

BLM Utah Resource Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Oct. 29-30, 2019
John Wesley Powell River History Museum
1765 E. Main Street, Green River, Utah 84525

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

BLM employees in attendance: Ed Roberson, Abbie Jossie, Lola Bird, Lance Porter, Kent Hoffman, Dan Webb, Christina Price, and Jonathan Moor.

Members of the public in attendance: Eric Anderson, Mike Worthen, Kay Small, Neal Clark, Travis Bacon, and Maggie Williams.

Green River District Overview

Presenter: Lance Porter, District Manager

Green River District:

- Manages 4.1 million acres of land in the Vernal and Price Field Offices.
- Is one of only 10 districts nationally that deals with Indian trust oil and gas.
- Is one of the only districts with BLM-managed lands in an Indian reservation boundary.
- Manages Nine Mile Canyon, the longest prehistoric art gallery in the world.

Special Recreation Permits issued in 2019: 146

Applications for Permit to Drill in 2019: 252

Permitted animal unit months Price: 99,520

Permitted animal unit months Vernal: 137,897

The John D. Dingell Jr. Act designated the John Wesley Powell National Recreation Area, San Rafael Swell Recreation Area, McCoy Flats Trail System, and the Jurassic National Monument.

BLM Updates

Presenter: Ed Roberson

- The BLM is in the process of giving five engines and approximately 100 radios to local fire departments. Acting Deputy Secretary Kate McGregor and Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Casey Hammond will come to Utah for a ceremony celebrating the transfer toward the end of November.
- Assistant Secretary Joe Balash signed the Record of Decision for the Sevier Playa potash project.
- Lake Powell Pipeline project - the Bureau of Reclamation office in Provo is leading the project for Department of the Interior. A new Notice of Intent will be issued. The BLM is working with the Water Resources Division at Utah Department of Natural Resources and the Water Conservancy District. A new completion date for the document will be developed.

- The Cedar City Resource Management Plan is currently on pause.
- Travel Management Plans – BLM Utah is working on six different plans – the first two are the Henry Mountains/Fremont Gorge and San Rafael Swell. A plan for the Sheeprocks is also being developed.
- Washington County – The BLM has acquired land in Red Cliffs National Conservation Area. When completed, 670 acres will have been acquired.
- Northern Transportation Corridor – Utah Department of Transportation has applied for a right-of-way for a Northern Transportation Corridor in Washington County. A Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement will publish around the end of November and will begin the project scoping process. Looking for ways to offset habitat loss if this project moves forward. This could modify the St. George land use plan and Red Cliffs management plan.
- Alton Coal – The BLM issued the lease and Assistant Secretary Balash approved the mine plan. The company will now begin air monitoring.
- Fire/fuels – The 2019 fire season was lighter than normal. BLM Utah completed 117,000 acres of fuels projects in 2019. Statewide, partner agencies completed nearly 200,000 acres of treatments.
- The Department of the Interior is working on environmental impact statements for fuel breaks and restoration.
- Oil and gas leasing – BLM Utah recently held the largest lease sale in 10 years. Staff are working to make sure that greenhouse gas is adequately addressed in the environmental analysis so that lease issuance can take place.
- Bonneville Salt Flats – the BLM is working with University of Utah on research regarding salt conditions and impacts.
- Mag Corp site on the Salt Lake Field Office – the BLM received a settlement and will be rehabilitating these lands.
- The Price Field Office fire and fuels program has been managed out of the Moab office. A decision was made recently to align the Price fire and fuels program back with the Green River District out of Vernal.
- Wild horses – BLM Utah gathered 260 horses from the Onaqui herd and 150 from the Range Creek area. The next gather is North Hills in December. Acting BLM Director Perry Pendley says wild horses are the BLM's biggest challenge. The BLM is looking at different fertility control options to see what will be the most effective long term.

BLM Utah FY 2019 Accomplishments

Presenter: Ed Roberson

- Shared the 2019 BLM Sound Investment brochure and reviewed the economic output numbers.
- Completed statewide Greater Sage-grouse Resource Management Plan amendments.
- Repatriated 16 individuals and 979 associated funerary objects.
- Entered into a travel management programmatic agreement with several counties.
- Hosted booths at hunting, fishing, and conservation events.
- Entered into a five-year financial assistance agreement with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative.
- Acquisition of private inholdings in the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area.

- Issued 2,114-acre lease to Alton for coal development.
- Held four lease sales, selling 367 parcels for a total of \$11,898,058.
- Executed a \$100 million budget with a 98 percent execution rate.
- Awarded approximately 290 contracts valued at \$14.9 million, 28 interagency agreements valued at \$2.8 million, and 82 financial agreements valued at \$26.6 million.
- Conducted New Employee Orientation.
- Assembled a serious incident or fatality response team and implemented scenarios.
- Began implementation of the Dingell Act. The Dingell Act designated 653,722 acres as wilderness and released 17,420 acres of wilderness study areas.

