

Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council
Aug. 7-8, 2018
Lakeview Interagency Office, Lakeview, Ore.

Aug. 7, 2018

Present: SEORAC members Dan Morse, Julie Weikel, Jason Kesling, Ken Poole, Richard Watts, Don Hodge, Dan Morse, Stan Shepardson and Timothy Davis; Todd Forbes, Lakeview BLM; Larisa Bogardus, Lakeview BLM; and members of the public Louise Linton and Jeremy Austin.

The group visited Foskett Spring, where they heard about the recovery work that led to the proposed delisting of the Foskett Dace; stopped in the field to hear about the use of telemetry in sage grouse monitoring; visited several units identified as possessing wilderness characteristics for consideration in the Lakeview Resource Management Plan Amendment; and viewed an experimental weed mowing project designed to restore native forbs and grasses.

Aug. 8, 2018

Present: SEORAC members Jason Kesling, Phil Milburn, Stan Shepardson, Dan Morse, Mark Owens, Julie Weikel, Don Hodge, Richard Watts, and Tim Davis; Pat Ryan, Vale District Malheur Field Manager; Jeff Rose, Burns DM and SEORAC DFO; Larisa Bogardus, Lakeview BLM; Todd Forbes, acting Lakeview DM.

In the absence of a quorum, it was decided to meet as the Public Lands Access Subcommittee.

Designated Federal Official and Agency updates

- Jeff Rose, Burns District Manager (written briefing attached)
 - A new alternative is being added to address CSU's withdrawal from the spay trials assessment before it's released for public comment later this year.
- Pat Ryan, Vale District Malheur Field Manager (briefing attached)
- Todd Forbes, acting Lakeview BLM District Manager (briefing attached)
 - Fish and Wildlife Service has two CCAs (Candidate Conservation Agreements), which are agreements with private landowners to voluntarily implement conservation measures on private lands to enhance conservation of a species (Sage Grouse). If the species is listed, the federal government will still honor the agreement. CCAs offer incentives for participation on federal grazing lands with similar assurances.
 - Lakeview is involved in involved in 5 CCAs (Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances). Two have been signed and one is pending. They cover half to two-thirds of the PAC (Priority Areas of Concern) habitat.
Mark Owens commented that these agreements have been very successful in Harney County and encompass about 50 percent of the lands affected.
Dan Morse requested a list of required or recommended actions taken in response to triggers in Causal Factor Analyses for all three districts by email or the next meeting.

Lakeview Wilderness Inventory Update

(PowerPoint attached)

Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council

Aug. 7-8, 2018

Lakeview Interagency Office, Lakeview, Ore.

Lakeview has 118 units identified as possessing wilderness characteristics, 32 of which are contiguous to Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and 86 of which stand alone. Lakeview BLM manages about 3.3 million acres, 488,000 of which are WSA and 1.6 million acres of which are identified as possessing wilderness characteristics.

As with the Vale District's Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan Amendment, Forbes asked the RAC to recommend units to be managed for wilderness character and areas to be managed for other priorities. Lakeview is on an accelerated timeline and expects to have a draft ready in December. Dan Morse said the process should go more smoothly, as the RAC can use the existing matrix developed for Vale's Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan Amendment.

Chairman Jason Kesling suggested sharing the RAC's recommendations for the SEORMPA with the newly appointed RAC members for background.

Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan Amendment

Julie Weikel suggested scrapping the planned October field trip to concentrate fully on reviewing the draft SEORMPA and evaluating the Lakeview units for recommendations. It was decided to also schedule a November teleconference to continue this work.

Brent Grasty reported the draft SEORMPA should be released for public comment in September.

Dan Morse expressed concern that delays in Federal Register Notices might prevent the RAC from having time to craft a formal recommendation, although members and interest groups could still comment individually. Julie Weikel agreed, saying it defeats the purpose of the RACs, which is to participate in the planning process.

