



**Minutes of the D-E NCA Advisory Council  
November 5, 2013, 3:00–6:00 p.m.  
Bill Heddles Recreation Center  
Delta, CO**

**Council members attending:** Katie Steele, Joe Neuhof, Oscar Massey, Bill Harris, Mike Wilson, Tamera Minnick, Steven Boyle, Doug Atchley, Terry Kimber (by Skype).

**Council members absent:** Steve Acquafresca

**BLM staff attending:** Katie Stevens, Collin Ewing, Andy Windsor, Samantha Staley, and Marie Lawrence.

**Members of the public attending:**

Kaye Simonson, Conrad Tucker, Ralph W. Files, Joyce D. Olson, Sherry Schenck, Chris Miller, Bob Janowski, and others.

**Call to order and introductory remarks**

3:00 p.m.: Chair Katie Steele called the meeting to order and called for introductions of Advisory Council, BLM staff, and the public.

Steele: We are going to try hard to keep meeting more focused by following Robert's Rules of Order.

**Role of the Council, agenda review, and meeting objectives**

Steele: We are focusing on variances between the BLM's Preferred Alternative and the Advisory Council's recommendations. (Went over agenda and structure of meeting.)

Collin Ewing: To summarize, this is the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Council. They have put a lot of work into it. The Omnibus Act designated the NCA, and we are working on a resource management plan to manage the NCA for the next 20 years. We finished the public comment period, which ended on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, and had six meetings to discuss the differences between the Council's recommendations and the BLM's Preferred Alternative. The Council is now considering whether to make new recommendations. We are working on preparing the Proposed RMP and are hoping to have this done by next Fall and released to the public for a 30-

day “protest period.” The BLM has some things it would like resolution on today. We will start with those.

Steele: (Reviewed recommendations from last meeting, reading from 10/24 minutes). We have many more topics to work on. I ask Council member Steve Boyle to discuss biological systems, as the Council didn’t have a quorum when this topic was discussed at the October 24th meeting.

### **Council discussion: biological systems**

Boyle: My only concern is that seasonal closures are compatible with the presence of big-game animals.

***Motion (Boyle):*** *I move that we recommend the BLM exercise flexibility in the dates of seasonal route closures to the extent of big-game needs.*

Bill Harris: I second the motion.

Ewing: Early April and early winter are important to motorized communities. Right now those times would be included in the proposed seasonal closure for winter range. We got comments saying folks aren’t seeing big game in there, but we also got comments that we may see more if we have closures. Steve and I talked with CPW, and we heard from them that, especially for deer, seasonal closures are very important.

Tamera Minnick: Did you ask CPW about that? They said if big game animals are there, then the BLM should close; if not, no need to close. (Addressed to Boyle) Can the BLM make that decision on a case-by-case basis?

Boyle: Yes.

Minnick: Can changes in seasonal closure scheduling get out to the public easily?

Ewing: We can write that flexibility into the plan. I need to spend some time with the ID [interdisciplinary] team to find out whether that can work, but I sort of feel like it would.

Kimber: My issue is that there is so much country up there that animals can get seclusion. Lots of people like myself like to get out and see them at that time of year.

Steele: Are we okay with the motion?

Oscar Massey: I will see elk migrating in and out of Cactus Park and Pinyon Mesa. Our ranch is right in that corridor.

Steele: Should we give BLM the flexibility to change closure dates?

Harris: My only concern is that the decision be communicated to the public in a timely fashion.

Doug Atchley: It's totally different year to year. It should be flexible.

Massey: I agree with that. They shouldn't be harassed. Same thing with my livestock. Can you leave them alone until they've calved?

Joe Neuhof: It seems challenging to get the word out from year to year. BLM should look closely at that. I think the BLM should consult with CPW, not just rely on staff.

Ewing: Wet soils are also an issue, so we would also need to check with our hydrologist.

Mike Wilson: I'm all for being more flexible, because lots of routes are also closed.

Steele: (Asked the note taker [Marie Lawrence] to read back the original motion.)

