

Northwest Resource Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
 Thursday, Aug 16, 2007
 Chamber of Commerce
 Kremmling

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

Kathy Hall, Category 3	Steven Gunderson, Category 1
Jeff Comstock, Category 3	Charles Kerr, Category 2
Dave Cesark, Category 1	
Pat Kennedy, Category 2	Larry McCown, Category 3
Duane Dailey, Category 3	
Clare Bastable, Category 2	John Martin, Category 3
T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1	David Bailey, Category 2
Dona Shue, Category 2	

Not present: Jon Hill, Cat 1; Forrest Nelson, Category 3

BLM Staff

	David Boyd	
Jamie Connell	Pete McFadden	
John Husband	Angela Davis	
Catherine Robertson	Jason Zayatz	
Kent Walter		
Dave Stout		
Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Steve Bonowski	Republicans for Enviro	
Chris Sammons	Rancher	Kremmling

Called meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Jamie introduced Dave Stout, new Kremmling Field Manager.

Jamie said current RAC nominations are still going through the process. Two members did not reapply, so this should be there last meeting. Jamie and Dave Stout presented plaques and expressed thanks to Dave Bailey and John Martin for two terms on the RAC.

A Quorum is present.

Field Manager Update

Grand Junction Field Office, Catherine Robertson

Started with update on wild horse gather of Book Cliffs herd Sept 15. RSVP to Catherine if you are interested. Catherine passed out guidelines for attendance.

Community Development Plan (CDP) for Palisade and Grand Junction

Watersheds: The stakeholders group met in July to review the public comments (<10) in the draft community watershed plan. In general the comments fell along the lines of what the group has heard during the various public meetings; plan should be binding, no drilling in the watershed boundary, etc. The City of Grand Junction formally adopted the plan on July 30, and it goes before Town of Palisade leaders on August 13.

Identified a number of BMP that were appropriate. Company understood BLM would be applying COAs specific to watershed. Emergency preparedness plan, planning on actual drill of the plan.

Seven public comments. Not a lot of interest in plan on behalf of public.

Drill cuttings will be trucked off-site.

CAM/Red Cliff Coal Mine: Glenn Wallace, a retired BLM Colorado State Office planner, has been hired to be the lead on this project since Jane Peterson took a job in Nevada. BLM staff has reviewed the draft Proposed Action and a draft revised schedule has been developed.

Uranium Mining: Several uranium mining proposals are being initiated in the Gateway area. Energy Fuels has submitted a Plan of Operation for uranium mining at the Whirlwind and Packrat mines located about three miles west of Gateway. The Environmental Assessment is being written by a third party consultant under BLM's direction. Energy Fuels has also applied for permits with the Colorado Department of Reclamation and Mine Safety, Mesa County, and other state and federal agencies. Several other mining companies in the Gateway area are exploring and sampling for uranium at other locations in the Uravan Mineral Belt. The White Mesa mill is located in Blanding, Utah, and expected to be online soon. Uranium notices and activity is anticipated to increase because of this and the fact that the Department of Energy released its final Environmental Assessment on July 6, 2007. DOE has decided to reissue uranium leases on additional lands in this area.

National Energy Corridor EIS: The BLM and three other federal agencies (Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and U.S. Forest Service) are preparing a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to identify the impacts of designating energy corridors on Federal lands in the western United States, as directed by Congress in Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The draft EIS is scheduled to be released for public review in late summer 2007. The proposed corridor generally follows the

existing designated north-south corridor along the TransColorado pipeline and other electrical transmission lines through the Grand Junction Field Office area.

Also most of the other field offices. Info is on blm.gov. Not much public interest yet. Expect some.

T Wright: Should RAC comment on this one? Especially since there hasn't been much involvement yet.

Jeff Comstock: Private lands protection? Needs to look at that as a RAC.

Dave Boyd: Will send info about energy corridor. Local map, please link to website. To energy subcommittee (e-mail or hard copy)

Will have public meeting in Grand Junction when draft comes out.

Grand Junction Resource Management Plan: The Grand Junction Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in January 1987, provides management direction for the 1.28 million acres of public land. Since being approved, the RMP has been amended 12 times and adjusted through plan maintenance 43 times. In the Colorado State Office 10 year planning schedule the Grand Junction Field Office is due to revise the RMP beginning in FY 2008 with a final RMP and Record of Decision to be completed in FY 2011. The first step toward meeting this schedule is to complete a preparation plan analysis in FY 2008. The purpose of this preparation plan is to identify anticipated planning issues and management concerns, identify preliminary planning criteria, and establish a work plan which identifies the staffing and technology needs, and to identify budget and funding needs. Mesa County will be asked to be a cooperating agency with BLM in the development of the RMP.

