

**Bureau of Land Management – Arizona
Resource Advisory Council Meeting
December 12, 2018**

**BLM Arizona State Office
One North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona 85004**

RAC Members:

Name	Residence	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present
Bill Brake*	Scottsdale	Grazing	01/2020	Y
Maggie Sacher	Marble Canyon	Commercial Recreation	01/2019	Y
John (JC) Sanders	Bouse	Commercial Recreation	01/2019	Y
Emmett Sturgill	Kingman	Grazing	01/2020	Y
Krishna Parameswaran	Scottsdale	Energy/Minerals	09/2021	Y
Michael Quigley	Tucson	Non-Commodity/Environmental	01/2020	Y
Thomas Hulen	Tempe	Non-Commodity/Dispersed Recreation	01/2019	Y
Sharma Torrens	Tempe	Archeology and Cultural Resources	01/2019	Y
Michael Dawson	Tucson	Environmental	09/2021	Y
Gary Watson	Kingman	Local Area/Elected Official	09/2021	Y
Stuart Marsh, Ph.D.	Tucson	Local Area/Academia	01/2019	Y
Stephen Trussell	Gilbert	Local Area/Public-At-Large	01/2019	N
Stephen Williams	Elgin	Public-At-Large	01/2020	Y
Holly Jaleski	Flagstaff	Public-At-Large	09/2021	Y
Marianne Cox FOR Jim deVos (non-voting)	Phoenix	Arizona Game and Fish Department	n/a	Y

BLM Staff:

Name	Title	Office	Present
Raymond Suazo	Arizona State Director	Arizona State Office	Y
Karen Kelleher	Arizona State Associate Director	Arizona State Office	Y
Amber Cargile	Deputy State Director, Communications	Arizona State Office	Y

Jody Weil	Deputy State Director, Resources & Planning	Arizona State Office	Y
Lucas Lucero	Deputy State Director, Lands, Minerals & Energy	Arizona State Office	Y
Gera Ashton	Deputy State Director, Business & Support Services	Arizona State Office	Y
Michael Herder	District Manager	Arizona Strip District	Y
Leon Thomas	District Manager	Phoenix District	Y
William Mack	District Manager	Colorado River District	Y
Scott Feldhausen	District Manager	Gila District	Y
Dolores Garcia	Public Affairs Specialist	Arizona State Office	Y
Dawn Smith	Recording Secretary	Arizona State Office	Y

Public in Attendance: See the attached sign-in sheet.

Meeting Minutes

Opening Comments

Presenter: Bill Brake, Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Chair

- Welcomed RAC members and others to the meeting and introduced Maggie Sacher as the Recreation RAC chairperson.

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Presenter: Raymond Suazo, BLM Arizona State Director/Designated Federal Official

- Welcomed new and returning RAC members and thanked them for attending.
- Provided a BLM personnel update.
- Discussed the roles and responsibilities of the RAC:
 - Providing BLM line managers with opinions and advice as well as feedback from constituents.
 - Providing stakeholders with feedback from the RAC meetings, and interactions with the BLM staff.
- Explained his leadership philosophy:
 - Be responsive, not reactive
 - Have a plan
 - Communicate early and often
 - Look at issues through multiple lenses
 - Focus on customer service
- Discussed major projects and how BLM Arizona has been supporting Department of Interior priorities:
 - Reorganization, strategic planning and streamlining
 - Recreation, hunting and fishing
 - Border
 - Shared conservation stewardship
 - Working landscapes
 - Energy, infrastructure and minerals

Questions/Discussion:

Question: How will the the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) streamlining tie in with the DOI regions?

BLM: BLM Arizona is implementing the Secretary's Order on NEPA streamlining. As far as DOI regions, the Department is leading the planning for that and evaluating roles and responsibilities.

Question: In these days of budget reductions at the Federal level, are you able to fill staff vacancies?

BLM: We are definitely focused on reducing costs and being prudent stewards of public funds. We are able to re-staff a lot of our critical jobs, but in recent years, BLM Arizona has reduced from 600+ employees to approximately 425 employees, so that gives you a sense of how many positions we have reduced over time. The benefit of having clear priorities is that we are working hard to ensure we focus our limited resources on those priorities. We are also looking at filling in needed gaps and recruiting talented people.

