

**BLM Utah Resource Advisory Council
Conference Call Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2020**

Meeting attendees

Utah Resource Advisory Council (RAC) members: Chad Baker, Joan Hayes, Callee Butcher, Clif Koontz, Jay Tanner, Rick Draney, Michael Small, Troy Forrest, Tom Adams, Ralph Bohn, Tyler Thompson, Bill Cox, Frank White, and Mike Worthen.

BLM employees: Anita Bilbao, Kelly Orr, Gus Warr, Lola Bird, Jaydon Mead, Myron Jeffs, Gloria Tibbets, Matt Blocker, Lance Porter, Jake Palma, Dana Truman, and Callie Goff.

Members of the public: Mary O'Brien, Sarah Thomas, Andy Eatchel, Dave Spencer, Kitty Benzar, Larry Ellertson, Matt Cazier, Neal Clark, Brad Clements, Tyson Todd, Brieanah Schwartz, Dan Morse, Scott Albrecht, Clay Crozier, and Phil Hanceford.

Chad Baker recused himself from any conversations relating to the Lake Powell Pipeline due to ethics considerations.

BLM Utah Priorities and Outlook for Fiscal Year 2021

Presenter: Anita Bilbao, Acting State Director

- Welcome to our two new RAC members - Tom Adams and Mike Worthen.
- BLM Utah priorities are safety and health. The State Office sustained earthquake damage and the office is currently closed due to repairs taking place. Employees in the State Office continue to telework.
- We are currently working to onboard summer seasonal employees. Our priority is safety protocols and giving employees what they need to do their job safely.
- There has been an increase in visitation across Utah during the last few months. Our priority is to work collectively to provide for public and employee health and safety.
- Anita Bilbao is still serving as the Acting State Director. No announcements about a new State Director yet.
- In relation to the Dingell Act, BLM Utah will soon be completing the Hyde Park and Ashley Springs land conveyances.
- The comment period for the Lake Powell Pipeline Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) began on June 5.
- The comment period for the Northern Corridor Draft EIS will begin on June 12.
- The 30-day comment period for the September oil and gas lease sale Environmental Assessment began on June 9.
- Advisory committees – we are currently renewing charters for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee (GSENM MAC) and the Bears Ears National Monument Advisory Committee (BENM MAC). Six new members were recently

appointed to the GSENM MAC and the BENM MAC is hoping to meet this fall. Recommendations for appointment to the San Rafael Swell Recreation Area Advisory Council have been forwarded to Headquarters.

- GSENM is working to implement their new resource management plan that was signed in February. The Utah RAC provided input on the GSENM plan. If there are needs from any offices for RAC input, the office can request RAC assistance.
- The Bears Ears National Monument Management Plan was also signed in February. They are currently working on implementation level plans including travel management plans and cultural resource management plans in association with recreation management plans. The BENM MAC will be providing feedback on implementation plans.
- Cedar City Field Office Resource Management Plan – we are working to get the Draft EIS released for public comment as soon as possible. We look forward to engaging with the public once it is released.
- A right-of-way application was received for the Pine Valley Water Supply Project. We hope to publish the notice of intent to prepare an EIS in July.

Desolation Canyon River Program Business Plan

Presenter: Jaydon Mead, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Price Field Office

- The Desolation Canyon River trip is 84 miles long. The put-in location is Sand Wash and the take-out location is Swaseys Boat Ramp.
- A limited number of river permits are issued through a lottery system. During high use (May 15 to August 15), six permits are issued per day. During low use (August 16 to May 14), two permits are issued per day. 427 permits were issued in 2020. One permit is good for up to 25 people.
- Average visitation is 5,200-6,500 visitors per year.
- The proposal is to increase the permit fee from \$25 per person to \$50 per person. The proposed increase would be an added expense of \$4.17 per person per day for a six-day river trip.
- The annual operating costs average \$400,000. The annual revenue average is \$250,000, for a net loss of \$150,000. The goal of the fee increase is to get closer to covering costs.
- Fees cover approximately 65 percent of the river program costs while appropriated funds, which are not guaranteed, cover 35 percent of the cost.
- Fee revenue would be used to enhance facilities and experiences at the put in and take out locations, improve/maintain ramps, expand parking, install new screen cabins, and improve interpretive signage.
- Without a fee increase, visitor services may need to be reduced.
- Public outreach efforts took place from Jan. 13 - Feb. 12, 2020.
- A total of 16 comments were received – three were supportive of the proposal, five were against the proposal, and the other half were equivocal.

