

NW RAC
Aug 22, 2013
Grand Junction

Attendance

Cat. 1 – Dave Grisso, Tom Latham, Steve Loshbaugh, Wes McStay, John Potter

Cat. 2 – Stacy Beaugh, Dan Davidson, Pat Kennedy, Dona Shue, Terry Sweet

Cat. 3 – Jeff Comstock, Dean Riggs, Barbara Vasquez, Lanny Weddle

Absent: Kai Turner, Cat. 3

BLM: Jim Cagney, Steve Bennett, Stephanie Odell, Wendy Reynolds, Katie Stevens, Kent Walter, David Boyd, Chris Joyner, Leigh Espy, Steven Hall, Erin Jones, Bridget Clayton

Public: David Ludlam, Western Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association; Emily Hornback, Western Colorado Congress; Charlie Kerr; Sam Montoya, XTO-Energy; Doug Lempke, Tri-State; Soren Jespersen, The Wilderness Society; Sherry Schenk; Kate Graham, Conservation Colorado; Karen Sjoberg, Citizens for Clean Air; Nick Payne, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Chair Den Riggs called to order at 8 a.m.

Leigh Espy gave a summary of the State Office resources group.

Special Recreation Permits

Barbara – how does BLM determine approval when there is conflict among uses?

Katie – We look at that in our Resource Management Plans. It's done in an open and transparent process that way.

Barbara – We had hunting outfitter say public was not allowed in the area where he held an SRP. How do you select who gets what area?

Katie – Look at who else is already permitted in an area. Look at geographically. Is there competition, which gives the public multiple choices?

Kent: Look at past performance when we renew. Relay on public to let us know issues.

Steve: Hunters are considered upland permits in the Colorado River Valley Field Office. We will not issue multiple permits on same piece of land. Avoids conflicts, not fighting over same area. Have had moratorium on issuing new permits because of RMP. Becoming controversial as more access opens on Colorado River below state bridge, so will lift moratorium.

Stephanie: Coordinating with CRVFO. Permits and terms are posted online for public to review.

Dean: They also consult with Parks and Wildlife for hunting and fishing SRPs

Roan Plateau SEIS resolution

Dean: We won't vote until after we hear from public. Will discuss first.

Jim: We are required to look at several things by the Judge – air quality, community alt. Through the Notice of Intent we said we'd look at lands with wilderness characteristics, t&e species. There is some info to clean up regarding technology. Sage grouse NOI did not identify Roan because didn't know if would be id'ed as habitat, so we will analyze in sage grouse EIS, then incorporate that analysis in the Roan Plateau SEIS. Have to look at all that. So question on table is what else from scoping needs to be included?

Jim: May need to look at RFD

Bennett: RFD didn't address shale oil, winter drilling, or fracking in detail

Boyd: Proposed plan analyzed 1,500 wells, 210 of which were on top.

Bennett: Don't know how many we are talking now, but would likely be more than 210.

Bennett: issues from scoping include:

Separate analysis on top and bottom

Support narrowly defined court-ordered analysis

Implement phased leasing, start leasing process over

Cancel leases and start again

Cancel existing leases on top outside anvil ridge

Designate top as 36,000 acres as ACECS

Manage wilderness characteristics where they are found

Riggs: is community alternative a full alternative?

Bennett: just says NSO on top, access gas from bottom. Doesn't include other aspects of a full alternative. However, we did get scoping comments this spring expanding community alternative. But it would have to be folded into a complete alternative. Will use as much of the analysis from the old plan as possible

Riggs: Are we saying it is as simple as keeping the analysis to only as narrow as what is required?

Barbara: I am concerned about difference in number of wells now expected vs what was analyzed in the original.

Jim: We have to look at what higher RFD would mean.

Loshbaugh: Hindsight is 20/20. Judge recognized a few lapses. Plan at the time evaluated with best technology at time. So do we go back and reevaluate all management plans as technology advances?

Wes: What was lacking in the air quality analysis, and what is being done?