Agenda Item: Division Updates

Presenter: Jody Weil, Deputy State Director, Resources, Planning and Fire

Outcome Based Grazing:

Outcome Based Grazing (OBG) is designed to provide greater flexibility to the livestock operator and the BLM to adjust grazing use for changing conditions, and in order to achieve specific objectives:

- Enhanced partnerships for managing livestock grazing
- Conservation performance and ecological outcomes rather than process and prescription
- Cooperative improvement, management and/or protection of public lands within an allotment or specified geographic area (multiple allotments)
- Positive economic and social outcomes

Questions/Discussion:

Question: For the demonstration allotments, do you have a long range history of the range condition and quality?

BLM: Monitoring is definitely part of our permitting system and always has been, so we do have that data.

Question: I think this sounds brilliant! Does this blend in or take away or how does this work with the traditional standards and guides? Are you still using those same criteria? What will the evaluation process on the range be after the test programs have gone through, something like Standards and Guides where the public goes out and also evaluates?

BLM: Monitoring is built in to Outcome Based Grazing, so there is this ongoing monitoring to see if we are maintaining conditions. There is annual monitoring and then there is also a longer term look at the overarching conditions and land health evaluations.

Comment: I encourage you to get with your District Managers and have some meetings with your ranchers before you come out with this new plan. I think it is a great idea, makes all the sense in the world. But I also know it's important to keep the communication going with the permittees so they understand what is happening, particularly if there are changes.

Comment: A lot of this has been implemented with our drought planning because we have had a pretty decent drought in the last few years. So, part of what had been implemented before is just making it easier for the managers to allow us in our drought planning to move our cattle based on the amount of forage that is there.

Question: It sounds like adaptive management applied to grazing. I am curious to know the effect on monitoring in terms of staff resources, whether it is an increase or a decrease or no change. And what roll-out is planned for the rest of the state.

BLM: I do not anticipate there will be a significant change in the monitoring. We do have the monitoring tool, it's what we refer to as Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring AIM, but that is not a replacement for the current monitoring we have in place.

Comment: I suggest that if we start rolling out Outcome Based Grazing in Arizona that we reconsider activating some of the standards and guides processes as part of it; it was effectively used in Arizona and especially on some of the allotments struggling with making standards. It might be a way to get the public involved with it and get that buy-in.

Comment: We have a meeting with the BLM once a year and we can have a planning session and invite the public to that. Monitoring and planning are done on an annual basis.

BLM: Arizona is not one of the pilot states, but we wanted to give you an idea of it, so you understand what it is and how it could apply to Arizona. However, we are still open on a district by district basis, through the idea of improved or increased flexibility on the part of the grazing permittee. We can have those discussions without actually having a pilot allotment as part of the formal national pilot.

NEPA Streamlining:

The purpose of the order is to implement improvement to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews conducted by the DOI, including the BLM. Secretary's Order 3355, and subsequent guidance from the Deputy Secretary of Interior, set page and time limits for Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments.

Questions/Discussion:

Question: Is there a way to look at planning currently in the NEPA process?

BLM: Yes, all of our NEPA documents are posted in the BLM's e-planning website.

Question: Is there any need to coordinate with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)?

BLM: That is being done by BLM and the Department at the national level.

Wild Horse and Burros:

- BLM Arizona gathered 806 burros from the range in FY2018, with the animals held at the Florence facility pending adoption or sale. That is double the number gathered in the previous year, due to an increase in adoptions and sales.
- RAC members are welcome to visit the Florence facility where wild horses and burros are trained and adopted. Through the inmate training program, prison inmates train the animals which assists in the inmates' rehabilitation.
- RAC members would like a more in-depth briefing on our Burro Strategy at a future meeting.

Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM):

- The AIM program provides a standardized process for the BLM to collect quantitative information on the status, condition, trend, amount, location, and spatial pattern of resources on nation's public lands.
- The AIM approach is based on five key elements:
 - Standardized set of core and contingent indicators for both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems;
 - Statistically valid sampling design (where appropriate)
 - Structure implementation process
 - Electronic data capture
 - Integration with remote sensing

Secretary's Order (SO) 3362 "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors":

- SO 3362 directs agencies within the DOI to work in close partnership with the State of Arizona to enhance and improve the quality of big game winter range and migration corridor habitat on Federal lands under the management jurisdiction of the DOI, in a way that recognizes state authority to conserve and manage big game species, elk, mule deer and pronghorn.

Agenda Topic: Division Updates

Presenter: Lucas Lucero, Division of Land, Minerals and Energy

Expediting Energy Projects Permitting and Streamlining Environmental Reviews:

- Solar Energy Zones
- Renewable Energy and Transmission

Mineral Program Leadership:

- Mineral Materials
- Native American Minerals Program
- Leasable Minerals

Land Tenure Program Leadership:

The Division provides program oversight and project management of multiple land tenure projects, which consist of land sales, land exchanges, land acquisitions and land donations.

