

**Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council
Minutes
Feb. 26, 2009**

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Dean Riggs, Category 3 | Steven Gunderson, Category 1 |
| Lanny Weddle, Category 3 | |
| Dave Cesark, Category 1 | Jon Hill, Category 1 |
| Pat Kennedy, Category 2 | |
| | Charlie Kerr, Category 2 |
| Clare Bastable, Category 2 | Glenn Vawter, Category 1 |
| T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1 | |
| Dona Shue, Category 2 | |

Not present: Mike Perry, Gary Bumgarner, Larry McCown, Jeff Comstock

BLM Staff

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Steve Bennett | David Boyd | |
| Dave Stout | | |
| John Husband | | |
| Catherine Robertson | | |
| Kent Walter | | |
| | | |
| Visitors | Representing | Town/City |
| Ron Velarde | CDOW | Grand Junction |
| Randy Hampton | CDOW | Grand Junction |
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Called to order 1:17 p.m. A quorum is not present.

Introductions.

New members need orientation notebooks/CDs.

T Wright nominated.

T Wright unanimously elected chair.

Pat nominated as vice chair.

Pat elected unanimously vice chair.

(Jeff Comstock reached by phone, so quorum on election).

Housekeeping: Be sure to let Dave B or John know if there are problems getting reimbursed for travel. BLM has moved to a computerized system – we are all having problems.

Kent Walter informed Forrest Nelson was recognized at a Rio Blanco County event for his two terms on the RAC.

Working groups

Recreation – Pat Kennedy (2), Steve Gunderson (1), Clare Bastable (2), Dona Shue (2), Dean Riggs (3), Gary Bumgarner (3)?

Invasive species – Jeff Comstock (3), Jon Hill (1), Pat Kennedy (2)

Wildlife – T Wright Dickinson chair (1), Jeff Comstock (3), Dave Cesark (1), Claire Bastable (2), Charlie Kerr (2), Dona Shue (2), Dean Riggs (3)

Cultural Resources – T Wright Dickinson (1), Pat Kennedy (2), Dona Shue (2), Mike Perry (2), Glenn Vawter (1), Lanny Weddle (3)?

Energy and Minerals – Larry McCown chair (3), Jeff Comstock (3), Dave Cesark (1), Charlie Kerr (2), Jon Hill (1), Glenn Vawter (1), Dean Riggs (3), Clare Bastable (2)

Wild Horse and Burro – Dona Shue (2), Jon Hill (1), Dean Riggs (3)

Planning process review – T Wright Dickinson (1), Steve Gunderson (1), Clare Bastable (2), Dona Shue (2), Jeff Comstock (3)

Catherine suggests wildlife working group help Field Offices understand various travel management restrictions for wildlife. Help all nw offices be consistent and share information.

Dave B will e-mail out list to RAC.

T Wright: Wants regular conference call with managers and Pat to talk about agenda items.

Future agenda item on immunocontraceptive for wild horses.

Pat Kennedy: McInnis Canyons charter up in the fall. McInnis Canyons Council needs to decide whether to go to new charter or go under the NWRAC.

Catherine: The group could prepare something for the McInnis Canyons group letting them understand how that arrangement would work. Pat and Catherine will draft a letter and circulate by e-mail.

Public Comment:

Mesa County Commissioner Steve Acquafresca: Crossing BLM property as Colorado River Trail progress continues. Will have concrete trail along entire river. IDed a BLM parcel between Fruita and Grand Junction. Thanks BLM for cooperation. River Front Commission has drafted a letter to BLM identifying other parcels for future ROW or acquisition. Also, some ranchers have asked me to convey their need to use motorized vehicles. Don't want to be in violation of BLM rules. Want to see ranching continue in Mesa County – want to ensure rules allow ranchers to continue their operations.

T Wright: Will address livestock permittee access issues in conference call with FMs.

RMP subcommittee updates

GJFO: passed out list of members. Group expresses their support.

Grand Junction RMP Subcommittee

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Energy oil and gas | Sean Morris |
| Energy oil and gas | Doug Weaver |
| Energy Solids | Bill Chenoweth |
| Recreation Motorized | John Potter |
| Recreation Mtn Bike | Craig Roberts |
| Recreation Hiking | Mary McCutchan |
| Socio/econ/business | Charles Burenheide |
| Special areas | Joe Nuehof |
| Cultural/historical | Zeb Miracle |
| Grazing | Tom Latham |
| Sportsman | Tom Burke |

Glenwood Springs: Steve Bennett: Group meeting again to look at preliminary draft. Meet on same day as Coop Agencies. Need an oil and gas rep and a chamber/business reps due to others dropping out. Need a new RAC liaison (Dave C and Larry have not been able to attend.).