RAC member discussion:

- Expressed concern about fee increases given the current social and economic climate.

- Impressed with Price Field Office employees and the work they are doing. Understands issues with the current economy but thinks the proposal is well thought out. The proposal will benefit the public and natural resources in the long run. A fee increase is overdue.

Price Field Office Campgrounds Business Plan

Presenter: Myron Jeffs, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Price Field Office

- The proposal is to increase fees in three existing fee sites and implement fees in 12 new locations.
- The three previously authorized fee sites are Swinging Bridge North, Swinging Bridge South, and Price Canyon Recreation Area. Fees for Swinging Bridge South and Price Recreation Area have not been increased since 1995.
- For these three sites, the existing individual site fee is \$6 or \$8 per night and the existing group site fee is \$20 per night. The proposal is to increase the individual site fee to \$20 per night and to increase the group site fee to \$75 per night.
- The Price Field Office is proposing 12 new fee campgrounds: New Joes, Cottonwood Canyon, Buckhorn Wash, The Wickiup, The Wedge, South Temple Wash, San Rafael Reef, Temple Mountain Townsite, Little Wild Horse, Sand Wash, Jurassic National Monument, and Millsite. Most locations have undergone substantial development. For these 12 campgrounds, the proposal is to charge \$20 per night for individual sites and \$75 per night for group sites.
- The three-year average operating cost for all sites is \$241,788. The three-year average revenue is \$18,176. FY 2019 revenue was \$22,203.
- The FY 2021 projected expenses are \$250,000. FY 2021 projected revenue if the proposal is implemented would be \$220,000.
- Public outreach efforts took place from Jan. 13 - Feb. 12, 2020.
- A total of six public comments were received via email. One was expressly opposed to the proposal and the other comments were supportive or neutral.

RAC member discussion:

- When would the new fees become effective? Six months from publication of the *Federal Register* notice.
- Would dispersed camping be affected? The BLM may implement supplementary rules to limit dispersed camping right around the campgrounds.
- The majority of the Price Field Office is still available for free camping. Hoping that a decision on the fee proposal won't have to be delayed.

Wild Horse and Burro Program Update

Presenter: Gus Warr, Utah Wild Horse and Burro Program Lead

- Wild horse and burro program goals: maintain healthy herds on healthy rangelands, ensure the health and welfare of animals in our care, and place excess animals into good homes.

- Nationally, off-range holding costs accounted for 67 percent of program expenditures in FY 2019. Total 2019 program expenditures were \$85,549,143.
- The cost of lifetime care for a single horse is approximately \$50,000 based on an average of 25 years of government care.
- BLM Utah has 19 herd management areas – 17 with horses and two with burros. There are 10 herd areas, all with horses, of which three have zero populations.
- The current estimated population in Utah is 5,746 animals – 5,316 wild horses and 430 burros. Population estimates are conducted using aerial surveys.
- Utah’s appropriate management level (AML) is 1,956 animals – 1,786 for horses and 170 for burros.
- Thus far in fiscal year 2020, BLM Utah has gathered 517 horses. An additional 1,825 horses are scheduled to be removed this summer for a total of 2,342 horses.
- BLM Utah placed 7,104 animals into private care in FY 2019.
- The BLM has many partnerships for management of wild horses and burros.
- Looking ahead: continue and scale up gathers and removals, increase the use of humane population growth suppression tools, develop new, innovative ways to place more animals into private care, and streamline holding costs.