Harris: We should amend it to include road conditions.

Kimber: The roads don't get fixed or plowed, etc., anyway, so what's the difference?

Neuhof: Are there any plans to maintain the roads?

Ewing: We hope to maintain them.

Steele: Are we going to add road conditions in April?

(The recommendation was amended to include road conditions.)

***Amended motion (Boyle):*** *I move that we recommend the BLM exercise flexibility in the dates of seasonal route closures to the extent of big-game needs and soil conditions.*

Harris: I second the motion.

(Eight Council members approved; Kimber abstained.)

Boyle: I move to recommend no new routes in sagebrush patches 60 acres or larger.

Steele: We could grandfather existing routes in sagebrush. Are there any public comments on this?

Ewing: The public comments agree with what Steve and Tamera are saying.

Atchley: There is nothing in the motion that says the BLM has to reroute.

Wilson: A reroute is new construction. It has to be built to specifications around the perimeter. The determination should be made whether that is a possibility, before the original route is closed.

(The Council discussed this further.)

**Motion (Boyle):** *I move to recommend no new routes in sagebrush patches 60 acres or larger and that the BLM should be able to move interior routes to the edges of a patch, if necessary.*

Minnick: I second.

(The Council passed the motion unanimously.)

**Motion (Boyle):** *I move to recommend Alternative C for the management of mountain shrubland communities, which requires that 25% or more of the communities are in each of the following age classes: early, mid, and late seral.*

(There was more discussion to clarify.)

Minnick: I think that D is more appropriate than C, as it requires that 15% or more is in each of three age classes.

Harris: I would try to avoid using B [Note: For mountain shrubland, this is the same as E, the Preferred Alternative], which is more damaging.

Boyle: The seral stages are more important to big game.

**Motion (Boyle):** *I move to recommend Alternative D for the management of mountain shrubland communities, which requires that 15% or more of the communities are in each of the following age classes: early, mid, and late seral.*

(The motion was seconded.)

Steele: All in favor?

(The Council passed the motion unanimously.)

Steele: Doug, do you want to recommend the removal of recreation from the list of water-dependent values?

Atchley: (Regarding recreation as a water-dependent value) The point here is that degradation of the land is not from one activity.

Steele: That being the case, it is already in Alternative E.

### **Council discussion: the Wilderness**

Neuhof: In the Preferred Alternative, in Zone 1, travel is restricted to designated routes. I support that staying the case. This feeds into the discussion around geocaches. I don't think we need a motion for that.

Steele: There has been quite a bit of public discussion on this topic.

***Motion (Neuhof):*** I move that the Advisory Council support Alternative E for designated routes in Zone 1.

Steele: Is there a second?

Harris: I second that motion.

Atchley: Why are we doing this?

Neuhof: There are a ton of social trails to culturally sensitive sites.

Atchley: What about hunting?

Neuhof: Is hunting allowed in Zone 1?

Ewing: There could be hunting, and that's a challenge with the requirement to stay on designated routes in Zone 1.

Neuhof: That area really funnels people; you get a spider web of social trails.

(The Council discussed the size and condition of Zone 1.)

Steele: It's still a very small acreage in terms of usable acres. I'm concerned about watering livestock and horses.

Harris: The hunting question is a good one. I'm not sure how much deer hunting there is, but there can be seven or eight permits for hunting bighorn sheep.

Ewing: We may be able to provide some sort of exception language for legal hunting.

(The Council further discussed designated routes to cultural sites.)

Harris: [Alternative] D routes are marked.

Atchley: How does the BLM even manage for that? That's my question.

Steele: Should we keep the motion the same?

Massey: When you have a lot of side canyons that have livestock, trails, etc., and game trails that may change every year, how do you keep people from going up there?

Steele: It's a small area with few, if any, side canyons.

(The Council further discussed amendments to the motion.)

**Motion (Neuhof):** *I move that travel be limited to designated routes in Zone 1, and that the BLM consider the needs of watering horses, cultural and heritage resources, and hunting.*

(The Council passed this motion unanimously.)

