

**Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council
Kremmling, Colo
Aug. 21, 2008**

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

Kathy Hall, Category 3	T Wright Dickinson, Category 1
Jeff Comstock, Category 3	Charles Kerr, Category 2
Dave Cesark, Category 1	Forrest Nelson, Cat 3
Pat Kennedy, Category 2	Larry McCown, Category 3
Lanny Weddle, Cat 3	Steve Gunderson, Cat 1
Mike Perry, Cat 2	
Jon Hill Cat 1	
Dona Shue, Category 2	

Not present: Duane Daily, Clare Bastable, Cat 2

BLM Staff

Steve Bennett	David Boyd
Kent Walter	Joe Stout
John Husband	Matt Anderson
Catherine Robertson	Jeff Kitchens
Charlie Beecham	Ken Kerr
Dave Stout	Jaime Gardner
Peter Mcfadden	

Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Jay Fletcher	Sen Salazar	Steamboat
Mike Crosby	Colorado Division of Wildlife	Steamboat
Jason Wedemeyer	CEC	Grand Junction
Kate Grahm	CEC	Grand Junction
Chris Sammons	Rancher	Kremmling
Kathy Kitzmann	Aurora Water	Aurora
Andy Treharne	Sen Wayne Allard	Grand Junction

Called meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Quorum present.

Dave Cesark and the RAC thanked Kathy Hall for her nine years serving on the NW RAC.

John H and Catherine explained the difficulties in processing travel and encouraged all to get travel info to Dave B as soon as possible.

Field Manager Updates

White River Field Office, Kent Walter

West Douglas Removal EA released: The White River Field Office completed the Environmental Assessment on the gather techniques for the removal of approximately 147 wild horses in the West Douglas Herd. The Environmental Assessment on the removal plan was released on July 14, 2008 for a 30 day appeal period. The first gather is expected in October, and more than one gather will likely be needed to remove all the horses from the area. The majority of the wild horses removed will be available for adoption through BLM's wild horse and burro program. The remaining wild horses will be placed in long-term holding facilities. The 1997 Resource Management Plan for the BLM White River Field Office recommended the removal of the West Douglas Herd, while expanding the larger Piceance-East Douglas Horse Management Area in better habitat to the east. In October 2007, the BLM's 2005 Environmental Assessment was approved for the removal of all the wild horses in the West Douglas Herd Area.

White River Oil and Gas RMP amendment update: The White River Field Office, Draft Resource Management Plan Oil and Gas Amendment, drafts for Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 have been reviewed internally by the BLM. A meeting with cooperating agencies and NWRAC Subgroup is planned for November 2008 to discuss final draft for these Chapters. Impact analysis will begin and once completed another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the Draft RMPA/EIS, July 2009 before release to the public. The Draft RMPA/EIS is anticipated to be released for a 90-day public review period in October 2009.

Oil and Gas update: The White River Field Office has approved 166 applications for permit to drill (APD) since October 1, 2007 and anticipates completing a total of 215 by the end of the fiscal year.

Oil Shale PEIS update: The public comment period on the Programmatic EIS for Oil Shale and Tar Sands on BLM lands ended in April after a 30-day extension to the original 90-days. Approximately 104,500 comment submissions were received, 100,000 of which were form submissions. The comments are available for viewing from the BLM website, but the comment analysis/summary is not complete. A Final EIS is expected by the end of the year. (Kent added that the NOA for the Final PEIS will be out Sept 5).

Oil Shale RD&D update: IDT Corporation, which recently acquired a controlling interest in EGL Resources to form American Shale Oil, LLC (AMSO) has re-submitted their Plan of Development as an addendum to Plan of Operations for their 160-acre

RD&D oil shale lease and a geo-hydrology program. BLM is currently reviewing both submissions. Chevron is currently in the process of drilling water geo-hydrology wells on their 160 acre RD&D lease tract. Shell Frontier submitted addendums to their Plan of Operations for all three of their RD&D leases.

Busy season anticipated for range program: The White River Field Office's range program is currently finishing its eight grazing permit renewals for FY 2008. This summer it will begin the work on its 12 renewals for FY 09. The weed work will continue with two seasonal employees and a contract helicopter to be hired this summer to spray weeds.

T Wright: How many renewals would be affected/not renewed if we don't get appropriations rider in Sept?

Kent: Don't know answer if that happens, but we are expecting to get them all done. Kent will get info to T Wright and Jay Fletcher by end of next week.

Black Footed Ferret: The minimum known population of black-footed ferrets in the Wolf Creek Management Area at the end of 2007 was 16 animals. Survival and reproduction continues to be documented only in a few colonies near the eastern margin of the Management Area. We have initiated a research project on ferret resource selection to help identify why we are observing success in some areas and not in others. This is a cooperative effort with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, United States Geological Survey – Biological Resources Division, and the University of Missouri. During our spring survey in April we documented 10 individual ferrets while surveying only two colonies. We have a habitat manipulation planned for late this summer in order to expand currently suitable habitat and have requested 10 additional captive-reared ferrets for release this fall. Our annual late summer survey is scheduled for August 13-22 and we currently have 35 participants scheduled to assist with this effort.

