

Resource Advisory Council
Minutes
December 4, 2014

Attendance

NW RAC

Category 1: Dave Grisso, Jim Mattern, Wes McStay

Category 2: Carl Conner, Barbara Vasquez, Dona Shue, Stacy Beaugh, Luke Schafer

Category 3: John Justman, Dean Riggs, Kai Turner, Meyer Neuhof, Lanny Weddle

BLM: Joseph Meyer, Karl Mendonca, Stephanie Odell, Wendy Reynolds, Kent Walter,
Wayne Werkmeister, David Boyd, Chris Joyner,

Public: Marty Felix, Friends of the Mustangs

Lois Bethane, Friends of the Mustangs

Christine Beaumont, SWB / SWAT

Michael Paulick, SWB / SWAT

Tracy Scott, Steadfast Steeds

Kat Wilder, National Mustang Association – CO Chapters

Jason Railey, WPX Energy

Callie Henderson, Advisory Board Conservation District

Joyce Crawford, Advocate For Mustangs

Geogria Manus, Friends of the Mustangs

Peter Hart, Wilderness Workshop

Mark Spague, Rio Blanco County

Kim Zamiedio, SWAT

Michell Sandes, SWAT

Aleta Wolf, SWAT

Stella Trueblood, SWAT

Carrie Wagner, SWAT

TJ Holmes, SWAT

Scott Robertson

A quorum is present

Dean Riggs called meeting to order at 8 a.m. and talked about the field trip and proceeded to introductions of new members Luke Schafer and Jim Mattern.

Riggs identified those members who were up for introduction. Meyer Meyer reiterated that those positions were set to expire and that if they wished to remain in the RAC, then they need to submit applications.

Elections – Dean Riggs went over positions and requirements.

Nominations were made and seconded that Dean Riggs remain Chair. Vote takes place and carries. Riggs remains Chair

Meyer Neuhof and Barbara Vasquez both nominated for vice chair
Nominations seconded and closed. Vote takes place.

Barbara Vasquez nomination carried – new vice chair will be Barbara Vasquez

Riggs identified tentative RAC dates for 2015. Two dates were changed from original proposal with RAC agreement on alternative date selected.

Meyer explained trends for meetings and let the group know about trends, date and location discussed. Trends were in line with typical weather conditions so summer RAC wasn't in Grand Junction and winter RAC meetings weren't in Kremmling, Craig, or Meeker, locations with heavy snow fall. Silt was chosen for February meeting for winter travel safety.

Meeting decisions completed by consensus

set at

Feb 18-19 at Silt

June 3-4 at Kremmling

Aug 19-20 at Meeker

Dec 2-3 at Grand Junction

Callie Hendrickson gave presentation regarding August National wild horse and burro advisory board

Encourage BLM employees to watch the national WHB meetings

Gives introduction and summary about WHB Act of 1971

“lack of interest in adoption of horses”

Overview some key facts for WHB Act

According to presentation -

26500 authorized horses in HMA

49200 horses currently on range –

See handout WHB A

“only horses BLM will currently remove is due to safety or lawsuit”

Shows slide that Nevada has over 50% of wild horses in country

WHB program components see slides –

success and limitations of fertility control is closely tied to size of HMA. Large size of HMA is a limiting factor in success

Challenges of enacted appropriations vs. holding costs

“Nobody wants to see any horses in holding”

Projects that outcry for horses that die in holding because average age of horses in long term holding are aging.

Riggs – It seems entire system is about to implode unless hard decisions are made
Callie – we can’t keep going on like this

Shue – How do we get this information you just presented out to the public?
Are there easier ways to distribute information presented by Callie

Callie – Working with national office to get one or two page documents to RAC meetings

Shue – we want to make information as simple as possible to get out to people.
Suggest that Public Affairs present information in easy to digest information.

Riggs- information needs to get out to the American public because system is completely bogged down

Callie – 2 things of progress.

1. Understanding that Rangeland health is the issue
2. Managing horses that are on the range

Callie – NEPA documents aren’t done after DC says we will not do a gather
Suggestion has been made that we do a Programmatic EIS that explains impact on range

Dave Griso –

what does “off range” mean.

