



DENCA Advisory Council Minutes

January 4, 2012

Mesa County Courthouse Annex, Grand Junction, CO

Those attending:

- Chair Katie Steele of Grand Junction
- Joe Neuhoof of Grand Junction
- Oscar Massey of Whitewater
- Neil "Mike" Wilson of Eckert
- Steve Acquafresca of Grand Junction
- Vice-chair Bill Harris of Montrose
- Tamara Minnick of Grand Junction

Absent:

- Terry Kimber, of Delta

BLM staff attending: Katie Stevens, Andy Windsor, Ben Blom, Jim Cagney and Brodie Farquhar.

Public attending: Doug Atchley of Delta County, Jan Shepherd, Eric Rechel, Jan Potterveld, Joyce Olson, Sherry Schenk, Terry Gray, Kay Simmonson, Dick Miller, Tom Deryberry, Steve Chapel, Conrad and Mary Tucker, Joyce Olson, Tanna Gray, Mark Ackerman. Bob Jenowski, Phil Martin, Laurie Hill, Rob Hill, Mark Ackerman, James Solomon, Del Martin, Ken Sanders, Jeff Bates, Woody Welcher.

Katie Steele noted presence of a quorum. Council should focus on seeing whether there is a range of alternatives and are they appropriate? **Katie Stevens:** BLM information is shared with the council early and not with the public. The council is chartered by the law that created the NCA, and the purpose is to give feedback to BLM. There is a need to proceed carefully and deliberately, following guidelines on not sharing pre-decisional information. The public will eventually have a 90-day comment period in late 2012, but until then, her ability to answer questions is limited, though she can keep taking comments. Sharing the management alternatives with the public would add six additional months to the process. The main purpose of holding public meetings with the Advisory Council is to allow the public to observe the interaction between the council and the BLM – it is not to foster interaction with the public. **Katie Steele:** intends to more closely adhere to a formal meeting structure, allowing for two public comment periods of 15 minutes each and asking the public to provide feedback in the form of comments.

Focus on Natural Resource Alternatives

Tamara Minnick worked with **Oscar Massey**, **Steve Acquafresca** and **Doug Atchley**, in reviewing the Natural Resources section of Chapter 2. To summarize, this group came up with three recommendations:

- 1: Alternative B and all members of the group questioned the desirability of management via natural processes.
 - 2: Closing riparian areas to trailing cattle didn't seem appropriate.
 - 3: The group did not consider it realistic to move vegetation health from "good" to "very good."
- Recommended a focus on trends rather than specific end results.

Public comment:

James Solomon (motorcycle): asked whether the Advisory Council is being asked for general or more specific suggestions. **Katie Steele**: the answer initially is for general comments, and more specific comments later. **Jan Shepherd** (quiet use) wants the council and BLM to safeguard birds by capping pipes; take photographs of cultural sites over time to show changes and to add guided geology hikes, emulating the Colorado Monument. **Steve Acquafresca** suggested the Museum of the West would be a good partner for guided hikes. **Jan Potterveld** (horseback recreationist) said keeping the goal of moving vegetative habitat to "very good" condition would cause too many restrictions in the NCA. **Eric Rechel** (wildlife advocate) noted that Alternative B as worth consideration within the context of looking at the entire NCA and recreational impacts on wildlife.

Further Natural Resources Discussion

Tamara Minnick: consider soils health along with vegetative health.
Further discussion touched on wildlife friendly fences and the tradeoffs in retaining crested wheatgrass on the land.

Wilderness Report

Joe Neuhoof: he and **Mike Wilson** had discussed the alternatives for Wilderness. Question arose regarding whether power drilling of climbing bolts is allowed in the wilderness (it isn't in two alternatives but is allowed in a third). **Andy Windsor**: bolts might be a preferable outcome to wrapping ropes around trees and debarking the trees.
Joe Neuhoof: more access to the boundary of wilderness is needed.

BREAK

Cultural Resources alternatives

Bill Harris and **Katie Steele** discussed cultural resources. **Bill Harris**: Inclined to think that the NCA cultural resources needed interpretation and education, that it was necessary to monitor cultural resources and not much more.

Harris: heritage tourism could have impacts on cultural resources, even though some are fragile and easily damaged. Escalante Canyon could be overrun with visitors and triggers are needed so growth can trigger appropriate management responses.

Sees opportunities for on-site interpretation where the cultural site is well known by the public. Old Spanish Trail is fragile and will need off-site interpretation.

Excellent opportunity for onsite interpretation where the site is well known.

Katie Stevens: BLM has consulted with area tribes, learning that the tribes are often more interested in protecting landscapes versus only focusing on sites.

Public comment

Eric Rechel: pleased that the council wants soil health considered. Consider cryptogamic soils as well.
Jan Shepherd: hikers can have scary encounters with guard dogs when no sheep herder is present.
Urged the use of warning signs on trails when dogs are present.

Next meeting

Katie Steele said the next meeting would be January 25, in Grand Junction, focused on recreation, livestock grazing and ACECs (Areas of Critical Environmental Concerns).