

## **BLM Utah Resource Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**March 9-10, 2020**

**Best Western Plus Abbey Inn**

**1129 S. Bluff Street, St. George, Utah 84770**

Utah Resource Advisory Council (RAC) members in attendance: Joan Hayes, Callee Butcher, Clif Koontz, Rick Draney, Troy Forrest, Ralph Bohn, Tyler Thompson, Bill Cox and Frank White.

BLM employees in attendance: Anita Bilbao, Kelly Orr, Lola Bird, Ahmed Mohsen, Christian Venhuizen, Jaydon Mead, Myron Jeffs, Kevin Oliver, Allison Ginn, Keith Rigtrup, Chris Conrad, Harry Barber, David Hercher, Aaron Kania, and Erik Vernon.

Members of the public in attendance: Noel Poe, Greg Garfield, Soren Jespersen, Oliver Wood, Richard Spotts, Sarah Thomas, Heath Hansen, Lexi Peery, Jane Whalen, Bryan Dixon, Adam Snow, Scott Albrecht, and Tristan Meek.

### **Color Country District Overview**

Presenter: Ahmed Mohsen, District Manager

Color Country District overview:

- Covers Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield, Beaver, Iron, and Washington counties.
- Community cooperation: Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative, rural fire readiness program, youth programs, and community stewardship.
- Work closely with the State of Utah on vegetation and fuels management program.
- Livestock grazing.
- Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative – In 2019, 16 students were hired for internships and three interns were hired into permanent positions.
- Wild Horses – completed gathers in the North Hills, Chokecherry, and Mt. Elinore herd management areas.
- Hot button issues – desert tortoise and growth in Washington County.

### **BLM Updates**

Presenter: Anita Bilbao, Acting State Director

- Ed Roberson retired at the end of last year. Anita Bilbao is the Acting State Director, Abbie Jossie is the Acting Associate State Director, and Kelly Orr is the Acting Deputy State Director for Natural Resources. A statewide priorities document was shared with the group.
- Current District Managers – Ahmed Mohsen, Color Country; Brian Quigley, Canyon Country; Harry Barber, Paria River; Lance Porter, Green River; and Kevin Oliver, West Desert.
- The selection process for a new Utah State Director is underway.
- The new BLM headquarters is located in Grand Junction, Colorado. Employees are in the process of transitioning to the new location.
- BLM Utah is preparing to host Washington Office employees that are moving west and will be located in Salt Lake City.

- Challenges – vacancies in the headquarters office and getting vacancies filled.
- Benefits of the move west – resources going to the field across all BLM states.
- BLM Utah priorities are tied to Department of the Interior (DOI) priorities. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) is our foundation. Five competencies - leading people, leading change, business acumen, building coalitions, and results driven.
- Major projects underway: Right-of-way for Lake Powell Pipeline, Northern Corridor, Uintah Basin Railway, Bears Ears National Monument plan, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument plan, Cedar City Resource Management Plan, travel management plans, Greater Sage-Grouse plans, and Dingell Act implementation.
- The Utah RAC charter was signed by Secretary Bernhardt and is in effect until March 2022.
- There will be a call for nominations to fill behind nine members on the Utah RAC later this year.
- The call for nominations for the San Rafael Swell Recreation Area Advisory Council and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee have closed. The next step is to review the applications.

#### **Desolation River Program Business Plan**

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

- Desolation Canyon is an 84-mile river trip. The put-in is at Sand Wash and the take-out location is Swaseys Boat Ramp.
- Designations in this area include – National Historic Landmark, Special Recreation Management Area, Wilderness areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic River designations.
- Limited number of permits. High use (May 15 to August 15) – six permits per day. Low use (August 16 to May 14) - two permits per day. Permits are issued through a lottery system. The lottery is for all permits during the year. 427 permits were issued in 2020. One permit is good for up to 25 people.
- Commercial use is allocated prior to the lottery opening.
- Launch numbers were determined on carrying capacity when the Desolation Canyon plan was developed.
- A lottery permit can be transferred to someone else if it can't be used.
- Camp sites are available on first-come, first-served basis.
- The five-year average number of visitors is 5,845.
- The fee collection authority is the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, Individual Special Recreation Permits, and FLPMA.
- Fee proposal – increase the permit fee from \$25 per person to \$50 per person.
- The six-year average total revenue is \$249,404.
- Commercial guides pay the per person fee plus three percent.
- The average annual operating cost is \$412,275.
- Fees cover approximately 65 percent of the river program costs while appropriated funds, which are not guaranteed, cover 35 percent of the cost.
- The annual net loss in operating cost is \$149,097.
- Have you considered adding more launches per day? There is hesitation to increase use, so as not to negatively impact the visitor experience.



