

**Northwest Resource Advisory Council**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
 Thursday, Feb. 14, 2008  
 Glenwood Springs Community Center  
 Glenwood Springs, CO

**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    | Forrest Nelson, Cat 3        |
| Pat Kennedy, Category 2    | Larry McCown, Category 3     |
| Mike Perry, Cat 2          |                              |
| Clare Bastable, Category 2 |                              |
| Jon Hill Cat 1             |                              |
| Dona Shue, Category 2      |                              |

Not present: Lanny Weddle, Cat 1; Duane Daily, Cat 3; T Wright Dickinson, Cat 1

**BLM Staff**

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
|                     | David Boyd      |
| Steve Bennett       | Brian Hopkins   |
| John Husband        | Sherri Thompson |
| Catherine Robertson | Charlie Beechum |
| Kent Walter         |                 |
| Dave Stout          |                 |

| <b>Visitors</b> | <b>Representing</b>          | <b>Town/City</b>  |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Frank Smith     | WCC, GVCA                    | Rifle             |
| Joe Neuhof      | CEC                          | Grand Junction    |
| Luke Shaffer    | CEC                          | Craig             |
| Carolyn Tucker  | Shell                        | Newcastle         |
| Bob Millette    | Sierra Club                  | Glenwood Springs  |
| Creed Clayton   | US Fish and Wildlife Service | Glenwood Springs  |
| Collin Ewing    | US Fish and Wildlife Service | Grand Junction    |
| Peter Hart      | Wilderness Workshop          | Carbondale        |
| Leslie Robinson | Colorado Confidential.com    | Rifle             |
| Dan Becker      |                              | Silt              |
| Sasha Nelson    | CEC                          | Craig             |
| Ken Brenner     | Citizen                      | Steamboat Springs |
| Janelle Husband |                              | Craig             |

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

Annual elections. Unanimous for Dave Cesark Chair, T Wright Vice Chair

Five members terms are up this year: Kathy Hall, Clare Bastable, Duane Daily, Steve Gunderson, Forrest Nelson

## **Field Manager Updates Round 1**

### **Kremmling Field Office, Dave Stout**

**Glenwood/Kremmling RMP revisions:** Interdisciplinary teams from the two offices continue their efforts with alternative development. In Kremmling, a number of meetings have been held with cooperating agencies and the RAC subgroup in an effort to develop an acceptable range of alternatives. The emphasis in many of the meetings has been on the recreation management alternatives, especially potential Special Recreation Management Areas. The Kremmling staff met with CDOW managers and biologists from Jackson and Grand counties on February 1<sup>st</sup>, to review the wildlife and recreation management alternatives. KFO staff and Roy Smith from the Colorado State Office met with cooperators and others on January 29<sup>th</sup>, to discuss preliminary thoughts about wild and scenic river determinations. Preliminary thoughts about suitable segments are that Colorado River segments from Gore Canyon downstream to Catamount are suitable as recreation river segments. All other eligible segments in Kremmling are thought to be not suitable for W&SR determinations.

**North Park Stewardship:** The Stewardship Contract with Jackson County has been signed. A work plan for FY2008 has been developed and approved. Work on the ground will begin when snow cover is gone.

**Oil and Gas Leasing:** The November 8, 2007, oil and gas lease sale attracted substantial public interest in Grand and Jackson counties. Residents of both counties, including elected officials of towns in Grand County, felt they had not been adequately notified of the sale. In an effort to help residents become familiar with the leasing process and involved in the process, I began public outreach efforts. I met with about 100 Walden area residents on January 5<sup>th</sup> during a community forum on oil and gas development, to discuss the BLM's leasing process. I met with the Board of the Middle Park Soil Conservation District, and others, on February 12<sup>th</sup> to explain the leasing process. I am working with local Trout Unlimited folks in Grand County to organize a similar meeting in eastern Grand County, during the latter part of February. The Jackson County Star and the Sky-Hi News have agreed to publish a series of guest commentaries on oil and gas leasing, in an effort to reach folks who could not attend public meetings. Leases have been nominated in Jackson County for the May sale. The KFO staff is reviewing those nominations. The Colorado Division of Wildlife was quoted recently in the Jackson County Star, requesting that leasing cease west of State Highway 125 in Jackson County, due to concerns about sage grouse.