RMP still current, amended 12 times. But area is changing, lots of growth. Advances from Roan and Little Snake plans in terms of energy develop.

Bangs Canyon Implementation: In Area 1, best known as the Lunch Loop, the layout of the planned freeride mountain bike trail is nearly complete, and construction is expected to begin this fall with the help of volunteers from Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA). A risk management plan produced by International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) and some of the work associated with the trail will be funded by a grant from REI. The Tabeguache Trail was recently closed to motorized vehicles between Monument and Little Park Roads. Construction has begun on a series of planned motorized trails in Area 4, in the Billings Canyon area. Across Little Park Road, at the Little Park Trailhead, and elsewhere along the Little Park Road, post and cable were installed by the Work-Enders to restrict motorized access to designated routes and direct roadside parking to the Bangs Canyon Trailhead. The WSATV Club completed significant trail repairs on the Tabeguache Trail this spring to address soil erosion problems. This fall, a section of road from Second Flats is planned for decommissioning, along with a short section of road leading south from Billings Canyon. Signing and

visitor maps will be updated to reflect these changes. The design and layout of the trail system planned for Area 6 will soon be initiated under an assistance agreement with Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) and Bicycle Colorado.

North Fruita Desert Implementation: The GJFO plans to layout a short but challenging section of the Lippan Trail early this fall. Construction will be completed with volunteer crews, as opportunities arise. Information on visitor usage is also being collected in the new campground to assess the need for and feasibility of facility expansion, as well as a fee program for overnight use.

Probably two years out from having fees. Don't know what the fee would be. Probably more than \$5. Looking for a partner to help manage and maintain site that could be there to collect.

Recreation Site Vandalism: There has been a sharp increase in vandalism to GJFO recreation sites recently, most notably the Whitewater Boat Launch and the Monument Road Trailhead (City of Grand Junction), but there have been incidents at the Loma Boat Launch (Mesa County) and other sites as well. Infrastructure is being damaged or stolen, and parked vehicles are being broken into with alarming frequency.

Grand Junction Field Office Land Disposal Strategy: The GJFO is preparing a land disposal strategy to guide priority land disposal activities within the field office. The 1987 Grand Junction RMP placed 140 isolated tracts totaling 24,998 acres in a general disposal category because these parcels are difficult and impractical for BLM to manage. Most of the disposal tracts are concentrated in Glade Park, the Book Cliffs (north of De Beque), Whitewater, and the Collbran/Plateau Valley area. There are also a few scattered tracts in the desert north of Fruita and in the Gateway area. BLM's policy is to use a balanced array of land disposal tools to meet local community expansion and development needs. The passage of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) in 2000 has provided additional incentives to utilize land sales as a land disposal tool. Revenues generated from these sales are directed to an acquisition account that can be used by land management agencies to purchase lands with higher public resource values. School District 51 has expressed an interest in some of the disposal parcels for school sites and Mesa County has identified a need for recreation sites and open space in the Whitewater area. BLM will coordinate with the School District and Mesa County to identify specific parcels of interest. Parcels classified for disposal in the Whitewater area that are not proposed for conveyance to state or local governments will be offered for competitive sale by public auction.

McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (NCA), Catherine Robertson

Loma Boat Launch: The BLM is still interested in acquiring the private land which currently provides parking for boaters. The land owner has also expressed interest in providing an easement for the parking area. The BLM and Colorado Division of Wildlife

(CDOW) are developing conceptual plans for adequate parking. The CDOW recently graveled the road and beach access.

Knowles Fire: A human-caused fire burned 92 acres along the river at the mouth of Knowles Canyon. A significant portion of the cottonwood gallery and a successful release site for the tamarisk beetle were burned. A rehabilitation plan was written and is waiting approval.

Fire Restrictions: Due to extremely dry conditions and a bumper crop of cheat grass, Stage I restrictions were implemented on June 15.

Trailheads and Trail Connections in the Snooks Bottom - Devils Canyon Area: This is a multi-faceted project involving key components:

1. Devils Canyon Trailhead improvements. BLM will receive funding to upgrade the Devils Canyon Trailhead. Work will commence spring 2008.
2. The NCA and the City of Fruita are cooperating on an equestrian parking lot at Snooks Bottom. Partners are being lined up for construction and a grant will be written this fall to cover construction costs.
3. The NCA will finalize a hiking and equestrian trail plan for Opal Hill Trail this September.