RAC member discussion:

- Compliments on management of wild horses in Utah. Need emphasis on reaching and maintaining AML. Look at ways to maintain AML such as population control measures.
- Some rangeland impacts across the west are significant. This is a challenge.
- How quick can the BLM respond in removing animals in the case of drought or wildfire? The BLM responds as quickly as possible in these types of situations.

BLM Regulations Update

Presenter Kelly Orr, Acting Deputy State Director for Natural Resources

- Rulemaking – agencies have the authority to issue regulations from laws enacted by Congress.
- Proposed rules must be published in the *Federal Register*, which initiates a public comment period. Final rules must be published in the *Federal Register* and take effect no less than 30 days after the date of publication.

Current BLM regulatory revision efforts:

- E-bike regulations – The 60-day comment period closed on June 9. Over 10,000 comments were received. The next steps are to review comments and prepare comment responses. The goal is to publish a rule in *Federal Register* by the end of the calendar year.
- Timber regulations – the proposed rule published on June 8 and the public comment period is open through Aug. 7. The current rules haven’t been revised in many years. The goal is to streamline the process for the sale of forest products and improve the BLM’s

ability to conduct active forest management, while reducing burdens to the public and the administration of BLM lands.

- Grazing regulations – The BLM is developing an EIS in conjunction with proposed revisions to grazing regulations. Scoping closed on March 6. Approximately 1,500 comments were received. Upon release of the Draft EIS and proposed rule, there will be a 60-day comment period.
- Land use planning regulations – this effort is on hold due to other priorities.

Public Comment Period

- The public comments received via email from Jean Public and Richard Spotts were emailed to RAC members for review prior to the meeting and are attached.
- Sarah Thomas – Conserve Southwest Utah is requesting a full and robust comment period on the Draft EIS for the Northern Corridor Project. Concerned about suppression of public participation. The Lake Powell Pipeline and Northern Corridor Projects are unfolding simultaneously. The scoping period was only 30 days. The Draft EIS for the Northern Corridor is being released during COVID 19 which impairs the ability of the public to comment. Online forums and virtual meetings are not an adequate response. Relevant documents necessary for full participation in the comment period have not yet been released, including the Northern Corridor Project scoping report. The Northern Corridor Project invites public comment on four interrelated actions that trigger three major plan amendments. It is a highly complex project that warrants careful, deliberate participation. The public cannot be expected to comment on this complex project in 90 days and in the midst of a pandemic. Requests that the comment period be extended until the pandemic is under control to allow for appropriate public engagement. Asks the RAC to encourage the BLM to keep the public informed on the relationship between the June 4, 2020 Executive Order on Accelerating the Nation's Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Emergency by Expediting Infrastructure Investments and Other Activities and the public comment opportunities for the Northern Corridor and Lake Powell Pipeline Projects.
- Kitty Benzar – has the RAC looked at the percentage of proposed increases over the years? Several studies show that fees deter visitors to public lands. Many people are out of work and should be welcomed to public lands without fees. The fee proposals will displace dispersed campers. There was no robust effort to notify the public of the proposed fee increases.
- Andy Eatchel – the fee proposals will create impacts to low income populations. There was inadequate publicity of the plans. Many people prefer more primitive camping experiences. Why does the BLM think that the public wants developed camping experiences? A comment was made that the vast majority of Price Field Office lands are available for use, but you can't get to it or find out about it. Worried that primitive camping won't be allowed in the future. Building more sites will just increase maintenance costs and result in increased fees. The trend should be toward less development in camping.
- Neal Clark – comments from SUWA on fee proposals. The Dingell Act requires the Price Field Office to develop a comprehensive management plan for the San Rafael Swell

Recreation Area. Campground development and fee increases will result in shifting use. The Dingell Act has changed the status of the lands. There is no urgency to develop new camping opportunities. There will be a San Rafael Swell Recreation Area Advisory Council. They will be involved in developing the recreation plans. Need to look at everything comprehensively.