**KFO Land Exchange Updates:** The Windy Gap Land Exchange, west of Granby, has not yet been completed, but is expected to be completed in the near future. 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 the Granby area.

Jeff: Water rights associated with this?

Dave: Infrastructure and water rights. BLM would get some water rights.

Jeff: What is BLM's interest in water rights

Dave: Working with DOW

Jeff: Want update next meeting. Concerned about DOW and BLM holding water rights for wildlife. Concerned about mischief that can be played when fed agency has water rights. Tell me what water rights were previously used for.

Catherine: Not uncommon for BLM to have water rights, often used for grazing permittees.

**Dave S: will get more info to RAC before next meeting. Possible next meeting agenda item.**

The Blue Valley Ranch Land Exchange remains in hiatus, pending completion of the RMP revision. An appraisal request has been submitted at the request of the Blue Valley Ranch, as a means of determining the accuracy of the original appraisal. Contracting for an appraiser is ongoing. The new appraisal will be an interim appraisal. We met on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with representatives of the Blue Valley Ranch, including their attorney and land exchange consultant, to discuss the status of the contractor-prepared NEPA document on the exchange, and the status of the pending appraisal and RMP development. The Blue Valley Ranch manager attended the meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup>, when preliminary thoughts on wild and scenic river determinations were discussed with cooperators.

**Lower Blue River Cooperative Management Plan:** Stakeholders along the lower Blue River, including the BLM and the USFS, have been preparing a management plan to 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 Plan will be addressed in an alternative of the Kremmling RMP revision, if the Plan is substantially completed in time to be analyzed as part of the Draft RMP. The stakeholders are beginning public outreach on the plan. A draft of the interim version of the Lower Blue River Cooperative Management Plan is now complete and ready for public comment. It is available on line at: <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. Four separate documents are available for viewing:

1. The summary fact sheet
2. Matrix planning tool
3. The first draft interim version of the plan
4. Comment sheet

Public open house forums were held on Tuesday, February 12th, in Silverthorne and on Wednesday, February 13th, in Kremmling. Comments on the Plan will be accepted until March 13, 2008.

### **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 May of 2008. LSFO is developing the alternatives for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. We will meet with the cooperating agencies later this month to discuss the preliminary alternatives.

Forrest: Air quality analysis. Do you include other sources like Utah.

John: Do consider other sources. Don't have specific info about development though, so we are using our best estimates of what we think will happen using studies from other areas as well.

**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 July 2008, and the Record of Decision is anticipated in the spring of 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:** After completion of the Emerald Mountain Land Exchange, the Emerald Mountain Special Recreation Area was dedicated in August 2007. By the end of September the Ridge Trail was open for public use. Ridge Trail provides opportunities for strenuous, challenging mountain biking, Nordic skiing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and other recreational activities. Development of the Ridge Trail is a part of the implementation of BLM's Recreation Area Management Plan for Emerald Mountain which was approved on June 15, 2007. Design of the Ridge Trail has been a joint effort between the BLM; City of Steamboat Springs Parks, Open Space and Recreational Services Department; Emerald Mountain Partnership; Rocky Mountain Youth Corps; and Routt County Riders. BLM will soon begin 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. 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.

Dave C: Wonderful job on this exchange.

**Wild Horses:** The Little Snake Field Office is beginning 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 near the top or above this range. The gather is tentatively scheduled for the first week of October 2008.

John: Having a real winter. Some people are concerned with about 30 horses near the highway. BLM is keeping a close eye on them. So far they are doing OK.

### **White River Field Office, Kent Walter**

**West Douglas herd decision stands:** The White River Field Office is working on a gather plan for the approximately 120 horses in the West Douglas Herd. The Environmental Assessment on the gather plan is expected to be released for public review this spring. The first gather is expected in the fall, and more than one gather will likely be needed to remove all the horses from the area. The majority of the horses gathered will be available for adoption through BLM's wild horse and burro program. The remaining 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 September 2005, BLM completed an Environmental Assessment that also concluded the herd should be removed because the 123,000-acre

West Douglas Herd Area could only support up to 60 horses, too small a herd to maintain genetic viability naturally.

Lawauit filed with DOJ on gathers in 2006, amended to focus on this decision to remove wild horses in West Douglas area.

Jeff: removal is for complete removal?

