

Northwest Resource Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, Aug. 10, 2006
 Holiday Inn
 Craig, Colorado

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

Wade Haerle, Category 2	Steven Gunderson, Category 1
Jeff Comstock, Category 3	Charles Kerr, Category 2
Dave Cesark, Category 1	Jon Hill, Category 1
Pat Kennedy, Category 2	T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1
Duane Dailey, Category 3	Forrest Nelson, Category 3

Not present:

- Kathy Hall, Category 3
- Larry McCown, Category 3
- David Bailey, Category 2
- Clare Bastable, Category 2
- John Martin, Category 3

BLM Staff

John Ruhs	David Boyd
Steve Bennett	Jeremy Casterson
John Husband	Barb Blackstun
Catherine Robertson	Andrea Minor
Kent Walter	Andy Windsor
Mel Lloyd	Bunny Sterin

Visitors	Representing	Town/City
David Watson	Northwest Colorado Snowmobile Club	Craig
Dona Shue	High Plains Mustang Club	Craig
Joe Newhof	Colorado Environmental Coalition	Grand Junction
Rick Hammel	Friends of NW Colorado	Craig
Reed Morris	Colorado Wilderness Network	Craig
Tom Gray	Moffat Co Commission	Craig
Jay Fletcher	Sen. Ken Salazar	Craig
Jane Yazzie	NWCOS	Craig
Susan Mekesel	VOA	Craig

Called meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

Approved minutes from last meeting.

Field Manager Update

Little Snake Field Office, John Husband

Little Snake Draft RMP revision release extended to January: The Little Snake Field Office's Draft Resource Management Plan Revision/Environmental Impact Statement is now anticipated to be released for a 90-day public comment period in January 2007. It was originally scheduled for release in July 2006. The schedule extension is needed to incorporate comments and recommendations received during the Cooperating Agency review of the Little Snake pre-Draft RMP/EIS. The cooperators submitted two consensus proposals that they asked BLM to integrate into the draft's management alternatives. One provides an incentive-based approach to limiting sage grouse habitat fragmentation while allowing year-round oil and gas drilling; the other allows for the orderly development of oil and gas in Vermillion Basin while protecting natural and scenic values of the area. The cooperators also provided specific comments concerning Wild and Scenic River eligibility and suitability determinations and managing lands with wilderness characteristics. A Record of Decision is anticipated in summer of 2008.

Progress continues on Emerald Mountain Land Exchange EA: The Little Snake Field Office last week sent the decision package on this exchange forward for State Office review. The package will then be sent to the National Exchange Review Team, then to the Washington Office. A decision is expected this fall. Under this proposed land exchange, 123 isolated BLM parcels totaling more than 15,000 acres would be exchanged for more than 4,000 acres on Emerald Mountain near Steamboat Springs.

Scoping period for 4,000-well EIS upcoming: The 45-day scoping period for the Hiawatha EIS, which covers up to 4,207 additional natural gas wells in the Rock Springs, Wyoming, and Little Snake, Colorado, Field Offices is expected to begin this fall. The wells will primarily be drilled in existing fields, and more than two-thirds of the wells will be in Wyoming. Public scoping meetings will be held in Rock Springs and Craig during the scoping period. Issues tentatively identified include: wildlife winter range, air quality, raptor nesting, soil erosion, reclamation, grazing conflicts, Colorado River salinity control, historic trails, and road maintenance

Little Snake Update

Jeff Comstock asked project lead why cooperating agencies were not involved from the outset. He felt there was resistance from Wyoming over involving Cooperating Agencies before scoping.

T Wright – This needs to be addressed. We need a statement from this RAC to BLM needed. Involve at very beginning, not after scoping.

Action Item: John Husband Will follow-up with Wyoming. He had not heard of this problem.

Next meeting: Questar or project manager from Hiawatha?

White River Field Office, Kent Walter

Scoping period extended for White River RMP Amendment: To ensure ample time for public involvement, the White River Field Office has extended the public scoping period to September 30 for its RMP Amendment addressing the level of oil and gas development over the 1.5 million-acre field office. Public scoping meetings will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. in Meeker September 12, Rangely September 13, and Rifle September 14. This planning effort is being jointly funded with industry, which will be funding the NEPA contractor.