Washington County Planning Updates

Presenter: Gloria Tibbets,

Lake Powell Pipeline Project

- Applicant: Washington County Water Conservancy District.
- Applicant objective: deliver a reliable annual yield of approximately 86,000 acre-feet of water from outside the Virgin River Basin into Washington County to meet projected water demands in 2060.
- The Bureau of Reclamation is the lead agency for this project. Cooperating agencies include the BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians.
- Alternatives:
 - No Action – the proposed project would not be built.
 - Southern Alternative (Preferred Alternative) - 141-mile, 69-inch diameter buried water delivery pipeline with supporting facilities, mostly following a designated utility corridor south of lands held in trust for the benefit of the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians.
 - Highway Alternative – construct 134-mile, 69-inch diameter buried water delivery pipeline with supporting facilities following Arizona State Route 389 across lands held in trust for the benefit of the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians.
- The Draft EIS was released for public review and comment on June 8.
- The target date for a Record of Decision is winter 2020-2021.
- The BLM's role in this project is processing a right-of-way application and an amendment to the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan.

Northern Corridor Project

- Applicant: Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT).
- The BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service are co-leads on this project and are responding to an application from UDOT for a road right-of-way through the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area (NCA) and Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, along with related amendments to BLM resource management plans for the Red Cliffs NCA and St. George Field Office, and a request from Washington County to amend an incidental take permit for desert tortoise.
- The Draft EIS will be released for a 90-day public comment period on June 12.
- A potential target shooting closure is being proposed for the Zone 6 area and is also part of the 90-day comment period. BLM law enforcement would enforce regulations in this area. The BLM also works with the Washington County Sheriff's Office.
- The target date for Records of Decision is winter 2020-2021.

- The Habitat Conservation Plan continues to be collaboratively implemented.

RAC Member Wrap-up Discussions

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act requires publication of a notice of intent to collect fees to be published in the *Federal Register* six months in advance of new fees being implemented. The Richfield Field Office Campgrounds Business Plan was approved by the RAC in June 2019 at the meeting in Kanab.

Desolation Canyon River Business Plan

The Price Field Office proposes to increase the cost of Desolation Canyon River permits from \$25 per person to \$50 per person. Since this would be an increase of an existing fee, not a new fee, it would not need to be published in the *Federal Register*. The RAC can recommend a phased approach or a modified proposal if they wish.

RAC member discussion:

- Expressed concern about the timing of raising fees in the current climate with so many people currently out of work.
- Expressed concern about a potential decrease in future appropriated recreation funding.
- Discussed a possible delay or phased approach to implementing the fee increase.

Jay Tanner made a motion to approve the Desolation Canyon River permit fee increase as proposed. Tyler Thompson seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

Category 1 – 5 yes

Category 2 – 2 yes, 2 no

Category 3 – 4 yes, 1 no

Tom Adams made a motion to raise the Desolation Canyon River permit fee to \$40 per person instead of \$50. Rick Draney seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Category 1 – 5 yes

Category 2 – 3 yes, 1 no

Category 3 – 5 yes

Price Field Office Campgrounds Business Plan

The Price Field Office proposes to charge \$20 per night for individual camp sites and \$75 per night for group camp sites.

RAC member discussion:

- Recognized the need for developed camping opportunities and associated fees to cover operating costs and maintain facilities.
- Expressed concern about the perception of raising fees in the current climate.
- Some members expressed support for implementing the fees right away and some expressed support for delaying fee implementation.
- Discussed a possible phased approach to fee implementation.
- Discussed the need to give lower income individuals opportunities to use facilities.

- Discussed questions about operating costs and potential revenue numbers.
- Expressed support for the BLM to be able to cover operating expenses.

