

Northwest Oregon Resource Advisory Council (RAC)

Meeting Notes

October 21, 2015
9:00AM – 4:30PM

Salem BLM District Office
Lobby Level Conference Room
1717 Fabry Road
Salem, OR 97306

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT: David Schmidt, Jeremiah Price, Peter A. Giordano, Mike Ripley, James Dundon, John Atkins Jr., Lon Otterby, Craig Pope, Will Tucker, Annabelle Jaramillo, Jerry Bailey, Jo Niehaus

MEMBERS ABSENT: Glen Crinklaw, Pam Berrian, Andy Geissler

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mike Korn (Eugene District - Siuslaw Field Office Manager), Bill O'Sullivan (Eugene District - Upper Willamette Field Office Manager), Diane Morris (Salem District – Marys Peak Acting Field Office Manager), Karen Shank (Salem District - Tillamook Field Office Manager), Belle Smith (Salem District - Cascade Field Office Supervisor), Patricia (Pat) Johnston (Eugene District - Plant Ecologist), David Howell (Salem District - Associate District Manager), Patricia Mallette (Eugene District - Associate District Manager), Trish Hogervorst (Salem District - Public Affairs Officer), Kim Titus (Salem District Manager), Kathy Stangl (Eugene District Manager), John Huston (Designated Federal Officer and Salem District – Cascades Field Office Manager), Robin Kaltenbach (Note Taker and Eugene District – Procurement Specialist), Kathy Angstrom (Salem District - Management Analyst), Scott Snedaker (Facilitator and Salem District – Marys Peak Field Office Fisheries Biologist)

9:00AM **Welcome**

- Safety Discussion
- Welcome by Kim Titus (Salem District Manager) and Kathy Stangl (Eugene District Manager)
- District Manager Expectations – Build a collaborative team for Secure Rural Schools funding decisions, and provide recommendations for the recreation fee program and natural resource related decisions
- Introduce Designated Federal Official (DFO), John Huston
- Introduce facilitator, Scott Snedaker

9:13AM Member Introductions/Ice Breaker Questions

Name, affiliation, why on RAC, and Alma mater mascot

9:30AM 2016 RAC Meeting Agreement

Members of the RAC agreed to the following procedures as they conduct meetings:

- Be recognized before speaking – raise hands
- Abide by agenda timeline
- Avoid side conversations
- Cell phones/electronics off
- Acknowledge and respect differing points of view

9:33AM Overview of the BLM in NW Oregon (Power Point)

John Huston – Overview of future combined Eugene/Salem District and Cascades Field Office

Karen Shank – Tillamook Field Office

Q: *How much of your lands are second generation or second burn?*

A: The majority.

Diane Morris – Marys Peak Field Office

Mike Korn – Siuslaw Field Office

Bill O’Sullivan – Upper Willamette Field Office

10:15AM Break

10:30AM Overview of the NW Oregon RAC and RAC Notebook

Charter

Q: *Can you give an explanation of what Title II Secure Rural Schools funding is?*

A: Explanation will be given a little later.

Q: *Who is our DFO?*

A: John Huston, Cascades Field Manager.

Q: *Having been on a RAC before, the big change with this RAC is being an advisor for management planning, recreation, other resource issues, and timber decisions. Can you explain that piece a little more?*

A: This is a full RAC, we will be coming to this RAC for input on more resource issues than just Title II Funding decisions.

Q: Do we have more authority?

A: You will be advising the Secretary of the Interior on resource management issues, more than previous RACs which just focused on Title II funding decisions. Kathy Stangl – We used RACs in California for assistance with Resource Management Plans (RMPs), so this RAC will be a broader scope than traditional RACs in this area have been.

Q: Is the comment period for RMPs still open?

A: Kim Titus - The Comment Period for the RMPs was extended, but is now closed.

Q: Is this a time to discuss RMP questions?

A: Kim Titus - We're going to be putting those questions in the Parking Lot, so we can discuss them next spring.

