 5- **Shoshone Field Office Update for TF District BLM RAC (1p)**
- 6- **Cold Springs Replacement Concept 2 Map (1p)**
- 7- **Jarbidge Field Office Update for TF District BLM RAC (2p)**

8- Burley Field Office Update for TF District BLM RAC (1p)

Minutes certified by:


James Wills, TFD RAC Chairman

9-12-2017
Date


Michael Courtney, TFD Manager

9/18/2017
Date

Minutes recorded by:

Jody Sherwood, Shoshone Field Office Administrative Assistant