First Oil Shale Research Development and Demonstration Assessments issued: BLM has released the first of three oil shale Research, Development and Demonstration Environmental Assessments for a 30-day public comment period, which closes on September 1, 2006. The first EA, involving one of five proposed oil shale projects in Colorado, covers the RD&D proposal from EGL Resources, Inc. Two more EAs, one for Chevron Shale Oil Company and another for Shell Frontier, will be released for public comment in the coming weeks. Shell Frontier's EA covers three separate proposals. All projects under consideration are on BLM lands in the Piceance Basin.

Progress continues on programmatic EIS for Commercial Oil Shale Leasing: The Draft Programmatic EIS for commercial oil shale leasing is expected to be released for public review this winter. BLM is currently finalizing data collection and writing the draft.

T Wright: PEIS how much of NW RAC area is affected? How do entities participate?

Includes Wyo, Utah, Colorado Field Offices including Glenwood, White River, GJ, Little Snake. Looking at environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Public process, cooperating agencies are signed on. Being handled out of DC. Held 14 scoping meetings. More meetings will come when the draft EIS is released.

Forrest: Rio Blanco County is a cooperator

T Wright: RAC needs to be high profile on this. This is huge in scope. Shouldn't sit on sidelines. RAC has unique ability to participate from public or coop agency. Need to advise DC of our interest.

Kent: Oil shale regulations are also being developed, so there are three on-going projects: RD&D leases EAs, PEIS for commercial leasing, regulation changes.

Oil Shale Discussion. What role should RAC play?

T Wright: First step is to raise hand to WO and say don't forget us. Then work through managers and Sally and figure out what appropriate role would be. Working group on oil shale to coordinate RAC involvement.

Jeff: Talked on Roan about being involved at same level of coop agencies. Asks Forrest if he sees benefit of RAC advising BLM.

Forrest: all projects in Rio Blanco, definitely going to be involved. Wouldn't hurt if RAC up-to-speed

Twright: Should be most involved in PEIS (vs RD&D). Need to discuss with BLM how to best be involved

Kent: (asked how he sees RAC involved) Important for coops to be fully engaged and they are. How can RAC supplement these activities? Opportunity for involvement at Draft. If specific concerns aren't being addressed, need to bring it to BLM's attention

Jeff: next meeting have oil shale person, talk about three processes?

Twright: Need paradigm shift for involvement. Need to take advantage of opportunity RAC provides: Microcosm of constituents. Need to tell us you want us to engage us

Catherine: RAC should identify questions and invite you to come to next meeting.

Jeff: existing energy committee should fire off questions to Sherri

Kent: Brought it to your attention last RAC (others?). Support Catherine idea, also oil shale regulation revision Jim Edwards would be good.

Wade: Three process RD&D, PEIS, Regulations. Not necessarily intertwined. Not everything under PEIS.

Jon: For instance hard to understand why PEIS without knowing what the process of oil shale recovery will be

Action item: Energy group will send questions to oil shale person to Kent to pass on in Denver in advance of next meeting (Energy and Minerals – Larry McCown chair (3), Jeff Comstock (3), Dave Cesark (1), Charlie Kerr (2), John Martin (3), Kathy Hall (1), Jon Hill (1) will be done within a month

Charlie: Commercial leasing hanging out. Energy Act says as soon as EIS is done, but this is premature. Don't want to see commercial leasing before companies are ready

Group wants background before making another recommendation.

Action item: Briefing papers from BLM on oil shale processes in advance of the RAC meeting

White River Field Office plans wild horse gathers: The White River Field Office completed Environmental Assessments and signed decisions for several wild horse gathers this season. BLM will gather 301 horses from the estimated 436 horses in the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area and taken to BLM holding facilities for adoption. BLM plans to capture and remove all of the estimated 52 horses outside of this Herd Management Area. Meanwhile, the proposal for the West Douglas Herd is to remove the first 89 horses captured, which should leave about 50 in the area after foaling this year. Work on the environmental documents authorizing the complete removal of the West Douglas Herd continues.
White River, Kent

T Wright: What is the status of the West Douglas protest?