Statewide Planning Updates

Presenter: Abbie Jossie

- Bears Ears National Monument Management Plans: A Record of Decision will be issued this fall. Lots of tribal outreach took place for these plans.
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument/Kanab Escalante Planning Area. On Oct. 18, a Notice of Error was published which re-opened the protest period that closes on Nov. 18. A Record of Decision will be issued this winter.
- The recommendations for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee members are currently with the Department of the Interior for vetting.
- A new Instruction Memorandum will allow the BLM to reimburse tribes for expenses related to the consultation process.
- Cedar City Resource Management Plan: This plan is on pause while other plans are being completed. The next step is issuance of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public comment.
- Northern Corridor Environmental Impact Statement: The BLM plans to issue a Notice of Intent to Plan this fall. The BLM is administrative lead for the process, with Fish and Wildlife Service as a co-lead.
- The BLM is under a Secretarial Order to streamline National Environmental Policy Act analysis. Environmental Impact Statements are to be completed in one year.
- Uinta Basin Railway Environmental Impact Statement: A proposal from the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition to construct and operate a railway connecting the Uinta Basin to the interstate rail network. This proposal may require consideration of plan amendments.

Travel management planning

- Travel management plans for Price, Richfield, Moab, Vernal, and Kanab are in progress and should be completed on time.
- San Rafael Swell Desert – an EA for public comment should be issued in December.
- The Henry Mountains/Fremont Gorge plan is delayed indefinitely.

Oct. 29 Public Comment Period

- The written comment from Jean Public was distributed to each RAC member.
- Mike Worthen, Iron County Natural Resource Specialist: Complimented BLM Color Country employees for completion of fuels and range projects and appreciates the work that is getting done. The wild horse situation is tough and the commissioners appreciate the BLM's efforts. Iron County serves as a cooperating agency on the Cedar City Resource Management Plan. This planning effort began in 2012 and a draft was ready in 2015 but was held back due to sage-grouse planning. Delays continue and he is worried that the information is getting stale and wants to see the draft issued for public comment. Mr. Worthen urged the BLM to hurry up on this project so that things can move forward.
- Travis Bacon, Mayor of Green River – thanked the group for what they do and welcomed everyone to Green River. Mayor Bacon is extremely in favor of multiple use and is against closures. Public land access is important for locals and visitors and is important to economic development of the city.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Kanab Field Office administrative changes

Presenter: Ed Roberson

- The Kanab Field Office is currently part of the Color Country District. With the Grand Staircase monument boundary changes, leadership took a look at current management of the units.
- BLM Utah is proposing to combine the Kanab Field Office and the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument into a new unit called Paria River District.
- The BLM Deputy Director for Operations approved this administrative change. A District Manager, Monument Manager, and Field Manager will be selected.
- This new District will function well and be successful.
- The fire and fuels program will continue to be managed out of the Cedar City office.

John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act implementation Public Law 116-9

Presenter: Braden Sheppard

- The Dingell Act was signed on March 12, 2019. The act consists of more than 100 bills introduced by 50 Senators and several House members.
- The bill involves designation of wilderness areas, National Conservation Areas, wild and scenic rivers, special recreation areas, and direct land conveyances.
- Provisions of the Dingell Act: Land and Water Conservation Fund, Every Kid Outdoors program, hunting and fishing access, expedited search and recovery approval, helium leasing, equal access to justice, road closures process, habitat protection grants, and national volcano early warning and monitoring system.
- Designated 17 BLM-managed wilderness areas in Emery County totaling nearly 750,000 acres. Some new wilderness areas replace former wilderness study areas and others are new.
- The BLM will complete grazing inventories in these areas during the next two years.

- San Rafael Swell Recreation Area – two-year timeframe to complete route inventories.
- Designated the 850-acre Jurassic National Monument which includes the Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry. The site was designated for its paleontological, scientific, educational, and recreational resources. The BLM is required to complete a management plan in two years. The BLM will request input from the RAC on this plan.
- Designated the San Rafael Swell Recreation Area totaling 217,000 acres. The BLM is required to complete a management plan in five years.
- The bill called for a San Rafael Swell Recreation Area Advisory Council to be created. This group will provide input on the management plan. A call for nominations for members will be issued once the charter is finalized.
- Designated the McCoy Flats mountain bike trail system, the first-ever congressionally-designated trail system. The BLM is required to complete a management plan in two years.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers – The BLM is required to complete a management plan in three years.
- Designated the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area totaling 30,000 acres. The BLM is required to complete a management plan in two years.
- The Goblin Valley State Park expansion will convey 6,300 acres of BLM land to the State of Utah to expand the state park.
- The Ashley Springs conveyance will transfer 791 acres of BLM land to Uintah County to protect the watershed and aquifer.
- 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.

How do we best engage the public in planning and implementation, what tactics work best, and what stakeholders should we be working with?

- Do a good job of public outreach, not just a press release. Reach out to specific user groups. Target these specific user groups. Social media was used as part of the BLM's outreach for the open houses.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service is an example of getting help with spreading the word – they go to the Conservation Districts to ask for help in getting participation at meetings.
- People are interested, but they don't always get involved.
- Reach out to the various user groups and then meet with them individually.
- Partner with Chad Booth and get on the County Seat and/or At Your Leisure programs.
- Frame the issue to get people interested in being involved.
- Going forward, the BLM will be asking for input on planning for each specific plan.
- Continue to work with outside entities, Utah Mining Association, etc. Keep them engaged throughout the process and follow up with them.
- There are many examples of working groups across the state that could be engaged to help get the public involved.