Jeff: New volunteers and others have forgotten that these are non-essential populations. Can really see that in appeals and in State Regulations. Ferret Plan encouraged voluntary restrictions to protect ferrets, not mandatory as would be in state rules. Suggest RAC encourage BLM to make that point with the state during rulemaking process.

Dave C: How do you want us to do it?

T Wright: RAC wrote a letter supporting in 2001 for Management Plan.

Jeff: BLM needs to defend that ferret plan.

Catherine: Working on MOU with State. Ferrets are isolated and may not be high on the radar.

T wright: Need to have the MOU address ferrets.

Jeff: Write letter for supporting ferret plan be incorporated into the MOU. Motioned and seconded.

Catherine: May not want to limit it to the MOU, more general that what was agreed to in ferret plan be followed in state rules. Ferrets should not have higher protections than other uses.

Charlie asks for clarification about DOW's additional protections.

Jeff says additional protections are being added on for ferrets beyond the ferret management plan.

Charlie: Would like more detail from DOW before I can sign on.

Jeff: Want to advise BLM to ensure ferret plan is followed in COGCC rules.

Charlie: Suggest in letter that we simply call attention to the plan and make sure they follow it.

Motion to draft a reminder letter to BLM. Jeff and T Wright will draft and send to the RAC to review. Carries unanimously.

ACEC and Rare Plant Projects: The WRFO and the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) are working collaboratively to designate four BLM ACECs as state natural areas.

- ❖ Duck Creek ACEC 3,950 acres for TES plants
 - ❖ Ryan Gulch ACEC 1,430 acres TES plants
 - ❖ Blacks Gulch 800 acres paleontological values
 - ❖ Moosehead Mountain ACEC 10,690 acres remnant vegetation associations
- Draft articles of designation are currently being reviewed by BLM for final approval.

These areas would be an addition to the 6 ACECs currently designated as State Natural Areas including:

- ❖ Deer Gulch
- ❖ Dudley Bluffs
- ❖ Lower Greasewood
- ❖ Raven Ridge
- ❖ Yanks/Upper Greasewood

WRFO and CNAP are also planning a fencing project to stop OHV damage to occupied habitat for the federally threatened Dudley Bluffs Bladderpod. The fencing project will close and abandon a route identified for closure within the WRFO RMP/ROD. The project will eliminate OHV damage to this habitat, which has seen a 67% decrease in the population since 1996. The project will not close the entire route, just that portion that traverses occupied habitat. Informational kiosks will be developed to provide education and information to motorists wishing to use the open portion of the route. Because the fencing project will occur on occupied habitat, formal consultation has been initiated with the Fish and Wildlife Service. The project will be implemented in the fall of 2008.

Jeff: Do Jon and Forrest support that road closure?

Kent: Implementing a decision from 1997.

Prescribed Fire and Fuels Program: The White River Field Office has 10 projects planned for a total of 5450 acres. 1,700 acres are targeted for completion by the end of the year. The planned projects will benefit Wildlife, Range and Hazardous Fuels Reduction programs.

Seismic Projects: The White River Field Office has received applications for three seismic surveys from ExxonMobil, Williams, and WesternGeco. Environmental analysis and documentation is currently being performed on two of the three projects.

Multiple Pipelines, Rights of Way in the works: The White River Field Office is working on a number of rights of way associated oil and gas activity or other uses within the Field Office. Currently the field office is in various stages of reviewing or authorizing pipeline projects from Questar, Williams, Enterprise, Exxon Mobil, XTO and TransCanada. Also, White River Electric is constructing approximately 27 miles of 345 KV power line through the Field Office. Several applications for communications towers are pending, and WRFO is working closely with Rio Blanco County and the oil and gas industry to upgrade and realign existing roads.

Glenwood Springs Field Office, Steve Bennett

Jamie Connell is on detail in Wyoming until October.

Roan Plateau oil and natural gas lease sale nets \$113.9 million. Thursday's Roan Plateau lease sale netted \$113.9 million, making it the highest grossing onshore oil and natural gas lease sale in BLM history in the lower 48 states. A total of 54,631 acres in 31 parcels were sold. Vantage Energy of Englewood obtained all the parcels offered on top of the Plateau. Williams was the winning bidder on one parcel in the southern part of the planning area below the Rim, Oxy on two on the southern end below the Rim, and Meadow Ridge #3 LLC out of Denver won nine leases on the east and north sides of the planning area below the Rim. Approximately 15,000 protests to the lease sale were received from environmental groups, with protests from the State of Colorado as well. Protests must be resolved before the leases are issued or the state receives its 49 percent share of the lease sale.