Kent: It's a plan amendment, so the State Director signs it and responds to any protest. This process is taking long because of large amount of turn-over of key people. The decision can't be appealed through IBLA because it is plan amendment. Could appeal implementation of that decision.

T Wright: Given that this is full force and effect decision, I am advocating that you remove all of the horses, not leave the 50.

Kent: Plan amendment is not full force and effect, but the EAs for the gathers are. The Field Office is following the current RMP until protest resolved. That's the most appropriate action until the protest is resolved; it's not pre-decisional.

Kremmling Field Office, John Ruhs

Glenwood and Kremmling Field Offices hold Wild and Scenic River eligibility open houses: The Field Offices held meetings in Granby, Kremmling, Glenwood Springs and Eagle in June to share information about the Wild and Scenic River eligibility process. The BLM is required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to assess river and stream segments under its management jurisdiction as part of its Resource Management Plan (RMP) process. These Field Offices have not conducted this assessment before. The wild and scenic rivers study process is composed of two main components: the inventory/eligibility phase and the study/suitability phase. The inventory phase includes identifying eligible rivers and stream segments, and assigning a tentative classification. The Field Offices are currently conducting only the inventory phase. At the end of this phase, BLM will document its findings and eligibility determinations in a report. If any river or stream segments are found to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a suitability study will later be conducted. River or stream segments must be found eligible *and* suitable to be considered for designation in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and only Congress or the Secretary of Interior can designate segments.

Ruhs: Also working on VRM, community assessments

Next meeting: Update on RMP revisions of KFO, GSFO, including Wild and Scenic River (WSR) (maybe separate presentation on that)

Wade: What does Wild and Scenic River Designation mean for stretches outside the designation? Eg Water use and storage?

Ruhs: Two phases: We are in inventory/eligibility stage

Husband: May not necessarily have impacts. Need to protect ORV.

Comstock: Issue is who has adjudicated water rights. Recommends looking at existing water rights in WSR.

Cache la poudre only WSR in Colorado right now.

Husband: Since 1989 managing Yampa to protect to not impair WSR values.

T Wright: Wants to see Comstock include his knowledge/points on WSR.

National raft race to be held on Kremmling Field Office lands: With hundreds of spectators and participants expected at this year's whitewater race on the Colorado River through Gore Canyon Aug. 19, the Field Office is working closely with the race organizers, Union Pacific Railroad and Grand County. The race organizers this year will incorporate a free shuttle system to help alleviate traffic. The winner of the event representing the U.S. in the World Championship in Korea later this year. Last year's winner of the Gorefest finished in 3rd place in the World Championship.

Volunteers to construct technical 4x4 route: The Mountain Metal Mashers club will be constructing a technical 4x4 "rock crawling" route north of Kremmling later this month. The route was approved through field office planning. The one mile of route will include a series of rock structures constructed from boulders hauled into the site and is believed to be the first "constructed" technical rock crawling route in BLM Colorado. There is high demand locally and nationally for such trails. By creating this trail, Kremmling BLM is both creating an opportunity and helping control use. This type of rock-crawling use is typically low impact because the vehicles move very slowly.

Kremmling Field Office partners with Jackson County on proposed North Park Stewardship Project: A stewardship agreement between BLM and the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners should be signed by October 1, 2006. The Field Office forestry staff has been doing reconnaissance of timber resources on Independence Mountain with the intent of having approximately 150 to 200 acres available for harvesting next spring. Merchantable mountain pine beetle infested lodgepole pine will be harvested in this initial Stewardship project effort. Also, the Field Office fuels and

forestry staff will be working jointly this winter to design fuels breaks in conjunction with this timber harvest. A cultural resource survey supporting this project of more than 3,000 acres will be contracted and should be completed by early winter 2006.

Kremmling Field Office partners to improve Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat: The Kremmling Field Office is cooperating with the Middle Park and North Park Greater Sage-grouse Working Groups, as well as the Owl Mountain Partnership, to complete 600 acres of sage-grouse habitat improvement projects this fall. Five hundred acres of treatment will occur in North Park and 100 acres will be treated in Middle Park. These projects will involve mowing old even-aged stands of sagebrush to allow young, more vigorous sagebrush plants to replace the treated sage. Also, the mowing will allow understory grasses and forbs to flourish by removing the sagebrush competition. Grasses and forbs are important components of sage-grouse habitat, especially during the nesting brood rearing seasons.

