

# BLM Resource Advisory Council

## Final Minutes

January 23, 2013

Idaho Falls, ID

In attendance: Aaron Swift, Scott Johnson, David Pennock, Ross Goddard, Kevin Poor, Gary Vecellio, Todd Kuck, Joe Kraayenbrink, Matt Woodard, Linda Price, Dave Pacioretty, Louise Stark, Babette Thorpe, Karen Rice, Sarah Wheeler, Jeremy Casterson, Shane Rosenkrance, Dana Olson, Marianne Little, John Jakovac. Later in the meeting Mike Webster from Governor Otter's office, Kathryn Hitch from Sen. Crapo and Amy Taylor from Sen. Risch's office made an appearance.

### Round Robin Discussion

Sarah Wheeler welcomed everyone to the RAC meeting and thanked everyone for travelling to Idaho Falls, ID. Aaron Swift made a motion to elect Gary Vecellio as the Chairman and Matt Woodward as Vice Chairman. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Matt Woodard made a motion to re-elect Aaron Swift as the Secretary; motion was seconded and passed unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to pass the September 2012 minutes; motion passed unanimously. A discussion took place and was determined that the Secretary would have the draft minutes to RAC members within 7 days of the meeting and then members would have 30 days to comment before being sent to the Chairman for final approval.

Joe Kraayenbrink gave a brief overview:

- BLM budget is expected to be cut by 8 or 9 percent and congress is expected to pass the continuing resolution through October. For now seasonal work and employees are going to be filled.
- Gateway power line EIS is being reviewed for all federal land. Record of decision (ROD) is to be made by June 2013.
- RS2477 federal road law has come into plan for the BLM in Caribou and Custer counties. Federal court ruled against Custer Counties lawsuit filed against BLM of access issues on Herd Creek Road.
- Sage-Grouse update: alternatives have been set, and draft EIS due out in May/June 2013; a national technical team of experts has been developed to help determine alternatives in hopes that the bird does not get listed. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) must make a decision by 2015.
- Mining update/Habitat Evaluation Analysis (HEA): Thompson Creek still working on EIS for expansion, phosphate patch in Southern Idaho has 3 ongoing EIS's and 2 more are being

planned by mining companies. HEA mitigation has come into play for wildlife habitat and possible mitigation strategies for the mining industry.

- RAC meetings: RAC members are encouraged to keep networking for up and coming new RAC members. Typically RAC meets 3 or 4 times a year. RAC plans to meet twice in 2013 including Challis in April and Pocatello in August.
- Fellow members of the RAC would like to welcome and congratulate new members including: Louise Stark, Dana Olson, Babette Thorp, John Jakovac and Marianne Little.

## Field Office Updates

### Jeremy Casterson, Idaho Falls

- Gave an overview of the Fisher Bottoms property, no EA has been kicked off as of yet but is being planned for the future. No motorized access from the locked gate will be permitted by the public, a parking lot may be built on the canyon rim in the future, and access to the site can be made by boat or a short walk in. Undeveloped campsites will be allowed on the property from the river access. Possibilities of onsite security are still being evaluated which include the writer and residence program or camp host. BLM is going to monitor traffic of people with a trail counter and camera. Stabilization of buildings is planned if BLM can come up with 30K to fund the project. Education and outreach of the property include signage at the walk-in area as well as interpretive signs. An Environmental Assessment (EA) of the sited is being planned for next year.
- Birch Creek campground reservation fee: is being proposed of \$35 per day for group sites which can hold approximately 25 people. The fee structure request was made by members of the public who wanted to be able to reserve the group sites ahead of time. Fee proposal has been posted in the federal register and RAC will be asked to vote on the fee increase in the April 2013 meeting.
- Menan Butte update: The Northern Butte, which is owned by BLM, went through a supplementary rule planning process in 2008 and in that rulemaking BLM closed all firearms shooting in the area. Due to lack of communication, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) was not made aware of the closure and has since gotten involved. IDFG asked for hunting to be allowed but not target shooting. BLM has agreed to this recommendation and hunting is allowed but not target shooting. Hopefully this will provide better public safety.
- Forage Reserve: possibility of a forage reserve which does not have a permittee in the Big Desert Sheep area is being reviewed to allow permittees to “turn out” animals in case of an emergency i.e. wildfire. The allotment is approximately 5800 acres and would allow for 1200 AUM’s. An EA has been drafted and is being protested by Western Watershed Program (WWP). BLM is working with attorneys to get through the protest.
- WWP: BLM continues monitoring and developing study plots in the areas that WWP deemed to be “problem” areas. BLM has identified those areas and are working toward Best Management Practices (BMPs).