Roan Plateau travel management implementation continues: GSFO is working with engineers from Grand Junction to install physical barriers on a number of roads on the Roan Plateau that were closed through the Roan Plateau RMP Amendment process. Last year the areas were closed by signs. The closures are in place largely to protect wildlife habitat as recommended by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Energy Office continues high number of on-site inspections: The Glenwood Springs Energy Office has processed 252 Applications for Permit to Drill so far this fiscal year. Another 132 APDs are pending. The staff has also completed 783 inspections, exceeding

planned target by 46%. The Washington Office is leading the preparation of the three year report to Congress on the seven Pilot energy offices created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This report is required as a part of the Act and will include recommendations to Congress. A two year report was completed and released in February 2008.

Glenwood Springs completes RFD for planning effort: As part of the RMP planning process, the Glenwood Springs Field Office has completed a Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario, which is used as a baseline number for estimating and analyzing impacts to and from oil and gas development by alternative. The RFD represents a 20-year estimate of oil and gas development that could occur under the hypothetical scenario of no constraints. The alternatives in the RMP will apply constraints. The RFD is not an authorization or approval. The Glenwood Springs RFD's unconstrained projection is 5,678 wells over 20 years on BLM lands and federal split estate within the Glenwood Springs Field Office. For a cumulative effects analysis, the RFD also includes projections of the number of new wells over 20 years on private land (9,024) and Forest Service lands (872) within the GSFO boundaries. BLM has no jurisdiction over those wells. (The White River National Forest is currently working on an oil and gas EIS that will include an RFD for the entire Forest.)

Questions from audience: Do you ever look at totally constrained numbers?

Steve: Range of alternatives in RMP.

T Wright: Not well pads, just wells. So what's the number of wells per pad?

Steve: about 8 wells per pad.

GSFO/KFO RMP Revision Update: The GSFO/KFO RMP revision schedules have been pushed back to accommodate air quality monitoring. Since the GSFO and WRFO are dependent upon the same cumulative modeling results, delays in the WRFO schedule affects the GSFO, and subsequently the KFO schedule. GSFO has initiated a separate contract to conduct independent near field and far field air quality modeling and analysis for their planning effort.

RMP Revision Background

- **September 2005:** Completed Preparation Plan
- **May 2007:** Formal Scoping period ended
- **July 2007:** Travel Management workshops
- **October 2007:** Field Offices began Alternative Development
- **November 2007 – April 2008:** Field Offices worked with Cooperating Agencies and NW Colorado RAC subgroups to help develop alternatives

RMP Schedule

- **June 2008 – October 2008:** Colorado State Office Review of Alternatives & Staff Finalize Alternatives
- **October 2008:** Field Offices will begin Impact Analysis
- **February/March 2009:** Internal review Draft RMP/Draft EIS for SO & Solicitor

- **September 2009:** Complete DRMP/DEIS – 90-day Public Comment Period Begins
- **July 2010:** Complete PRMP/FEIS – 60-day Protest Period Begins
- **January 2011:** Complete RODs

The Wild and Scenic River stakeholder group continues to function well, and no major stakeholders have dropped out. The group has secured funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, along with contributions from all participating stakeholders, to pay for facilitation of their process. On June 30, the stakeholder group submitted a conceptual plan to the Glenwood and Kremmling Field Offices, so that we can include the plan in our NEPA analysis. The conceptual plan includes all the major elements that you would see in a typical BLM Wild & Scenic River plan, such as flow management, water quality management, cooperative land management, issues affecting ORVs, etc. However, many parts of the plan simply include a list of the ideas that the stakeholders are considering, especially in areas where it is challenging to reach a consensus, such as flow management. The stakeholders are attempting to get us a more refined plan with consensus on specific, proposed actions by November 1 for inclusion in the draft RMP.

The following was included in an email update that went out to the RAC Subgroup and Cooperating Agencies in early August....

BLM received several letters concerning a health impact analysis. The BLM is also concerned about the health-related impacts of our decisions along with the other human uses in Garfield County and surrounding counties. Recently, St. Mary’s Saccomanno Research Institute and Mesa State College, with the help of communities in Garfield County, collaborated to conduct a study of health risks related to oil and gas industry activities. This comprehensive project involved a “three-pronged” approach to the assessment of human health risks: Community Focus Groups, Human Health Risk Assessment, and Data Analysis and Communication. The assessment provided residents of Garfield County and several other counties detailed health/risk information and a baseline to measure future impacts. If you are unfamiliar with the assessment please visit the following website - <http://www.garfield-county.com/Index.aspx?page=580&recordid=475&returnURL=%2findex.aspx>.