Bennett: The Roan air model didn't address cumulative impacts outside planning area, didn't address ozone. We have already updated our air modeling for RMP that addresses those concerns. May do modification based on new RFD for Roan.

Wes: Will that pass EPA?

Bennett: Yes, it already has.

Jeff: I want to point out that to withdraw leases is illegal. These are valid existing rights. You have the issues identified by the Judge and by the NOI. Rest are opening a can of worms that will start a whole new, long planning process. Deal with what you have to deal with, nothing more.

Barbara: I am not suggesting that everything be started over, but I am very concerned about the gap in RFD from old plan to present

Kent: If you update the RFD, you have to go back and update analysis in each alternative, plus new alternative (community). Could consider canceling leases as an alternative, but if it is not reasonable, you still address it and explain reasons why.

Latham: Keep it simple and move forward

Barbara: It needs to acknowledge the new RFD and how you will address it

Dave G: keep it narrow, judge and NOI issues

The group opted to hear any public comments on the topic before bringing it to a vote.

Grazing permit conditions of approval

Wes: Common conception that BLM grazing permit holders do not have to build fence against private land. Should be 50/50 split for cost. BLM is claiming they don't have to fence public land from private landowners. Would like to see COA that permittee is responsible for half the fencing.

Jim: There is a lot of situational variation with that. A standard COA would not cover it.

Wendy: Once we issue a grazing permit, we don't control where cattle go. Issue is that cows that graze on BLM can move onto private land if it is not fenced. Should BLM have COA that says permittee is responsible from keeping livestock from leaving BLM and getting on private. Right now, since Colorado is a fence-out state, a private land owner is responsible for building fence.

Wes: My private leases require that I maintain fences. It should be the same for BLM permittees. Can we have COA that would require permittees to maintain fences so their cattle don't move onto private land?

Tom: Not a common practice all over, but it does happen. Common practice that permittee fences private land, but not everyone does it.

Loshbaugh: We require any permittee to maintain fence and control weeds on our property.

Wes: Proposing a COA on permit renewals that highlights 50/50 cost-sharing .

Lanny: Comfortable drafting a resolution, not ready to vote today.

Jim: I suggest resolution talk about site-specific situations

Jeff: BLM is landowner, why would permittee be responsible? State statute says landowner is responsible.

Dean: Maintaining and building a fence are two very different things

Jim: If it became BLM responsibility to build all fences, couldn't do it. Have to not graze areas

Terry: Are we getting into state and federal law here?

Dean: I would like to know what is in current BLM permits

Jim: We have authority to issue emergency closures if there are problems like that

Pat: Wes, Lanny, Jim Wendy and Tom will draft resolution and bring to the group next meeting.

Following public comment, the resolution was put to vote. There was discussion about whether there should be a specific timeframe mentioned in the resolution. Some felt strongly that there should be, others didn't feel like it would have an effect. Some points on the resolution were edited to clearly show support for the 2005 resolution, and to acknowledge that a new reasonable foreseeable development scenario for oil and gas would be needed.

All 14 members present voted in favor of the resolution.

Public comment:

John Bonner, private land owner adjacent to BLM lands. Main permittee on the adjacent BLM grazes 567 head of cattle for 5.5 months, from November to early May, between North 16 Road and North 18 Road. Those cows are on my land all the time. Nothing for them to eat out there on the BLM land. Come up to our property where we water. One cow dropped dead within 100 yards from my house on my property, attracting predators including bears, plus it was really stinking. Permittee would not remove it. Cows have broken my cedar fencing, destroying the place. Support what Wes is suggesting.

David Ludlam. Comment on Roan Plateau resolution. Two basic fundamental things. You can exacerbate extremely redundant analysis or take a pragmatic approach that limits the analysis to only what it has to do. You have sequester, challenges always about money. BLM is going to spend two more years and \$2 million to redo an analysis that has already been done. Consider adding something to the resolution for an expedient timeframe for completion. \$112 million tied up from oil and gas companies. Losing money each year. Very real issue, not abstract. Add a bullet about timeliness. Urge board to support resolution with timeliness clause.