Question directed to CPW representative, “do state’s get involved”

Riggs- not sure of a state that wants to take this on

Callie- only states that sue BLM are successful

Vasquez- to Shue how would we go about getting information out to public

Justman – once range conditions are gone you’re left with nothing.

Riggs- Has slaughter of animals ever been used

Callie- in specific time periods that US Congress has prevented the BLM from destroying horses

Conner – We need to appeal to representatives

Shue-Recommend individuals contact representatives

Callie – There is very heavy opposition to any horse or burro sent to another country even when animals are being sent specifically for work

Wendy – Has the topic sage grouse come out pertaining to this?

Callie – 1/3 of HMA's overlap priority sage grouse habitat. This places BLM in a very difficult spot when this happens. Horses significantly impact sage grouse.

Wendy- It's not just all about the horses. Other species must be considered.

Callie – There has been a movement to get horses listed as T&E species

Weddle – NY Times article about situation in Utah. "It's a good thing NY Times is writing about this."

Callie- Directs people to 13 national wildlife groups

Wes McStay – Concerned that the BLM might extend wild horses beyond HMA's. If they are going to just allow HMA's to have poor rangeland conditions then to draw that line there would be a defining extent.

Riggs- Discuss response to resolution and what it means.

Interpretation is that it is at minimum a positive feedback. Fertility control successful in Little Book Cliffs.

Carl – perhaps we should reach out to other RACs

Shue- felt like it was premature to reach out at this point.

Weddle – agree with Shue – discuss letter that was published in media that writer claimed Dr Shiner was managing horses for extension with fertility control

Wes – asking about control methods being used anywhere that might reduce numbers

Shue – question has been asked about

Group discussion about the cooperative relationships and how they impact the ranges and help wild horses.

Jim Dollerschel presentation – see presentation

Marty Felix and Georgia Manus assist Jim in presentation

Dollershell "We need to do a better job of getting the good word out there of some of the things we're doing that we're doing right."

Dollerschell Marty is considered the wild horse Anne of the Book Cliffs. Georgia very active with fertility control on and off range activities.

Dollerschell gives history and details about FOM / BLM partnership
In 2012 – celebrate 30 years working together

Discussion of off range activities and promotion of wild horse management
DeBeque wild horse days.
2002 beginning of USGS fertility control project

Enormous cost savings is what the American public gets from FOM work on the range
darting process and about darting team success

Numbers for treatment of PZP – recruitment 20-25% down to 8-15%

2013 Bait / Water Trapping

Discussed FOM duties during 2013 gather. FOM ran holding facility during gather so BLM staff could monitor and conduct bait trapping operations.

USGS using fecal samples to help BLM estimate populations.

Introduced three horses into LBC to help with genetic diversity.

Dollerschell Trust is key to why this partnership has been successful. Working together in the field really important. Takes time.

Wes: liability?

Dollerschell: they are under volunteer agreement which covers injury

Lanny: Wilderness stuey area?

Jim: two thirds of area is WSA. Some cases helps, in others hinders. More limited in WSA for horse treatments.

Georgia: Likes WSA for a variety of reasons, but would like to have it released to be able to do things like seed and develop water. Have to go through Congress. Would help with range management horses and wildlife.

Lanny: When was it put in? 1982. Why? After WHB Act.

Jim: required to inventory. We did not recommend it to be wilderness, but made criteria to be WSA.

Barbara: Is this relationship only area with this kind of volunteers? Do they get reimbursed.

Jim: Others out there. No policy for reimbursement to volunteers. Varies by office. We reimburse for gas.

Barbara: Anything BLM can do to support volunteers would help BLM.

Jim: We would save a lot by using volunteers to help prevent more foals on the ground.

Dona: Has BLM pursued releasing WSA.

Meyer: Not an agency decision, it's a Congress decision. We make recommendation about whether we think it should be wilderness or not.

Dona: Would It help to have this group support relaing WSA?

Georgia: Yes.

Wild Horse Resolution

Dona: Draft Sand Wash. Should we ad seomting about using more effective PZP? This would support Wendy's efforts to get more funding for volunteers.