After reviewing the results of such a comprehensive study of health and environmental risks, it would be helpful to know: “What specifically would BLM need to assess beyond what Garfield County has analyzed in their 2008 health impact assessment?” Please email Brian Hopkins brian_hopkins@blm.gov with reasonable suggestions and any potential data sources by August 22, 2008.

GSFO RAC Subgroup		
John Baily	Recreation – Biking (ECO Trails)	
Chris Beebe	Recreation – Biking (Red Hill Council)	
Steve Dahmer	Wildlife/Hunting	
Peter DuPont	River Outfitters	Vacant

Fiona Floyd	Recreation - Equestrian	
Taylor Hawes	Colorado River District	Vacant
Michael Kennedy	Recreation - Climbers	
Sherri Long	Oil and Gas (Encana)	
Ken Neubecker	Wildlife – Trout Unlimited	
Greg Noss	Recreation – Motorized	
Kurt Shultz	Upland Hunting Outfitters	
Steve Smith	Environmental – The Wilderness Society	
Karen Witt	Chamber/Business	Vacant
Tom Turnbull	Grazing	

The BLM GSFO intends to send periodic email updates throughout the fall 2008 including the results of our consultations with the BLM Colorado State Office. Realizing the schedule revision above the next RAC subgroup meeting will be in the winter 2008-2009 – dates to be determined.

Larry: Garfield County had to respond to two based jumpers who jumped off the Roan Plateau. Search and Rescue had to eat the cost. Don't know if this is a trend. (Had to use helicopter to rescue)

Larry: Garfield County has years of air studies to help with air quality assessments?

John H: projection, but use all data?

Steve B: Inventory of existing data, don't know if they are using GarCo data.

Question from audience: Is air based on RFD?

John H: Projected maximum number for areas. Run at maximum level and one at 75%>

Steve B: In Glenwood we will use RFD as one alternative for the modeling.

Little Snake Field Office, John Husband

RMP Update: LSFO continues to progress on the supplemental air quality analysis to the Little Snake Draft RMP/EIS. As reported at the last RAC meeting, EPA Region 8 reviewed the DEIS 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 decided to conduct a supplemental air quality analysis, which will entail an additional public notification and comment opportunity. We worked with EPA to develop a protocol, and an air quality consultant has been conducting the modeling and analysis. The supplemental analysis is scheduled to be released in September of 2008. LSFO is developing the alternatives for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. We have met with cooperating agencies to discuss preliminary alternatives.

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 in January 2007 due to Questar's requested modifications to the Proposed Action. The Draft EIS is now scheduled to be complete in November 2008, and the Record of Decision is anticipated in late 2009. 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: BLM has been working closely with the City of Steamboat Springs conducting a number of public participation workshops to further understand and be able to integrate the public's interest in some of the more detailed aspects of resource and recreation management on Emerald Mountain. The last of six workshops is scheduled for August 21, 2008 at the Steamboat Springs Community Center. Implementation plans for the summer of 2008 are to improve signage and interpretation at Emerald Mountain, and complete some of the final pieces of the Ridge Trail. Development plans include beginning the concept and design for the Kemry Draw day use area

Wild Horses: The Little Snake Field Office is continuing the preparations for a wild horse gather in the Sand Wash Herd Management area. The appropriate management level (AML) for the Sand Wash herd is 163 to 362 horses, and the current population is estimated to be over 400 horses. The gather is tentatively scheduled to begin around October 17, 2008.

Lanny asks about how birth control administered?

John: captured horses get first dose, then applied by dart the second dose.

Dona: What happens to horses that are euthanized?

Jaime gardner: wild horse and burro advisory board looking at hard proposals like euthansia. Should have recommendations this fall.

Black Footed Ferrets: The preconditioning season for Black Footed Ferrets has begun at our Browns Park Facility. The LSFO received 6 adult ferrets to test the security of our new pens in Browns Park. We expect to receive our first allocation of about 25 ferrets, in family groups for preconditioning prior to release, during August. We also expect of second group of approximately the same number to arrive in October. Preconditioning takes approximately 6 weeks. All Black Footed Ferrets are scheduled for release in Wolf

Creek Basin. Spotlighting inventory and monitoring of previously released ferrets in the Wolf Creek Basin Occurred the week of August 12-19. Results are not yet known.

Vegetation Treatments for Sage Grouse habitat: Approximately 600 acres of a 3,000 acre treatment area on Cold Springs Mountain was treated to open up closed stands of sagebrush to improve sage grouse habitat. The area was treated with 2-4-D, aerially applied in short bursts of spray across the 3,000 acre area. This is the second year of this cooperative project with CDOW, NRCS, BLM, and Vermillion Ranches.

A similar treatment is proposed for September on Middle Mountain. Approximately 1,000 acres of closed canopy sagebrush will be treated using Spike in an effort to kill approximately 40% of the sagebrush to improve habitat for sage grouse.

Grazing Permit Renewals: The end of the ten-year permit renewal effort that the BLM has been working on is September 30, 2009. The LSFO remains on track at this time to complete this effort.