RAC Member Time Frames

One third of the RAC has a one year term appointment, one third has a two year appointment, and the final third has a three year appointment. The second round of appointments will be three year terms, resulting in one third of the RAC rotating off each year.

Ground Rules

Q: Are there rules around disclosing information to the public or speaking of this RAC outside RAC meetings?

A: Karen Shank – these meetings are open to the public, notes are public knowledge, and there will be an open public comment period, so there are no disclosure rules. This is a transparent committee.

Q: With the ethics rules, should we all assume with background checks we've all been checked and everyone here is cleared?

A: At this time you are all cleared to our knowledge, but as issues come up if you realize you might have a conflict of interest, just share that you have a conflict of interest and excuse yourself if need be.

Q: How do we offer ideas or input to the agenda?

A: We'll put together a draft agenda, send it out to RAC members, and ask for input or edits.

Q: Since this is a public meeting, how does the public offer agenda items? Has there been general public input on agendas?

A: Sometimes agenda items are created from the public comment period.

Q: Is the RAC the only body who can offer agenda topics or can the public change or input agenda topics?

A: DFO - RAC Bylaws are not clear on agenda formation. The public will funnel their agenda topics or interests through RAC members and the RAC members will work with the RAC Chair and DFO who will produce the agenda.

Action Item: Research bylaws and how public can impact agendas

Q: *Will we be using Roberts Rules to Order for all meetings?*

A: That is for the RAC to decide.

Roles of Members

- Disclose any litigation you or groups/affiliations are involved in against the BLM
- Members can serve on RAC subcommittees
- Members must attend meetings, field trips, and public meetings/discussions
- Keep updated on local knowledge and issues
- Provide information to constituents and bring feedback/information to BLM
- Specifics and additional guidance are provided in handouts in RAC member binder

RAC Quorum/Approval Process

- A quorum requires three members in all three categories to be present
- Specifics and additional guidance are provided in handouts in RAC member binder

Expense Reimbursement

All members are eligible. For BLM travel assistance contact Teresa Williams (Eugene District) at 541-683-6991 or via email

Q: *Is the normal travel funding doubled for this RAC, because it's a combined RAC?*

A: Will research and provide response.

Action Item – RAC members complete front page of travel form

Meeting Location Options

Q: *Is there a better location for RAC meetings to be held?*

S: We need to know what capabilities staff needs in order to put meetings together.

S: This is the first time I've seen this binder and would like time to read through it and bring questions or comments to the next meeting.

11:35AM History of Recreation Fees

1951 – Public Law 82-137 (brief explanation)

1964 – Land & Water Conservation Fund (brief explanation)

1996 – Recreation Fee Demo Program (Fee area funding stays within the area)
2004 – FLREA (brief explanation)

Overview of Recreation Fee Demo Program

- Can't charge a fee if only have parking ; only offer general access; is dispersed recreation
- Can charge a fee if has standard amenities; expanded amenities; special use
- Can't charge more than private operators providing similar services
- When fees are to be increased they have to meet requirements
- Rec fees are used for general maintenance, clean up, education, and expansion, which are all part of a successful program

Role of RAC in Determining Recreation Fee Increases

Section D – If a Recreation RAC isn't established, a regular RAC can be used

Q: How do we know we are authorized to make Recreation decisions?

A: It's listed in the charter (page 7) and is specifically mentioned in FLREA. You can provide information to your constituents. Please share with BLM the needs, thoughts, feelings, feedback from your constituents. RAC can approve proposals, suggest corrections on proposals, and turn down a proposal.

Q: Interest in an inventory of current recreation fees, knowing what we charge now, how long that fee has been in place, how fees have changed in the past, how much funding per recreation site is brought in each year?

A. Research will be done on this.

Q: How combined recreation fees work? (example: Deschutes River) How are agency portions determined?

A. Research will be done on this.

Q: When outside groups are hired to collect fees, will that information come through this RAC?

A: When those groups collect fees and the funding goes into BLM accounts, it's simply a service they provide so we don't have to collect our own fees.

Q: Can the Wyden Authority be used for recreation Sites?