- Should the commercial fee of three percent be increased? Moving forward, would fees increase? The recreation business plan would need to be updated to change these things.
- 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, expand parking for free use and paid use areas, and improve interpretive signage.
- The proposed increase would amount to an additional \$4.17 per day.
- Services may need to be cut without a fee increase. It is difficult to keep up with maintenance needs. Ranger presence is four career seasonal employees from March through October. Volunteers are used with the rangers. The BLM is partnering with the Tribe for patrols this year. The left side of the river was shut down two years ago by the Tribe. The BLM does not permit the Tribe. They have their own system. Permit numbers were not cut when the left side of the river was closed.
- If the fee is increased, some of the money would go toward the boat ramp expansion project and parking expansion.
- Public outreach efforts took place from Jan. 13 - Feb. 12, 2020.
- 16 comments were received – three were supportive of the proposal, five were against the proposal, and the other half were equivocal.
- Frank White would like to see the Recreation Insider newsletter started up again.
- Rick Draney - Concern about perception of doubling the fee. If the fee goes up, the experience needs to remain a quality experience.
- The BLM wants to make positive changes as much as possible with the funding available.
- Having the funding to maintain facilities is important. The fee increase would still not cover the current operating costs.
- Green River Daily – should a launch fee be charged at this location? A fee tube could be used.
- Look into a different option for the lottery system.

#### **Price Field Office Campground Business Plan**

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

- Three previously authorized fee sites: Swinging Bridge North and South and Price Canyon Recreation Area. For these sites, the existing individual site fee is \$6 per night. 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 proposal is to charge the same fees across all campsites.
- Toilet facilities are needed at Exit 131 north and south on I-70.
- The three-year average operating cost for all sites including Swaseys Beach is \$241,788. The three-year average revenue is \$18,176.
- FY 2021 anticipated expenses - \$250,000. FY 2021 anticipated revenue if proposal is implemented - \$229,000.

- Public outreach efforts took place from Jan. 13 - Feb. 12, 2020.
- Six public comments were received. Two comments were opposed.
- Campgrounds are open year-round.
- Funding could be used for operations and staffing.
- Price Field Office seeks out all grant funding opportunities.

### **Fivemile Pass Proposed Special Area management proposal**

Presenter: Kevin Oliver, West Desert District Manager and Allison Ginn, Assistant Salt Lake Field Manager

Questions for the RAC:

- How can BLM better manage the Fivemile Pass Area?
- What would be the most appropriate fee area boundary?
- Would the RAC support a fee system?
- What kind of infrastructure do you recommend at high-use OHV areas?

### **Background**

- The Salt Lake Field Office is at the draft Environmental Assessment stage of the process for the Fivemile Pass area. An environmental assessment will be released for comment in the next few months.
- Fivemile Pass is the “go to” area along the Wasatch Front. It is a big dirt bike area.
- The Manning Canyon area is capped and closed.
- This area is currently classified in the resource management plan as an extensive recreation management area.
- There is a cooperative agreement in place with Utah Division of State Parks.
- Size: approximately 34,000 acres.
- Annual visitation: 65,000 visitors annually.
- Facilities: asset value of \$450,000.
- Expenditures: \$104,295 per year including operations, law enforcement, and recreation staff.

### **Proposed solutions**

- Special area designation – use would be permitted
- Fee-based, day-use
- Supplementary rules
- New recreation developments

### **Public Scoping**

- Public scoping took place from Nov. 15 - Dec. 2, 2019.
- 80 formal comments were received
- 61 percent were opposed, 18 percent were partially opposed, four percent were supportive, six percent conditional support, and 11 percent did not state an opinion.