Staffing: Staff turnover, primarily through retirement and moves for career progression, continues to be a challenge for the LSFO. We have been both successful and fortunate in filling vacancies with new staff. The challenge is expected to continue for the next several years.

Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit: We're about 2/3 of the way through our normal fire season and it has been below normal, in terms of number of starts, so far. The Unit has had 112 fires that have burned 1389 acres (as of 8/13/2008). During an average year, we would have probably had about twice that number of fires. We still have about one more month in what is considered our normal season, so these numbers will likely change a little. We've certainly had fairly dry conditions for most of July, but the lightning occurrence this year has not been as high as usual so that's the big reason for the number of starts being low.

As was mentioned in the last meeting, the NW Colorado Unit was one of the BLMs pilot areas for some changes in the Wildland Fire Management Policy. So far this season, we have managed 3 Wildland Fire Use (WFU) events on the Unit. One burned 8 acres and the other two burned between 0.1 and 0.5 acres each. The WFUs don't represent much of a policy change from the past in terms of our processes and planning. We've had 3 Appropriate Management Response (AMR) fires on the unit, each of which had sections that had confinement actions implemented to prevent spread in an undesirable direction. The other sides or portions of these fires were allowed to continue to burn until they naturally went out. The Kraft fire burned 668 acres, the Spicer fire burned 32 acres and the Sand fire burned 25 acres. As we continue to adjust our management of fires towards the AMR way of thinking, many fires will have portions that we take protection actions on and portions that we allow fires to continue to burn to provide benefits to the vegetation resources in those areas.

Grand Junction Field Office, Catherine Robertson

CAM/Red Cliff Coal Mine: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled for release on August 29. A public meeting will be held in Fruita on September 25. Public comments will be accepted until October 28, 2008.

Uranium: The Environmental Assessment for the Whirlwind Mine Plan of Operation is undergoing review by the BLM Colorado State Office and the Solicitor's office. We are also monitoring 11 Notices of Intent for exploration in the Gateway area.

Oil and Gas: We are currently working with environmental consultants writing EAs for Master Development Plans (MDP) for six projects. The companies include Aspen (Whitewater), Black Hills (Homer Deep and Horseshoe Canyon), EnCana (east of DeBeque), and OXY (Conn Creek). The Black Hills' Winter Flats MDP was approved in July. We are also processing 3 gas pipeline proposals in the Douglas Pass, Debeque, and Collbran areas, and the Garfield County road 204 proposal along Roan Creek.

Bangs Canyon Special Recreation Management Area

With the assistance of the Western Slope ATV Association, COHVCO, and the Western Colorado Conservation Corps, the GJFO has completed a new system of ATV and single-track motorcycle/bicycle trails in the Billings Canyon area of the Bangs Canyon SRMA (Area 4). These trails loop and connect to existing four-wheel-drive roads to create a 27-mile trail system. The ATV trails were signed and open for public use in June. The single-track motorcycle/bicycle trail is complete but will not be opened until properly signed and after it has received some moisture to help pack the trail tread and identify problem areas that may need further work to prevent resource damage. The entire system is expected to be open for use in September.

Several miles of single-track motorcycle/bicycle trails planned for the Snyder Flats area (Area 6) and an associated trailhead planned for Highway 141 are on hold pending further cultural resource work in the area and are targeting next summer for completion of this cultural work.

Gateway Special Recreation Management Area: The GJFO is currently in the process of drafting a recreation management plan for the Gateway SRMA. The draft management plan is expected in October, and the final plan is expected in December 2008. In partnership with the GJFO, Gateway Canyons Resort is beginning to plan another volunteer project for early fall aimed at completing more of the new Lumsden Canyon Trail System. Two stacked loops, nearly 2 miles or 25% of the system, were completed last spring and are now open for public use.

Recreation Fee Proposals: The GJFO has proposed a new fee for the use of the North Fruita Desert Campground (\$10) and a fee increase at the Mud Springs Campground (\$10). Both proposals are supported by the RAC, the Mesa County Board of Commissioners, and the City of Fruita and must now be presented to the RRAC for their consideration. If approved, the new fees will be implemented in 2009.

Tamarisk Leaf Beetle: The GJFO has seen an explosion this summer in the amount of tamarisk destroyed by the beetle. The Dolores River from its mouth in Utah to south of Gateway Canyons resort has been attacked by the beetle. Along the Colorado River the beetle has moved east along to Mee Canyon within the McInnis Canyons NCA.

McInnis Canyons NCA: With the retirement of Paul Peck, the NCA Manager position was advertised and Katie A. Stevens has been selected. Katie is currently with the BLM's Montana State Office working in the Planning and Environmental Coordination shop.

T Wright: is everything OK from grazing permittees on Dominguez ?