A: Question added to Parking Lot for future research.

Q: There's a long process that lasts almost a year before these proposals come to the RAC. Can the process change so the RAC can come in earlier to provide comment on proposals?

A: That's our intent with this RAC.

Q: Is there going to be a mechanism for prioritizing a fee structure so it's in line with Fish and Wildlife, Forest Service, or other federal and state agencies? It would be good to know what others are doing in our area.

A: It would be good to know what our partners are doing. The consideration of fees charged by other agencies (along with private businesses) is part of the required business plan completed prior to fee proposals coming to the RAC.

12:14PM Lunch

1:00PM Check in with RAC

Q: Is there something we've missed? Were you expecting anything different from this meeting?

S: It would have been nice to receive the binder information before this meeting to be able to speak intelligently and answer some of the questions that have been posed.

1:03PM Overview of Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Legislation

- This is a Title II SRS RAC
- Proposals are recommended by the RAC to the DFO
- All SRS funds must be obligated by September 2017
- When trying to answer questions about SRS always go back to legislation for guidance
- We received funding for 2014/2015 before this RAC was fully formed; potentially we might receive the 2015 funding this year before the February RAC meeting
- Projects can be proposed by anyone
- Projects must benefit federal lands and/or federal resources; the legislation defines federal land as those lands governed under the O & C Act
- Specifics and additional guidance is provided in handouts in RAC member binder

Introduce RAC's role in SRS Project Selection

- Monitoring is normally done by the BLM on behalf of the RAC
- Title II funding can be used on Federal Lands (specifically O&C) and to improve Federal (O&C) resources
- The Wyden Authority can be used to spend federal funds on non-federal lands

Q: Can Title II funding be used on lands that were acquired in a land swaps?

A: It depends upon what that land was designated as after the swap. When projects come in the BLM reviews the project to make sure it's in compliance with Federal laws, then the RAC approves those vetted projects. Funding needs to stay in the county for which it was generated.

Action Item - Need to think about process of how to organize all the counties that will offer proposals

Q: If money isn't spent, what happens to it?

A: Funding is put onto Assistance Agreements which last for 5 years. So it gives the partner flexibility of time to do the work and the funding stays put and more funding can be added.

1:36PM Next steps for 2015-16

Discuss Process for Project Solicitation

- Public Letter inviting people to submit proposals
- Website
- David Howell – Salem District RAC Project Proposal Coordinator
Pat Johnston – Eugene District RAC Project Proposal Coordinator
- Application will be online
- Proposals may be able to be submitted as PDFs

Timelines and Deadlines

Oct 26 – Start SRS project solicitation

December 14 – Close SRS project solicitation and BLM internal technical compliance review

January 11 – Distribute SRS proposals to RAC members

Mid February – RAC meeting to review SRS projects

February/April – BLM internal process

May – BLM distributes SRS funds

Action Item - Due January 1, 2016: Tell Pat if need a hard copy

Q. How can RAC Members help?

A. Go to communities and let them know about the opportunity to submit proposals.

Q. Would you like BLM to assist with a technical review of projects before the RAC reviews projects?

S: In the past we got counties to review the RAC proposals for their county.

Q: Can stakeholders provide a review of projects?

A: RAC members represent stakeholders and are welcome to communicate with them. Proposal providers are welcome and encouraged to contact BLM technical staff for assistance with proposals.

Q: If proposal providers aren't sure if NEPA is required, what are they supposed to do?

A: Come into the BLM and have our NEPA people assist them.

Criteria for SRS Title II Projects

Exercise: What is this RAC's criteria for projects?
What Criteria is important to you?

Criteria Identified:

- Review by County Commissioners
- Matched funding and Volunteer hours
- Review by County Commissioners and Matched funding
- Project impact broad users or narrow users
- Matched funding
- Broad benefit to the community, ecological benefit, economic benefit to the community
- Results are backed by science, matched funding
- Matched funding, quality of oversight and management, partnerships, long term benefits, long term monitoring
- Youth involvement and projects that promote culture
- Uniqueness of projects, thoughtful projects, not typical budget projects

Action Item – January 11, 2015 - Combine criteria into a table

Choose Late Feb/Early March Dates for RAC Meeting

Q: *What do you envision as this RAC's process, since this is two RACs worth of work?*

A: Thinking 2 to 3 days.