Doug Denison, Bill Barrett Corp. Hold all the leases on top of plateau. We have \$54 million tied up in the leases, plus all the legal fees. Agree with the idea of including a timeliness clause. RFDs are obsolete by the time plan is done. Technology is changing so fast. The EIS is not the end of the analysis, leaseholders would need to submit plan of development, then BLM would do an EA or another EIS. Specifics are dealt with in the second analysis. The District Court did not invalidate leases, please keep that in mind.

Charles Kerr. Served on NW RAC for 6 years. Difficult process. This is a difficult decision. Questioning bullet about cooperators. The 2005 resolution was unanimously passed, but the resolution also said the NW RAC supports a final decision that would not affect the historic recreational, grazing and other uses of the Roan Plateau. For that to happen, drilling would have to be extremely limited. Your draft resolution says current plan balances development with protecting other resources. Plan proposes 210 wells on 13 pads, but now I am hearing something on the order of 30,000 wells. The Roan is a biologically rich island that needs to be protected. There is drilling all around it. People in the area strongly supported no or limited drilling. With this resolution, are you asking BLM to go fast and not do it right? Process was done wrong before, that's why court remanded it. Surprised by this resolution. Is your intent to narrow job to rush a this foris forward? Don't put time limits on the resolution. The Roan Plateau is precious to wildlife and people who live near it.

Sage Grouse EIS

Project Lead Erin Jones gave a PowerPoint overview of the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Environmental Impact Statement. The public comment period runs through

Nov. 14, 2013. The plan looks at four alternatives – no action, the National Technical Team Report, a national conservation alternative developed in the Great Basin, and a Colorado alternative developed with Cooperating Agencies.

Field manager updates

White River Field Office, Kent Walter

WRFO teams with local recreation district on new trail: This summer the White River Field Office and the Eastern Rio Blanco Metropolitan Recreation and Parks District completed the second phase of the Jensen-Ute Park Connector Trail, which connects two Meeker parks across approximately two miles of BLM lands. With a short walk through town, this trail now makes a complete 5 1/2 mile loop, with trailheads at Ute Park, the top of 7th Street, and the newly constructed Sanderson Hills Park. Phase 2 picks up at the top of China Wall, where Phase 1 ended, and continues down into Anderson Gulch, terminating in Ute Park on the western edge of town. The District funded the cost of design and construction for Phase 2, while BLM funded the cost of the NEPA analysis and will take over long-term maintenance of the portions of the trail on BLM administered land. When the trail contractors (Progressive Trail Design) completed construction, they then spent several days identifying potential Phase 3 trail alignments. Phase 3 would be located on the mesa and rolling hills behind China Wall. The intent is to ultimately provide a full system of non-motorized recreational trails immediately adjacent to the Town of Meeker.

OHV access project nearing completion: Phase 2 of the Willow Creek OHV access project is nearing completion. This is a project that has been in motion for several years, and when complete, will open approximately 20,000 acres of BLM administered land to the public that was previous inaccessible due to private land access issues. Phase 1 of the project was completed in two years ago with the assistance of the Colorado Statewide OHV Trail Crew and local volunteers, who helped Field Office staff construct the trail, build gates at private property entrances, and build a bridge. This year the Field Office will complete the final 1 1/2 miles of trail at Horseshoe Bend. Another important element of this project is the MOU among the BLM White River Field Office, BLM Little Snake Field Office, the USFS Blanco Ranger District, and the Yampa Valley Trail Riders motorized trail group. This MOU allows the WRFO shared use of a new trail dozer that was acquired by the Yampa Valley Trail Riders through a grant from the Colorado Statewide OHV Trail Grant program. Some other recently funded upcoming projects include a Colorado Parks and Wildlife OHV Trail Grant Program for hiring two full-time seasonal employees to perform a motorized route inventory next year, and a Federal Highway Administration grant, also to be used towards motorized route inventories and travel management planning. The receipt of these grants has been successful in large part to the strong partnership the Field Office has forged with the local OHV riding group, Wagon Wheel Trails Program, Town of Meeker, Rio Blanco County and the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO).