Long-term Trail Planning: The NCA received a State Trails Planning Grant for a long-term sustainable frontcountry trail system. This includes linkages from the above-mentioned trails to Colorado National Monument (CNM), Dugway Trail, Dinosaur Hill, Riverfront Trail, and Fruita. Safe crossing of Highway 340 is currently an issue. Connecting the CNM to Fruita via the Dugway Trail will only increase the concerns in crossing Highway 340. A secondary issue is the safety of the Dinosaur Hill Road onto Highway 340. This planning effort will start this winter.

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC): In celebration National Public Lands Day, the NCA will host approximately 150 VOC volunteers September 15-16. The group will construct ½-mile reroute of the Trail Through Time in Rabbit Valley.

More handicap accessible at bottom, extending trail out further.

Mesa County held meetings on Doming/escale NCA with Mesa State. Feelig from public and commissioners was should be recommended. Would include wilderness proposal.

T Wright: How much grazing, how would premitss be treated?

Catherine: Three allotments in GJFO. Will be working with premitss on motorized use agreements. Land use health assessments. Looking at ponds, needs for new ponds

White River Field Office, Kent Walter

We're staying busy. Just received 237th project application (covers all projects)

Oil Shale work progresses – The three RD&D lessees continue to work on monitoring and securing permits. Shell withdrew its applications for State permits on its first RD&D lease, but we expect a new development plan to be submitted by the end of the year. Approved nearly 300 geohydrology wells

The schedule for the Programmatic EIS covering commercial oil shale leasing has been extended to allow extra time to incorporate feedback during the cooperators' review period. The review period ended June 15 after a two-week extension. The Draft PEIS is expected to be released for a 90-day public review period later this year.

Washington Office continues work on West Douglas protests: The Washington Office is currently working on the responses to protests received on the Environmental Assessment authorizing the removal of the wild horses in the West Douglas Herd Area. A lawsuit filed by the Colorado Wild Horse and Burro Coalition is currently pending on the West Douglas decision as well as last fall's gathers from the West Douglas and the East Douglas/Piceance herds. We expect a decision this fall.

John M: Is the lawsuit specific to your area?

Kent: Yes, specific to these herds.

Pat: Why is Little Book Cliffs gather going ahead?

Kent: Different publics/working groups. Suit is pending on past gathers.

White River Field Office Vacancies – Hiring new personnel has been a priority for the White River Field Office during the past months. About 40 percent of permanent staff at the WRFO has retired or moved on recently, including the Associate and Assistant Field Managers. In addition, a number of new positions are being hired, including four new petroleum engineering technicians, a legal instruments examiner, and an additional natural resource specialist.

White River RMP amendment update – The White River Field Office RMP Amendment is progressing, with specialists now delving into the long process of developing alternatives. The Air Quality Working Group has completed protocol for the CALPUFF air model and is finalizing the protocol for the CAMEX air modeling. The socioeconomic group met yesterday (Aug 15). The Draft RMP is anticipated to be released for a 90-day public review period in 2008.

Should take about 8 months for alternative development. Longer than we thought but still faster than many others. Very complex issue

Charlie: How many future wells are we looking at for the White River Field Office?

Kent: Upwards of 15,000 wells. Completed RFD. Submitted to SO for review. Needs to be approved. New statewide policy on how we collaborate with cooperators.

Jamie: RFD is maximum estimate with minimum restrictions. Not proposed or authorized. Just a piece of data for analysis. You need to see the draft plan to understand the full context.

Catherine: We are going to pilot approach with unconstrained RFD, but also more realistic, constrained development.

Larry: can you change the name to something like unconstrained development scenario?

Jamie: Washington level decision. There is a lot of confusion from public over the RFD process.

Charlie: Isn't it an upper limit?

Jamie: RMPs analyze impacts from various levels of development, but do not set an 'upper limit'

Agenda item: RFD topic on specific WRFO, KFO, GSFO. Educate RAC before group works on it. GJFO is next in process.

T Wright: Suggests RAC recommend that the process change to something that isn't so confusing.

Black-Footed Ferret program: Annual spotlighting effort. Aug 22-31 nightly inventories. Already seen three litters this year. Will be releasing 20 in wolf creek this year. Studies looking at habitat

Two prescribed fires: Oak Ridge with DOW,USFS. Many contributors. Another with the park service.

Glenwood Springs, Jamie Connell

First Record of Decision for Roan issued: BLM issued a Record of Decision covering 70 percent of the Roan Plateau in early June. A 60-day public comment period for the remaining 30 percent, which are all the areas proposed as "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern," closed August 10. An additional comment period will be held that will include electronic submissions. The Secretary of the Interior granted Colorado Governor Bill Ritter 120 days to review the Roan plan earlier this month. Other efforts in Congress could further limit leasing or drilling on top of the Roan. BLM is currently following direction from Congress to lease the Roan Plateau. BLM and will certainly follow any new direction it receives from Congress.