Catherine: working closely with them. One permittee in Uncompahgre field office has been working closely with Sen Salazar's office.

Public comment period:

Chris Sammons. Pioneer family have been here over 100 years. Same issue as last year. Neighbor to Junction Butte wetlands managed by BLM. Pulled out paperwork for land exchange since 1998. We have working ranch, manage forage. Tried to work with BLM to use portions of the BLM property. Talked to local office about working something out. Offered partnership deal – we would offer to volunteer to harvest hay and graze cattle to manage grass to enhance wildlife habitat. Did site visit. Thought we were going to work with us, but they decided not to. I am confused about what local office is doing. The original agreements were that this would stay managed in historical way. All we have is agreement to use some electric fence that replaces fence that BLM tore down. We would like to work with BLM. Sad to see beautiful piece of property just sitting there going to waste. Elk problems -- come from public land. The public land is not as good of habitat for elk or the geese. Open for suggestions or help for dealing with this local office.

Dave C: asks Dave S for response: Adjacent landowners also want to graze. That's a possibility in some years. Plan to burn this fall. Dry now so we can burn this fall. Don't agree that grazing is the best option right now.

Peter McFadden: Areas primary's objective is wildlife. We will include you in management plan for that area. Don't have exact timeframe for completing a management plan for that area.

T Wright: I was here at that time on the RAC. Linda and the BLM promised the historic use of those properties. That means agricultural use. I specifically remember that the irrigation would be maintained.

Dave S: The primary purpose these days is wildlife. Was that discussed back then?

Dave C: asks Dave S to Report back to rac at Dec meeting about progress. Including terms of land exchange

Lanny: A concern that I have is that Chris had understanding that she would hay. When time came she was told no. Needs to be addressed.

Larry: troubled by 1998 agreement that seems to be being ignored and new management plan developed. Would this exchange have occurred with the idea of how the lands are managed now. Don't we have contract in place? Historical use must continue. Would rather see hay used instead of burned. The contract is being ignored. Elk are going to walk over the burned ground to her private land.

Kent: Need to do management plan once we get lands.

Jay Fletcher: The Senator's office is working very closely with permittee Catherine mentioned for Dominguez-Escalante. Thinks things are worked out now.

Kremmling Field Office, Dave Stout

Glenwood/Kremmling RMP revisions: Colorado State Office staff has completed their review of Chapter 2 (alternatives) and comments have been submitted to Field Office staff for review, and for transmittal to the contractor. Field Office staff is finishing review of Chapter 1 (introduction) and Chapter 3 (affected environment). The status of the planning effort and an overview of alternatives for the Kremmling RMP were presented to members of the Kremmling Cooperating Agency group on July 9. The schedule for both RMPs is slipping due to the need to conduct air quality monitoring. Impact analysis is expected to begin in late August or September (excluding air quality). Internal review of the Draft RMPs/EISs by the State Office and the Solicitor is planned for March 2009. The Drafts are expected to be published in September 2009. If the current schedule is maintained, the Proposed RMPs/EISs will be published in July 2010, followed by the Records of Decision in January 2011. The proposal from the Wild and Scenic River Stakeholders group (for the Upper Colorado River) was recently presented to the BLM, offering alternative management options for management of that river.

Our RFD is a couple hundred wells. May need to revisit that number. May exceed prediction.

North Park Stewardship: The Stewardship Agreement with Jackson County was signed, as previously reported. Jackson County is seeking bids for logging a 30-acre fuel break on Independence Mountain. A site tour for prospective bidders will be held on August 22nd. Work continues on a timber sale on Independence Mountain. The original sale layout has been modified due to slope and access concerns. We expect to have the timber sale modifications completed within the next few weeks. At that time, Jackson County can seek bids for that work. Road work to improve access to the sale area will be completed as service work for Jackson County.

Oil and Gas Activities: The 36-square-mile geophysical project in North Park was completed early in April. Phase 2 of the project is underway, south of Pole Mountain, on an area of about 44 square miles. Eight APDs have been approved for the EOG Company. Seven APDs are pending, 5 for EOG and two for other companies. All of the APDs are for wells south of the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge in Jackson County.

The Windy Gap Land Exchange: The Windy Gap Land Exchange, west of Granby, has not yet been completed. A binding exchange agreement was signed locking in the values of the exchange, until Congressional notification has been completed. A Decision Record was signed and the Notice of Availability of Decision was published. No protests were received. The exchange was submitted for Congressional review; Congress is not in session, so the review will occur later this year. As explained at prior RAC meetings, the exchange is between the BLM, the Forest Service and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. The District will gain lands around their infrastructure. The BLM will gain land along the Colorado River; the Forest Service will gain a small amount of land in Arapaho National Recreation Area.