White River Field Office hosts two type 2 Incident Management Teams in 2013: Fire season has been busy in the White River Field Office with type 2 incident management teams being called in twice. Type 2 teams are called in to help manage a fire when the complexity and number of required resources exceeds the local unit's capabilities. In June a type 2 team managed the 1,067-acre Wild Rose Fire 21 miles south of Rangely and the 388-acre Collins Fire 20 miles southwest of Meeker. Both were lightning-caused. In July another type 2 team arrived to manage the 2,009-acre Citadel Fire, 40 miles northwest of Meeker, and the 647-acre East Tschuddi Fire, 20 miles northwest of Meeker. Both were also lightning caused.

WRFO teams with CSU on possible transplanting project: The White River Field Office is currently analyzing a project examining the feasibility of transplanting and seeding two federally Threatened plants – the Dudley Bluffs bladderpod and the Dudley Bluffs twinpod. Both plants are endemic to Rio Blanco County and are found nowhere else in the world. The Field Office released an environmental assessment on the project for public review in July. This research has the possibility of providing increased mitigation efforts that may eventually lead to the delisting of the two plant species. Seeding by hand is scheduled to begin in Oct. 2013 with transplanting to take place in spring 2014. Transplants will come from plants grown from seed in a greenhouse. The project area is approximately 27 miles southeast of Rangely in the northern part of the Piceance Basin.

Dates of note:

- WRFO RMPA – Currently anticipated early 2014

Colorado River Valley Field Office, Steve Bennett

CRVFO to initiate NEPA remedy for existing White River National Forest leases – The public scoping period is anticipated to begin this fall for an Environmental Impact Statement to address deficiencies in past environmental analyses for 76 oil and gas leases issued under White River National Forest lands. The BLM leased these parcels from 1995 through 2012 after receiving nominations from interested parties and obtaining concurrence from the U.S. Forest Service. The U.S. Forest Service determines which of its lands are available for oil and gas leasing. The most recent decision making these lands available for oil and gas leasing was made through the 1993 White River National Forest Oil and Gas Leasing EIS, a decision that was reaffirmed in the 2002 Forest Plan. However, the BLM did not formally adopt the Forest Service EIS or conduct any additional environmental analysis of its own before leasing these parcels. A 2007 ruling from the Interior Board of Land Appeals stated that the BLM must either do its own analysis or formally adopt the U.S. Forest Service analysis before offering U.S. Forest Service parcels. BLM will incorporate much of the analysis from the on-going White River National Forest Oil and Gas Leasing EIS, which addresses future leasing on the Forest. As a result of this analysis, the BLM could cancel leases, modify the terms and conditions of the leases, or keep the existing terms and conditions of the leases in place.

CRVFO settles lawsuit over air quality analysis – A recent legal settlement between BLM and Earthjustice regarding analysis of air quality impacts from oil and gas wells in

the field office has generated significant media coverage. Under the terms of the settlement, BLM agreed to continue its current practice of using the most updated air model when analyzing new well proposals and when reanalyzing well applications originally analyzed under an older air quality model used for the Roan Plateau. Additional information about applications for permit to drill will be available on-line as a result of the settlement.

CRVFO sees busy fire season – Fire crews have just wrapped up the 390-acre Red Canyon Fire, which was located between Glenwood Springs and Carbondale. A type 2 incident management team managed the fire that had caused multiple evacuations. In June two fire were managed by separate local type 3 incident management teams from the Upper Colorado River Interagency Management Unit, the 485-acre Ward Gulch Fire and the 403-Brush Creek Fire. The Ward Gulch Fire also involved evacuations. In July fire crews managed the 66-acre Bull Gulch Fire in the Bull Gulch Wilderness Study Area. Its remote location allowed it to be monitored but not actively suppressed. This helps return fire’s beneficial role to the ecosystem, doesn’t put firefighters unnecessarily at risk, and potentially saves substantial costs.