Q: *Is there a way to find efficiencies?*

A. This will be looked into.

Q: *Could we share our thoughts and feelings of the proposals with each other before the formal meeting?*

A: Sharing thoughts on proposals outside the formal meeting makes the discussion not public record, and the RAC needs to be open to the public. Efficiencies should come with getting proposals a month before the meeting, BLM review, and potential County review.

Q: *Can we add county comments or prioritization onto the RAC website or include it in the proposal?*

A: County comments or prioritization might sway the RAC or dishearten project proponents.

Q: *Was there a unified process figured out by the BLM to review the proposals or an idea of how this RAC would function?*

A: No, it's being left up to the RAC to figure out how they want to tackle this process.

S: February won't work for most of the RAC members. The first week in March would be best. Given the number of counties within the NW OR RAC, three days will be needed to review all of the projects.

Action Item – October 30, 2015 – Complete doodle poll for next meeting dates

2:34PM Break

2:45PM RAC Members Choose Chair and Vice Chair

Motion 1 – Chair

Nominations for Anabelle only, she accepted the position

Motion 2 – Vice Chair

Nominations for Dave Schmidt only, he accepted the position

DFO will be in touch with Chair and Vice Chair to put together next agenda

Location of Next Meeting:

Salem District Office - 9
Linn County Fair Expo - 2
Springfield Interagency Office - 2
Research Facility in Corvallis – 1

Next meeting will be in Salem

3:00PM Public Comment

No public present – will leave open if any members of the public arrives

3:00PM Introduce Oct 22 Field Trip

- Return travel form and follow up questions go to contact Kathy Angstrom (Salem District)
- Power Point shown about projects that will be visited
- Logistics: will be walking on pavement and gravel trails, hard hats and location maps will be provided, bring lunch
- Vehicle coordination:
 - Salem van – Pete, John, Jerry, Craig, Jim, Kim, John, Diane, Scott, Dave, Trish
 - Eugene van – Kathy, Jo, Lon, Mike, Bill, Pat
 - Tangent Park and Ride – Will
 - Meet at Alsea Falls – Mike Ripley

POCs -

Diane Morris – Driver of van leaving from Salem District

Pat Johnston – Driver of van leaving from Eugene District

Q&As

Q: Worried on responsibility to monitor and review, we don't really see each and every project. Any thought on monitoring and reviewing? Have there ever been issues around monitoring and reviewing within the BLM?

A: BLM will have lots of technical specialists going out and reviewing projects.

If there are issues they would come back to the group and inform the RAC.

Dollars are obligated to Assistance Agreements which each has a Program Officer assigned to it to review and monitor the project.

Q: Can those technical experts give us a progress report or some sort of tracking sheet of how the project is going?

A: We can look into this.

Q: I've never had a report on any Title II project approved.

A: Those are good suggestions, we can come up with a summary of approved projects and have project leads provide progress reports.

Q: Have projects ever turned money back? What projects spend all their money?

A: We can provide a report to show this.

Action Item - January 2016 – Create progress report spreadsheet on previously approved projects (with pictures) including extent funded, funding spent, and if any money was returned

3:38PM Public Comment period is closed.

No public came to speak.

3:38PM Meeting Adjourned

Action Items

- Research bylaws and how public can impact agendas
- Fill out front page of travel form today or bring tomorrow to field trip
- Need to think about process of how to organize all the counties that will offer proposals
- Due January 1, 2016 - Tell Pat Johnston if you need a hard copy (Done)
- By January 11, 2015 - Combine criteria into a table (Done)
- By October 30, 2015 - Complete doodle poll for next meeting dates (Done)
- In January 2016 – Create progress report spreadsheet on previously approved projects (with pictures) including extent funded, funding spent, and if any money was returned (Done)