Electronic comments will cost \$30,000-\$50,000. Should publish on Aug 20 and run two weeks.

John M: are you vulnerable because of only 14 days?

Jamie: No, we did 60 days, not required to do any of it electronically. For now, go to blm website for address to comment. I don't have it yet.

We are working with State to do briefing on the Roan Plan.

Don't think all gas is accessible under Salazar/Udall amendment to the energy bill It would involve ability to drill 4-5 miles, and there are other impacts are associated with that. Also, not drilling the top would likely focus drilling in sensitive winter range. Questions that we have raised.

Larry: One of key facets of the Proposed Plan was preserving the winter range as well as top. CDOW has made concern known about sacrificing bottom, impacts to deer.

John M: If people have an opinion on this, now is the time to send it to the Governor

Energy Office working on Geographic Area Plans: Specialists in the Glenwood Springs Energy Office are busy working on a number of Geographic Area Plans (GAPs), also known as Master Plans of Development. The Glenwood Springs Energy Office requires an operator to submit GAPs so that a broad evaluation of plans and impacts can be completed, and environmental impacts and appropriate measures to mitigate these impacts can be identified. GAPs are released for public review and comment before the environmental analyses in completed. Three GAPs were out for review this spring, and two more are expected in the months ahead.

Not seeing an increase in wells past few years, but we are doing many more under GAPs which lead to better environmental analysis

New GSFO location announcement expected this fall: GSFO continues to work with the Denver Service Center on the location for its new building. The 20 potential sites in Glenwood Springs, Newcastle, Silt and Rifle have been narrowed to three. Regardless of location, a new, energy-efficient building will be constructed.

Energy Office and Field Office will be housed together

GSFO Community Planner Brian Hopkins wins national award: Long-time Glenwood Springs Field Office employee Brian Hopkins received a national "Legends" award from the American Recreation Coalition for his outstanding efforts in community-based planning. Hopkins recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to accept the award. The annual Legends award is presented by the Coalition in recognition of successful efforts to enhance outdoor recreation for the public. Among his latest work is the community

assessment he conducted as a prelude to the RMP revision in Glenwood and Kremmling, which he presented at the last RAC meeting.

Fire season update

Dave C: Have done a great job. Very professional.

T Wright: burn into wells?

Some did. Working with companies and county on emergency plan, appropriate actions. No problems, but learned a lot

Williams given BMP award by BLM at COGA for design and implementation of H&P rigs

Glenwood/Kremmling RMP update: Coming soon! (under the Kremmling update)

Little Snake Field Office, John Husband

Little Snake RMP revision: The Colorado Department of Natural Resources submitted comments on the draft RMP/EIS on July 2 with some recommendations that differ from their pre-draft recommendations.

Regarding sagebrush habitat, DNR cites new information and recommends increasing protections for greater sage-grouse, including:

- Increasing the NSO around leks to 0.6 mile radius (from the current .25 mile radius)
- Decreasing the disturbance threshold allowed within defined sage grouse core areas to 1% from 5% (maintaining the voluntary, incentive basis for this limitation)
- Defer additional leasing within the defined sage grouse core areas and CDOW State Wildlife Areas or make leases in those areas NSO

Regarding Vermillion Basin, DNR now recommends that the area be deferred from leasing for the life of the Little Snake RMP (15-20 years), citing the tremendous rate of oil and gas development ongoing and projected in Northwest Colorado.

We are currently considering the new recommendations from DNR as we move forward to prepare the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

A separate issue has arisen concerning the air quality analysis for the draft RMP/EIS. EPA Region 8 reviewed the draft RMP/EIS and found the air quality analysis to be inadequate. The primary concern is proximity to Class 1 air quality areas and the amount of new oil and gas activity projected to occur within the planning area over the next 20 years. After numerous discussions with EPA to determine the best way to proceed we have decided to conduct a supplemental air quality analysis, which will entail an

additional public notification and comment opportunity. We will issue a notice and revised schedule when the protocol for this analysis is developed.

John Husband: BLM has not projected how much gas is in Vermillion Basin or that value of that gas, despite what has been said in newspapers.

Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit: Overall fire activity within the NW Colorado Interagency Fire Management Unit has been down some what this year. Normally the Unit averages between 250 to 300 fires and currently has experienced fewer than 200 fires. The largest fire to date has been the Jack fire at 170 acres approximately 10 miles west of the community of Greystone in Browns Park. Quite surprising considering the fine fuel loading especially the cheat grass component found in the lower elevations of the unit. We have only managed one fire use incident, the Hells Canyon fire on the Dinosaur National Monument, which burned only 2 acres. Several other fires were monitored using the strategy of confine/contain status based on location, access and firefighter safety. Currently the ERC's (Energy Release Component) are running near average for this time of year and would expect them to remain here until the fuels dry out following the recent moisture we have received. Fire restrictions that have been in place since early July are being lifted over most of the unit.

Recent organizational changes reported at the last meeting have been implemented smoothly. The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin Grassland (MBR&TBG) has formed its own forest-wide fire management (spanning the Wyoming/Colorado border) for business reasons. Interagency coordination has continued smoothly through the Craig Interagency Dispatch Center, and few operational problems have been encountered.

Hiawatha work continues: The Rock Springs and Little Snake field offices continue to work with Questar and the Cooperating Agencies on a proposed energy development project that could include up to 4,200 new wells. About 66% of the new wells would be in Wyoming. The project schedule was delayed due to Questar's requested modifications in January to the Proposed Action. The Record of Decision is now anticipated for November 2008, which is approximately 5 months after the target ROD date from the previous schedule. Cooperating Agencies on this project are the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Wyoming State Geologic Survey, Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Wyoming Business Council, Colorado Department of Natural Resources (Colorado State Land Board and Colorado Division of Wildlife), Sweetwater County Commission, Sweetwater County Conservation District, Moffat County Commission, Northern Arapaho Tribe and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Emerald Mountain Implementation: The long-awaited Emerald Mountain Land Exchange closed on February 22, 2007. The 4,139-acre Emerald Mountain parcel just

west of Steamboat Springs is now public land managed by BLM. As part of the exchange 123 isolated BLM parcels in Routt County totaling 15,416 acres were transferred to private ownership, primarily to adjacent landowners who held the BLM grazing permit. BLM developed an initial implementation plan for the area including trail segments and a parking /staging area. As components are completed on the ground adequately, the area will be opened to targeted public uses (mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding). Public access has been limited to day-use, foot travel only pending completion of facilities to handle anticipated uses. The Rocky Mountain Youth Corps has been working on the Ridge Trail along the northern boundary of the parcel. City of Steamboat Springs has received a GOCO grant for detailed planning (longer range) and has applied for a GOCO grant for implementation. The Emerald Mountain Partnership is planning a celebration on August 16, 5-7 pm.

Received four appeals, three have been withdrawn

Aug 10 Oil and Gas Lease Sale Results: The BLM Colorado State Office sold 98 parcels totaling 69,504 acres at its quarterly oil and gas lease sale August 10. The lease sale earned \$8,124,868.50 in proceeds, of which 50 percent will go to the State of Colorado. About 48 percent of the acreage in the lease sale was within the Field Offices covered by the NW RAC:

- **Little Snake** – 26 parcels totaling 14,971 acres in Moffat County; 8 parcels totaling 3,952 acres in Routt County
- **Kremmling** – 7 parcels totaling 9,485 acres in Grand County
- **Grand Junction** – 4 parcels totaling 3,909 acres in Mesa County
- **White River** – 2 parcels totaling 805 acres in Rio Blanco County

All parcels listed above were protested by the Center for Native Ecosystems. Many were also protested by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. No leases will actually be issued until the protests are resolved.

Sand Wash Herd: Herd count is higher than anticipated. May be doing a gather next year, one year earlier than scheduled.

Kremmling Field Office, Dave Stout

Idiot's Hill: The Kremmling Field Office is working with the State Land Board (SLB), the Grand County Sheriff, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Kremmling Police Department, and an SLB grazing permittee to mitigate impacts from motorized use on SLB and BLM parcels in the Idiot's Hill area immediately north of Kremmling. An existing route across the SLB parcel was identified in the Wolford Travel Management Plan in 2005 as a critical access point for local users to reach adjacent BLM-administered public lands and designated motorized routes further to the north. Since the travel plan decision was implemented, an endangered plant species has been discovered on the SLB parcel in the vicinity of the route, and new issues have arisen with regard to excessive

noise from users as they linger on the SLB and BLM parcels near a residential subdivision.