- Ray Mine Land Exchange

- Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange

Management of Land Boundaries:

Cadastral Survey provides technical direction on the management of land boundary issues to other federal agencies, Indian tribes, states, counties, municipalities and other interested parties through surveys and/or Standards for Boundary Evidence products.

Federal Agency Support through Land Withdrawals:

Withdrawals are established for a wide range of public purposes or programs and are used to protect the substantial investment of Federal funds, improvements and facilities, sensitive environmental values, public health and safety, and national security.

Oversight of Commercial Recreation Leasing Program (Concessions):

BLM Arizona has developed guidance for issuing new commercial leases for recreation-related business. All leases will be issued with rent that is based either on the fair market value of the authorized use, or as determined by competitive bidding.

Questions/Discussion:

Question: Is there some type of market study on what the appropriate royalty rate is? Lease rates?

BLM: DOI's Office of Natural Resources Revenue collects market data which is tied to inflation indexes. Information on valuation and royalties can be found at: www.onrr.gov.

Agenda Topic: Division Updates

Presenter: Gera Ashton, Division of Business and Support Services

- Bullfrog Day-Use Recreation Area Infrastructure Improvement Project
- Improvements at Copper Basin Dune OHV Area
- Culvert crossing at Haeckle Road and San Simon Wash
- Cooperative Agreements
- Hiring Controls

Agenda Topic: Division Updates

Presenter: Amber Cargile, Division of Communications

- The BLM Communication Framework was previously presented to the RAC. We are currently working on an outreach and engagement strategy to support the framework and will present it to the RAC at a future meeting.
- Legislative Affairs --BLM Arizona Division of Communications handles Congressional inquiries from the Arizona delegation and has helped prepare legislative reports and Bureau testimony on a number of federal public land bills.
- We continue to build out the public website (www.blm.gov).

Agenda Topic: Recreation RAC Session

Presenters: Maggie Sacher, Recreation RAC Chair; Francisco Valenzuela, USFS Director of Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness Resources

The Recreation RAC discussed three U.S. Forest Service Fee proposals in Arizona.

- Sollers Cabin Rental (Coronado National Forest)
- Spring Valley Cabin Rental (Kaibab National Forest)
- Coronado National Forest Fee Program

Public Comment Period (30 minutes) – One person provided Public Comments.*Public Comments*

Kitty Benzar, Western Slope No Fee Coalition President:

- Opposes the parking fees for both the Butterfly and Bigelow trailheads and cited a 2008 lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service.
- Ms. Benzar stated for the record that she opposes the two trailhead parking fees, but I do not oppose any other item on the proposal.

Mr. Greg Lewis provided an email comment and photographs for the record regarding the Butterfly and Bigelow trailheads. See attached comment and photos.

U.S. Forest Service Comments

- There are 204 developed recreation sites. With this fee proposal, over half of them will remain fee free.
- Toilets at sites represent a significant Operational and Maintenance cost, including pumping, stocking, and daily maintenance.
- Sites not subject to the fee schedule are susceptible to the potential for the removal of amenities over time.
- Butterfly and Bigelow trailheads are developed recreation sites more developed and level than some of our other trailheads. Operation and maintenance costs are approximately \$25K annually.
- Loss of fees at sites will result in removal of amenities the public has expressed strong interest in keeping. There are many other fee free alternatives available.
- They received little objection to the increase of fees in public comments.

Recreation RAC Question/Discussions

Comment: Noone likes to see fees on public lands; however, in reality that's not our charge to vote on and the agencies are not in a position that they can do that anymore, so we need to lay our personal opinions aside and look at these specific sites that may be in question and talk about whether we feel, both of them or certainly Butterfly meets the requirements and intent of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Public input is a very important part of this consideration.

Arizona Game and Fish Department Comment: Arizona Game and Fish is a nonvoting member of the RAC. We recognize that the efforts that Coronado has gone to, to work with Arizona Game and Fish Department to come up to some comparable approaches for the no fee areas for the lakes. So, that is really appreciated. While we would prefer to see the free public access, we recognize the cost for the operations and maintenance for the facilities and in particular for wildlife management. We recognize when you have high traffic and the trash and litter that comes into play attracts wildlife and when those calls come in they come in to us a lot of times, as well. But we recognize the need for the operations and maintenance and the cost hike to operations and maintenance there, which is why we identified the support for the proposal as you notified it from a wildlife conservation/wildlife management stand point. We support the approach.