More than 50,000 acres in Kremmling Field office nominated for August oil and gas lease sale: The August 10 Colorado Oil and Gas Lease Sale includes 35 parcels totaling 52,432 acres in the Kremmling Field Office. More than half of the total is split estate. Statewide, 164 parcels totaling 179,900 acres are being offered. The breakdown for Field Offices in the NW RAC is:

- Kremmling: 35 parcels; 52,432 acres
- Little Snake: 9 parcels; 9,466 acres
- White River: 6 parcels; 10,900 acres
- Glenwood: 5 parcels; 3,062 acres
- Grand Junction: 10 parcels; 11,574 acres

T Wright: Where are oil and gas sales in KFO?

Ruhs: Mostly North Park, some in Grand County

Duane: What is the status of the Blue Valley Land Exchange?

Ruhs: We have received the draft EA from the contractor. We will review this fall, and get comments back to contractor. Then go back out to public.

Glenwood Springs Field Office, Steve Bennett

Energy Office continues to fill vacancies: The Energy Office continues to build its staff levels. The office has recently hired a geologist, a second land law examiner, wildlife biologist and planning coordinator. Interviews for a realty specialist were just completed, and recruitment efforts will be initiated again for an additional natural resource specialist,

petroleum engineer and supervisor. The current staff includes three natural resource specialists, two petroleum engineering technicians, a petroleum engineer, production accounting technician, hydrologist, ecologist, land law examiner, staff assistant, and supervisor. The Forest Service will be hiring three positions, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service has a biologist on-board.

Energy office primarily doing environmental reviews as well as inspection and enforcement. Working with USFS. Housing cost has been issue.

Steve G: Where do most people live, then?

Steve B: Newcastle, Rifle, Battlement. Pay also issue, BLM is looking at how fed jobs compare to industry.

Wade: What about locality pay? Should we address as a RAC?

T Wright: Why not move the office to Parachute?

Steve B: We are in process of finding new location because of the number of new employees, plus our lease will expire in two years.

Wade and T Wright: Work is down in Parachute, you should locate there

Steve B: But we also have Eagle Co, and we don't want to separate our staff.

Charlie: What about housing subsidies? Bonuses?

Husband: No subsidies. We've looked at signing bonuses in Craig, but it's hard to get approved

Autumn release anticipated for Roan Plateau Final Proposed Plan: The Glenwood Springs Field Office is working with the BLM State Office and Washington Office on the final reviews for the Proposed Roan Plateau RMP Amendment. The Plan could be released as early as September. The Field Office has worked hard to ensure meaningful public involvement throughout the planning process, including extending the comment period last year on the Draft from 90 to 120 days, engaging the cooperating agencies in a series of meetings to formulate the final proposed plan, holding a series of public meetings to gather input on "preliminary alternatives" before the Draft was written, and holding a special RAC meeting to hear from the public.

The Plan is going to the printer today and should be out in September

Jeff: how is RAC's recommendation being handled in document?

Responding to comments received in the document.

State grant helps fund OHV crew: Two seasonal recreation technicians are working this summer inventorying routes throughout the Field Office while contacting OHV users. This thorough route inventory will be used during the upcoming RMP revision. Typically riding motorcycles themselves, the seasonals also make contact with other OHV riders to help explain regulations and trail etiquette as appropriate. They help install and replace signs and markers as well as monitor the condition of trails, signs and other resources. The seasonals will work from May to October and are funded in part through a \$35,000 State Park grant.

Pre-planning for RMP revision underway: In addition to the Wild and Scenic River evaluations, the Glenwood Springs and Kremmling field offices will be working with local and county governments on community assessments to aid in planning. The information gathered will be incorporated into the RMP revisions.
Glenwood, Steve

