



Twin Falls District  
Resource Advisory Council



MEETING MINUTES

9/27/2017

**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 - District Public Affairs Specialist  
Ken Crane - Burley Field Manager  
Elliot Traher - Jarbidge Field Manager  
Codie Martin - Shoshone Field Manager  
Curtis Jensen - Twin Falls District Fire Management Officer (Acting)  
Lisa Cresswell – District Planning and Environmental Coordinator  
John Kurtz – Shoshone Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Kelsey Brezendine – District Fire Information Officer  
Sean Boggs – Burley GIS Specialist  
Rosemary Crawford - Burley Administrative Assistant Trainee

**Public Attendees:**

KMVT news

*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 Rosemary Crawford at (208) 677-6600, or by email at [rcrawford@blm.gov](mailto:rcrawford@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**

District Manager Michael Courtney welcomed all those in attendance to the meeting, and briefly introduced the agenda items. He emphasized the BLM's mission to protect rangeland habitat, the advantages of using drones for resource management, and the continued focus and challenges faced in maintaining public lands for multi-use.

**Item II: 2017 Fire Season Overview – Curtis Jensen**

Curtis informed the council that the fire season started on March 20<sup>th</sup>, with the latest fire occurring near Bliss on September 24<sup>th</sup>. A Geographic Area Coordination Center for the Great Basin was staged at the College of Southern Idaho and was operational for 71 days from June 21<sup>st</sup> through September 12<sup>th</sup>. The Twin Falls District had a total of 62 fires that burned 147,274 acres. Curtis stated that 35 fires were human caused, and 27 were caused by lightning, with the most damage stemming from human caused fires. The Fuels program, which handles prevention and rehabilitation of burned areas, exceeded the 2017 target with 112% completion. The Twin Falls District Fuels program accomplishes 60% of state goals, and 30% of the nation's goals. A Large Fire Assessment study will be conducted by the District in early October to review the Mammoth Cave fire which burned 49,912 acres, including sage-grouse habitat. They will make sure the District meets the Secretarial Order for large fires within sage-grouse habitat, give recommendations on how we can do things better in the future and what we did well.

Ken discussed the Goose Creek Flood Control district and the construction of a new sink trench in June. The District has three existing trenches, but another was needed for emergency distribution of flood waters. The Flood Control District has determined that still more discharge capacity is needed and is working on a new proposal to construct two additional trenches.

**Item III: Burley Field Office Update – Ken Crane**

Ken discussed the Burley Landscape II project which has an emphasis on shifting from managing live trees to the removal of standing dead trees remaining from recent wildfire in sage-grouse habitat areas. Standing dead trees offer a "predator perch" and their removal is essential to the protection of sage-grouse nesting areas. Additional considerations besides sage-grouse habitat include mule deer habitat and effects of juniper management on hydrology of the watershed.

Ken gave an update on the Berger permit renewal. Eighteen proposed grazing decisions were signed at the end of August, and the protest period just ended for all interested parties. The office has received one protest, and is in anticipation of an appeal from the same party. If litigation ensues, office workload will increase considerably.

The Coe fire burned 1,065 acres on the east side of Cotterel Mountain, and included a portion of the Oregon Trail. The entire fire area is mapped as general sage-grouse habitat. The Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation plan calls for 200 acres to be drill seeded, and 200 acres aerial seeded with a mixture of native and like-native grasses and sagebrush. The aerial seeded areas will be masticated to remove standing dead junipers, and chained in order to incorporate seed into the soil. Noxious weeds will be monitored and treated, and grazing will be avoided in the burned areas to maximize recovery.

**Item III: Potential for Unmanned Aircraft Systems use in resource management - Sean Boggs**

Sean gave an overview of the advantages to using Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in resource management. Sean is one of three FAA licensed remote pilots in the District. The use of drones and the aerial footage collected can help in fire management and fuels projects by detecting hot spots with thermal cameras, and by monitoring recovery efforts in remote areas. Drones can be used to assist in wildlife management projects by tracking animal counts, as well as monitoring materials, such as gravel pit use. The BLM can also use drones to monitor vegetation growth before and after grazing seasons. A typical mission takes one day to complete, with one hour of flight time before charging is needed. Sean explained that drones are low risk because they are un-manned aircrafts. Drones provide a unique aerial perspective, and offer time-saving advantages. Recently, a drone proved useful in the Shoshone field office to identify areas of leafy spurge growth.

**Item IV: Wood River Travel Management Plan – John Kurtz**

John gave an overview of the Wood River Travel Management Plan. The Shoshone Field Office has contracted Advanced Resource Solutions (ARS), to conduct the travel management plan environmental analysis. He explained the challenge of creating a travel management plan is to think objectively, and focus on minimizing the impact of the routes on public land. There are three different options for the Wood River plan. The initial step was to finalize and document the route evaluations. The route evaluations document if the route interfaces with: wildlife habitat, cultural resources, natural resources, water, etc. The rationale for designating or closing a route is also clearly stated. John also noted that options may need to be altered in the planning process as more feedback is received from the public and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The plan is currently accepting comments and next will be modifying the options, developing a preferred alternative and conducting the analysis. The Shoshone office hopes to have a preferred alternative ready for review by December 2017. The public comment period ends Sept. 30 and will re-open in May 2018 when the draft EA is ready for review. The final decision is expected by January 2019. The public can access the BLM e-planning website, read the Scope of Information package, and offer feedback.

Colorado Gulch bridge removal: The BLM will work with its County partners to provide guidance because removal of the bridge will change recreational use in that area significantly.

Chairman James Wills set a tentative Wood River Travel Management sub-committee meeting date for January 17th, 2018.