## Proposal

- The Proposed Action is a Special Area boundary of 17,790 acres and is focused on three zones of contiguous BLM land with recreation developments.
- Proposed improvements – beginner OHV rider areas, group camping areas, site-host area, equestrian trailhead, access trails, easements and/or leases, road improvements, OHV staging areas, signs and kiosks, additional restrooms, and resolution of trespass issues.
- Proposed supplementary rules – permit and fee for recreation use, day-use parking only in OHV staging areas, posted speed limits, campfires in fire ring or fire pan, safety flags on OHVs in beginner OHV rider areas, restrictions on glass containers, firewood collection, construction debris or pallet burning, commercial/industrial vehicle parking.

## Discussion

- Frank White likes that there are riding areas for beginners. Recommends working with Utah Division of State Parks to create this area.
- Signage would help emergency responders.
- Speed limit would be 15 mph in beginner and staging areas. As posted in other areas.
- May want to consider one-way trails. Could consider this in travel management planning.
- Post trail difficulty rating levels to assist riders and help them be safe.
- Clif Koontz recommends not posting speed limits.
- Maps are available and there are existing kiosks in the area.
- There are very few signs in the area outside of the staging areas.
- Want to maximize opportunities in the area for all types of recreation.
- The area would be signed but not fenced. Want to post areas so visitors know area boundaries.
- This area is subject to a target shooting closure. There are no current plans to designate a target shooting area.
- Dispersed camping – no proposed camping restrictions. Dispersed camping is still allowed. Some sites would be hardened to encourage use in those areas. Rock fire rings would be allowed.
- The BLM is currently working with private landowners regarding the proposal. Some adjacent landowners may want to sell land and some may not. One landowner may be interested in an easement. Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) is potentially interested in leasing some of their land.
- Recommend recruiting volunteer hosts for this area.
- Cleanup efforts have been successful in the past.
- If there is a Fivemile Pass fee area, Knolls could be included in the pass. May want to consider a pass that also includes Little Sahara Recreation Area.

## March 9 Public Comment Period

- The written comment from Michael Small was distributed to each RAC member. The public comments received via email from Jean Public, Herm Hoops, and Dr. Andrew Eatchel were emailed to RAC members prior to the meeting and hard copies were also provided at the meeting.

- Oliver Wood with Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance provided comments on the Price Business Plan. This is all about process for recreation management planning. His ideal situation is not to be around people - wants to see public lands without seeing people. Everyone's ideal experience is different. Business plans and the Dingell Act recreation plan process provides a number of opportunities for public input. On-the-ground implementation planning is through the management planning process for the San Rafael Swell plan. This is not the right venue to talk about recreation management in this area. Table this process and see what comes out of the San Rafael Swell planning process.

### **Washington County Issues and Projects**

Presenter: Keith Rigtrup, St. George Field Manager

St. George Field Office overview:

- Total acreage: 629,000 in Washington County
- 15 Wilderness areas
- 19 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Habitat for multiple listed threatened and endangered species
- Visitors in 2019 - 766,000
- 140 special recreation permits issued in 2020
- Multiple realty actions in progress
- The Ash Creek project is in progress - camp sites will eventually be installed

Two National Conservation Areas (NCA):

**Beaver Dam Wash NCA** – 63,480 acres. This area experienced multiple fires in 2005. Planting projects are taking place. Some planting projects are in partnership with other agency partners and volunteers. Continuing brown bag lunches at the St. George office to share information on what is happening across the field office.

**Red Cliffs NCA** – 45,108 acres located in the annexation zones of Washington County's five largest cities. The RAC is interested in touring the Red Cliffs area to see the changes that are taking place. The BLM is working to acquire private inholdings in the NCA. Have made good progress the last two years with this effort. Still working with other landowners on acquiring inholdings.

### **Northern Corridor proposal**

- Application from Utah Department of Transportation for a road right-of-way through the Red Cliffs NCA.
- Proposing Zone 6 for tortoise habitat mitigation.
- Washington County is proposing to amend an incidental take permit for desert tortoise.
- All groups are working together on this project.
- Four potential decisions: Right-of-Way application, amend the Red Cliffs NCA plan, amend the St. George Field Office plan, and a US Fish and Wildlife decision about the incidental take permit.