Steele: What about group size?

**Motion (Neuhof):** *I move to support Alternative E for group size limitations.*

Steele: Is there a second to Joe's motion?

Harris: Just in the Wilderness?

Wilson: I second the motion.

Ewing: Any type of permit we issue would limit group size in Zone 1.

Neuhof: Did the BLM get any comments on this?

Ewing: We got comments supporting group size limits, but there is a conflict with outfitters; we may need to consider exceptions for education and other uses that are low impact.

Neuhof: It seems like that would open up a can of worms; if there are groups of 25-30 people out there, that's going to impact experiences.

Steele: Should there be exceptions?

(The Council further discussed special permits inside and outside of the Wilderness.)

Steele: Should we amend the motion to give the BLM more flexibility?

Neuhof: We can endorse with the caveat that the BLM has the flexibility to meet the goals of the NCA regarding education, etc.

Steele: Is that a second?

**Amended Motion (Neuhof):** *I move to support Alternative E for group size limitations, with the stipulation that the BLM retains the flexibility to meet the goals of the NCA regarding education and other values.*

(The motion was seconded.)

(The Council passed the motion with seven to two in favor; those against supported the motion for Zones 1 or 2 but not for Zone 3.)

(Kimber announced that he would have to leave the meeting [i.e., end remote connection], but asked the Council to consider a motion to recommend that the BLM allow use of administrative roads for retrieving game.)

Steele: I would like to thank Terry for his time, his love of the NCA, and for bringing the traditional user's approach to the Advisory Council.

Harris: I second that!

(Kimber ended his remote connection with Council.)

#### **Council discussion: areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs)**

**Motion (Steele):** *I move that the Advisory Council support Alternative E with Gibbler Mountain staying in the Cactus Park SRMA.*

Harris: I second the motion.

(The Council discussed motorized and non-motorized recreation and parking lots in the Gibbler Mountain area.)

Neuhof: Can we support E including Gibbler but suggest if there is an opportunity to support a horse route or quiet trail, make one?

**Amended motion (Steele/Neuhof):** *I move that the Advisory Council support Alternative E with Gibbler Mountain staying in the Cactus Park SRMA, and if there is an opportunity to support a horse route or quiet trail, the BLM make one.*

(The motion was seconded, and the Council passed the motion unanimously.)

### **Council discussion: recreation and travel management**

**Motion (Harris on behalf of Kimber):** *I move to allow motorized use of administrative routes for retrieval of downed game.*

Steele: Is there a second?

Boyle: Is there a precedence for this?

Windsor: The Forest Service tried this and had to back off.

Steele: This could open up a can of worms.

Boyle: It's not enforceable. Anyone can say they're using a road to get game.

Massey: You could have a set retrieval time in morning. Hunters call in to CPW with GPS coordinates, and they could give permission.

Ewing: CPW said this is hard to enforce. The Forest Service had to amend the Grand Mesa travel plan to eliminate this allowance

Massey: Utah does this from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Steele: The motion was to to allow use of administrative routes.

(The Council declined this motion unanimously, but with the understanding that Kimber would have voted in favor if he had been present.)

### **Public comment**

Jan Potterveld: (Regarding) the comment on group size in Zone 1, you have to go through Zone 1 to get to Zone 2, so the 8 to 12 group size limitation doesn't make sense.

(The Advisory Council clarified that the Preferred Alternative's group size limitation in Zone 1 is 12 and in Zone 2 is 8.)

Conrad Tucker: As long as the horse knows something is there, it doesn't have a problem with vehicles.

Eric Rechel: (Regarding) recreational shooting, I've been to 30 of 31 meetings, and I don't remember much discussion about recreational shooting in most of them. The quiet users have been very well represented at most meetings. I ask the Council to look at that commitment and have that be counted as a comment to the draft RMP.



Steele: We did discuss target shooting, but the Council's opinion was split 50-50. Therefore, Target Shooting was tabled until after the publication of the draft RMP.