**Item V: Twin Falls District Travel Management Planning – Ken Crane and Elliot Traher**

Burley Field Office travel update - Ken Crane:

The Burley area has a diverse ecosystem as well as diverse recreation opportunities. Population growth in the Magic Valley has made travel management a priority for the field office. The changing demographic has an increased interest in outdoor recreation. As the population grows, so will “use conflict”, such as illegal dumping. The Burley Field Office is currently in the route inventory stage of a travel plan. In 2014, the Field Office hired ARS to help inventory the land and routes. The inventory needs updating to show new routes. Current inventory shows approximately 1,600 miles of routes, but there could be up to 1/3 more unaccounted for. There are 278,000 acres of planning area under the new travel plan consideration, and the Burley Field Office would like to keep as much of it open to the public as possible.

Jarbidge Field Office travel update – Elliot Traher:

The Field Office has determined five potential travel management areas. The office is also in the route inventory stage of the travel management plan. Elliot stressed the importance of determining and managing large impacts, and developing a relationship with the public prior to plan development. Elliot stated that there needs to be a strong effort in enforcing rules already in place. Sign monitoring needs to be a priority, as well as recording land use activities seen in the field.

**Item VI: Cedar Fields Environmental Impact Statement Update – Lisa Cresswell**

Project Manager Lisa Cresswell explained the Native American interest in the Cedar Fields area. This is an archeologically dense area. Some portions of land within the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management have already been closed to the public. Cedar Fields is a heavy use area for rock climbing and OHV activity. The impact of this heavy use is apparent in the loss of vegetation around the base of the rocks, climbing hardware being drilled into the rocks, closures not being observed, and artifacts being taken from the site. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes have requested that the BLM address these adverse effects to the area. Five alternatives have been analyzed in the Impact Statement. The Field Office plans to publish the Draft EIS in February 2018 with a 90 day comment period that would end in May, with a finalized plan completed by March 2019.

**Item VII: Shoshone Field Office Update - Codie Martin**

The Idaho Water Resources Board (IWRB) has proposed 14 aquifer recharge sites, and have identified two potential sites thus far. The IWRB is currently working on a design submittal that the BLM will use to prepare an Environmental Assessment.

Codie has signed a Decision record transferring the Lincoln County Waste Transfer Station entirely to Lincoln County.

The Shoshone Field Office is looking to obtain right-of-way for an easement to cross State land to access BLM land near the canyon rim by Shoshone Falls in Jerome County. Three access points have been proposed. The city has also proposed the construction of a parking lot on BLM ground.

Codie discussed the Idaho Power King to Wood River transmission line progress. IPC is currently replacing structures on the northern portion of the right-of-way from Hailey to Macon Flat and expect to complete this by the end of the year.

The Nature Conservancy and the BLM are negotiating use of easement to ensure public use continues in the Nature Conservancy and Cenarrusa Ranch area. The BLM would like existing routes to remain open and available for non-motorized recreation to access public land.

Due to heavy spring run-off, large areas of Beaver Creek road in Camas County have eroded. Some areas are impassable by full size vehicle. The BLM has repaired this road in the past, however, at the present time BLM does not have the time or resources to offer. The BLM will rely on the county to initiate the repair.

Codie gave an overview of the fires experienced in the Shoshone field office this season. There were 32 total grazing allotments that were burned. Protection fences need to be installed, and cattle guards need to be repaired or replaced. Many permittees have been affected and had to decrease herd size, or find alternate pastures. Some allotments were completely burned and will be closed for one to two years.

The Record of Decision for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Resource Management Plan Amendment/FEIS was signed on July 31, 2017.

#### **Item VIII: Jarbidge Field Office Update – Elliot Traher**

Elliot mentioned the three FOIA requests that his field office has handled this year. At this time, there are no new requests. In 2016 there were approximately 700,000 FOIA requests across all agencies. Yearly, FOIA requests cost the Federal Government \$514 million in wages and litigation, with less than 1% being recouped. Information about FOIA reports can be accessed at FOIA.gov.

The Jarbidge Field Office experienced five fires during the season that covered a combined 85,000 acres. All fires were caused by lightning and in sage-grouse habitat areas. Although high winds were a factor in all fires, previously initiated fuel breaks were instrumental in slowing the fire movement. Elliot stated that his office anticipates all areas to grow back nicely.

**Item IX: Poster Presentation – Jody Hawkins**

RAC council member Jody Hawkins presented his poster presentation.

**Item X: Other Business**

~~The next meeting will be January 24, 2018~~

Brett Meyer and Tommy Hayes will give poster presentations at the January meeting.

**Handouts Provided:**

- 1- Twin Falls District Fire Briefing 2017 (1p)
- 2- Burley Field Office Update for TF District BLM RAC (1p)
  - a. Whiskey Fire Map (1p)
  - b. Coe Fire Map (1p)
- 3- Cedar Fields Draft EIS and Plan Amendment (8pp)
- 4- Shoshone Field Office Update for TF District BLM RAC (2pp)
  - a. 2017 Wildfires – Shoshone Field Office (7pp)
  - b. Google Earth maps - Shoshone Falls access routes (4pp)
  - c. High Divide – Cenarrusa map (1p)
  - d. King to Wood River map (1p)
- 5- Jarbidge Field Office Update for TF District BLM RAC (2p)
  - a. K97K Diamond A fire map (1p)
  - b. K978 Grassy Hills fire map (1p)
  - c. K3A4 Centennial fire map (1p)
  - d. K3BC Sandpoint fire map (1p)
  - e. K41M Loveridge fire map (1p)

Minutes certified by:

  
James Wills, TFD RAC Chairman

10-16-2017  
Date

  
Michael Courtney, TFD Manager

10/17/2017  
Date

Minutes recorded by:

Rosemary Crawford, Burley Field Office Administrative Assistant Trainee