Owyhee Reservoir State Airport

This was a continuation of a discussion at the March meeting, during which Ken Poole raised safety concerns about the condition of the runway, which is used for Search and Rescue, emergency landings and other essential services. Pat Ryan reported the road is essentially gone and would require extensive NEPA to restore, as it crosses WSA and ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern) lands. Phil Milburn commented it would take 10 times the work to repair the road than the runway itself.

Ryan added he has reached out to the National Guard for help in the form of a skycrane to deliver equipment, but has not heard back yet. Dan Morse said another option might be barging the equipment in rather than attempting to repair the road.

No action was taken, but Ryan said the Vale District will continue to explore the matter.

Tri-State Fuels

Pat Ryan reported the Vale District is actively developing the alternatives for the Environmental Impact Statement. The project proposes to improve the driveability of roads, bring them up to standards, and reduce fine fuels along roads through mechanized treatment, grazing and prescribed burning. The

Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council

Aug. 7-8, 2018

Lakeview Interagency Office, Lakeview, Ore.

alternatives allow for a range of no more than 968 miles to no fewer than 617 miles. The overall project would create a network of fuel breaks on 3.6 million acres spanning three districts in Idaho, Oregon and Nevada. The plan is to brief the state director in late September or early October and brief the BLM Washington review team Oct. 19.

Jason Kesling asked if the Burns/Pueblo 7-mile project was included. Holly Orr said it was separated because the Sage Grouse plan had slowed its progress in comparison to the rest of the project. Dan Morse commented on the challenges of the process. Kesling said the tribes are very opposed to the project.

Public Comment Period

Plush rancher Jesse Laird said he felt ranchers and sportsmen were not given equal consideration and that rights and privileges on public lands should be equal. He said there were so many special designations that very little is truly open to the multiple uses the BLM was founded upon.

Sage Grouse

Lee Foster, ODFW, presented (PowerPoint attached). In 1941, one lek was documented in Oregon. In 2018, a helicopter survey of north Lake and Harney counties spanning the area from Summer Lake to the Miller Homestead Fire, identified 12 new potential lek sites. Four were verified near Picture Rock in Lake County. Another survey found 16 new lek sites in Malheur County.

Todd Forbes reported the Oregon BLM Sage Grouse Plan Amendment comment period ended Aug. 2 and is now in the review process. Potential outcomes are leaving the plan as is or allowing for district-based management decisions.

Grazing/Range

Louse Canyon (PowerPoint presentation attached) – Todd Allai (Vale BLM) presented. Rangeland Standards and Guidelines require the district to look at all rangeland uses and conditions, not just grazing. In 1997, Oregon BLM adopted 5 standards for this purpose.

Louse Canyon has a very long history of concerns and controversy due to major Sage Grouse habitat, feral horse problems, Wild and Scenic Rivers, WSAs and reservation lands. Currently, five permittees are implementing interim grazing strategies.

Jayna Ferrell (Lakeview BLM) outlined several outcome-based grazing projects (PowerPoint attached). Twenty proposals were submitted from seven states. Of those, 11 were selected from six states. Two are located in Oregon on the Lakeview District. Both allow the flexibility to graze the allotments during greenups of annual grasses, regardless of the time of year. This should reduce damage to riparian areas.

A targeted grazing project is also being conducted in the Beaty Butte area, using livestock to reduce fine fuels.

Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council
Aug. 7-8, 2018
Lakeview Interagency Office, Lakeview, Ore.

2018 Fire Season

Todd Forbes said RFPAs (Rural Fire Protection Associations) are a tremendous asset because they can respond much faster and keep a fire small, particularly during lightning busts. They are also a great help with hauling water.

Lakeview is still working with the Department of Defense regarding some military flare fires, but the military has agreed to stop using flares until the matter is resolved.

Wrap up, bin items

It was decided to limit the Oct. 11-12 agenda to the SEORMPA, the Lakeview RMPA and an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife presentation regarding its wolf program. A teleconference was scheduled for Nov. 2 to follow up on the October RMPA discussions.