Rechel: I thought comments couldn't be submitted after comment period closed, yet the BLM seems to be considering comments made here.

Ewing: The BLM is required to respond to all substantive comments received during the public comment period on the draft RMP. Comments received outside the official comment period will be included in the record and considered, but BLM will not respond to them. The Advisory Council serves a different purpose.

Potterveld: Our intent is to share trails. Almost all incidents where horseback riders meet with motorized riders, there is no conflict. The function of the Grand Valley Trails Alliance is to bring different groups together to resolve conflicts on trail use, to bring people together. (Related some positive personal experiences regarding different user groups on one trail.) Don't rule out all instances of mixed use.

Massey: (Related his personal experience where a herd of cows reacted undesirably to vehicle full of children who came out to look at cows.)

Harris: This is etiquette that the educational part could address.

Steele: This could be accomplished in the implementation phase.

4:24–4:36 p.m.: Break.

Steele: We have three more topics to cover.

***Motion (Steele): I move to ban glass containers in the NCA.***

Minnick: I second.

Steele: In Alternative E, they are not banned except in target shooting areas. This was omitted in the RMP because of enforceability. Nine times out of ten it's an educational issue. Once glass is broken, it is nearly impossible to clean up.

Harris: It's now banned in the Potholes area. You don't see the old glass there, because gravel covers it up.

Neuhof: I totally support a ban. This is a good educational opportunity for the public, even if not enforceable. My question is will the BLM have to prioritize enforcing a glass ban over perhaps other more important issues.

Ewing: We reserve the right to prioritize our enforcement actions.

Stevens: We have to publish a notice in the *Federal Register* to give us the authority to enforce such a ban. This is already enforced under littering.

Minnick: If it becomes common knowledge that glass is banned, then you might not have glass.

Stevens: This could make the BLM look like a babysitter if it's strictly enforced by one of our law enforcement rangers somewhere.

(The Council further discussed the pros and cons of a glass ban.)

Steele: (Called for vote on motion).

(The Council passed the motion with six to two in favor of glass ban.)

***Motion (Steele): I move that temporary route closures not be made until funds are available.***

Harris: I second.

Ewing: We heard quite a bit about this. The team found 83 miles that had a concern. We found that 53 miles could remain open pending mitigation. Thirty miles had too severe a resource concern to remain open until mitigation. Only the latter are shown on our travel maps. We certainly plan to re-examine these routes in response to public comment.

Steele: Is this motion necessary?

Boyle: I think it's been covered. Let's not tie the BLM's hands.

Steele: I withdraw the motion.

Harris: I second.

(Council passed the withdrawal unanimously.)

Minnick: You skipped one (topic: prioritize trail from Delta to Grand Junction).

Steele: That could be accomplished in the implementation phase of the plan.

### **Council discussion: grazing**

Steele: (Regarding sheep grazing allotments in desert bighorn high risk areas—swaps offered but not mandatory), that's already in Alternative E, so I have no recommendation.

**Motion (Steele):** *I move that the BLM's plan require the grazing permittee to have guard dogs sufficient to control the herd but that the plan not specify the number of dogs.*

Atchley: I second.

Neuhof: Where did the BLM come up with the numbers?

Ewing: We got them from conversations with the permittees, but we understand that two bad guard dogs are worse than one good one.

Stevens: I think this was to protect bighorn sheep herds.

Boyle: The language came out of WAFWA [Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies] recommendations.

Atchley: The rule of thumb is to use one or two dogs.

Steele: Should we amend the motion for minimum of two dogs?

(Boyle asked to have the actual language read from the draft RMP, and the Council discussed this issue further.)

Harris: Did you get the recommendations from sheep herders?

Ewing: We sat down with them and with CPW.

Harris: Did you receive comments from grazers?

Stevens: I think we generally heard that "sufficient" should be used.

Boyle: I'm happy with the language "sufficient."

Atchley: There isn't anyone out there who would want interaction between wild and domestic sheep.