#### Changes to resource uses:

- Authorization of the right-of-way and establishment of a utility corridor up to 500' would potentially encumber up to approximately 260 acres of critical tortoise habitat and fragment another 2,025 acres in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve Zone 3.
- Establishment of Zone 6 under the Habitat Conservation Plan would add 6,818 acres to the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve (3,471 BLM-managed lands and 3,302 state trust lands).
- Use modifications related to the establishment of Zone 6 may include travel management, livestock grazing, visual resource management, and right-of-way management.

Scoping took place Dec. 5, 2019 - Jan. 6, 2020. Approximately 17,000 comments were received. Most comments focused on the right-of-way.

#### **Lake Powell Pipeline Project**

- Bureau of Reclamation is the lead agency for this project. Cooperating DOI agencies include BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The Kaibab Tribe joined as a cooperating agency in January 2020.
- There is one proposal and three alternatives being considered: the no action, the highway alternative and the southern alternative. The southern alternative is the State's preferred alternative.
- The proposed action is a 141-mile, 69-inch welded steel pipeline from Lake Powell near Page, AZ to Sand Hollow near St. George.
- Working to make a draft EIS available in June 2020, a final EIS in Dec 2020, and a Record of Decision in the first quarter of 2021.

#### **John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act implementation**

Presenter: Chris Conrad, Price Field Manager

- The Dingell Act involves projects statewide. There are 28 major projects in the Green River District.
- Ashley Springs conveyance – transfers 791 acres of BLM lands to Uintah County.
- John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area – designated approximately 30,000 acres for cultural, scientific, and recreational values.
- McCoy Flats Trail System – first congressionally-designated non-motorized mountain bike trail.
- Jurassic National Monument – designated 850 acres of the Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry for paleontological, scientific, educational, and recreational resources.
- Wilderness – designated 18 wilderness areas in the Price Field Office totaling 660,900 acres.
- San Rafael Swell Recreation Area – designated 217,000 acres. A San Rafael Swell Recreation Area Advisory Council will be formed. The application period closed on Feb. 27.
- Green River – designated 63 miles of the Green River including a 5.3-mile wild river segment, an 8.5-mile recreational river segment, and a 49.2-mile scenic river segment.
- Working with Utah Division of State Parks on the Goblin Valley State Park expansion.
- Other land conveyances: 320 acres for the Huntington Airport, five acres for the Emery County Sheriff Station, five acres for the Buckhorn Information Center, and 640 acres for the Emery City Recreation Area.

- The Dingell Act states where National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis is required for land conveyances.

### **E-Bike update**

Presenter: Kelly Orr, Acting Deputy State Director for Natural Resources

- E-bikes are considered off-highway vehicles based on current regulations and policy. E-bikes can be used on any trail designated for motorized use.
- Secretarial Order 3376 issued on Aug. 29, 2019 applies to all DOI agencies, but each agency has different regulations. As a result, implementation of this order may look different for each agency. The order applies to all classes of e-bikes. The BLM issued Information Bulletin 2020-003 on Oct. 22, 2019. These documents provide leadership direction but do not provide authorization to ride e-bikes on routes currently only designated for bicycle use.
- The BLM is working to revise regulations and will include a 60-day public comment period.
- The BLM can conduct analysis and make designations for different types of use. Last month, the Moab Field Office signed a decision for portions of the Monitor and Merrimac bicycle trail for e-bike use.
- BLM Utah is working on travel management planning and looking to see how analysis for e-bikes can be built into this process.
- The BLM Washington Office is working on an assistance agreement with the International Mountain Bicycling Association.
- There will be public comment opportunities.
- It would be very difficult to do a blanket Environmental Assessment for all mountain bike trails due to agreements currently in place and other factors. We need to look at how to best balance uses.
- E-bikes are becoming more popular.