Wendy: We are looking to measure effectiveness of darting this next year. We have much bigger population. My budget could not sustain a whole new program. We would like to find funding stream to help get more people on the ground at sand wash. This resolution could help.

Dean: Should we pursue this at a higher level on these issues?

Dona: Maybe send this to national board. Support these volunteer programs with added funding. Should we do these two together

Stacy: Should we encourage BLM to do more outreach and education/

Kai: need to word as "her management areas" not herd areas

Barbara: Flexible. Keep it flexible.

Public Comment

Scott Robertson – owns twin peaks ranch in West Douglas herd area. Livestock producer point of view. Last census 2010 was 190 herd. Close to 400 now at 20 percent growth. We need the BLM to help manage range. Drought has caused us to

cut livestock numbers way back, but also because of horses since 1990s. We took voluntary reduction in Texas Mountain area in 1990s. Worked with BLM on that. Last year we took voluntary deferment on Texas mountain. Upper Douglas Creek area, a narrow area, livestock has to move through it fast. Trying everything we can do on our part to alleviate range concerns in Texas Mountain. Haven't herd anything about West Douglas herd area. I know it is supposed to be zeroed out in near future. As numbers are expanding, horses are moving into our private property. Some areas not fenced, some areas wild horses are tearing fences down. Request RAC members to request BLM to put West Douglas area as a priority for gathers in Colorado.

Alita Wolf, Director of SWAT. We really think what FOM is doing is excellent. They are our mentors. Thank Wendy, she has been great. Working with BLM with trust is key. Sand wash is a large area, lots of horses, more than we need. Believe in PZP program, but need more volunteers. Need more darters. Wont see results until next spring. I do all the documentation, herd counts, photos. Very passionate about this. Would like to see us get numbers down. Graing permittes upset, would like to worj together with them. We want to have some relationship as FOM with BLM.

Joyce Crawford from Newcastle. We have adopted mustangs. We come up to Cameo to ride. FOM and BLM doing a great job with that area. Half the horses on the range as there was in 1971. 243 million ares of public lands, 26,000 wild horses on these lands now. 90 million domestic livestock. Keep numbers in perspective. 10 western states and 26,000 wild horses, 90 million livestock.. As far as spaying horses, Sheldon did some of this and 30 percent mares died immediately. No follow-up on the horses, no overall percentage known overtime. Permanent sterilization is not the way to look at it. PZP is a great program, but it takes time. Health of range is very important. Always a compromise. Wildlife competes with all of this too. Manage lands for health of range. Each herd area is unique. Sand wash basn has big public following, helpfully can get a good number of volunteers. People will contribute if non-profit group – pay dues, make donations. Horses are not the bad guys.. 20 percent figures may be overestimated, NSF says 12-14 percent.

Tracy Scott of Steadfast Steads– started horse sanctuary in Glade Park. American public does not know that we have wild horses. Education and awareness really important to have this information available. The more volunteers, the more ideas we have. As people learn and know more, ideas are exponential. Need more brains involved. Steadfast steads one of our priority. We provide opportunities to touch adopted horses. We look at all the positive ways we can help. FOM and BLM partnership huge. Beginning at Sand Wash. Looking to partner with Piceance. All those people who live in the east don't understand how much range we have. 20 acres for one horse for one year, very different in the east where you can have a lot more horses. Whole education thing that needs to be addressed

TJ Holmes – Advocate for Spring Creek Herd. Support PZP and sand wash efforts. Darter and documented for Spring Creek herd. PZP works. 70 percent success in Spring Creek first year, 100 percent success this year. Not in favor of sterilization,

smaller herd and area, but very difficult to dart. Appreciate BLM Colorado, member of state and national groups. Starts with volunteers and documentation. Wayne and Jim very helpful. Tried to model what we are doing to LBC. Colorado could be a model nationally. Use volunteers and develop contacts. I am willing to help. Darterd 30 mares in spring creek this year. About 70 since we have been doing it. Need volunteers who know horses, let us help you. Agree about health of the range. We pushed for last roundup, so we'd have fewer to adopt out. Trying to do more bait trapping, volunteers can help. Thank you RAC for listening to us.