Glenn volunteers to be a RAC representative on the subcommittee. Clare will also.

Donna Gray is interested in the energy spot.

Clare will help for a business or chamber rep from Carbondale.

Subcommittee wants to have role in selection of preferred alternative. They want to track changes made internally as well. Want to bring them in to help incorporate public comment after draft is released.

Subcommittee, coop agencies and staff are reviewing the draft at the same time.

Does subcommittee give comments to RAC or field manager?

T Wright: To RAC. Need to be able to meet deadlines. Don't want to hold up process.

Catherine: That's why RAC members are key on these committees.

Kremmling: Dave Stout: Group was formed to develop alternatives, they have done that. Not asking them to comment on internal draft.

T Wright: Concerned that this group is now just like all the other public. We wanted this group to have better conduit.

Clare: we're at challenging point. How do you use the group from here that's meaningful? Need to be clear what we are asking them for. Also, we need to discuss whether it's appropriate for Field Manager to determine what things they want the RAC to comment on.

White River: We followed FACA on the West Douglas – we were challenged but it was upheld. Process is important. Dona and Jon are RAC members. Toni Moore doesn't want to be chair, Luke Shaffer has put his name forward to replace her. Next subcommittee meeting before April cooperator meeting. Hoping RAC subcommittee can help make sure things are clear for cooperators, can participate in coop agency meetings. Want feedback on alternatives bto help determine preferred alternative.

Catherine: Subcommittee needs a charter.

Use the informal working group.

Clare: If goal is just to ensure adequate range of alternatives, that's a good goal. Need to decide how to do that.

Kremmling Field Office, Dave Stout

Kremmling RMP Revision: BLM staff met with cooperating agency representatives and the RAC subgroup on February 10, for a briefing on Chapter 2 (alternatives) of the Kremmling RMP revision. The cooperators reviewed a summary of all alternatives and proposed actions. The RAC subgroup discussed the recreation alternatives and proposed actions. The Kremmling interdisciplinary team expects to receive Chapter 3 (affected environment) and Chapter 4 (environmental consequences) this week for the start of internal review. Additional reviews and meetings with the cooperators will be scheduled for the coming spring and summer.

North Sand Hills Working Group: Kremmling Field Office Outdoor Recreation Planners have scheduled a meeting of the North Sand Hills Working Group for February 23. The meeting is intended to re-organize and re-vitalize the group, which has been in hiatus. The North Sand Hills, an open dune area east of Walden, is the only dune area in Colorado open to the public for OHV use. Management issues, including over-use in some areas and damage to vegetation, necessitate more intensive management. The Working Group, comprised of a variety of agencies, interest and user groups, and individuals, will assist us in developing and implementing a comprehensive management plan.

Inspiration Point Fuels Treatment: The Colorado Division of Wildlife recently transplanted 15 bighorn sheep at Inspiration Point, along the Colorado River southwest of Kremmling. We are working on a fuels treatment plan for the transplant area with the intention of improving forage and habitat for the sheep. We expect to conduct a prescribed burn in the area this spring.

Forestry: Cooperative efforts continue with Jackson County on the North Park Stewardship Agreement. As previously reported, a contract was issued for a 30-acre fuels treatment on Independence Mountain, northwest of Walden. We expect to have a contract prepared under the agreement for the Fischer Draw timber sale, also on Independence Mountain. The sale will offer saw timber and biomass. Salvage logging continues on several sales in eastern Grand County. Logging is being conducted in winter to reduce impacts, and is being done in conjunction with sales on adjacent private lands to take advantage of economies of scale.

Energy Activities: Dawson Geophysical, on behalf of Wellstar Corp, has proposed a geophysical project in Jackson County for the coming summer. The project will cover an area of about 30,600 acres east of Walden, including 8,600 acres of public land. This the third project in Jackson County since late 2007.

Glenwood Springs, Steve Bennett

Glenwood Employee wins national award: Long-time Glenwood Springs Bureau of Land Management employee Mike Kinser was recently awarded the Rangeland Management Specialist Recognition Award for BLM Colorado at the 62nd Annual Society of Rangeland Management meeting Feb. 8 in Albuquerque. Mike has been with the Glenwood Springs Field Office since 1981. He is recognized as a leader statewide in range management.

New Office Update: The new building for the Glenwood Springs Field Office in Silt is still on schedule for completion and occupancy June 19. We will be utilizing our new system furniture and files from the Energy office. Since this furniture will have to be dismantled two weeks ahead of the move there will be a loss of computer and phone access. This is expected to cause at least a week of downtime. We plan to set-up temporary work stations but the office move will result in a disruption to our customer service abilities. The Energy Office will be integrated into the Field Office and we will no longer refer to it as a separate office. We will be planning an open house inviting the public and users after we get settled from the move this summer.