SourceGas cleaning-up historic spills in natural gas storage area -- SourceGas operates the 9,524-acre Wolf Creek Storage Area above Carbondale in order to reliably supply natural gas to communities from Glenwood Springs to Aspen. Natural gas is injected into this former gas producing area during off-peak demand periods in warmer months and extracted during peak demand periods. They are in the process of completely renovating their infrastructure in this area, which dates back to the 1970s and 1980s. They have discovered historic hydrocarbon and other contamination on two pads once they removed old buildings. They have completely removed and replaced the contaminated soil from the pads and continue to monitor the ground water. The primary contaminants detected are hydrocarbons, glycol and iron. Contamination appears confined to the well pads and the immediate area. Surface water and groundwater do not appear to be impacted. Two other pads show some soil discoloration at their toe, although only one has come back positive for hydrocarbons and glycol. BLM and the Forest Service are continuing to require SourceGas to monitor the area. Additional testing may be required based on the results of the monitoring.

Dates of Note:

- Proposed RMP/Final EIS release – anticipated in fall 2013
- Sutey Ranch Land Exchange proposed decision – anticipated early 2014
- Roan Plateau Draft SEIS – anticipated late 2014

Little Snake Field Office, Wendy Reynolds

Veterans crew gets first fire assignment in Little Snake: After a summer of helping reduce hazardous fuels throughout northwestern Colorado, members of the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Veterans Fire Corps got their first fire assignment in August at the Kodiak Fire in western Moffat County. The Corps trained in Craig before beginning

their hazardous fuel work. Two squads were formed: one worked out of the Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit in Craig and the other with the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit in Grand Junction. Although one squad helped manage the Milk Creek Fire near Meeker in July, the second squad was still awaiting a chance to work a fire. Both squads were combined as one crew and mobilized to assist with the management of the 54-acre Kodiak Fire northwest of Maybell. The Kodiak Fire was managed for multiple objectives, and the Veterans crew assisted with mop-up and black lining operations.

Two Craig ranchers indicted for dumping and digging on BLM: Leland and Bradford Smith were indicted in June for dumping and digging trenches on public land with heavy equipment to divert water. The brothers pleaded not guilty to both charges and now awaiting trial. If convicted, they could have to pay as much as \$500,000 in fines and could be subject to jail time.

TransWest and Energy Gateway South transmission line updates: The two large powerline projects with proposed routes through Moffat County continue to move forward. The TransWest Draft EIS is currently out for public comment. A public meeting was held on the draft in Craig last week. Meanwhile, the Gateway South project recently announced a preferred alternative for its Draft EIS, which is expected to be released in early 2014. Both projects includes several proposed routes through Moffat County. They are proposed to move wind energy from Wyoming to Las Vegas.

Sand Wash fertility control efforts continue this fall: The Little Snake Field Office has worked with the Humane Society US on a fertility control project in the Sand Wash Herd Management Area for the past five years. This fall BLM, HSUS and the GEMS Horse Group will continue darting mares with PZP in an effort to slow population growth in this herd. The goal is to reduce the current 20 percent recruitment rate to 10 percent or lower.

Kremmling Field Office, Stephanie Odell

Bark beetle mitigation work in full-swing in KFO -- With 289 miles of roads within the Kremmling Field Office directly affected by beetle-killed trees, the field office has initiated the NEPA work to treat up to 5,300 acres through multiple projects along and adjacent to roads in Grand County beginning as early as FY 2014. The goal of the work is to reduce the threat to public safety and infrastructure by removing and utilizing beetle-killed trees in travel corridors and other high-use areas. Reducing hazards and risk along roads in neighboring Jackson County has been a priority in many of the previous and current projects in the Kremmling Field Office, including several of the 11 currently active contracts covering a total of 978 acres, four more projects expected to go to bid in FY 2013 for an additional 384 acres, and an additional four projects for 1,034 acres that could begin as early as FY 2014. With the market for lumber and wood pellets rebounding from the recession, the demand for access to beetle-killed trees is also rebounding, helping ensure these projects will continue to have interested bidders. New products using material from beetle-killed trees are also creating more opportunity, such as for bioremediation and absorption in the oil and gas industry.