Blue Valley Ranch Land Exchange: The Blue Valley Ranch Land Exchange remains in hiatus, pending completion of the Kremmling RMP revision. An appraisal of offered and selected parcels is being conducted by a contract appraiser, who expects to complete the new appraisal by the end of August. The appraisal is being conducted at the request of the Blue Valley Ranch, as a means of determining the accuracy of the original appraisal, which was in dispute. The new appraisal will be an interim appraisal. This fall, KFO staff will give a critical review of the NEPA document prepared for the exchange by Blue Valley Ranch's contractor.

Lower Blue River Cooperative Management Plan: Work continues on developing a management plan for the lower Blue River below the Green Mountain Reservoir. The BLM has been participating in developing the plan, which will address public use of that stretch of the river, most of which is bordered by private lands. The plan also addresses management of outstandingly remarkable values that were identified during wild and scenic rivers inventories on three segments of the Blue River. The stakeholder group is planning to incorporate as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and is currently reviewing the basic provisions outlined in the Articles of Incorporation. The BLM, USFS, and BOR are slated to be advisors to the Board established under the nonprofit organization. Minutes of meetings, and plan drafts for review are posted on the Summit County website: <http://www.co.summit.co.us/> Look for a "Draft Lower Blue River Cooperative Management Plan" link under the "Documents for Review" section in the upper, right corner.

Gore Fest: The Gore Fest was held August 16. The Gore Fest is a national competitive whitewater race on the Colorado River through Gore Canyon, southwest of Kremmling. This will be the 19th year for the event; it was not held last year. This year, race organizers are taking an active role in managing participants and spectators by arranging for camping and parking accommodations, and by providing shuttle transportation between the starting and finishing points of the race, and between Kremmling and the Pumphouse Recreation Site. This year, post-race festivities will be held in Kremmling in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, instead of on public lands, as in the past. We expect several hundred participants and spectators for the event.

Wolford Reservoir Access Closure: The Colorado River Water Conservation District is beginning a boat inspection program at Wolford Reservoir in an attempt to keep Zebra and Quagga mussels from being introduced into the reservoir. The inspection program

will be similar to those in place at Pueblo Reservoir, Lake Dillon, and other lakes in Colorado. The District has asked us to close an access route across public land to the reservoir, in conjunction with the inspection program. The closure will apply to trailered boats, only. Those with trailered boats can reach the reservoir by passing through the inspection point. We have agreed to begin a temporary closure on that access once the inspection program is underway, which should be within the next few weeks. We will work with the District to periodically review the closure and the inspection program, to determine if the closure needs to remain in place.

T Wright: Does water come with Windy Gap land exchange? How do you plan to treat the landscape. That was our concern when exchange Chris Sammons brought up. You need to maintain green footprint and be very clear about what you say you are going to do with the land.

Three-tier update

Catherine: The proposal submitted to DC has all the field offices in this rac being one district. There will be district manager. The district manager probably won't be in place before December meeting. Field managers will still be actively involved.

T Wright: Do we need to reiterate that we want the interaction with the field manager. That is key to success of RAC.

Kathy: Critical. I have seen it with just district manager, and field managers don't participate as much

T Wright: RAC's responsibility to ensure field managers are at this table.

Twright: another letter reemphasizing we want local field manager involvement

GJFO RMP subcommittee Matt Anderson

Here to confirm that you want a RAC subcommittee for our RMP, and if you do, how you want to go about forming it.

Working on Wild and Scenic assessments, community assessments (Mesa State)

Draft RMP would be released Early Jan 2010, ROD summer of 2011. Scoping this fall.

Looking at everything in Field office but McGinis canyon RMP.

Matt mentions cooperating agencies, partners.

Jeff C: If you are using state database, how is The Nature Conservancy helping?

Matt: trying to help us be consistent across field offices and states.

Jeff C: That opportunity exists in BLM right now. What purpose is TNC serving?

Matt: Cooperative effort BLM has started with TNC.

Joe Stout: Bringing tools to the table that we can decide to use. It is information we don't have. Spear-headed at national level.

Catherine: Not just TNC, but others who might have datasets like USFWS or DOW.

Matt: Makes analysis less subjective

T Wright: I think there needs to be a greater explanation of that this partnership with TNC is intended to do, and what it is not intended to do.

Presentation at December meeting about this partnership with TNC.

Overview of issues: community expansion, energy, recreation

Larry: How do you mesh with adjacent field office plans?

Catherine: working with them on that. Some are ahead of us in planning schedule and some behind.

Jeff C: will you use Glenwood model for subgroup? A: yes

Larry: needs to be two RAC reps from GJ to liaison with the subcommittee.

Kathy: Thinks all RAC members from GJ should be on this committee.

Larry: Other subcommittees had the RAC members to answer questions about that RAC, not to lead the group or comment themselves on the comment.

Pick two RAC members now. They will set up criteria for members, suggest membership

DAVE C: want independent advice from the subgroup to the RAC.

