



# United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management  
3028 East Main Street  
Canon City, Colorado 81212



## FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC) MINUTES November 20-21, 2013

### Category 1

Ed Neilsen  
Mike Barningham  
Bill Dvorak  
Steve Oswald

### Category 2

Mike Nelson  
Greg Labbe  
Kristin Ann Salamack  
Jason Anderson

### Category 3

Laura Benjamin  
Dean Sandoval  
Al Trujillo  
Christopher "Kit" Shy  
John Stevenson

### ATTENDEES

Tom Heinlein, Designated Federal Officer (Front Range District Manager); Kyle Sullivan, Front Range RAC Coordinator; Shelley Freer, Front Range RAC Administrative Assistant; Keith Berger, Royal Gorge Field Office Manager; and Andrew Archuleta, San Luis Valley Field Office Manager.

### GUESTS

No guests were in attendance.

### INTRODUCTIONS AND OLD BUSINESS

All RAC members and attendees introduced themselves after the meeting was called to order by Kit Shy at 9:20 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the group. Mike N. made a motion to pass the last meeting's minutes; seconded by Ed N. Tom introduced Kyle Sullivan, the new Public Affairs Officer and RAC Coordinator. New members Kristin Salamack and Jason Anderson share information about themselves and their interest in the RAC.

Tom thanked out-going members Jay Hetter and Mike Nelson for their service, adding that they have both been excellent contributors to the RAC. A plaque was presented to Mike; Jay's will be mailed as he was not able to attend the meeting. Mike expressed his thanks to the RAC; he will continue to be involved as a member of the public.

### OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

## MANAGERS UPDATE

### **Tom Heinlein, *Front Range District Manager (Designated Federal Officer)***

Tom apologized for the lack of RAC meetings last year. This was an unfortunate result of budget cuts and sequestration. BLM is bracing for round two with a lower operating budget but Colorado BLM is in relatively good shape. He explained how the budget process works. Tom has received many comments regarding the state-wide RAC meeting that was held in February, ranging from good to it being a waste of time and money. Comments were received from current RAC members stating they did not appreciate being assigned to specific meetings, future agendas need to come from local RACs, and to hold in smaller towns to save costs. Tom gave a brief overview of the Resource Management Plan process, which will be taking a great deal of BLM employee's time and resources. An RMP update will be on the next RAC agenda.

### **Andrew Archuleta, *Field Office Manager, San Luis Valley Field Office***

Andrew discussed the Intermountain West Joint Venture; funding will be provided out of multiple programs. Part of this venture involves the Blanca Wetlands project which is of national significance. Funding has yet to be determined. This location is an essential stopover site for shorebirds. Andrew handed out an article explaining more about the Intermountain West Joint Venture.

The Rio Grande Natural Area Commission has hired an editor/writer to assist with their private land management plan. Sub-committees will be meeting in December. BLM will be working on their part of the management plan.

There are many horse and cattle trespass issues in the San Luis Valley (SLV). They are working on plans for impoundment and need to find funding to assist with this problem.

The Cadastral Survey team will be working on a natural area boundary project.

BLM has been sued by an environmental group regarding NEPA on trailing activities. Some trailing is occurring on BLM land and allotments without permission or permits, with approximately 400 miles of trailing in the SLV. It is hoped a decision will be made by the end of the month.

They have received one Application for Permit to Drill (APD) in the SLV. Hundreds of comments were received on the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Continued restoration is occurring at Kerber Creek which is a mining impacted area. Three miles of restoration will be completed this year, leaving 1.5 miles left to finish.

The campground at Zapata Falls has been completed. SLVFO was overwhelmed with the large number of visitors this summer. Re-signing has been completed to assist visitors on where to go. They are collecting fees but it has not yet been determined if the campground is self-sufficient. They are hoping to get a campground host for the next season.

Funding fell through for the Cochetopa scenic byway.

