

**Southwest Resource Advisory Council**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Friday, August 16, 2013**  
**Ridgway, Colorado**

**Southwest Resource Advisory Council Members**

Eric Sanford, Renzo DelPiccolo, Phil Chamberland, Wally White, John Reams, Barbara Hawke, Andrea Robinson, Lynn Padgett, Kathy Welt, Ken Emory, Buck McGee

**Staff**

Lori Armstrong, Barb Sharrow, Shannon Borders, Connie Clementson, Marietta Eaton, Stuart Schneider, Christina Reed

**Visitors**

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Kathy Welt at 9:10 a.m. A quorum for the meeting was not determined as three members of Category 2 were not present; therefore, no action was taken on the minutes. Everyone introduced themselves.

Departing members were recognized with framed photos including Barbara Hawke, Andrea Robinson, Eric Sanford, Buck McGee and Lynn Padgett.

The member roles and responsibilities were presented by Lori Armstrong, BLM District Manager. Barbara Hawke, Wally White, Andrea Robinson and Lynn Padgett expressed concerns about utilizing the RAC to its fullest potential and encouraged BLM staff provide the RAC with opportunities to provide input.

**Uncompahgre Field Office Resource Management Plan**

The Resource Management Plan was delayed, but the draft -should be available for public review in November 2013. Several of the RAC members suggested utilizing the sub-RAC for public outreach as the plan is released. Barb suggests using the group for wild and scenic alternative and oil and gas alternative as there are 17 cooperating agencies involved in the planning process. The group was in favor continuing the sub-RAC for the RMP.

**Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan**

Connie Clementson showed a PowerPoint presentation detailing the plan status. Wally White suggested creating a Sub-RAC for Tres Rios Oil and Gas. Lori Armstrong suggested including the discussion when a quorum is present at the next meeting. Renzo DelPiccolo suggested defining the roles if this moves forward. Barbara Hawke suggested having office hours for specific questions for the public if they have specific RMP question.

Eric Sanford suggested considering the sub-RAC for the entire district. Renzo DelPiccolo asked the group to define the outcomes for the sub-RAC. Wally White indicated he wants better public relations through

meetings to improve oil and gas education for the public. Kathy Welt suggested forming a sub-group rather than a sub-RAC. Andrea Robinson moved to appoint a sub-group including Eric Sanford and Wally White with room for one other to assist the Tres Rios Field Office with issues of importance to the community in regards to oil and gas. Barbara Hawke seconded the motion. The motion will be sent via email for a vote in order to achieve a quorum. The email vote was passed unanimously.

Reports from each field office were distributed via email. See attached documents.

### **Public Comments**

Ken Emory presented survey information from the Trails Preservation Alliance and The Louis Berger Group called Economic Contribution of Off-Highway Vehicle Use in Colorado. It indicated motorized recreation contributes \$945,396,793 to the Colorado economy.

Brandy Ross representing Little Switzerland, an outfitter and federal permit holder, said her employees and customers were accosted by a law enforcement officer that demanded they have a special permit that historically was covered by the Forest Service. She asks that if there are administrative changes to inform outfitters so that they are not pulled over and intimidated by law enforcement. Connie Clementson said although they were ticketed it should be dismissed.

John VanDenBerg, Citizens for a Healthy Community, thanked the group for withdrawing acreage from the lease sale. He also indicated the North Fork Valley alternative was submitted for the Uncompahgre Field Office Resource Management Plan. He is very concerned and believes that some places should not be drilled. He also said oil and gas is not compatible with organic farming. The group is also concerned about air quality and pollution, and is starting to do research to determine base line data.

John Austin said the Resource Management Planning process is hopelessly bogged down.

Wally White was asked to comment by San Juan County who wishes to make sure the closure by Molas Pass is not enacted for another year where snowmobiling is occurring in a Wilderness Study Area. La Plata County also asked that leasing be deferred until the new Resource Management Plan is finished. They are concerned about air quality as well.

### **Bighorn/Domestic Sheep**

Desert bighorn are a BLM sensitive species, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep are not. The Gunnison and Uncompahgre field offices have bighorn populations in close proximity to domestic sheep grazing allotments. Currently, staff is trying to determine separation techniques. Additionally, the Grizzly Gulch allotment within the Gunnison Field Office hasn't been used in 10 years and has become home range to Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep. The permit holder has applied for use for sheep grazing. The staff asked the RAC members to help with concepts to keep the wild and domestic herds from comingling.

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff also presented some of the challenges their agency faces as they work to maintain herd numbers and herd health. Bighorn sheep have also experienced whole-herd die offs and research is being done to determine the cause and a preventative. The Western Association of

Fish and Wildlife Services published recommendations how to manage comingling and suggest separating domestic and wild herds by nine miles.

Buck McGee suggested having a private group buy the allotment. Lori Armstrong indicated it was a possibility but still requires a land use decision to change type of usage. Eric Sanford suggested an allotment exchange. Lori Armstrong said we currently have no vacant sheep allotments in the District. Barbara Hawke suggested seeking private land in exchange and encouraged the staff to consider ecotourism.

### **Proposal to Classify Lands for State Indemnity**

Lori Armstrong provided the Federal Register Notice and maps showing the parcels. Comments are due to the BLM Colorado office by Sept. 3, 2013.

### **Question & Answer**

Barbara acknowledged the Dolores River Restoration work specifically Amanda Clement's, BLM Ecologist, work and willingness to share what worked and didn't with the projects on the ground.

Wally White asked about progress regarding the Durango Urban Interface. Connie Clementson indicated it was on hold on request by the City of Durango.

Connie Clementson asked the RAC for comments on the new version of the Alpine Loop map for the OHV brochure. It is available electronically. Next year, is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of scenic byways and the Alpine Loop is a scenic byway.

Marietta Eaton said next year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Four artists are working with scientists to collaborate artistic products in celebration of the act. She also reported the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Anasazi Heritage Center is Aug. 24-27.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Field Trips**

- November 14-15: Uncompahgre Field Office (location tentative)
- RAC Nominations

### **Adjournment**

Eric Sanford moved to adjourn the meeting. Wally White seconded the motion. The motion carried.