Grand Junction Field Office, Catherine Robertson

BLM February Oil and Gas Lease Sale Protests Resolution: BLM Colorado announced resolution of the February lease sale protests for the Grand Junction and Palisade watersheds on August 3. Announcements were coordinated so that all interested parties were notified personally by the State Director and Catherine Robertson. BLM will issue the leases for these parcels to the successful bidder and, immediately upon issuance of the leases, direct a suspension of the leases within the watershed for up to 1 year. This will provide a “time out” and allow the lessee time to work with all appropriate parties before any surface-disturbing operations are authorized. The lessee has committed to take the initiative to prepare what might best be termed a “community-based development plan.” Such a plan, developed through open dialogue and cooperation among the parties, will identify the key elements to be factored into how the lessee will design its future development activities. In addition, BLM will require the lessee to submit site specific Plans of Development (POD) for any projected development activities prior to authorizing any surface-disturbing activities. BLM has also accepted a proposal from the successful bidder of the parcels and has officially amended the leases to include a “No Surface Occupancy” stipulation for 960 acres encompassing the springs and intakes in the Town of Palisade watershed.

Notice of Intent for Red Cliff Mine EIS to appear in Federal Register: The BLM Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) will be directing the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed underground Red Cliff Coal Mine near Loma, Colorado, including Right-of-Way and Land Use Applications for facilities on Federal Lands, submitted by CAM-Colorado, LLC (CAM). The NOI has cleared Washington review and will appear in the Federal Register in the coming days. The EIS will analyze the development of surface facilities for coal mining associated with the proposed mine, including roads, a water pipeline, coal stockpile and waste disposal areas, a coal preparation plant, the mine portal, other administrative and operations facilities, and a railroad spur line that would connect to the existing Union Pacific Railroad line near Mack, Colorado. Cooperating agencies include the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers, the Office of Surface Mining, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Mesa County, and Garfield County. The public scoping meeting on the proposal will be held August 24 at the Fruita Civic Center from 4-7pm.

The proponent has purchased property, EIS will include alternatives. New portal of existing mine, being treated as new mine.

BLM Grand Junction is working with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to minimize the potential impacts to wildlife from proposed and existing energy development in the Field Office. The GJFO has selected a pilot project, one of three in the State, to look at alternative mitigation for seasonal stipulations for deer and elk winter range. The pilot project is in the Plateau Valley Plan of Development (POD) area covering operations by Laramie Energy, LLC. Partners in the pilot project include Laramie, CDOW, NRCS, and the BLM. The pilot will examine alternative mitigation provided on Laramie's privately owned surface for exceptions to the winter range seasonal stipulation timing restrictions. BLM will analyze the alternative mitigation in a supplemental EA to the approved POD for this season. Laramie and the partners intend to develop a Ranch Management Plan for the long-term beneficial management of private lands to further enhance wildlife habitat values on the Ranch over the '06/'07 winter.

CDNR and other agencies are starting to get stretched thin given Roan and NWCOS, hard for them to be coop agencies on all these projects. If RAC feels it is important, need to share with agencies that their involvement is important

Dave Cesark: Williams, GSFO and CDOW doing something similar in terms of winter range pilot study.

Petition for Stay Granted in Part on Decision Record for Bangs Canyon

Implementation EA: After a Petition for Stay was filed on May 4, 2006, on the Implementation Decision for the Bangs Canyon Implementation EA, the BLM Grand Junction Field Office received a Petition for Stay in Part, which was granted on June 8, 2006, by the Interior Board of Appeals (IBLA) on the Decision Record. IBLA concluded that appellants, which included The Wilderness Society, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Colorado Mountain Club, Western Colorado Congress, Sierra Club and the Concerned Citizens Alliance, failed to show the likelihood of success on their arguments, except for their argument that BLM failed to take a hard look at the effects of approving two ATV trails in the northern part of Area 5 of the SRMA. BLM's designation of these two trails was based on public comments received from the draft EA, and BLM will resolve the issue prior to constructing those trails. There were several failed appellant arguments, such as WSA designation, "results rigging," NEPA/CEQ/NHPA violations, T&E species, weed control and inconsistencies with the 1999 management plan.