Catherine wilder – freelance writer writing about spring creek, will branch our to other areas in nw Colorado. 5th generation Rancher, have wild horses. Cattle and livestock can co-exist. My son 6th generation rancher is to run as few cattle as possible. Want to see as few horses as well, PZP. Horses and cattle have been together for 500 years out here. I give my time as a gift to horses, I don't need to be reimbursed

Georgia – We had never water trapped before, but we thought it would work. Even in those bigger areas with wilder horses, it will also work. You could dart them. Bait trapping was much cheaper than helicopter gather. Put food and water you will be able to dart them.

Marty – Even daily sentinel doesn't cover horses. Most people in valley know we have horses but don't know we have such problems in the West. I will be giving presentation at the museum coming up. Thank you for more support for volunteers. One year I went up to the top 37 times and only darterd 16, didn't get a dime. We appreciate any kind of support. Makes us feel better. In some parts of the west, some BLM folks not supportive of this kind of thing. Try to convince those people to help. They need a Jim Dollerschel out there. Agree with Goergia on catch and release – however you have to do it. You could sterilize mares with PZP. Only 50 percent of three year mares have returned to fertility. For four years, only 2 percent have had foals since. We are very careful now and are taking a hard look at it. Two mares had one shot and never had another baby. They will learn to avoid darters. Research shows PZP can make ovaries and other things fail. So need to watch them closely. Only one mare never responded.

Wild Horse Resolutions cont.

Dona: more discussion? I think we should submit what we have and then work on some additional things. Eg something for Wild Horse and Burro advisory board. Should we include Piceance?

Barbara: Maybe write just one supporting it for the whole district?

Dona: Wendy had different issues than the others. But if there is a way to combine them.

Wendy: Need volunteers, without them we have no program.

Lanny: This is the first time we've gotten a response.

Dave or Chris will acknowledge to WO response

Meyer: Public/private partnerships instead of "volunteers" better wording and give more flexibility. For NLCS we got IM directing field offices to prioritize working with friends groups

Dona: can we do that?

Dave: Yes.

Luke: I do think it should be formalized.

Carl: NW Colo issue, need to keep it focused. Affects a lot of people. How can BLM coordinate efforts of diverse groups? Need to get more people involved. There's a grazing organization, energy organization. Need to get them involved. Needs to be a much larger effort, this is the place to start.

Stacy: Where is PEIS at? Need update on where that is, and what other opportunities rac could do to get more information to public.

White River Travel Management

Heather Sauls, Aaron Grimes.

Walter: We are going to be seeking RAC support for establishing a subgroup for travel management.

Aaron: Powerpoint

Travel management is comprehensive, not just motorized/non-motorized.

Open, limited, closed are planning classifications
WRFO is going to use this inventory for accurate baseline maps of all existing travel routes.

Inventory work done on eastern side of field office with a total of 650,000 acres – approximately half of field office

Date and GPS stamped images collected during inventory.
Discuss the use of that data for the future interpretation

Grimes – Request NWRAC subgroup to provide external perspective and represent local interests

Sauls - Anticipate this amendment done at EA level not EIS level

Walter – Discuss vision for RAC subgroup and what they would or could accomplish

Sauls – more organized way to involve public groups

Boyd-Clarifies role and scope of RAC... NOTE : subRAC can only advise the RAC, not the BLM.. Meetings have to be open to the public and structure has to be that they advise the RAC only. RAC ultimately votes on people placed on sub group and.

Walter- lessons learned that no subRAC for O&G amendment.

Sauls – Give clear vision about how subRAC would meet and be supported by the BLM

Riggs-past use of subRAC was misused by lack of structure and vision
Vasquez-Framework has to be clear from RAC with liaisons reporting back to the RAC periodically

Shue – recommendation that we have a subRAC established for WRFO
Motion seconded by Weddle. Emphasis placed on clear guidance. Weddle explained to Walter that we would need subRAC nomination names so RAC can vote on electronically

Luke – question about duration of subRAC and what WRFO could hope to accomplish with the subRAC

Walter – we have information that we want to share that can be seen publically and get public agreement in a transparent manner

Luke – concerns about unintended consequences

Dave – The CRVFO subRAC lack of updates held up the process of RMP development and left a bad taste in RAC's mouth.