Kent: Yes, but it may take 5 years to get them all.

**White River RMP amendment update** – The White River Field Office is currently developing the alternatives for its Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment. Planners have been coordinating with the Cooperating Agencies and working groups on air quality and socioeconomic issues, as well as the sub-committee of the NW RAC. The Draft RMP is anticipated to be released for a 90-day public review period this fall.

Air quality group completed protocol for all three models. Emmissions data from Vernal , Glenwood, GJ, Price, LSFO along with our own. Comprehensive air models. Having started running the models, preparing the data. Looking at a range of 550 multiple well pads to 2,600 multiple well pads. Socioeconomic working group. Wide coordination with a variety of groups and studies so information will be useful across studies.

Dave C: Appreciate efforts to avoid duplicative efforts on socioeconomic work

Kathy: Agrees

**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 seasonals and a contract helicopter to be hired this summer to spray weeds.

Steve G: Why do you have these goals for the grazing program?

John H: All of BLM under this direction. Need to do full NEPA on permits, 10-year cycle.

Jon H: What about other vacancies like realty specialist?

Kent: Hired NRS, PEs, permission to hire realty specialist. Have about eight vacancies. High demand for housing, just nothing available in Meeker. Hard to retain highly qualified work force.

RDDs: Core sampling to understand what's happen underground for baseline info. EGL interests was purchased by another company, so they have new partner to help fund IDT, Fortune 1000 company.

## Oil Shale Presentations

### Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO), Catherine Robertson

**GJFO Resource Management Plan:** The GJFO RMP was last comprehensively updated in 1987. We are scheduled to begin working on a comprehensive update in FY 2008 and will be approaching our cooperators in late winter to initiate Cooperating Agency Agreements. BLM will engage the Northwest RAC throughout the planning process. Issues will no doubt include energy and mineral development, increasing recreational use on BLM lands, urban interface issues, land tenure, special areas designations, and travel management. We hope to contract a Community Assessment to be conducted this spring and begin formal scoping in late summer/fall.

**CAM/Red Cliff Coal Mine:** Completion of the Draft EIS has been delayed to ensure the development of a quality document. The Draft EIS should be released to the public for review in early June 2008.

**Whirlwind Uranium Mine:** The preliminary EA is scheduled to be released for public review sometime in March 2008.

Jeff C: Community reaction?

Catherine: In Gateway there's more support, Grand Junction less support. So it varies. Transportation issues are the main issues in county process

**Oil and Gas:** We are currently working with environmental consultants writing EAs for Master Development Plans for seven projects. The companies include Aspen (Whitewater), Black Hills (South Shale Ridge area, Horseshoe Canyon, and Winter Flats), Encana (east of DeBeque), and OXY (Conn Creek). All are in eastern Mesa County, with the exception of the latter two, which are in western Garfield County. Proposals range from three wells and pads to 175 wells and 25 pads.

**Bangs Canyon SRMA:** With the assistance of the Western Slope ATV Association and the COHVCO Foundation, the GJFO has nearly completed construction of 14 miles of new shared-use ATV 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 20-mile trail system. Final construction will be completed and signing will be installed as weather permits. The trail system will officially open in the spring.

The GJFO is currently working on the engineering and design of a new trailhead to be located adjacent to Highway 141 in Unaweep Canyon. This facility will serve a new connection between the Tabeguache Trail and the Snyder Flats Road, planned for

construction in the summer of 2008 and the shared-use, single-track trail system planned for the Snyder Flats area.

Charlie: Timing questions

Catherine: Doing cultural resource surveys to determine where trails are. Trail head this summer, trails next. 4wd trail probably 09. Developer buying land at exit. May have opportunity for public access. Need to see what happens.

**Gateway SRMA:** Work on the Gateway SRMA Recreation Plan has begun. The recreation benefit study conducted by ASU and the motorized route inventory of the Gateway SRMA were completed last fall. With this information in hand, a *Notice of Intent to Amend the Grand Junction Resource Management Plan for the Gateway Special Recreation Management Area* was published on December 20, 2007. Two public scoping meetings were held in Grand Junction and Gateway in early January, and eight public planning workshops will be conducted by Mesa State College through February under an assistance agreement with the GJFO. These workshops will be held in both Grand Junction and Gateway. Public scoping ends February 29, a draft management plan is expected in early October, and a final plan is expected in early December 2008. The new plan would change the current management guidance by designating travel opportunities; addressing commercial, competitive, special area, and organized group activities and events; identifying recreation needs; and defining recreation management objectives.