Kremmling Field Office active in environmental education: Kremmling Field Office staff have been actively pursuing opportunities for environmental education. Some of the larger activities included Earth Day in Walden for 4th-8th graders focusing on weeds, and 4-H river trips for both Grand County kids and kids from the eastern plains. The office participated in several other presentations and booth displays. Although themes vary by event, Leave No Trace Ethics are typically emphasized. Upcoming events include a West Grand High School freshman river education trip, a Middle Park High School river trip that includes a river clean-up, and a North Park High School geology and social studies trip to the North Sand Hills.

Kremmling Field Office takes advantage of Healthy Lands Initiative funding – The Kremmling Field Office has been using Healthy Lands Initiative funding for a number of projects that improve range management, watersheds, wildlife habitat and forest resources. For instance, HLI funding was used to drill four water wells to improve grazing systems and provide additional water source for wildlife. These have helped draw cattle out of nearby riparian draws and have improved overall vegetation conditions within the allotments. Also, 20,000 acres of noxious weed inventory have been completely yearly to identify priority management areas, and 175 acres of noxious weed treatment have been applied yearly. Hydrographs for two forested streams have been developed to help estimate runoff and watershed response to management actions, and water quality monitoring has been funded to support livestock grazing permit renewals, timber and fuel projects and recreation management. More than 100 acres of wetland areas, including three large fens, and 10 miles of riparian areas, have been monitored to ensure resource values are being maintained or enhanced. The BLM has worked with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife to survey the North Platte River's public fishing areas for stream stability and fishery habitat. More than 1000 acres annually have been inventoried and monitored since 2012 for raptors and/or sage grouse. Funding has also provided for ongoing monitoring of sagebrush treatments. In addition, 275 miles of fences have been inventoried and cataloged into GIS. This data will provide import information on the condition and type of fence that will aid in future maintenance and help guide wildlife management decisions related to fencing issues. In the forestry program, 79 acres have been prepared to help establish new tree seedlings and reduce the amount of hazardous fuels.

Dates of Note:

- Anticipated release of Proposed RMP/Final EIS – Winter 2013/14

Grand Junction Field Office, Katie Stevens

Oil development proposal near Whitewater: The Grand Junction Field Office recently completed a public comment period on the FRAM Oil Master Development Plan in the Whitewater area. The comment period was extended 15 days from an original 30 day comment period. More than 24,000 comments were received, mostly electronic form letters from the Natural Resource Defense Fund, but also a number of local comments. Comments ranged from air quality concerns to access points into the production area. The

Fram Whitewater Master Development Plan is an exploratory project involving up to 108 wells on 12 new well pads. The project is planned for an area about 15 miles east and southeast of Grand Junction, east of Highway 50 and north of Kannah Creek Road. The project proposal spans a four-year program of mainly oil exploration under public and private leases. Construction and operation of the Whitewater MDP could allow for production of up to 8.7 million barrels of oil over the life of the project, estimated to be 20 years.

CMU Law Enforcement Training Center dedicated: The Colorado Mesa University's Law Enforcement Training Center was dedicated August 15, 2013. The center is being built on land formerly managed by BLM outside Whitewater. The BLM worked with many partners over about four years on a Recreation and Public Purposes Act transfer of around 90 acres to Colorado Mesa University, at a price of \$10 per acre, for construction of a training center for local law enforcement. The first phase, a driving training track, has now been built.