The Trust for Public Land, McInnis Canyons NCA and the Friends of McInnis Canyons are hosting an event on August 19 marking the acquisition of the 520-acre tract of land in the heart of the Rabbit Valley known as the "upside down ?." A "meet and greet" starts at 10 a.m., followed by speeches at 10:30 a.m. and a barbeque at 11 a.m. Bring your favorite toy along for recreational activities in the afternoon. Trail access

issues can now be resolved and a funding request for a campground submitted with this key acquisition. The event is being held at the Cow Camp in Rabbit Valley—travel to the Rabbit Valley exit off I-70, turn south/right and follow the signs. While 2-wheel drive vehicles can access the area, a shuttle will be available from the main lot. Just east of here, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado are working with McInnis Canyons NCA staff for this year's National Public Lands Day project, which is sponsored locally by Williams and scheduled for September 30-October 1. As identified in the RMP, the Rabbit's Ear Trail will be transformed into a scenic loop with ½ mile of new trail constructed. More information may be obtained at www.voc.org.

Pat: Sponsoring these events is a big deal. Food, tools, ambulance on hand, potties. Very organized.

Dave: 4th volunteer for outdoor Colorado project for Williams, first on BLM

Wade: How much to sponsor a weekend like this?

Dave: Depends, \$10-20,000 range

The Department of Energy, BLM, Forest Service and the Department of Defense are preparing a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to identify the impacts of designating energy corridors on Federal lands in 11 States, as directed by Congress in Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Designating these energy corridors ahead of time helps minimize the time it takes to site and approve projects, as well as reducing environmental effects and conflicts with other uses of Federal lands. Individual projects proposed for these corridors will be analyzed further under NEPA for their environmental impacts. More information can be found at www.blm.gov.

The Department of Energy Draft Programmatic Environmental Analysis on their Uranium Leasing Program was released for public comment on July 12—the comment period was extended 15 days to August 25, 2006. In an area separate from DOE's lease tracts, BLM is currently working on a petition to file an application for withdrawal with the Secretary of the Interior. This action was requested by the CDOW. The purpose of this petition is to withdraw 30 acres of public lands in three southwestern Colorado counties to protect rare maternity roosting sites for the Townsend's Big Eared Bat. These sites are located in uranium mines.

Three high school students were charged on June 20, 2006 with vandalizing large boulders and sandstone walls holding rock art in the McDonald Creek Cultural Resource Management Area of the McInnis Canyons NCA. These individuals chose to spray their first and last names in blue, white and black paint—their high school colors—on the sandstone. They will pay restitution, which will cover BLM's expenses incurred in removing the spray paint. The actual petroglyphs were spared damage, and the sandstone was successfully cleaned from the rock's surface. Let this serve as a reminder that the BLM depends on the public to watch for illegal or unsafe practices on public lands and the public to report incidents they witness to the nearest field office.

Wade This is my last RAC meeting. Really appreciate how BLM bends over backwards for public involvement: NWCOS, Roan, watersheds. It's a shame this is not reflected in the media.

Public comment period

Reed Morris, Colorado Wilderness Network—Supports RACs position for early public/cooperator involvement in the Hiawatha EIS process. It has the potential to have impacts. Also commends the White River Field Office for extending their scoping period. Wants to clarify that all decision in the Bangs EA are before IBLA. Also, all resource areas (except Grand Junction) are involved in RMP Revisions right now, and oil and gas decisions are a big part. I support deferring leasing, especially sensitive areas, while revisions are going forward.

Rick Hamel, Friend of NW Colorado – If appeals don't go to IBLA, the judges tend to dismiss the case. Why is leasing occurring at such a rapid rate and prior to completion of RMP process? I would like to see more public involvement in RMP process, like NWCOS here in Craig. But only six participants in NWCOS came from general public. There is not enough coverage in press, and BLM is not proactive enough in getting the public involved.

Jay Fetcher, Sen. Salazar's office – Sen. Salazar will hold a farm bill listening session next week in Grand Junction.

Joe Newhof, Colorado Environmental Coalition – I am the new executive director for CEC. In regards to the RD&D EA, it's a great opportunity to look at impacts. I think it's fuzzy to move ahead with commercial leasing before you have the RD&D results. Thinks it would be more appropriate to do a single EIS instead of three EAs.

Dave Watson, Northwest Snowmobile Club – I am on Moffat County land use board, snowmobiler. More and more areas being closed to motorized use. Wilderness areas lock us out. We pay registration fee to use lands parks and recreation. Don't see other uses paying. Would like to see BLM charge more fees for backpackers to generate more money for trails.