Comment: I generally support the approach, support the fee increase for the fee again having heard about the two trailheads, I'm also trying to sort out to what extent the amenities are being met and at least it appears to me that the alternative parking locations, seem to be close enough, it a non-fee, but not able to make a conclusion on that. Without reservation, I would like to kind of listen to the rest of before I make my decision.

Comment: The U.S. Forest Service has done an exceptional job in putting together the fee proposals increase request. In the cases of the two trailheads, they do have amenities and they do have alternate sites for free parking. I will say one way or the other, I do not think we necessarily need to exclude those in this process, but I have to commend the Forest Service for recognizing their camping sites are in some cases over-used, in other cases under-used and trying to make accommodations for that. And I think they have done an excellent job on this proposal. I am in favor of recommending the approval.

Comment: I am against any fees being charged but I also realize that the society that we live in, if you want a bathroom, everybody would think that we were in San Francisco if we did not have restrooms at those places. Because I cannot take a non-committed position. I am just going to vote in favor of the proposal.

Comment: I am strongly in favor of the proposal. I would just suggest that if it's going to be held up due to a lawsuit over these two trailheads, that I would calculate which would be better to get remove them now and avoid the lawsuit and get the fee implemented immediately or perhaps having it delayed, but it is definitely needed.

Comment: I think these fees are reasonable, and that they have done their due diligence on getting the public's input and accommodating the public's needs and concerns. As an attorney, when I heard about the settlement agreement, it really piqued my interest. I really appreciate Kitty Benzar speaking to this. I did go read the case last night and I do understand where she is coming from there. It was very helpful to hear the Forest Service discuss the amenities. I would still say it is reasonable and recommend this proposal.

Comment: I think the Forest Service did a fantastic job and they did everything that we requested during the last visit here. I am certainly going to be in favor of the entirety of it. I would also like to recommend for the Forest Service to consider the Pet Fee that Mohave County imposes at

some of their parks. There is a reason for that, the pets do bring an additional amount of wear and tear to the areas. There is also a problem with cleaning up after the pets. Just a recommendation, but I will be supportive.

Comment: I, too, am very supportive for the proposal. I think it has been well thought through. More than sufficient public involvement and really minimal opposition for the two trailhead sites and I think that is more along the lines of precedent versus cost. And with respect to FLREA guidance, and I think the Forest Service has clearly shown that there are free options, and those are quite reasonable for the public. I support the proposal as is.

Comment: I support the proposal and also would like to thank Kitty Benzar and the Western Slope No Fee Coalition for being so diligent and always trying to do the best they can for the citizens of the United States. In terms of fees on Public Land, I would also like to thank the staff of the Forest Service and I would include the BLM staff, too. The United States has given these public servants a real challenge to try to manage our public land and keep them safe and to provide restrooms, trash and amenities.

Comment: I also support the proposed fees, as is. I did talk with many people that I know coming from fixed or lower incomes. They are in support of raising the fees. They all realize the value and that we pay for what we value, and they valued trailhead parking and those kinds of things, as much as they would value \$5.00 for anything else. In fact, to them the cost of \$5.00 was pretty minimal considering the benefit they received out of being in the woods and for people who like to have bathrooms and stuff those are important and we do not have them, it ends up being a nasty mess.

Comment: I am philosophically opposed to charging user fee access to public lands and I would much prefer if Congress would allocate our taxes appropriately to fully fund the land management agencies, but I also agree that is not our charge and that is not our fate here. I have seen a few of these fee proposal presentations in my one and a half terms on the RAC now and I have to say this is about the best one the Forest Service has brought forward. Thank you for having taken our previous advice to heart and delivering. I have absolutely no issue with the fees for the cabins and for the campgrounds. I am sensitive to the idea, living in Tucson and having parked along the Mount Lemmon Highway to go hiking, that trailhead parking should not be a fee site. On the other hand, I also see the need to maintain amenities that are in place, so with the caveat that I am concerned that the fee program may lead to the temptation to the amenity of the trailhead site in order to charge a fee. Which I do not know if that is what is going on here, but I just want to caution you to not do that in the future. Amenities need to be maintained on a frequent and regular basis and that costs money. So given that they are both at Butterfly and Bigelow, I can see the need to charge fees for that.

Comment: I support it as it has been presented both the cabins and all the other fees. It has been demonstrated that there is parking near the area would have no fee, and to me that is a major factor.