Gore Fest: The field manager's update for the May RAC meeting included the announcement that the 2007 Gore Canyon Race on the Colorado River had been cancelled due to inadequate financial support from sponsors. Last month, inquiries were made to us about having the race on August 18 and 19, the original dates for the event. Organizers were told we would not be able to process a permit for the event on those dates. The Gore Canyon Race is quite complex and requires substantial lead time to work with the Union Pacific Railroad, Grand County and others, to ensure a safe event, and to plan for large numbers of people needing to camp, park cars, have access to the river, etc., in addition to outfitters and the general public who will be using the river at the same time. We told the organizers that we wanted the event to continue and would work with them for a permit in 2008. In the last few weeks, there has been a lot of talk among kayakers about holding the event without a permit. As a result, we have developed a plan for handling an expected influx of kayakers who may run an unofficial race. We have entered into a dialog with kayakers on the Mountain Buzz website, explaining how the situation evolved this year and what we can and cannot do regarding unauthorized events. Several people in the kayaking community have been very helpful by providing comments on the Mountain Buzz website in support of the BLM's position, which have reduced the rhetoric about the cancelled race and the insults directed at the BLM.

Pat K: Similar thing happened with mountain biking in Mesa County. An effort to get around permitting. Appropriate to take action, citation.

T Wright: Want to kick this to recreation committee. Want to say we don't condone this kind of action.

John M: Makes me want to stay on for next meeting. Can't step on rights on groups. There are historical events that have been going on a long time. Be very careful about the gov't doing something about the public doing something they don't want. Is it legal. Our resolution needs to deal with specific issue: website generated uses of public lands.

T Wright: I can't condone intentional degradation of public resources to go around processes. Up to us to responsibly remind public about right to recreate on public land with protection of resources.

Clare: Would be happy to lead effort to craft this. Appreciate what john says and thinks I can incorporate that

Charlie: not a new permitting process. Gore Fest just didn't get the job done this year and there are some who will do the activity any way. Degradation of land, public safety concerns. In general BLM, NPS, USFS very accommodating to these sorts of uses.

John M: The new process is that there is a higher fee than historical, and they also broadened definition of who needs permit in Colorado. Need to go slow.

Larry: recreation community as whole hasn't been affected by permitting like grazing, energy. But rogue groups organizing on websites needs to be nipped in the bud.

John M: Is there system failure if it's cheaper to deal with a ticket than a permit? It's a system failure. Might have to recommend a new way.

Working group will work on this issue

Blue Valley Exchange: Kremmling Field Office staff is meeting with the proponent's representatives on August 24 to discuss the completed Draft environmental assessment prepared by the proponent's contractor. Other topics at the meeting may include review and discussion of comments presented by the proponent's attorney on Wild and Scenic River eligibility findings, and the proponent's conclusions following the review of the appraisals by the USDI Appraisal Services Directorate. KFO met July 17 and 18 with the Blue Valley Ranch manager and consultants for an on-the-ground look at the majority of offered and selected exchange parcels.

Windy Gap Exchange: We expect to complete the Windy Gap Exchange by the end of calendar year 2007. The proponent of the exchange is the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which is gaining land to protect its infrastructure associated with the Windy Gap water diversion, part of the Big Thompson water project. NCWCD will gain lands administered by the BLM and an easement from the U.S. Forest Service in the Windy Gap area, west of Granby. The BLM will receive NCWCD lands near Gore Canyon and the Forest Service will receive NCWCD lands in the Arapaho National Recreation Area. The Gore Canyon acquisition will improve opportunities for the BLM's management of wildlife habitat and recreation.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Jackson County: The Kremmling Field Office has been participating in developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Jackson County. The North End Community Wildfire Protection Plan has been completed. We are involved in the initial steps of developing the Westside CWPP, which will cover the area between the North End and Grizzly Creek CWPPs, in the Rainbow Lakes area on the west side of Jackson County.

Pellet plants near Kremmling: Two business groups have begun the process of gaining approval for wood pellet manufacturing plants, both of which will be located near Kremmling. One plant would be located in southeast Kremmling, and has the support of local government officials. The other plant would be located outside of the Kremmling City limits, southeast of the City. Both plants, if approved and built, would accept lodgepole pine from nearby mountain-pine-beetle-infested forests.

North Park Stewardship Project: The contract for the stewardship project has been presented to the Jackson County Commissioners for their review and approval. Once

signed, an annual work plan will be developed and logging can begin. The project will harvest merchantable mountain-pine-beetle-infested lodgepole pine on as many as 200 acres on Independence Mountain in North Park.

SEAT base at Kremmling should we need one. Didn't need one this year

Jeff Hayworth will win national stewardship award.