Minnick: I'm concerned about the basis for the decision; it should be the BLM's decision.

Boyle: I'm okay with it as long as BLM makes the decision.

(The Council discussed this further.)

Stevens: We would use an EA to make those determinations if we didn't set standards in the plan.

Atchley: I'm concerned, because you can't judge effectiveness of dogs by number.

Massey: You're either controlling the domestic sheep or protecting the bighorn sheep. Is the dog going to do that or is he going to control domestic sheep?

Steele: When managing sheep herds, is it easier to manage with set numbers, so the BLM does not have to deal with that on an allotment by allotment basis?

Boyle: I don't care as long as bighorn sheep are protected.

Steele: I move to withdraw the motion.

Harris: I second.

(The Council approved the withdrawal unanimously.)

(The Council discussed the definition of "trailing" and reviewed the closure of the Rose Creek allotment.)

Steele: Anyone want to make a motion that it remains open?

***Motion (Massey): I make a motion (that the Rose Creek allotment remains open).***

Atchley: I second.

(The Council discussed the Bean Ranch allotment.)

Harris: Is there water available on Bean Ranch?

Massey: There is a reservoir on BLM land. There is a subdivision there.

Boyle: How does it benefit the BLM to close Bean Ranch?

Ewing: We would just be closing it formally. It is a difficult one to manage.

Massey: Can't you combine the two?

Stevens: There hasn't been a lot of interest in managing (Bean Ranch).

(The Council discussed the Bean Ranch allotment further.)

Stevens: It hasn't been grazed in, say, five years.

Massey: I would say more like ten years.

Harris: (Referring to Rose Creek) If it's closed and a cow gets down there, they could be ticketed.

Atchley: That's the concern.

Steele: We could leave it open so if a cow wanders there, the rancher doesn't get ticketed.

***Amended motion (Massey/Steele): I move that we recommend that Rose Creek remains open but the Bean Ranch allotment be closed.***

(The Council approved this motion.)

### **Council discussion: social and economic conditions**

Atchley: Agriculture and grazing are a significant part of the economy. All we're asking is for that to be reflected in the RMP. Our data came from CSU. There's a multiplier effect which hasn't been discussed in the RMP. The other part is the cultural-social, the history of grazing. There's a historical and cultural aspect that should be discussed too. Delta would really like to see that preserved in the NCA, with education.

Minnick: Would you like to make that a motion?

Atchley: I make that a motion.

Steele: How is motion worded?

(The Council further discussed the social and economic implications of grazing.)

Harris: I make a motion that the recommendations of Delta County be included in the proposed RMP.

Atchley: (Reiterated Delta County comments that wider economic impacts of grazing be acknowledged.) Section of RMP on social and economic conditions should reflect comments that Delta County made to draft RMP.

Neuhof: Can we add "as appropriate?"

Steele: How about "as applicable?"

Minnick: It should distinguish between opinion and facts.

Boyle: We just want BLM to consider it.

Neuhof: How about if we ask for special consideration, put a highlight on it?

Stevens: We could have our economists re-evaluate this.

**Council discussion: cultural resources and other business**

Steele: (Regarding) land swaps, should we make a motion or leave as is?

Atchley: Delta county would like to see these (sites in Escalante Canyon) preserved.

**Motion (Steele):** *I make a motion that the BLM Investigate land swaps for sites in Escalante Canyon that are presently state owned.*

Harris: I second. Is that already in Alternative E?

Ewing: I think so...Andy?

(Windsor and others consulted the draft RMP.)

Minnick: It's on page 172.

(The Council discussed this further and dropped the motion, as it is in the Preferred Alternative.)

**Motion (Steele):** *(I move that) the Old Spanish Trail should be protected and off-site interpretation utilized versus on-the-ground interpretation.*

(The motion was seconded, and the Council passed this motion unanimously).

Steele: Any other recommendations?

Minnick: I have a motion to protect and restore supplemental values for all three zones.

Windsor: Restore would mean more active management, which would mean more trammeling (installations, gardening...). Another wilderness value is hands off, let natural processes take their course.