Recreation RAC Chairperson Comment: The Forest Service has done a remarkably good job presenting this proposal. They have done a very good job of standing their ground when

challenged this morning on supporting why these two particular sites should remain in the fee program. So, I, as Chair would like to make two motions.

MOTION	Motion made by	Second
To support the rooms with a view fee proposal for the Spring Valley Cabin at Kaibab National Forest and the Sollers Cabin in the Coronado National Forest Cabins, as submitted, with one suggestion being to evaluate a Pet Fee..	Maggie Sacher	Emmett Sturgill
Unanimously Approved.		

Mr. Suazo mentioned once you make a recommendation, he forwards them as is.

Bill Brake requested clarification on a “Yes vote” for the second motion. He asked if it would be with a caveat to go ahead and okay the program as it was described by the USFS.

Maggie Sacher stated Mr. Brake was correct as long as the USFS takes down the signage at the trailhead parking, and they would still be able to charge a fee. It covers everything in the proposal, as written. Just to give the USFS credit where credit is due, when that was brought to their attention that the sign is up, I was told earlier it is going to be taken down.

MOTION	Motion made by	Second
<p>To support the Coronado National Fee Proposal, as written, with one condition, and three suggestions for Forest Service consideration, and these would be included as a caveat to support condition one to remove all signage that identifies a fee area as a trailhead parking which is the photograph you see.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion One: Continue to work with D.C. to approve more Fee Free Days to accommodate lower income, fixed income and those that prefer to not pay for access to Federal Public Lands. • Suggestion Two: Give full scrutiny to evaluation and consideration regarding the concessionaire’s contract as to looking in to whether the campground management and fee should be returned to Coronado National Forest. 	Maggie Sacher	Stuart Marsh

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion Three: Continue to work towards all buses that use Forest Service overlooks, rest areas, and picnic grounds pay an appropriate user fees. 		
Unanimously Approved.		

Recreation RAC Session Adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Agenda Topic: District Updates

Presenter: Leon Thomas, Phoenix District Manager

- Shooting Sports
- Vulture Mountains Recreation and Public Purposes Act Lease Area Project
- Kirkland High-Quality-Poxxolan Mine
- Horseshoe Grazing Allotment Lease Decision
- Special Recreation Permit Events – Winter Season (currently 52 active SRPs)
- Juan Bautista De Anza Recreation Management Zone – Engineering and Design Phases

Agenda Topic: District Updates

Presenter: Scott Feldhausen, Gila District Manager

- San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement
- Ray Mine Land Exchange
- Ripsey Wash Tailing Impoundment
- Holbrook Basin Oil and Gas Interest
- Navajo County Vegetation Treatments
- Sentinel Landscapes

Agenda Topic: District Updates

Presenter: William Mack, Colorado River District Manager

- District law enforcement rangers support local and national needs, including disaster response
- Fire Management Program
- Your Pass Now--two Hot Spots to purchase passes
- Special Recreation Permits
- Realty Actions
- Recreation Program
- Long-Term Visitor Areas Business Plan Update
- Copperstone Mine Plan of Operation

Agenda Topic: District Updates

Presenter: Mike Herder, Arizona Strip District Manager

- Landscape Restoration Project for Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument
- Lake Powell Pipeline (Kanab Creek ACEC) Proposed RMP Amendment Update
- Reevaluation of the Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan visitor use allocations—responding to exponential increase in visitor interest

Public Comment Period – General RAC (30 minutes):

No public comments were made.

Wrap-up:

- Amber Cargile communicated with the USFS and requested they consolidate their fee proposals as much as they can to eliminate some of the time spent during this meeting, so we can work on BLM issues, as well.
- Next RAC Agenda Item Ideas:
 - Recreation shooting pilot with partners like Game and Fish (Working Item)
 - Burro Strategy (Adoptions and Gathers)
 - Cross cutting over a lot of resource areas, approach to vegetation management and restoration efforts.
 - NRCS, Wildlife organizations and Conservation organizations
 - Restoration Efforts
 - Mike Dawson suggested incorporating NEPA Streaming Process and how they are working with the EIS’
 - Wildlife Movement Corridors and Wildlife Linkages, particularly in transportation corridors.
 - Field visit to see work on the ground
 - Standards and guides training

Raymond Suazo thanked departing members Maggie Sacher, John (JC) Sanders, Stephen Williams, Stuart Marsh and Thom Hulen.

Next Meeting Discussion: Dolores Garcia will send a Doodle Poll with date suggestions for the next meeting. All members will need to attend in order to have a quorum.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Dawn Smith.