### **Statewide Planning Updates**

Presenter: Kelly Orr, Acting Deputy State Director for Natural Resources

- The BLM is largest land management agency.
- A Secretarial Order on planning was issued to limit Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) to 150-300 pages based on complexity and to complete the process in one year.

### **BLM Lead or Joint-Lead planning efforts**

Cedar City Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and EIS – working to bring this effort to a close. This plan will replace management plans that were completed in the 1980s. We have been engaging with the public and cooperators on this effort. The next step is a public comment period.

Northern Corridor EIS and RMP Amendment – The BLM and US Fish and Wildlife Service are joint leads on this project. Approximately 17,000 comments were received; 576 were unique letters that the BLM is responding to.



Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Supplemental EIS – Wildlife is managed by state agencies. The BLM plans are for management of the habitat. US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a “warranted but precluded” listing decision in 2010. This began a west-wide planning effort by the BLM. BLM plans were completed in 2015 and US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a “not warranted” decision. Revised plans were issued in 2019 which were then put on hold by a preliminary injunction. In 2020, the BLM Issued a draft supplemental EIS which is out for public comment through April 6. We want to develop plans that are as informed as possible. We are looking to have the supplemental EIS address the issues and have the preliminary injunction lifted.

#### Dingell Act Planning efforts

Primary planning efforts:

- John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area management plan – two years.
- McCoy Flats Trail System management plan – two years.
- Jurassic National Monument management plan – two years.
- San Rafael Swell Recreation Area management plan – five years.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers management plan - three years.
- Wilderness area plans – no specified timeframe.
- The land exchange with SITLA is value to value, not acre to acre, which can take a longer time to complete. Conveyances don’t take as long to complete.
- Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) projects cannot take place until NEPA is completed. Exchange lands don’t always have NEPA completed before the exchange takes place so WRI work can be delayed. The BLM wants to get the NEPA done so projects can move forward. WRI results speak for themselves.

#### Travel Management Planning

- The 2017 settlement agreement resulted from a legal challenge. The settlement agreement requires the BLM to complete 12 travel management plans between 2019 and 2025.
- The San Rafael Swell Desert travel management plan is the furthest along in the process. This planning process is analyzing 377,000 acres of land and 1,100 miles of routes.
- Travel management plans can be a multi-year process.

#### **Non-BLM led efforts**

Lake Powell Pipeline EIS and RMP amendment – addressed in previous presentation.

#### Uinta Basin Railway EIS and RMP amendment

- In January 2020, the BLM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) for the preparation of an EIS for the proposed railway (approximately 85 miles between the Uinta Basin in northeastern Utah and an existing rail line near Kyune, Utah).
- The Seven County Infrastructure Coalition has applied to 1) the STB for authority to construct and operate a new rail line under the Interstate Commerce Act as amended 2) the BLM for a right-of-way on BLM-administered land under Title V FLPMA and any potential land use plan amendments.

- STB (lead) issued a Notice of Intent and Notice of Availability of draft scope of study in June 2019. The STB will decide whether to grant authority to construct and operate and, if so, which alternative the Coalition should construct and under what conditions.

### **Air Quality Monitoring**

Presenter: Erik Vernon, Air Resource Specialist

- Why does the BLM monitor air? Sustain the health of public lands, Clean Air Act, FLPMA, and NEPA.
- The Salt Lake Field Office and Vernal Field Office have non-attainment areas. Need to look at air quality when projects are proposed in these areas.
- Class I areas in Utah are the five national parks.
- Monitored Values: air pollutants (carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, ozone, lead, and sulfur oxides), air quality related values, and other air resource program monitoring such as greenhouse gases and noise.
- Airshed is an area where pollutants spread out.
- Total emissions in Utah have decreased, but there has been an increase in emissions from oil and gas wells and fugitive dust.
- The Air Quality Index is used to describe air quality.
- Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter less than 10 (PM<sub>10</sub>) and 2.5 (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) micrometers, and ozone are the biggest concerns in Utah.
- BLM targeted air monitoring locations – Escalante area and Alton area.
- The BLM Annual Air Monitoring Report will be available in late April or early May.
- The BLM does not determine air quality compliance. Our data is used to evaluate potential actions on public land.
- The handout provides a summary of air quality in each BLM field office.
- The BLM looks at air quality when undertaking actions.
- The only Box Elder County air monitor is located in Brigham City. The State of Utah and Environmental Protection Agency have the responsibility for monitoring air quality across the state.
- The Murphy Ridge monitoring station in the northeast Utah monitors ozone, nitrogen oxide, and PM<sub>10</sub>.
- Link to EPA Air Data Air Quality Monitors website: <https://www.epa.gov/outdoor-air-quality-data>