The Palisade clean-up project is planned for April 4-6, 2008. In partnership with Gateway Canyons Resort, trash and non-historic debris associated with an old mine will be removed from the Palisade by aircraft. A cultural survey was completed last fall on both the mine and historic access route.

In partnership with the GJFO, Gateway Canyons Resort is planning to assist BLM with the completion of the new Lumsden Canyon Trail System. Construction was initiated in June 2007 on National Trails Day by a group of volunteers under the direction of the GJFO, but there is much work to be done and the GJFO lacks the resources to complete the project in a timely manner. The project will help meet the growing demand for non-motorized trails in the Gateway area.

The first phase of the Calamity Camp Stabilization Project was completed last fall, in partnership with the Museum of the West. One roof was fully restored. Similar work on two additional structures and a perimeter fence to prevent vehicles from driving into and through the camp is planned for 2008.

**Grazing Permit Renewals:** The GJFO is currently on target to meet the congressional mandate to complete BLM range permit renewals by fiscal year 2009. Overall, land health reports have shown the GJFO is meeting the standards. Staff is addressing issues with a few grazing permits and is working with the permittees, NRCS, and county



extension agents to assist BLM in addressing the issues identified in those land health reports.

**Sulfur Gulch:** Denver Water is revisiting a 2001 proposed dam location, proposing to flood Sulphur Gulch, in the DeBeque area. Sulfur Gulch is approximately 4 miles west of the town of DeBeque, just past the Pyramid Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Previous plant surveys determined that the gulch contains approximately 750 individual cacti of the federally listed Uinta Basin Hookless Cactus, which would be submerged if this project were approved and constructed. Denver Water will announce a final decision by spring. The project would likely involve formal consultation with the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) because of the hookless cactus. Denver Water's catalyst for creating the new reservoir is to ensure adequate water flow during low flow periods for Endangered fish and to provide water to the Front Range.

Dave C: size of reservoir?

Catherine: No, large but not deep.

**South Shale Ridge (SSR):** BLM is proceeding with NEPA compliance on SSR and is preparing a new EA. The State Office is working on a programmatic Biological Assessment that would cover consultation requirements for federally protected species in the GJFO.

#### **McInnis Canyons NCA Supplemental Regulations**

Supplemental regulations for the NCA will be sent to the State Office for review and approval in February 2008, with anticipated publishing in the Federal Register in March 2008. The public will have 30 days to provide comments on the proposed regulations. The BLM will utilize the public comments to finalize the regulations this spring.

#### **Fire Ban Considered for the Colorado River Corridor**

The NCA is considering a summer-long ban on open fires in the Colorado River corridor from Loma to the state line. The time period would be early May and extend to late October. Campers could still use stoves and gas-fired grills that have a control to turn off the flame. This restriction is needed to protect the few remaining cottonwood galleries, and to minimize safety risk to campers. This will be discussed with the NCA Advisory Council in March 2008.

#### **Devils Canyon Trailhead**

A new trailhead will be constructed in 2008 and will include a 40-car parking area, an accessible toilet, and a new information kiosk. Construction should start this summer. The new trailhead will serve hikers only. Horse trailer parking will shift to a new lot to be built at Snooks Bottom.

Pat K: COPMBA vice president forming Friends of Lunch Loop group will be looking for help from GJ RAC members.

## **Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit Update:**

**Fire Danger:** The Upper Colorado River drainage is currently at 130 percent of normal, with continuing storms forecasted. If this trend continues the fire season should be as follows:

- **Upper Elevations:** The above-average snow pack will result in later clearing and green-up, higher soil moistures, and increased live fuel moistures. The season looks to be significantly less active compared to fire seasons from the past decade. If the spring ends up being drier than normal, areas of concern would be those with high concentrations of bug-killed lodge pole pine.
- **Lower Elevations:** The high soil moistures will result in above-average cheat grass production, annual grass growth, and live fuel moistures. The areas of greatest concern will be ones with high concentrations of cheat grass.