Callee Butcher made a motion to table the Price Field Office campground fee proposal and revisit it at a future date. Ralph Bohn seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

Category 1 – 2 yes, 3 no

Category 2 – 3 no

Category 3 – 1 yes, 4 no

Tyler Thompson made a motion to approve the Price Field Office campground fees as proposed. Jay Tanner seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

Category 1 – 3 yes, 2 no

Category 2 – 1 yes, 3 no

Category 3 – 3 yes, 2 no

Clif Koontz made a motion to approve the Price Field Office campground fees as proposed, but delay implementation until June 2021. Rick Draney seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

Category 1 – 3 yes, 2 no

Category 2 – 2 yes, 2 no

Category 3 – 4 yes, 1 no

Rick Draney made a motion to increase the Price Field Office campground fees for individual sites to \$15 per night instead of \$20 and group sites to \$75 per night to be implemented no sooner than Jan 1, 2021. Tyler Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Category 1 – 3 yes, 2 no


Category 2 – 3 yes, 1 no

Category 3 – 4 yes, 1 no

Next RAC meeting

The next Utah RAC meeting will be held on Nov. 9-10, 2020 in Price, Utah.

Potential topics: Fivemile Pass Recreation Area Business Plan, Special Recreation Permit Program overview, status of advisory councils in Utah, and Color Country planning updates.

Approved: 
Troy Forrest (Sep 10, 2020 08:34 MDT)

 Troy Forrest, Chairperson

Date: _____

Outlook

Delete Archive Junk Sweep Move to Categorize Snooze

- Folders
 - Inbox 117
 - Drafts 3
 - Sent Items 4
 - Deleted Items 1062
 - Junk Email 27
 - Archive
 - All Documents
 - Conversation Hist...
 - Important 226
 - Notes
 - Starred 3
 - [New folder](#)
- Groups
 - [New group](#)
 - [Discover groups](#)
 - [Manage groups](#)

[EXTERNAL] Fw: ca njutah officials start understanding natioal land is national land and not utah land to destroy form oneygrubbing

Jean Public <jeanpublic1@yahoo.com>
 Fri 4/24/2020 4:18 PM
 Bird, Lola

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Jean Public <jeanpublic1@yahoo.com>
To: abilbao@blm.gov <abilbao@blm.gov>; lbid@blm.gov <lbid@blm.gov>; contact@wildhorsepreservation.org <contact@wildhorsepreservation.org>; information@sierraclub.org <information@sierraclub.org>; humanelines@hsus.org <humanelines@hsus.org>; info@peta.org <info@peta.org>; info@lohv.org <info@lohv.org>; madraven@gmail.com <madraven@gmail.com>; contact@thedodo.com <contact@thedodo.com>; scoops@huffpost.com <scoops@huffpost.com>; info@nyclass.org <info@nyclass.org>; westchesterhumane@gmail.com <westchesterhumane@gmail.com>; info@idausa.org <info@idausa.org>; info@cok.net <info@cok.net>
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020, 06:15:08 PM EDT
Subject: Fw: ca njutah officials start understanding natioal land is national land and not utah land to destroy form oneygrubbing

utah officials start understanding natioal land is national land and not utah land to destroy form mneygrubbing

gthe aenda of this group is to kill all wild horsesi utah. eveyr wild horse in utah is under threat from this vicious solely utah group. this isnational land but this is not national organization. this is solely utah selfish mendacious people who want to murder and kill wildness so that they can use national land for theirown selfish ingterests. this is above their pay grade and they need to be stopped since this is national land they are sitting on and trying to own for their own wallets. this is nagtional land owned by 330,000,000 and it shoudl be managed solely for hte interests of all this nations citizens and taxpayers. this group needs change, blm of course likes to be corrupt with locals and make out for itself and it has been found guilty on bribery in the past.

this group is totally self interested for their own wallets ane haw no rewpsect for the rights of all of amnerica., this vicious group says to all oghter americans you have no rights in utah we will kill at will. we all need to stop such an ugly group. the wild horses and other wildlife have rights to live, to be respected andprotected. we canno allow csuch merciless killing humans to take away our rights to have a decent america. this comment is for the public re cord. please receipt. jean puliee jeanpublic1@yahoo.com