(The Council discussed this further.)

Minnick: Zone 1 is 1,500 acres. If you have threatened and endangered species or cultural resources, it's been trammled, and I'd like to see them restored.

(The Council discussed this further.)

Minnick: I would like to see protect and restore to make it more flexible for the BLM.

Stevens: "Protect" does give us a lot of leeway to do projects.

Ewing: If the objective is to protect and restore, we will need to actively go out and look for restoration opportunities.

Boyle: Given the clarification, I would be leery of encouraging the BLM to do non-wilderness things in wilderness.

Minnick : What about re-seeding after fires?

(The Council discussed what this would mean.)

Ewing: The Preferred Alternative will allow us to do things like address weeds and presumably re-seed.

Windsor: (Concurred).

(The Council further discussed the distinction between protect and restore and how these actions relate to the preservation of threatened and endangered species.)

***Motion (Minnick):*** *I move that in the Wilderness Zone 1, the BLM should protect and restore supplemental values, but in Wilderness Zones 2 and 3, the BLM should only protect these values.*

(The motion was seconded, and the Council approved this motion unanimously.)

Steele: Are there any other recommendations or proposals?

(The Council made no further recommendations or proposals.)

### **Public comments**

Ralph Files: Invasive species come after a fire. If you don't have a way to control them, you can get into a bad situation. I am concerned about what you just said.

Ewing: We would probably seed to keep weeds out.

Massey: We have a lot of copper weed. Can we take that out?

Ewing: I'm not sure what copper weed is.

Massey: It's poisonous to cattle. It kills them. We have to pick it and burn it.

(The Council discussed this further.)

Steele: The question is would Oscar have the right to go in and take those out?

(The Council discussed this further.)

Steele: The BLM needs to do some investigation and get back to us.

### **Agenda for next meeting and final remarks**

Steele: (Asked Ewing about next meeting.)

Ewing: We have to put in a Federal Register notice. (Went through possible agenda for next meeting.)

Steele: (Thanked Wilson and Neuhof for their time and input to the Advisory Council.)

Neuhof: (Thanked Steele, Advisory Council, and BLM.)

(The Council discussed the date and time of the next meeting, and Ewing noted that three of the four new Council members were present. The next meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2014.)

Wilson: Here are some thoughts. (He gave Council members a handout and remarked on his time on the Council.) [Note: see attachment].

### **Meeting adjournment**

5:50 p.m.: Steele adjourned the meeting.

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### **Attachments**

1. Comments from motorized board member
2. Public comment—Conrad Tucker [2 pages]
3. Public comments—Eric Rechel [3 pages]



## Comments from motorized board member

I want to thank all of the other members for letting me work with you. Also the BLM people for their help with understanding rules and regulations. It has been a learning experience for an old duffer.

In a personal brain storming session in an attempt to understand what this process has brought about I have come to some understanding of the end product. The first revelation brought me to a question I need to ask. Why of all the many user groups represented is motorized use the one that is expected to give up access and be seen as the bogey man in environmental terms?

Let us take a look at Hikers. One can in almost all cases go anywhere they want without being told to only travel on designated routes. The same goes for horse people, again in most cases. Motorized is being discriminated against when compared to these user groups. Further as in my case as a disabled person I am told that because I need a motorized crutch to get out where I like to spend time I am doubly discriminated against. I have all my life tried to protect the environment and cultural sites and to respect the things left by our ancestors. I agree that designated routes for some users are a good idea, however when a management plan removes access from a large portion of non-wilderness lands something is wrong with the system.

Case in point is the south end of the hunting ground from the road to Bridge Port all the way to Delta. There are no motorized routes open that access the north rim or the Gunnison river for hunters and fishermen or for disabled people to see the sites or just have a quiet time in the outdoors. In the same theme since horse people are not restricted to designated routes why take very popular motorized routes and make them horse rider designated routes. Makes no sense to me.