Jane Yazy, NWCOS, Friends of NW Colorado: How wide of agenda can RAC cover? What does this one cover? Have you ever considered conferring about overload of uses, including neighboring states? Inter-RAC communication and planning? Will you wish you have done that? This area important for recreation and economic opportunities. Hope a RAC could find time to cross contact with other RACs. The RAC is one ingredient in foreseeing issues.

Pat: We have had interaction with SWRAC. Hard to get arms around just NW Colorado issues.

Steve: statewide fees. Overloaded uses? (A from Jane: resource extraction in particular, can get out of hand, e.g increase in oil and gas activity in the White River FO)

RS 2477 update, John Husband

Sec memo clarified how BLM would proceed. Confirmed DOI commitment to communication with claim holder

IM159 non-binding determination required before consulting on improvements. Still must meet obligation to reasonable regulate. Non-binding not legally binding, used for BLM planning purposes.

If BLM gets claim, BLM needs to make sure relevant info is available. Once BLM reviews claim and makes non-binding determination. Blm Encouraged to seek reimbursement.

Coordination with solicitors office throughout process

Written non-binding determination is to be published and have 30-day public comment period. At end of that period make final non-binding determination. If negative determination, claimant can still file ROW or go to court

So we have a process now for getting resolution to some of the claims.

Improvements beyond routine maintenance must consult with BLM.

Jeff: This is preliminary determination to give BLM opportunity to incorporate into their planning process (e.g. to not set-up closed area when there's a RS 2477 claim). Jeff and Club 20 believe BLM should not drag the decision out through a tedious process.

John: IMs clearly direct BLM to do this expeditiously

T Wright: This may help, but it still leaves BLM and claimant with conundrum of how to proceed when there are differences. This does not convey ownership

Charlie: All want to see these things resolved, but need to do it right

Wade Haerle and Mel Lloyd recognized for their contributions to the NWRAC.

New Range Regulations, Andrea Minor

The new regs go into effect tomorrow, Proposed rule issued in Dec 2003, received more than 18,000 comments.

Andrea presents Powerpoint overview

Jeff: RAC provided advice to DC. Including ability to transfer AUMs for other uses. Was that considered?

Andrea: No, but can still take temp non-use

SRP permit discussion

Background. State Director asked staff to get RAC support.

Questions and answers

Steve G: hard to support, questions aren't answered

Catherine: Two separate things. Rec staff is asking for support on charging for SRPs applications. Questions from RAC relate to who needs a SRP.

Jeff wants to understand SRP and what they are for before determining whether or not to support a fee.

Catherine: RAC could decide whether or not to support fees, and in the resolution encourage BLM/statewide SRP team to promptly address question of when a permit is needed

T Wright: can give them answer. Support fee increase for commercial and competitive permits, but encourage expeditious determination of who needs fees, etc. If fees apply to non-commercial users, we need to know who that applies too. Need clear understanding

Charlie: add to resolution "statewide commercial and competitive Special..."

T Wright: and encourage SD to clarify for non-competitive and non-commercial – when application fee would be required.

The RAC unanimously votes to recommend this resolution, which supports the SRP application fee, but also encourages the State Director to provide additional guidance to the public about who needs to obtain an SRP.

Split Estate

Nothing new since last meeting. Split estate report not released yet

HP Rig-cuttings

Dave: Rigs can go on x and y axis. Up to 22 wells on one well pad. Technological break through. Quieter, faster, cleaner, safer, more efficient. 30-40 percent efficiency rate. Will have 10 at end of year. Eliminated need for reserve pit, where rock cuttings go. 225 cu

yards per well on average. So what do we do with the cuttings if pit goes away? First choice for cuttings is to recycle them on active portion of drill pad and gravel access road. Would mix in with road base. Garfield County, Mesa County interested

Approached COGCC last year, letter said have approval with certain conditions. Cesark says conditions are not a problem, except for surface owner approval with BLM. BLM had concerns

Steve Bennett: reviewed proposal. Denied based on five concerns: increased salt content and pH in soils; risk to long-term revegetation success; potential sediment, condensate and heavy metal release off-site through surface water run-off; cuttings are not good road material structurally; would set a precedent for wide-scale application that would be difficult to monitor. Staff felt monitoring would take a long time to get real science to answer questions. At a minimum, we looking at off-site disposal. We are willing to consider other options, not comfortable approving this right now.