Sauls - It would be helpful for BLM employees to have specific and formal structure from RAC dictating formation and use of subgroup.

Shue-past failures has been on the RAC members because we haven't "stayed on top of the subgroup"

Vasques- great presentation

Neuhof – gave past experience of subRAC and DENCA RAC. Relayed experience that past subRAC's haven't been successful because they were not given good guidance on their role of looking at range of alternative

Sauls -Goal is diverse group of representatives

Shue – Questions regarding consensus and feedback to RAC

Justman- what is definition of “consensus” – Gave perspective about what consensus problems he's experienced in the past.

Walter – ensure that information is presented from majority not just “consensus”

Shue – liaison contributed to problem in the past because they are there to witness but not be involved. Liaison can't be involved in what subRAC is discussing

Walter – WRFO will send out a purpose and need document that will be shared electronically

Boyd – who is going to be liaison?

Riggs – Vote held on use of subRAC – vote carries that we will go forward with subRAC recommendation

Lunch break at 12:00

Meeting resumes 1:07

Alissa Leavitt-Reynolds & Natalie Fast

Presentation on what archeology program does and how it applies to other BLM programs

Examples of finds on western slope and their time periods. Explaining on finds help the BLM understand how patterned movements were done based on available food and resources.

Discussion of Fremont rock art in Canyon Pintado, Irish Canyon

Discussion about wickiups and time period presence suggests

Historic period starting about 1860 – start seeing railroads mineral and oil extraction, and grazing

Uranium mining – driver for historic data. Example Calamity Camp

2nd presentation – What do BLM archeologist do primarily compliance

National Historic Preservation Act 1966 – explains how the act drives compliance monitoring and inventorying

Must record “significant” archeology finds greater than 50 yr old

Section 100 Requires the feds to assume responsibility for proprieties under their control. (this doesn't apply to split estate)

Some of the agencies that are involved in section 106

Determining potential to affect historical settings

Change in use or setting and other adverse effects

Avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects on cultural sites – examples given for mitigation in the past

3rd portion

Archeologist in the meaning for the public.

Ute Learning Garden – replication of eco zones and their respective food and other resources available important to the Ute groups who traveled eco zones to make the most of different resources available at different times of year

Resource Protection-Assist law enforcement in cases of unauthorized excavation and vandalism.

Fostering and conducting research

Report new discoveries to staff

Mentor youth

Education and Interpretation programs in conjunction with other partnering groups

Meyer- Discussion about vandalism

Reynolds – Increase in vandalism but also increase law enforcement work

Some tribes are hesitant to attempt to repair rock art sites out of fear of further damage

Carl – “BLM Grand Junction Archeologists are best I’ve worked with,” outstanding group of cultural resources staff – GJ has been pressured with influx of people in Grand Junction and the valley. Volunteer monitors are important to help ensure vandalism is dealt with. Would like to see swift mitigation when vandalism takes place. Biggest challenge is protection and preservation. Comments regarding tribal consultation presentation with WRFO staff.

Walter – discusses challenge with compliance in face of development

Vasquez-Curious if volunteers get compensated. – Reynolds- no

Riggs – question about resolution

Shue – Discussion about Sand Wash Resolution

See Resolution

Boyd – Discussion about wording of resolution

Lanny move to adopt resolution – motion seconded and adopted

Meyer – 1:50 present NW District Manager report – see report

Lanny – questions about framework of the EIS –

Meyer- One ROD for all plans in Rocky Mountain

Walter- then BLM will make recommendation to USFWS if mitigation is enough to keep bird from being listed.