Dominguez-Escalante NCA draft RMP comment period extended: The 90-day public comment period for the Draft Dominguez-Escalante NCA has been extended by 30 days to Sept 23. The plan will provide a framework to guide subsequent management decisions on approximately 210,000 acres administered by the BLM in Delta, Mesa and Montrose counties of western Colorado. The Draft RMP analyzes five alternatives covering all aspects of BLM resource management within the National Conservation Area boundaries, including recreation, travel management, resource protection, wildlife habitat, special designations and livestock grazing. The National Conservation Area and Wilderness were designated by Congress in 2009 in recognition of their unique and important resources and values. The 90-day public comment period was set to close Aug. 22. In response to requests from the Delta and Mesa county commissions and others, BLM extended the comment period another 30 days. Public comments have centered largely on travel management.

Gather planned for Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range: The BLM plans to use bait and water trapping to gather wild horses at the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range beginning Sept. 3. The Appropriate Management Level for the area is 90 to 150 horses. Currently BLM estimates the population at approximately 154 horses. Drought conditions over the past year or so have hurt range conditions. With horse population increasing, a gather will ensure horses have enough winter forage to survive as well as ensure forage for wildlife. There is no livestock grazing in the Little Books Cliffs WHR. This month the Field Office will take one more look at multiple monitoring stations and determine future range forage production, which will help determine how many horses the range can sustain. The BLM will identify removal candidates with the aid of the Friends of the Mustangs, a local wild horse advocacy group. Horses five years old or younger that come from mares with other offspring remaining on the range will be the primary group identified for removal. Horses removed from the range will be transported to the Mesa County Sheriff Posse to await adoption.

Dates of Note:

- Proposed RMP/Final EIS release – anticipated in early 2014

Grand Junction RMP Comment summary

Katie Stevens gave a PowerPoint summary of the 4,000 comments received during the comment period for the Draft Grand Junction Resource Management Plan. Most of the 4,000 were detailed, substantive comments, vs. the e-mail blasts these comment periods sometimes generate. The two biggest areas of comment were travel management and air quality.

Public comment

Charlie Kerr – Air quality with oil and gas development is biggest issue that concerns me. Have shale gas on top of tight sands. We are on the verge of the next boom. Price will go back up and development will explode. A lot of development occurring without BMPs. BLM could take a lead in requiring BMPs for air pollution controls. It would be helpful for communities if this RAC would look at the issue and come up with resolution. Particulate matter exceeds standard. Ozone is being exceeded where there is oil and gas development. If development occurs without BMPs up front, then it's always a catch up game. Already there are people suffering from poor air quality in Grand Junction. People have to leave town when there is an inversion. Need to use tier 4 engines and other pollution controls. Williams and Encana use a lot of pollution controls that most others do not. BLM needs to require BMPs. Otherwise will have very serious problems like what you see in Salt Lake City. Preventing human health issues from actions on BLM land are one of BLM's primary responsibilities. Hope RAC will look at this issue.

Kate Graham – Grand Junction Economic Partnership could add to the economic data for the Grand Junction RMP

Karen Sjoberg, Citizens for Clean Air. Citizens for clean air started last winter. I suffered health effects from poor air quality, other people did too. People leave town, stay indoors in the winter. There is a lot of concern in this area about air quality – it was not hard to start a group about air quality. Urge BLM to put air quality as highest priority in GJFO RMP.

Jeff Comstock – Air quality is very confusing item. It's been a long time since the NW RAC talked about it. How about include it as an agenda item next time?

Dave Grisso – Also uncertainty from EPA on their rules. Be good to get someone from EPA. Regulation has exceeded current technology. We are struggling to meet regulations.

Barbara – have someone from industry talk about air quality from their perspective as well.

David Boyd asked the group how they felt about a Statewide RAC meeting in the spring. It would be hosted by the NW this time. Comments include that it should be only 2 days, there should be an agenda with the opportunity for the NW RAC to give feedback, rather than FYI items. It should not be on Valentines Day this year.

Next meeting Dec. 5 in Craig or Silt.

Possible agenda items include: Air quality, DMS, fence resolution