**Paul Tigan, Assistant Field Office Manager, San Luis Valley Field Office**

The Solar Energy process is continuing in the SLV. There are four zones in the SLV on both BLM and private lands. A solar competitive auction was held in October but there were no bidders in attendance. BLM is moving forward with another auction in Nevada. SLVFO is looking at a local resource base to look at unavoidable impacts. Land can be purchased and donated to BLM through conservation easements. Paul handed out a transmission line project location map. Several companies will be building new power lines with multiple repairs needed to existing lines of which many are sagging. They are developing alternatives to this on-going plan.

**Keith Berger, Field Office Manager, Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO)**

The last hurdle has been cleared for the Resource Management Plan process. The overall plan makes allocation decisions and determines what is allowed where and under what conditions. A visual resources inventory class was recently held at the RGFO for employees, with training on how to create resource inventory lists. The RMP process also includes looking at travel management plans. The RAC will play a critical role in the RMP process including assisting in the development of alternatives. A contractor will be hired to assist in writing certain portions of the plan. The schedule is as follows: analysis by May, 2014; public scoping in late summer of 2014; EIS public draft release in December, 2015; and final EIS in the fall of 2016. There will be an Oil and Gas lease sale in November of 2014. There was recent litigation on an additional Oil and Gas lease sale that has been resolved; those parcels will be on a separate lease sale.

There are on-going human health and safety, as well as resource issues in the Cache Creek area associated with recreational level mining activities. The RGFO is reaching out to user groups for help in finding potential alternatives.

BLM Solicitors recently visited Guffey Gorge. BLM is working towards a long-term management plan to address safety issues at the site.

Legislation is proceeding on making Brown's Canyon into a National Monument. Federal agencies will continue to manage their own land.

**Alyssa Radcliff, BLM Wildlife Biologist, San Luis Valley Field Office and Jenny Hehring, Contractor**

Alyssa and Jenny gave a presentation on the Gunnison Sage Grouse. The species is declining so a project has been launched to move Gunnison Sage Grouse to Poncha Pass. The power point presentation is available on the Front Range RAC webpage.

The RAC attended a frigid tour on Thursday to view the Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat on Poncha Pass. The tour looked at potential management opportunities and challenges within the habitat including transmission lines, recreational use and a fractured land pattern.

Ed made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Al seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00p.m.

November 21, 2013

**Craig Johnson and Chris Bockey, Visual Resource Inventory**

The RGFO is conducting a visual resource inventory as part of the Resource Management Plan process. The inventory will develop a baseline of scenic values within the field office based on 3 components: distance zone from observation points (highways, travel routes, overlooks); scenic quality assessment; and sensitivity to change. The three components are overlaid to develop a scenic value score. For the sensitivity to change component, input from local interests and stakeholders is extremely valuable. Craig Johnson and Chris Bockey are conducting the VRI for the RGFO and would like the RAC's assistance in reaching out to stakeholders and user groups. If you or some key individuals you know would like to assist with the inventory, please contact Craig and Chris.

Craig Johnson [cjohnson@logansimpson.com](mailto:cjohnson@logansimpson.com)  
Chris Bockey [cbockey@logansimpson.com](mailto:cbockey@logansimpson.com)  
(480)-967-1343

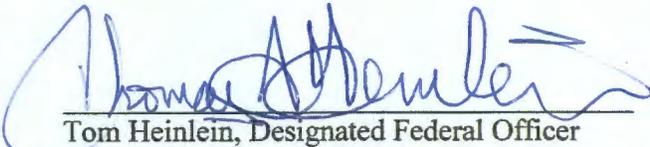
**NEXT MEETING DATES**

The next meeting dates are as follows:

June 4-5, Cañon City

August 20-21, Cañon City

November 19-20, San Luis Valley (Crestone)



Tom Heinlein, Designated Federal Officer  
Front Range District Office  
Bureau of Land Management



Christopher "Kit" Shy, Chair  
Front Range Resource Advisory Council