### **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Kanab-Escalante Planning Area plan implementation**

Presenter: Harry Barber, Paria River District Manager

- On Feb. 6, 2020, the BLM issued records of decision and approved RMPs for the Grand Staircase, Kaiparowitz, and Escalante Canyons units of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) and the Kanab Escalante Planning Area (KEPA).
- Although the boundaries have changed, Federal land ownership remains the same. KEPA lands are managed by the Kanab Field Office.



- The GSENM and Kanab Field Office make up the Paria River District. We are looking for ways to make management of these lands seamless.

#### **Our Focus**

- Continue managing for the increased demand of recreational activities.
- Continue working with partners, cooperating agencies, Tribes, local government and stakeholders in public land management.
- Continue managing for multiple use while still protecting monument objects and resources.

#### **What's New?**

- Allow non-motorized/mechanized competitive events only along designated routes.
- Provide more opportunities for OHV use on public lands.
- Inchworm Arch Road and V-Road are open and available for OHV use.
- On GSENM lands: 991,874 acres available and 9,879 acres unavailable for grazing.
- On KEPA lands: 848,424 acres available and 5,397 acres unavailable for grazing.
- The Escalante River Corridor remains unavailable for grazing.

#### **Monument Objects**

- Monument objects are still important and still protected.
- The same laws still apply to management both inside and outside of the monument boundaries.

#### **What else?**

- Increased demand for recreation. We are working in partnership with Kane County and Zion National Park on the proposed 36-mile trail system for the East Zion Initiative.

#### **Utah RAC Recommendations**

- Utah RAC recommendations on the RMPs were as follows: initiate travel management planning, vegetation management tools, ecological site descriptions, water development/livestock number decision, Little Desert open area, clarify issues, benefits of increased management flexibility, time to review plans, dispersed camping distances, group size limits, Native American traditional uses, and clarification of best management practices, exceptions, waivers, and modifications.

#### **Next steps in plan implementation**

- Work with stakeholders, Tribes, and partners to implement the RMP.
- Initiate the public process to develop programmatic plans.
- Initiate the public process to develop a travel management plan.

#### **Discussion**

- GSENM works closely with the State of Utah on management of public lands.
- Working with Jeff Bradybaugh on the East Zion Initiative.
- None of the lands are more important than others. They are all important.
- The Peregrine Fund monitors condors.

- Currently, no motorized vehicles are allowed in Paria Canyon.
- Before an action can be taken, it must go through the NEPA process. The NEPA process must be followed no matter which lands they are.
- There have been no expressions of interest in mineral development.
- Interest in special recreation permits has increased.
- Integration of resources is important.
- The GSENM and Kanab Field Office are working together to get important work done on the ground.
- 10 applications were received for the GSENM Advisory Committee.

### **RAC Member Wrap-up Discussions**

- Use of motorcycles on trails is increasing. Motorcycle racing event attendance is increasing as well.
- In the case of special recreation permits where cost recovery is required, could volunteer work by the group count toward cost recovery?
- When new RAC members are appointed, provide them with information on NEPA, special recreation permits, etc. and RAC member involvement and expectations in regard to these programs.
- Does the RAC want to hold more than one public comment period per day for RAC meetings?
- Voting on the recreation business plan proposals will take place at the next RAC meeting due to lack of a quorum at this meeting. A brief overview of the proposals can be shared at the next meeting prior to the vote.

### **March 10 Public Comment Period**

**Richard Spotts** - retired BLM employee from Arizona Strip.

**NEPA:** Today is last day for comments on proposed regulatory changes to the NEPA process. Proposed changes include direct and indirect effects, restrictions on definition of cumulative effects, and taking climate change out of NEPA. Project applicants can do their own NEPA. Many organizations are criticizing this effort. The CEQ proposed rule would take an ax approach vs. a scalpel approach to fine tune. Earth justice has had an 80 percent success rate in lawsuits against this administration.