### **Resources:**

- Budget cuts have resulted in a decrease from 25 to 19 in the number of firefighters that will be staffing BLM engines this season. We are looking at alternative ways to increase this staffing back up to 22.
- The fire program will again organize Type 3 Incident Management Teams this summer. These teams are used on fires or other incidents that have a moderate level of complexity, but that are not complex enough to warrant a Type 2 Team. They are made up of individuals from a variety of agencies and offer staff from any agency the opportunity to work incident management in an interagency environment. Recruitment is ongoing.

### **Cost Management:**

- National direction is for the Federal agencies to pick up less of the costs associated with fighting fires in, or adjacent to, residential development in the wildland/urban interface. Local agencies with protection responsibilities will be expected to pick up a higher percentage of these costs. The Federal agencies will continue to have specialists available to local communities to help them reduce their risk from the wildland fire hazard.
- On a national basis, more attention will be given to cost management. The new direction for fires that escape initial attack is called Appropriate Management Response (AMR). Under the AMR policy not all large fires will be aggressively attacked. During times of firefighting-asset shortages, some fires will be allowed to spread while efforts will be concentrated on protecting specific high-value resources. This policy was put into place in the Northern Rocky Mountains during the 2007 fire season.

**Training:** The BLM will again offer wildland fire training to local fire departments and organizations. This training is on weekends and evenings to accommodate the schedules of members of volunteer organizations who hold other jobs during the work week. This training is scheduled to begin in early April; further details will come out later.

**Grants:** The BLM will once again offer grants to rural fire organizations through the Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) program. The Colorado State Forest Service is our partner in the administration of this program. In order to qualify for an RFA grant a department must have less than 10,000 people in its response area and be in a position to fill a BLM mutual aid request during initial attack. It is a 90/10 grant with the agency paying for 10 percent of the costs and the BLM picking up the other 90 percent. Most of the grants awarded in the past have been for personal protective equipment.

**Energy Development:** One of the biggest safety challenges is the proliferation of energy development on the Western Slope. BLM fire staff has been working closely with local jurisdictions and industry to identify and mitigate hazards that have developed with the expansion of energy production. Hazards are being identified using GIS and training is being provided to both firefighters and energy industry employees. The primary intent is to give employees the opportunity to identify hazards associated with wildland fire in the energy production areas, and to give employees methods to mitigate those hazards.

**Fire Safety:** The fire program will continue emphasizing fire safety in all aspects of its operations. This will be done through training on an interagency basis. The priority of all fire agencies continues to be the priority of public and firefighter safety over the protection of high-value property and natural resources.

Larry: We had an incident last summer with fire and energy development. Can you work with energy companies who may have resources such as bulldozers? Could have helped keep the fire small.

Catherine: Part of what we're working on. Need to have training for energy workers and fire fighters on this. The fire you are talking about was one of the tipping points that showed us we need to work more with the companies. Don't want to put those folks at risk either.

Jeff C: In Moffat County we determined we can't afford some approach as feds. Need to use graters and dozers. Need training to scrape land in an environmentally safe manner. RAC needs to look at making sure BLM and Counties coordinate more to intergrate different techniques.

Catherine: Direction we have gotten and direction we are heading.

### **Glenwood Springs, Steve Bennett**

**Energy Office brings multiple benefits to GSFO:** The Glenwood Springs Field Office has seen a significant increase in workload accomplishments since its pilot Energy Office was established in April 2006. While we've seen a modest increase in the number of APDs approved before and after the formation of the Energy Office, we've seen a large jump in the number of on-the-ground inspections we've been able to accomplish. Some of the highlights include:

- APDs went from 298 in FY 05 to 397 in FY 07
- Environmental inspections went from 60 in FY 05 to 781 in FY 07
- 1,292 technical inspections were completed in FY 07, which is also substantially higher than anything accomplished in past years.
- The additional and dedicated staff resources have enabled BLM to reduce the average time needed to produce oil and gas environmental documents from 63 days in 2005 and 2006 to 43 days in 2007.
- Because of the integration of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel into Energy Office projects, the average time for Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act has been reduced from 45 days in 2005 to 13 days in 2007. Similar improvements were made in participation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Larry: BLM needs to get this message out to public, that environmental inspections, etc.

Steve G: What percentage of inspections have uncovered problems?

Steve B: 10-15 percent we have found issues, but they are generally minor

Steve G: Need to get that message out as well

Charlie: What is an environmental inspection?