I just recently read a good analogy of travel. A horse is twice as fast as walking, an ATV is twice as fast as a horse, a dirt bike [Motorcycle] is twice as fast as an ATV. This puts area of use into perspective. A person can walk say twenty miles in a day's hike. An ATV rider can easily ride twice or three times that in a day, a dirt bike rider would need over one hundred miles of trail to ride. Why is the motorized use area in almost all travel plans reduced by one third to half?

In my brain storming I came across an interesting study done by the Forest Service. Wilderness use days in the last ten years have fallen from just under 10% to just over 3% while non-wilderness use has risen by over 25%. Do we need any more wilderness or to manage any more land as wilderness that could be used by the public instead of being wasted. It would seem that there is something wrong with the land management system that does not plan for use by the larger user group.

Just some parting thoughts

Mike Wilson now ex guidance board member

**Dominguez-Escalante  
National Conservation Area**

**Advisory Council**

**Public Comment—Conrad Tucker**

I am calling on the Advisory Council to adopt two items:

1. Advise the Grand Junction BLM Field Office that the designation 'SRMA' be applied to the following areas: Cactus Park, Ninemile Hill, Farmer's Canyon and Gibbler Mountain. Reason: This is a prime area for motorized use. 'Quiet users' can enjoy the whole of the Wilderness designated area in the NCA plus the above mentioned areas. i.e. Quiet Users can 'walk off trail' anytime and walk where they wish to walk. (See 'Letters to the Editor', Sunday Nov. 3, 2013 attached)
2. The above areas need to be kept open year around. The best riding weather is in the spring and fall, with a few 'snow rides' occurring during the winter months.

Thank You for your consideration.

*Conrad Tucker*

Conrad Tucker  
Attachment

# COMMENTARY

Sunday Nov. 3, 2013

## LETTERS

### Nisley staff and principal deserve national award

**M**y daily ritual when opening The Daily Sentinel is to recall words from a hit song by Anne Murray back in 1983, "I sure could use a little good news today."

Well, my wish was granted Oct. 23, when I quickly skipped to Page 2 and discovered the uplifting article on the most recent accomplishment of the now highly acclaimed Nisley Elementary School.

Under the leadership of Principal Curry Newton and her dedicated staff, this school has achieved yet another scholastic honor to add to past achievements, which include Colorado School of Excellence awards in 2010 and 2012.

This year, Nisley is one of two schools out of 600 to earn a national Title I Distinguished Schools of the Year Award of \$5,000 in addition to the prestige and recognition it gained.

The success of Nisley is predicated on the credo that Newton and her teachers adopted five years ago: "that all students can achieve great things, regardless of background, socioeconomic status or learning challenges."

Those familiar with this school's location will appreciate the enormity of this challenge. The school environment there is "all about the kids," with students challenged to take "pride in their performance" and the staff refusing to take credit for the "awards."

This is a concept that could have enormous positive consequences if it were applied in our society and to our approach to life.

Newton says it best when she says their "ultimate goal" is for the student to become "a lifelong learner." Quite an ambitious goal for elementary school students, but it's working.

Congratulations, Nisley students. And, thanks, Sentinel, for providing "a lot of good news" in this article.

**RICHARD DORAN**  
*Battlement Mesa*

### Hiking opportunities abound in travel management areas

Quiet users have the freedom to enjoy all of the 1.4 million acres in the BLM's Grand Junction Resource Area and



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Conservation Area travel management areas. In most areas, it's completely legal to walk off trail on BLM lands. As a quiet user myself, I shake my head when quiet users complain about needing more trails. Grab a GPS and go; the best hiking is off trail.

Approximately 4,200 miles of legal motorized routes are in these two travel management areas. If we estimate each motorized route is about 10 feet wide (most are smaller), this represents an area of only 5,000 acres or 4/10th of 1 percent of the 1.4 million public acres.