**Northern corridor:** Concerned that the BLM may rely on the county's hired consultants for information to make decisions. There is a potential conflict of interest with these hired consultants. Don't underestimate the level of controversy with the northern corridor. This is a key attack on the BLMs system of conservation lands in the Red Cliffs NCA. Asked the BLM to postpone the NOI until the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a decision but the BLM moved forward. Zone 6 won't mitigate for the Northern Corridor. There are still lots of things that haven't been explained about how all of the pieces will fit together. How will the Washington County travel management plan fit in?

**Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument:** Harry Barber said all laws still apply in management of the Grand Staircase but the Antiquities Act is missing from this. All objects in the monument still need to be protected.

**Lake Powell Pipeline:** Hoping Bureau of Reclamation will support a water conservation efficiency proposal.

**Categorical Exclusions for pinyon juniper treatment:** How will this proposal move forward? It is frustrating to try to follow what the facts are about different proposals. Our democracy is as threatened as our public lands.



**Noel Poe** - Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners and High Desert Back Country Horsemen

Thank you to the RAC members and those working for the BLM for holding and participating in this meeting. Think about how the various BLM districts are going to inform the public about rules and regulations on implementation of decisions. How do visitors get information?

E-bikes: As a back-country horseman, I am nervous about shared trails where e-bikes could potentially be used. Horses can hear ATVs coming but can't hear when bicycles are coming. When horses get scared, they want to run. BLM should post signs at trailheads stating what uses can take place on that particular trail. Users want to know what other types of uses will be taking place on the trail. Bells work to alert riders that someone is coming. Need to get the symbol signs up at trailheads.

V-Road: That road is an old oil company road that was abandoned. The county wanted to open the road. The BLM went through the process to open the road. As soon as the Record of Decision was signed, the county graded the road. This is a cherry stem that goes through a WSA. The V-Road goes through a gorgeous area. There is slickrock sandstone that comes down to the road in some places with WSA on each side. Someone is going to want to bring their mountain bikes to that area and camp. Camping and illegal activities will start taking place in the WSA.

Lake Powell Pipeline: Nervous about this proposal and the cost of it. Who is going to pay for this project? I am most worried about climate change and less and less water coming down from the mountains. Afraid there won't be enough water and that the compact rules might change, and we will have an empty pipeline.

Grazing Regulations: New proposal coming for grazing regulations - he will follow what happens with that process. Encouraged RAC members to pay attention and follow what happens with that. Glad for the decisions of no grazing in Escalante Canyons in the new resource management plan. Users need to follow trail etiquette.

**Sarah Thomas** - SUNCLF Director and Conserve Southwest Utah

-Thank you to the RAC members for serving.

-Had a good year in 2019 – Held a Latino Conservation Week in the NCAs, conducted habitat restoration projects to help revitalize areas following fires.

-Conducted outreach with Washington County school children regarding NCA values to local students.

-The community highly values this land. They find relief when visiting the land. It is a place to disconnect and get rooted in the land.

Northern Corridor: concern about a highway going through the NCA. Zone 6 fails to provide mitigation for the corridor. Zone 6 will be fragmented by three highways in the future. Major concerns about this area serving as mitigation. Desires to see fair and transparent evaluation of alternatives.

### **Next RAC meetings**

#### **June 2020 Meeting**

June 8, 9, or 10 for one day in Richfield.

Potential topics:

- Select a chairperson
- Fivemile Pass update.
- Recreation fee proposals review and recommendations

- Any additional business plans
- Northern Corridor update
- BLM Utah priorities update and outlook for 2021
- Wild horse and burro program update
- BLM regulations update

November 2020 Meeting

November 5-6, 9-10, 12-13, or during the week of November 16 for a day and a half meeting in Price.

Potential topics:

- Dingell Act update
- Statewide Special Recreation Permit overview

Approved: Callee Butcher  
Callee Butcher, Acting RAC Chairperson

Date: 12 May 2020