Glenwood/Kremmling RMP Update:

- **Scoping:** The Scoping Report for the Glenwood Springs and Kremmling RMPs was recently completed. The report is about 500 pages and can be found on the project website: <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo/>.
- **Wild and Scenic River:** Field investigations of suitability characteristics on eligible wild and scenic river segments were completed in July. There are 16 eligible segments of streams and rivers in the Kremmling Field Office administrative area, and 11 within the Glenwood Springs Field Office. Information resulting from the field work will be carried forward into one or more of the alternatives developed for the Glenwood Springs/Kremmling RMPs.
- **Resident Small Group Discussions:** Researchers from Arizona State University conducted 10 small group discussions during the past few weeks to better understand the importance of public land recreation to local residents. The overall goals of the discussion were to help gain an understanding of the value residents and communities place on local BLM public lands and to identify future recreation demand that needs to be addressed in the land use planning process. The discussions represented a unique opportunity to offer thoughts directly to researchers compiling recreation data for the land use planning process. During the meeting, participants discussed topics that included: 1) preferred places to recreate on BLM public lands; 2) preferred recreation settings for their activities, 3) how they felt BLM public lands should be managed; and 4) general future actions that would enhance recreating on BLM public lands. Participants included: motorized users, non-motorized users, river outfitters, upland outfitters, chamber representatives and members of the Red Hill Council.
- **Social-Economic workshops:** BLM and the Sonoran Institute will host workshops in Glenwood Aug 21 and Kremmling Aug 22. Economic analysis is a critical component of any environmental assessment. These workshops will review the big-picture social and economic trends in the West, learn about the local economy within each Field Office boundary, and have an opportunity to discuss economic/social challenges and opportunities. This information will help the BLM and cooperating agencies representatives as we move through the land use planning process. RAC members are welcome to attend either workshop.

- **Alternative Development:** The information gleaned from the efforts above, along with the community assessments and additional information such as ACEC reports and the Analysis of Management Situation, will be used to develop alternatives that will be presented in the Draft RMPs. Alternative development is expected to begin in October. The Draft RMPs are scheduled for a 90-day public review/comment period in 2008.

Public comment:

Steve Bonowski. Republicans for Environmental Protection. Founded in 1995 to try to bring back conservation to Republicans. It is a partisan group. Thoughts on the Vermillion Basin and Roan from our unique perspective, our advice to RAC is to go slow. Sky won't fall if Vermillion is not drilled in next 15-20 years. Won't drill our way into energy independence. Number of active drilling rigs has dropped this year. Efficiency could reduce natural gas use by 20 percent in 20 years. Is market for natural gas that bright that you want to drill every acre? This plays into national and global economies. The mother lode not under Vermillion Basin. 42 million acres are currently leased, only 12 million are in production. This shows you don't need to lease everything. Going green makes money. Heat my house with natural gas along with passive and active solar, other people will discover these things. Our message is go slow. Hopefully this RAC will not take a position about drilling one place or another.

RAC protocol on letters:

Passed out new charter and SOPs. Reorganized no substantive changes.

Purpose followed Roan letter sent last time. Review quorum and voting requirements to avoid controversy.

Charlie: As background, I wasn't able to make last meeting. Only three people in Category 2 were present, and only two voted to send this letter. Violates charter. Letter was unfortunate mistake. Misrepresents one critical fact: RAC did not endorse proposed plan, only approach taken by DNR. Resolution was very carefully crafted. Letter was inappropriate, timed to influence Congressional discussions. Have to be more deliberate.

Jeff: We endorsed the DNR proposal in the resolution.

Charlie: But no plan at the time, so nothing to endorse.

T Wright: question letter that we sent reaffirmation of decision already made by RAC.

Clare: letter went a step further than that

Jamie: We should have caught that we didn't have majority of each category. Some people feel what was in the letter went beyond just a letter of transmission. We will make sure that majority votes on everything. If it's a letter of transmission we will just make it that, nothing more.

John M: wording has changed. Used to say needed three from each category, now it just says majority of each interest groups.

More discussion that the wording in the Charter has changed, but not the meaning. The RAC still needs three members in each category voting yes to approve a resolution.

Clare: is protocol for letters same as resolution? Should whole group be able to look at letter and that would be the vote

John M: doesn't think the way the letter was written would pass scrutiny.

Jamie: Anything substantive or a resolution will require vote. Letter of transmission will be just that. Won't allow that to happen again.

John M: Charlie, do you want to propose some sort of action?