Dave: Looking to gain support from RAC to perform a pilot study on effects on using these gravels on well pads and roads. Looking to do experiment

Catherine: not fair for RAC to jump into this, resource specialists have not had chance to look into this.

Husband: The internal discussions are still in process, there still things to work out, still things to go through.

Ruhs: Purpose of the RAC is to get advice and council to help make decisions. Not sure about the appropriateness of an issue coming to RAC from outside like this.

Kent: Agrees with other managers. Wonders about appropriateness and fairness.

T Wright: Agrees that this needs to work through the internal BLM process. In regards to what John Ruhs said: The RAC is not just for the BLM to bring issues to it. It's fine for Williams to bring this issue to us. Anybody should be able to bring issues to RAC, but need to respect the BLM decision-making process.

Dave: There has been a decision. Williams has been denied and that's why I'm here.

Steve Gunderson: BLM will look at your new proposal. I am assuming BLM would allow these pilot studies if the issues are addressed.

Catherine Robertson: If you have permission to apply these cuttings on private land, why not have test area on private land and involve BLM in study design.

Dave: BLM needs to be partner on BLM lands. Finding a way to dispose of these cuttings is critical to success of H&P rigs. Opportunity to use cutting-edge technology.

Dave: Here are the conclusions of the white paper prepared by an environmental toxicologist: no anticipated impacts from elevated SAR and pH content -- although run-off will be higher, the native plants should be able to tolerate higher levels, appropriate construction and best management practices will reduce potential for increased run-off, Garfield County believes the material is suitable road material, the pilot study would only set a precedent if BLM approves their widespread use.

Jeff: I believe this is enough information for BLM to take another look and respond. I would be disappointed if BLM denies this again without taking a second look.

Steve Bennett: We are obligated to take another look, and we could issue another decision.

Pat: How fine of material is this?

Dave: Varies

T Wright: This isn't $\frac{3}{4}$ inch road base, it's finer.

Pat: The gravels currently used for roads could be higher in the substances you are concerned about. We need to know how the cuttings compare to gravels currently used on roads.

Charlie: These are great rigs. But a small scale pilot study is not appropriate. We may not know impacts of this for 20 years or more. We're talking tens of thousands of wells. Shouldn't address this with just a pilot study.

T Wright: BLM should take a second look at this. I question its use as road base, William's needs to prove it isn't harmful. If you can, you should be able to use it. Need to find solution for cuttings. If you come to loggerheads come back to RAC.

Jon: Experiment wouldn't set precedent. Run-off could still come from pit.

Dave: We need encouragement to make these new rigs work. If we can't figure out how to handle these things, may have to make a step backwards.

T Wright: Pits incorporate bentonite, so they are impervious

Dave: Prof from CSU wrote letter of support for the study

Catherine: Field Managers are committed to helping people find creative solutions. This case clearly shows that BLM is committed to protecting water and environment, and to using sound science in our management decisions. We make these oil and gas companies go through a lot.

Jeff: Encourage BLM to look further, bring back to RAC next meeting

Public comment

Rick Hammel – Non-competitive events should require an SRP if the event is for more than 25 people, should cost about \$25.

Recommending close-circuit rigs in NWCOS for a long time.

Reed Morris – How is using the drill cuttings on the road recycling? Isn't it really disposal plan? Wouldn't proper road base already be constructed?

Donna Shue – Commend BLM for trying to make SRPs consistent. Enjoyed watching group reach consensus

Colorado Wilderness Network – what Mesa County and GJFO are doing with important. With future RMP revisions, do more to incorporate split estate issues into analysis eg effects on property values, private AUMs

Oil and gas overview, Barb Blackstun

Good information on blm website on leasing. Gives Powerpoint

All public domain lands are open to leasing unless withdrawn by congress.

Mineral leasing act of 1947 govens what we do

Next meeting:

Oil shale

When SRP applies? SRP committee update

WSR presentation/ KFO GSFO rmp update

Status on rig cutting

Wrfo update on planning process, summary of scoping

Roan plateau

Hiawatha (under field manager update)