Can you imagine hiking on a legal, motorized right of way that has been providing access to our youth, handicapped and elderly for the past 50 to 100 years, and then complaining about the fact that you heard a motor running? It would be like riding a mountain bike along Highway 50 and complaining about traffic. We need to bring common sense back into the equation. If you don't like hearing a motor while you're hiking, don't hike on a motorized route.

Nearly all of the motorized routes on our local BLM lands are legal rights of way based on Colorado law, and the federal law, RS 2477. The BLM only has proprietary authority on 99 percent of our public lands in Colorado.

Since jurisdiction over our public lands and our legal right of way has not been ceded to the federal government, the BLM can't close legal rights of way on our public lands. Under Colorado law, the right to vacate a legal right of way has explicitly been given to county commissioners.

**BRANDON SIEGFRIED**  
*Grand Junction*

### Health care exchanges take a toll on privacy

Regarding the Monday article, "Med-

November 5, 2013

BLM/AC Dominguez Escalante National Conservation Area

To Whom It May Concern

I have come to understand that the BLM/AC is still taking public comment on the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area management plan, not just at the public AC meetings, but through one-on-one lobbying and emails. It was my misunderstanding, but I thought public comment was to end September 22, 2013. I accept the public comment could continue through the AC past his date. It would have been considerate of all those involved if the AC had announced it was still taking comments outside the official AC public meetings. Because the BLM and AC did not do this I can only wonder if there aren't some other forces at play here in directing the management plan of the DE-NCA.

How long will comments be accepted? If there is a deadline will it apply to everyone? Can I come to the BLM and lobby for wildlife the moment before the final Plan is sent to the printers?

Sincerely

Eric Rechel

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Rechel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

November 5, 2013

BLM/AC Dominguez Escalante National Conservation Area

To Whom It May Concern

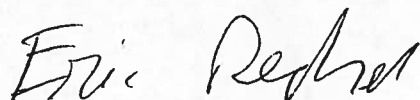
I have attended almost every public meeting held by of the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Advisory Council. From what I can remember individuals of the Quite Use group have been to all these meetings. I think at the last meeting, held at the Wittman building, there were only those of the quite use group and one other home owner. I remember one meeting when it was only Sherry Shank and I from the public.

The Quite Use group has sat through over 20 meetings lasting at least 3 hours. We have brought our concerns and visions of how this NCA can be managed for wildlife and people. At one meeting we were subject to an emotional tongue lashing from a motorized representative. There were negative comments toward our support of prairie dogs.

I want our commitment and attendance to the process of the NCA management plan to be recognized and acknowledged. Most importantly I want our presence to count towards a developing a management plan that supports wildlife and quite use. I want our comments over last 20 or so meetings, to be used as a significant comment on how to manage the NCA.

Sincerely

Eric Rechel

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Rechel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

November 5, 2013

BLM/AC Dominguez Escalante National Conservation Area

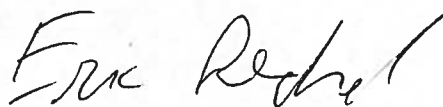
To Whom It May Concern

I am very concern about the how the recreational shooting in the NCA was established. I have attended almost all of the AC meetings and I do not remember there being any discussion on this topic of recreational shooting in the NCA. Then when the Draft EIS for the NCA came out in June 2013, there it is, recreational shooting in 95% of the preferred alternative. The inclusion of recreational shooting at the last minute without discussion by the AC suggests individuals, or an organization, which are disingenuous in their motives and actions. They did not come to the AC meetings with this proposal. I have some faith in the integrity of the local BLM so I can only guess that the forces responsible for this action came from offices that are over the local BLM.

This action is speaks of back room deals and arm twisting. I wonder if it is legal. Given that the legislation that created the NCA spoke of citizen involvement and public input can the BLM in all honesty accept this management decision?

Your duty as an AC council is to draw up a management plan for the National Conservation Area, not a National Recreation Area. There may have been shooting allowed in this area before the legislation, but the legislation created a Conservation Area from the existing BLM lands and with it came changes in the how these lands are to be used and enjoyed.

Sincerely  
Eric Rechel

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Rechel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "E" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.