### Todd Kuck, Challis

- Wild horse gather debriefing: Gather was held in October 2012, was successful in that no horses or personnel were injured during the gather. 24 horses went out to adoption to various folks and 85 horses were adopted by Wild Love Preserve in the Pahsimeroi valley. Approximately 50 mares were treated with PZP and released back onto BLM ground.
- Broken Wing Ranch: Thompson Creek Mine is looking to exchange their ownership of the Broken Wing Ranch which is approximately 800 acres with 3.5 miles of river frontage access for 5000 acres of BLM property surrounding the mine. Draft EIS scheduled to be completed by May 2013. A recommendation for the land swap will be sent out for RAC members to review.
- Dump fees: The RAC approved an increase in RV dump fees in January of 2012 at Joe T. Fallini and Cottonwood RV dump sites. Staff saw a decrease in unpaid dump fees for various reasons. Most likely lack of knowledge that RV dump fees are separate from camping fees or public was just unwilling to pay the fee. Increased signage will be staged at RV dump sites to increase public knowledge.
- Allotments: 4 permittee allotments in the Pahsimeroi Valley will be unable to “turn out” cattle due to administrative appeals by WWP.

### Linda Price, Salmon

- Staff is working on South zone travel management plan and the draft is ongoing. 3 public meetings held in the South Zone areas, comments taking on 150 miles of designated routes. Staff working on four alternatives to those comments with hopes of having them implemented by July 2013.
- Continental Divide Trial cabin to start construction this summer with a fee proposal of \$40 per day to be brought to the RAC in a future meeting. Issues have come up on how long to allow a group to reside in the cabin. Staff is working on resolving that issue.
- BLM working with Lemhi County on cooperative weed management program.
- Canyon to Big Timber: EIS to be done on 16 grazing allotments, staff addressing protest points, draft EIS out soon.
- Dug Out Dick update: BLM reclaimed the dug out's and have made interpretive signs.

### Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello

- Staff is working on new alternative routes for the Gateway transmission line due to Shoshone-Bannock Tribes opting out of the original agreement.
- Ongoing issues with old road law on the books RS2477 has come up in Caribou County similar to the action in Custer County and Herd Cr. Road.
- Curlew/Deep Cr. Travel Management Plan (TMP): Staff inventoried routes for 1 year, scoping package went out to the public last year and public comment wrapped up in August 2012. Staff has summarized the comments and is drafting the EIS document which has a May 2013 deadline. A final decision will be made by July 2013.

- A sub-committee of the RAC was formed to help BLM staff with the Curlew/Deep Creek TMP. RAC members include Dana Olson, Kevin Poor, Scott Johnson and Lawrence Fox (former RAC member). BLM and the RAC would like to thank those who volunteered for the sub-committee.
- Upcoming Assembled Land Exchange: possible exchange in the future of Morgan Bridge land (~400 acres) on the Blackfoot River for other parcels of BLM land which have yet to be identified. More on this exchange will be heard in the coming meetings.

#### Greg Mann, Pocatello

- Presented a slideshow of 2012 fire suppression and fuels reduction activities.

#### Future Meetings

April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, Challis, ID - Fee proposals, Thompson Creek Mine/Broken Wing Ranch Tour. Please meet at the Challis BLM at 10 a.m. details and agenda to come at a later date.

August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, Pocatello, ID - Pocatello TMP, Blackfoot River land exchange, Gateway Transmission.

#### Adjournment

Motion was made by Ross Goddard to adjourn, motion seconded by Kevin Poor, motion passed.