Steve: Construction, reclamation, mostly surface stuff, COAs

Charlie: How long funding for office?

Steve: Legislation is for ten years, we are in the third year.

**Roan Plateau update:** BLM is closely reviewing the views on the Roan Plateau Management Plan submitted by the State of Colorado in December.

**Glenwood RMP revision:** Glenwood staff have been working closely with the RAC subgroup and cooperating agencies on alternative development. In addition, the Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers facilitated a series of meetings looking at managing “The Crown” east of Carbondale.

**Fuel treatment, re-seeding work conducted near Canyon Creek:** GSFO partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, private landowners, Bookcliff Conservation District and the Colorado Division of Wildlife’s Habitat Partnership Program to re-seed 445 acres of BLM and 249 acres of private land burned by last summer’s New Castle Fire near Canyon Creek. The 13,000 pounds of native grass seed was applied aerially by a single engine air tanker. Last week GSFO also burned 11 of 25

slash piles near homes in the Canyon Creek subdivision that resulted from last fall's fuel treatment project. Another 100 piles farther east of the homes will be burned next winter, after they have cured more.

Dave C: commends BLM for work in this area.

### **Public Comment:**

**Dan Becker of Silt:** I don't see need for oil shale in future. Strap local communities, wildlife problems, socioeconomic problems, environmental problems. Not consistent with studies on global climate change. Fossil fuels don't meet that need to address climate change. But I agree with the President that we are addicted to oil.

Jeff: You say oil shale won't help us with energy dependence, how do you mean that?

Dan: Within 10-20 years we'll find we can't keep burning fossil fuels. Would sacrifice too much for energy independence.

**Peter Hart** Has read entire Oil Shale PEIS. Stark differences between Alt B and C show that oil shale development is incompatible with almost all other uses. NEPA's purpose is to disclose impacts. If you're starting NEPA before you know what action is, you can't analyze impacts. This is absurd. Need rational and reasonable push back on unreasonable timelines set by Congress.

**Joe Nuehof** Request the RAC support a 45 day extension of the 90-day public comment period for the Oil Shale PEIS. If you want substantive comments you have to provide substantive time. This is 1,400-page document. A lot of people want to give substantive comments, but if you have never done that a 90-day comment period isn't much. Cites White River RMPA scoping period was tripled to allow adequate time to review

**Luke Shaffer** I'm on the WFRO RMP Amendment subgroup. I'm concerned about the timeline for the group to comment on alternatives, extremely short – about 10 days. Would like to see from RAC opportunity for individuals on committee to get together in person to look for consensus. I think that's fair. That way you can incorporate a fair array of interests.

Jeff C: Want to discuss this further.

### **Oil Shale Discussion**

Kathy: thinks BLM should move forward. Don't want all development to move onto private land. Naive to think there won't be need for oil shale.

Clare: recommendation to extend comment period. Represent public. Member of public asked, we represent public. It's 1,400 pages

Jeff: Joe from CEC asked for extension. I have different view. You have 90 days to review document. I haven't been swayed to increase it at all.

Jon: I think it's alright to consider an extension, long document. 90 days is a long time. Reasonable to make request.

Dave C: What feedback are you hearing, Forrest?

Forrest: no one has complained about the timeframe

Charlie: to make substantive comments. Not all the people who review documents are getting paid to do so. It's a whole mix of people trying to provide comments. 45 days is reasonable. Confusing organization in the PEIS, for instance.

John H: 90 days is standard for these planning efforts.

Catherine: We get requests on almost everything for extensions.

Kent: Would have to go to Washington Office with specific rationale.

Steve G: Started out as leasing document, now it's an allocation decision. It doesn't lock anything on the ground. Need to get moving on this. Doing NEPA on vague info will go nowhere.

Clare: When request was made it was made on behalf of the people that are trying to comment on this – not just the organizations, not just those who are paid to do this. Just want a little more time to respond to 1,400 page document. Need to provide substantive time to receive substantive comments.

Pat: What does the 45 days really mean in the grand scheme of things when we're talking 11 years or more for leasing?

Kent: Energy Policy Act tells BLM to be ready to lease by 2008. That's why you see the deadlines as you do.

Kathy Hall: Makes **motion to request BLM to move forward with current time schedule**. There will be two more planning documents still before anything would be leased and developed.