Energy Program Updates

Presenter: Lance Porter

- During 2018, the Office of Natural Resource Revenue received and distributed \$160,480,220 associated with federal minerals in Utah. The Green River District was involved with 87.5 percent of that total.
- In 2018, the Green River District received 218 applications for permit to drill (APD) and processed 252 APDs. The Vernal Field Office completed processing all APDs (66) that were three years or older. The District also processed 5,360 sundry notices.
- The Price Field Office, in coordination with the State of Utah, awarded a contract to plug and reclaim 11 orphan wells.
- Approximately 4,400 production and environmental well inspections were conducted in 2018.
- Approximately 2.3 million acres in Utah are currently leased.
- Coal production in 2018 was nearly 12 million tons. This production comes from six active coal mines.
- The Price Field Office is currently processing three coal lease by applications, three coal lease modifications, and two exploration programs. This represents nearly 75 million recoverable tons of coal.

Cadastral Survey Updates

Presenter: Dan Webb

- Cadastral survey is one of the oldest and most fundamental functions of the US Government, originating with the Land Ordinance of 1785.
- Surveys create, define, mark and re-establish boundaries and subdivisions of the public lands.
- Most current survey projects are re-surveys.
- The Salt Lake City original initial point was placed downtown in 1847. The original survey started in 1855.
- As part of the Dingell Act implementation, Goblin Valley will need a re-survey.
- There are 6,500+ township surveys approved to date in Utah.

Lands and Realty Program Updates

Presenter: Christina Price

- Land tenure actions consist of acquisitions, disposals, exchanges, recreation and public purposes act, withdrawals, mineral interests, easements, recordable disclaimer of interests, and administrative jurisdiction changes.
- FLPMA Title V Right-of-ways consist of distribution/powerlines, pipelines, access roads, trails, highways and other means of transportation.
- Communication site leases – radio, television, cellular telephone, and other means of communication.
- Renewable energy – wind, solar, and geothermal leases.
- Land exchanges are very complex and can take a long time to complete.

- There is a Recordable Disclaimer of Interest application currently in progress for a road in Washington County.

2019 ROW Statistics

ROW grant assignments – 204
 ROW grant amendments – 37
 ROW grants issued – 152
 ROW grants renewed – 41
 ROW compliance inspections – 480
 ROW relinquishments – 63
 Film permits issued – 182
 Trespasses resolved – 8

2019 Land Tenure Statistics

Acquisitions completed – 1 (113.64 acres) Red Cliffs National Conservation Area
 Donations – 1 (41.79 acres) Red Cliffs National Conservation Area
 Disposals – 4
 Exchanges completed – 1 (84.43 acres) Mountain States Land Exchange
 Recreation and Public Purposes – 41 leases totaling 4,386 acres
 Administrative Jurisdiction Transfer – 10

Current Major Workload

Utah Test and Training Range land exchange
 Dingell Act implementation
 Lake Powell Pipeline
 Uintah Basin Railway
 Northern Transportation Corridor

Oct. 30 Public Comment Period

No public comments.

Recreation Updates

Presenter: Abbie Jossie

The BLM has received a number of Secretarial Orders in the last while. The following are recreation related:

Secretarial Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation
 Secretarial Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes and Territories
 Secretarial Order 3362: Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Range and Migration Corridors
 Secretarial Order 3365: Establishment of a Senior National Advisor to the Secretary for Recreation
 Secretarial Order 3366: Increasing Recreational Opportunities on Lands and Waters Managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior
 Secretarial Order 3376: Increasing Recreational Opportunities through the use of Electric Bikes

There may be business plans for presentation at the next RAC meeting – potentially for the Five Mile Pass and Desolation Canyon areas.

BLM Utah hosted over nine million visitors in 2019.

Electric Bikes

- Guidance from the Secretary is that the BLM will exercise flexibility in management.
- Electric bikes give riders the opportunity to go places they may not be able to otherwise because it reduces the physical demand.
- Electric bikes are becoming much more common on public lands.
- The BLM Washington Office is going to hold a public comment period and then work on developing final regulations. Once the regulations are developed, the BLM will begin implementation on the ground.
- The site-specific planning effort would focus on non-motorized trails as other trails are already open to motorized recreation.
- The RAC is interested in providing feedback on proposed regulations.
- The RAC recommends when developing new trails, get the expertise needed to make them successful. Offer a big variety of trails for different types of users.
- The BLM can collaborate with the Forest Service where trails meet.
- Moab has 150 miles of single-track trails where electric bikes can go.

Finalize details for the next meeting

The next RAC meeting will take place on March 9-10, 2020, in St. George at the Best Western Plus Abbey Inn. Agenda topics may include a Color Country District overview, State Director updates, planning updates, air quality updates, electric bicycle updates, Washington County issues, and recreation business plans/fee proposals.

Approved: /s/ Troy Forrest
Troy Forrest, RAC Chairman

Date: 12/20/19