Policy test 2008 policy pilot Fire management Ken Kerr

Upper Colorado River and Northwest Colorado units volunteered to test this policy this season. Presentation on history of fire management leading to the pilot program to manage fire.

One problem with test is we still have to call it a wildland use or suppression fire
Another was how the rehab money could be applied, needing to do WFSA, etc.

Risk management is very important in decision making

Charlie: need to write letter supporting more flexibility in how managers can use rehab dollars (ie for more than just suppression)

T Wright: need to be able to use rehab dollars to help with management goals

Charlie: need to emphasize to community that you can deal with smoke now from these fires or much bigger problems later

Resolution supporting this management approved unanimously

Bark Beetle Epidemic and Forest Health

T Wright: Moves that the NW RAC advise BLM that they should fully use statutory tools that have been given to them.

Larry: Second

Carries unanimously.

Dave S: We are using CAT EX in many places.

Charlie: May be more efficient to use EA than to misuse Cat Ex.

Draft Commercial Oil Shale Regulations

Jeff: Was bidding on royalty rate considered.

Charlie B: didn't hear that concern, didn't consider, would be hard to administer

T Wright Full bonding requirement may price smaller companies out

Charlie B: if companies walk away, somebody's going to have to pay. Smaller companies may have harder time. Public perception already that we were moving too fast and major concerns we have heard was how are you going to protect the environment?

Production would not begin until 10th year

Public comments on draft regs need to be received by Sept 22

Charlie K: What must RDD companies do to demonstrate their technologies for full conversion to 5170 acres?

Charlie B: if data they produce (economic and physical) shows they are economically viable, still would need to go through NEPA to convert.

Kent: would need full plan of development

Jeff: Would have liked to have seen more land management regulations from BLM and fewer on the economics such as royalty rate

Jon: need to be doing range improvements ahead of these guys to mitigate the impacts from their leasing

Kent: Can be addressed in EIS of specific development

Public comment period no afternoon comments

White River RMP Subgroup

Subcommittee met July 9. Addressed process we are going through, what is purpose of subcommittee. 3rd time we met

When and how can the group participate? Working on a letter from the subgroup to the rac addressing dates and points of participation.

The dates they wanted to point out to this group; Nov 2008 coop agencies and subgroup to talk about where we are with draft alternatives. After that meeting we will start analysis. We will explain to both groups how we incorporated comments.

December meeting. Subcommittee will present to the RAC

July 2009 will present draft eis/RMPA to subcommittees. Opportunity to comment on that. Public comment period will be in Oct 2009.

T Wright: Can you clarify for me whether you addressed subcommittee's issues?

Kent: all comments were addressed

T Wright: Subcommittee will have meaningful opportunity in Nov to provide feedback?

Kent: As far as developing analysis protocol –If the question is, is my issue being addresses and is it being analyzed? The answer is Yes.

Proposed final out for Sept 2010, ROD in 2011.

Once the subcommittee reaches consensus, it's imperative that the RAC know the timeframe. Want to make sure that they are addressing any issues or concerns that the RAC has. I recommend that their issues and concerns represent your issues and concerns, but they need to hear that from the RAC. Toni Moore from Grand Junction is chairperson. RAC members provide input but they don't vote in this subcommittee. Have business practice in place about voting.

Kathy Hall is done with the racs. How does the rac want to proceed?

The subcommittee all have jobs, life kicks in and they didn't get the letter to you. Wanted to show they are working together.

Dona: No consensus from group and this point in terms of range of alternatives. Biggest issue is that they feel the whole rmp should be revised, not just an amendment. Group needs to hear from RAC that the RAC wants them to work on alternatives for the amendment, and that a revision is on the table.

Jeff: Have you given them the sideboards?

Kent: Yes.

Dona: They don't agree. Think it should be a full revision.

RAC agrees that the subcommittee needs to stay within the scope of the amendment, and that a revision is not on the table.

T Wright: You have told me that group will have meaningful public involvement in alternative analysis in Nov, and I appreciate it

Action items:

- **T Wright and Jeff Comstock: draft a letter reminding BLM about the existence of the black-footed ferret conservation plan and encouraging BLM to continue following it. A draft would be sent to the whole RAC.**
- **Dave C: Draft a letter from the NW RAC advising BLM that they should fully use statutory tools that have been given to them to manage bark beetles.**
- **Dave B: Draft resolution supporting fire management.**

Meeting of all racs. NW RAC supports a statewide meeting of all three Colorado RACs. It wants some component of training included in that meeting. No formal resolution is necessary given both other RACs have done so.

Next meeting agenda items

White River subgroup

GJFO subgroup

TNC involvement in RMP efforts

Dave Stout follow-up on Sammons issue

Air quality. Policy realm that this rac could weigh in Conervation about where it makes sense regionally (Catherine suggests that be a topic for statewide meeting)

Invite EPA to come explain

Gateway