Charlie: It's water over the dam at this point. Want to emphasize for the future that the majority of each interest group – three members – are necessary to pass something

T Wright: Language is in the law

Glenwood/Kremmling RMP working group

Jamie: would like official subcommittee of this RAC to help us with RMP. What we are looking for: Do we have right items of concern, do you have any names of people

T Wright: need one person per category **Will contact grazing contacts to find appropriate person**

SteveG: is this per field office or both field offices

Clare: how many people?

Jamie: no more than 15, but 7 or 8 would be ideal

Clare: no hiking or equestrian

Timber

Need to have two members of this RAC from different categories

T Wright: Nothing is official until it goes through RAC, but they work with Jamie's folks. Make recommendations to RAC

Dave Stout: concerned about schedule. Will it affect schedule of RMPs? Will people involved in these groups feel like been wasting their time if BLM doesn't follow their advice? Thinking about travel management subgroup

T Wright: Can help educate about schedule. Kremmling hasn't done as much of this, but encourage them to do this now.

John M: Gives you more avenues to get input than other official channels

Dave Stout: Focus on travel management

T Wright: You are revisiting everything since it is a plan revision, need more representation. Take more time at the beginning, but saves you time at the end

Dave Stout: next RAC meeting is Nov

Jamie: I'll get names back from people, will send out to group. Have group set within in a month. RAC will agree to names

Discussion moves toward creating two separate groups, one of reach Field Office.

Charlie: Move that the RAC endorse formation of two formal subcommittees for each field office

Second

Passes unanimously

Need two rac members per subcommittee:

Clare and Duane volunteer for KFO

Dave Cesark and Larry McCown for GSFO

Kent WRFO RMP AMENDMENT

Our RMP Amendment is narrower in scope than the RMP revisions in GSFO and KFO. I suggest we use the northwest colo stewardship subgroup currently currently under the RAC, with the addition of one cat 2 member.

We are developing alternatives now, should be done drafting alternatives by end of September, then need buy-off from state office. Then we would take it to RAC and cooperators. Want draft alt completed by January

Jeff C: While it is appropriate to use subgroup of rac, I am concerned that you would be using them after draft alternatives are developed

T Wright: concerned about lack of public involvement in WRFO RMP Amendment compared to other RMP efforts. Need people on the ground to be involved in developing alternatives. Prefer you do it with an approach like GSFO and KFO

Kent: that's why the proposed group would be good, represent diversity of this subgroup

Jeff C: easy out to use the RAC sub group, need more local people and I will vote no on this proposal (to use the current subgroup)

John M: I would vote no too

Kent: Form a subgroup similar to GSFO approach with local community instead.

T Wright: I would support that

Resolution: T Wright formation of sub group under model of GSFO and KFO

Second

Passes

Two RAC members for this group: Dona and Kathy volunteer

Vince Matthews presentation on energy demand and use worldwide, how Colorado fits in

Susan Caplan presentation on air quality

Public comment period

Chris sammons. Ranches here multiple generations. BLM land next to ranch. Looks terrible. Need to manage for excellence. Acquired thru land trade years ago. Was to secure access to river. Need management plan for this area. Local family has begged local office to let family help them manage this area. We'll help out however we can. Repeatedly assured it will remain in production ag. Right off highway, everyone sees it. Hurts me personally to see this.

T Wright: Specific request that riparian by irrigation. Commitment in land exchange that this land will be maintained. RAC spent a lot of time on this years ago. Hope that BLM will look at this

Duane: Was gorgeous. Needs to be returned to its past status. A lot of miscommunication about this piece of property.

Dave C: suggests dave s and duane get with Chris and report back next meeting.

Managing for excellence

Jamie gave overview of proposal. NW district would follow boundaries of NW RAC field offices.

Looked at 52 different maps. Considered many factors, including RAC
Still looking at what responsibilities would be district employees. Probably trying to take responsibility away from state office, not district.

T Wright: Like idea of moving some duties from state office to district.

Jeff; what is logic of three-tier?

Jamie: Consistency across BLM, too many details having to be handled by state director (e.g. appeal to next level up)

John M: What is the benefit to the public?

Jamie: should benefit them by giving that extra layer to go to. Also, this is national direction. We will give our proposal and include cost.

District manager would likely be designated federal official – but still need to work out the details

John M: Worked under both scenarios, but feel more effective under current scenario, without district manager in the way

Kent: We need more time to put meat on the bones

Next meeting

T Wright: Talk about all three sagebrush initiatives, who do we participate, how do they effect us. T Wright. HLI, proposals for Colorado, CSI

Charlie: cumulative impacts on air for WRFO? Kent: need to run models once we have alternatives

Kent: Socioeconomic (Roy Peterman from Wyoming?) T wright look at big picture, better understand of big picture. Sonoran institute?