Meyer-Amendments will only change Sage Grouse amendments to RMP
Gunnison Sage Grouse listing see reference material
O&G consolidation began

Walter- Lease sales will continue to be handled in the respective offices

Wendy Reynolds-manager update – discussion about repatriation - suggestion of RAC field trip of Sarvis Creek Acquisition – explanation about why Sarvis Creek Acquisition was important

Response to rancher attached-

Hunting season – moderate with one death by carbon monoxide poisoning and significant ATV injury
LSFO – managing Coal

Karl Mendonca – Steve Bennet not available to be at meeting today but wants to announce retirement. Will invite Bennet to Feb RAC meeting dinner. FM Review- see attached

David – question about existing leases in Thompson Divide and if producing lease holders allowed to be part of negotiations. Question was also asked if Roan leases were permanently withdrawn from gas leasing permanently.

Justman – Question about equal access to justice act.

Walter – clarifies that the courts made decision to reimburse wild earth guardians for legal fees. It was not our decision.

Dave Boyd presented Field Office material for Stephanie Odell that had to leave early

Walter- WRFO – Thank for approving RAC subgroup and presents handout – see attachment concerning travel management WRFO document

Walter- present FM update – see attachment
Working on excess determination of West Douglas wild horses
Luke – Colowyo status regarding land closure

Walter – Explains safety concerns with Colowyo mine and initiated emergency closure to protect public from danger.
Working with Colowyo we were able to secure more public access

David- what is the AML for West Douglas
Walter – 0. There could be as many as 250 – 300 in excess

McStay – concerns with trapping. Do you have to go through volunteers?
Walter – Through gather plan, we are putting every acceptable method on table.
No- you don't need to do NEPA. If horses are on private property, it is doable to remove horses without NEPA.

Walter-at passage of the act, there were approximately 7 horses in that area. Now there are hundreds.

Carl – discussion about landscape studies in reference to tribal consultation and land use studies remedies many of the problems.

Walter – not everything of importance to tribe is physical. We need to be more focused on doing a better job.

Carl- looking for solutions for preservation in the way of ACEC. Mention of Cross Mountain in the importance to Ute tribe.

Wayne Workmeister – FM Update
RMP is in Washington office review
Meyer – CO State Director deserves a lot of credit for getting RMPs through Washington review.
See attached –
Neuhof- asking about progress of DENCA RMP

Riggs – review
Want to discuss involving other RACs
Horse Resolutions
Boyd- yes - individual RACs can work with other RACs to collectively solve problems
Riggs: We could draft a letter to other RACs?
Shue – Draft a letter to all other RACs in US and advise them of what we are submitting nationally and encourage them to submit something similar nationally to encourage better volunteer incorporation

Shue – Volunteers to write letter to other RAC's and reach out

Weddle- never seen any other proclamation from other RACs. It's good to reach out, and I'd like to know if the other RAC's have addressed this.

Shue- National WHB have never received resolutions from RACs

Meyer: One statewide RAC in Wyoming and not a lot of discussion of wild horse and burro

Vasquez-Wants to know structure of RACs

Boyd – varies by state. Joyner will get list of where all RACs are located

Riggs- National WHB advisory board letters need to go through who?

Boyd- we will need to do some examination of who and where resolutions should go

Meyer – this RAC needs to focus on NW Colorado but there are ways to discuss the resolution concept with other RACs as it applies to exchange and not advice.

Agenda items for Feb-

David – Looking for more updated information about ROAN settlement.

Boyd- Sutey land exchange area visit could be beneficial to see

Transwest express interest

Want to see an update on Programmatic EIS

WRFO EIS could be available to discuss

Subgroup liaison

Question asked about liaison for subgroup

Vasquez- nominated Kai Turner for liaison for subRAC

Riggs- might be a good idea to have two liaisons available for the subRAC

Nomination seconded –

Luke Shayford said he would be willing to be alternate. John Potter also was mentioned as someone that could serve as an alternate .

Joyner to send email to John Potter to inquire on interest serve on subRAC.

Shue – Do we want to consider a resolution for LBC Wilderness Study Area

Resolution to release LBC Wilderness Study Area from study area

Weddle-would like to discuss at next meeting –

Wendy – some interest in having Dr. Fitzpatrick attend RAC meeting and give presentation on PZP. We really don't know all the consequences of

Justman – Want update on FRAM

Meeting adjourn