[Federal Register Volume 85, Number 80 (Friday, April 24, 2020)]
 [Notices]
 [Pages 23056-23057]
 From the Federal Register Online via the Government Publishing Office [www.gpo.gov]
 [FR Doc No: 2020-08781]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 Bureau of Land Management
 [20X LLUT912000 L13140000.PP0000]

Notice of Public Meeting, Utah Resource Advisory Council, Utah
 AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.
 ACTION: Notice of Public Meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Utah Resource Advisory Council (RAC) will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The Utah RAC is scheduled to meet on June 10, 2020, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A teleconference may substitute an in-person meeting if public health restrictions are in effect.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Richfield Interagency Fire Center, 2031 South Industrial Park Road, Richfield, Utah 84701. Written comments to address the RAC may be sent to the BLM Utah State Office,

[EXTERNAL] Utah RAC Meeting - My June 10 meeting comments

Richard Spotts <raspotts2@gmail.com>

Wed 6/3/2020 1:49 PM

To: External_Affairs, BLM_UT <BLM_UT_External_Affairs@blm.gov>

Cc: Bird, Lola <lbird@blm.gov>; abilboa@blm.gov <abilboa@blm.gov>; Tibbetts, Gloria A <gtibbetts@blm.gov>; Ferris, Dawna E <d8ferris@blm.gov>; Carnahan, Rachel <rcarnahan@blm.gov>

June 3, 2020

RE: My comments for your June 10 meeting

Dear BLM Utah RAC members:

Please accept and review my following comments for consideration at your June 10th meeting, and attach them to your associated meeting minutes.

At the outset, I appreciated the opportunity to speak to you in person at your March 10th meeting in Saint George. As you know, I was disappointed with some of the BLM information presented at that meeting because it was biased and did not provide a balanced or thorough perspective on some controversial issues.

For example, on the BLM as a cooperating agency on the Lake Powell Pipeline DEIS, it did not describe the strong public opposition nor the need to consider a feasible water conservation alternative. On the BLM/FWS Northern Corridor Highway DEIS, it did not acknowledge the strong public opposition, the disastrous precedent that could be established for BLM's system of conservation lands, and the major concern that county consultants may provide a biased transportation analysis that BLM and FWS may blindly rely on in the DEIS. On the new GSENM related plans, on the listing to distinguish monument from public domain management laws, there was no mention of the Antiquities Act.

In light of these serious examples of BLM bias and information omissions, it causes me to wonder about the primary purpose of your RAC. I've read your RAC charter, and it basically says that you provide recommendations to the BLM Utah State Director. That's fine in concept, but I wonder about the actual reality.

If you almost always rely on BLM information in making any RAC recommendations, and that BLM information is biased, incomplete, or self-serving, how can you avoid being merely a BLM rubber stamp? How are you supposed to represent a diverse cross-section of public and stakeholder interests if your source of information is one-

sided and reflects the current management culture of political expedience? Does the RAC do enough to seek out and obtain balanced information from different sources?

For example, I note that on your June 10 agenda, there is a short public comment period before lunch, but the Washington County issues update occurs later in that early afternoon. So I or others from Washington County would be asked to speak before we hear the Washington County issues update. Intended or not, this creates the impression that the opportunity for public comment is only a bureaucratic formality, not a sincere request for public input.

As a retired BLMer, I know that BLM desperately needs some basic structural and cultural management reforms to truly serve the public interest and better respond to growing challenges such as climate change, invasive weeds, and recreational pressures. I would hope that the RAC could become more independent, seek more balanced sources of information, and be proactive in recommending necessary reforms. The status quo is broken, and we cannot timidly afford to allow it to continue.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Spotts

255 North 2790 East
Saint George Utah 84790
raspotts2@gmail.com

cc: Interested parties