Jeff C: **Second**

Charlie: Wouldn't want to see any recommendation that this RAC would like to see that timeframe maintained. It is inappropriate. Shell says they can't make decision for another decade. Don't want us to endorse a faulty timeline.

Kathy: So many issues down the road. Just a planning document to get things moving. Don't need to add that additional 45 days.

Clare: Two different things to not do 45 days and to support timeline.

**Motion: BLM move forward with existing timeframe and not provide an additional 45 days for comment on the draft.**

Motion fails because not three members of Cat 2 support it: Charlie, Clare, Dona, voted no. (Need three members from each Category to support a motion before it passes)

Jeff: Concerned about the whole issue of leasing phase as leasing goes forward (in oil shale regulations), would like to see RAC support a **motion that local governments have same opportunity as governor review in leasing phase.**

Kathy **seconds.**

Catherine: Governor represents all people of the state

Jeff; BLM has to weigh competing points from competing interests

Vote: The NW RAC encourages the regs being developed allow concurrent consultation with local governments and governor

**Motion: As presented to the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council (NW RAC) on February 14, 2008, the draft commercial oil shale regulations include a provision that BLM consult with the Governor's Office during the "expression of interest to lease oil shale" stage of the commercial leasing process. The NW RAC recommends that this provision also include concurrent consultation with local governments.**

**Cat1: all yes**

**Cat 2: all yes**

**Cat 3: all yes**

Charlie: Wonderful idea that this will provide energy independence. A lot of speculation. Science behind politics. We need to push back on national effort to move into this area. Huge pressure. Local voice from this RAC should say that moving forward with leasing processes before research has reached conclusions

Dave C: Not a leasing document, not clear on your point

Charlie: RAC needs to push back on political timelines. Need to support side that says lets proceed in an analytical way.

Steve G: Have research tracts right now to learn what technology is. Still have lots of NEPA to go. Need opportunity to figure it out.

Jon: Sympathize with position, but don't think we can change Energy Policy Act 2005.

Letter to DFO then to Oil shale planners

### **Subgroups WRFO**

Kent: took a while to get members. Have full subcommittee now. Met Jan 20. Asked for feedback on where we are with alternatives. RAC charter. Subgroup makes recommendation to RAC, RAC goes forward.

Kathy: Luke, do you want meeting of subcommittee.

Dona: group doesn't know who to report back to.

Larry: Very different from GSFO KFO. Subcontractor hosts meetings, BLM is there if we need them.

Kent: It's not in our contract with URS. It is in the KFO GSFO contract.

Clare: KFO subcommittee has been meeting for weeks.

Kent: plenty of opportunity to provide feedback throughout process. It is up to the RAC what you want to do. We just don't have paid facilitator, but we are following same model as Glenwood/Kremmling.

Switch to Glenwood to see how they are doing it.

Steve: Contractor, Brian has been at all the meetings

Brian Hopkins: 6 to 9 month process condensed to 3 months. Couldn't ask for more from group. Passes out handout outlining alternative discussion

Brian: Takes a couple of thousand dollars per day – about \$1,000 a meeting. Overall plan this saves us tons.

Larry: Contractors are able to get more out of the participants than if a BLM person was running it.

Clare: everybody is working very well together in Kremmling. Focus more on recreation.

Jeff: Important that BLM leads and facilitator be there.



Kent: We were waiting for rac group to take lead, they were waiting for us. I don't have any planning dollars for this amendment, it's all program dollars. Been meeting with our cooperators for months too. Have to maintain schedule. Asked for comments by the week of the 11<sup>th</sup>. We can meet face to face next week.

Feb. 20 meeting.

Clare: I would like to see group meet four times over next couple of weeks so group can gel.

Jeff C: We want to hear differences, group doesn't have to reach consensus

Kathy, Luke, Kent and Dona will meet after meeting to figure out how the WRFO should go.

Clare: Need to work out criteria for selecting sub committee members.

We'll take that back to Jamie.

2 p.m. public comment period. No comments.

Kathy: Appreciates updates and format.

Agenda items:

Land exchange/water rights in Kremmling

Permitting process for renewables on BLM lands (wind, solar, biomass)

Subcommittee selection criteria?

Tamerisk treatment (Catherine will line it up)

CoGCC update

**Send hotel stuff out again**

**Letter on oil shale**