Three-year report to Congress on Pilot Energy Offices nearly complete: BLM is preparing the final draft Year 3 Report to Congress regarding the Pilot Energy Offices as required under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This final report comes after the third year of establishing a pilot program at seven BLM field offices (including Glenwood Springs). The report will be going through internal review in early March, OMB review in mid March, with the final report going to Congress the first week of April. Some of the highlights of the recommendations include:

- Permanently establish and expand the federal permit coordination concept to other BLM oil and gas field offices using increased APD processing fees, as appropriate, while also providing BLM with administrative flexibility to determine the location and extent of expansion.
- Request Congressional authorization to create a similar Pilot concept with dedicated funding to support BLM renewable energy workloads.
- Consider providing incentives to split estate surface owners to enhance Federal oil and gas resource development.

Integrated Weed Management Planning: Glenwood Springs FO is preparing an integrated weed management plan and is accepting public comment through March 25. We will tier off the National EIS for Herbicide and Vegetative Treatment for a site specific, programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) covering the field office. The plan will cover all program areas such as oil and gas, range, realty, recreation, etc. It should provide for consistent management of weeds between program activities and cover guidelines for herbicide, manual and biological control measures. The plan and EA will streamline our Pesticide Use Permit process with one NEPA document vs. project by project documents.

The field office also staffed up with a Weed/Rangeland Management Specialist. We have purchased weed treatment equipment and are developing a more proactive weed management

program involving doing our own treatments and enhanced monitoring. This is strengthening our partnerships with the counties and other agencies on weed management efforts.

Glenwood/Kremmling RMP revision: BLM will discuss the internal Draft Environmental Impact Statement with cooperating agency representatives and the RAC subgroup members during upcoming meetings detailed below. Internal draft sections will also be made available for their review and comment. Instead of waiting and reviewing the whole internal Draft EIS in April, we plan to meet, discuss and review the internal Draft in smaller chapter by chapter pieces, allowing roughly a month to work through each section. We currently anticipate public review of the Draft RMP/EIS between Oct 2009-Jan 2010. The Protest period on the Final RMP/EIS would occur August 2010 - Oct 2010, with a final Record of Decision Feb 2011.

Cooperating agency/RAC subgroup meetings:

| DATES | AGENDA TOPICS |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Wed. Feb 11, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the planning process. • Discussion of the range of alternatives (Chapter 2). • Overview of preliminary draft Chapter 3 provided by BLM. • Begin cooperating agency representatives and RAC subgroup member's review of preliminary draft Chapter 3. |
| Wed. Mar 11, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary draft Chapter 3 discussion. • Receive cooperating agency representatives and RAC subgroup members preliminary draft Chapter 3 comments. • Overview of draft supporting documents provided by BLM. • Begin cooperating agency representatives and RAC subgroup members review of supporting documents. |
| Wed. April 15, 2008 (tentative) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive cooperating agency representatives and RAC subgroup member's comments on draft supporting documents. • Overview of preliminary draft Chapter 4 provided by BLM. • Begin cooperating agency representatives and RAC subgroup member's review of preliminary draft Chapter 4. |
| Wed. May 13, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive cooperating agency representatives and RAC subgroup member's comments on preliminary draft Chapter 4. • Overview and discussion on selecting the preferred alternative. |

Little Snake Field Office, John Husband

Cultural Resource Management in Moffat County: Moffat County is sponsoring a grant to study a large cultural site being impacted by a designated vehicle route in the vicinity of Vermillion Canyon. The site, which is eligible for the National Historic Register, was discovered in 2007 during a field investigation to determine effects of an ATV incursion on a medicine wheel feature near Vermillion Creek. The site lies along the last 200 yards or so of an unimproved two-track that dead ends before dropping down into the canyon. The two-track is part of a Moffat County R.S. 2477 assertion, so LSFO and Moffat County went to the field and discussed options to protect the cultural site and respect the access claims. There are no apparent options to reroute the two-track because of the extent of the site and terrain limitations. The grant would pay for a survey, which would utilize ground penetrating radar in an effort to determine if there are any subsurface features associated with the site. The results could allow

the BLM and Moffat County to better understand the site, address the cultural resource issues, and provide opportunities to address the County's concerns related to access.

Moffat County and BLM are developing a programmatic agreement which would make Moffat County a "consulting party" in the Section 106 review process for undertakings involving Moffat County permits, Moffat County Highways (including RS-2477 assertions), and consultations with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Under the terms of the agreement BLM would notify the county if a Section 106 process were to be initiated related to one of these issues and invite the County to be a consulting party. Dan Haas, BLM Colorado State Office Archaeologist, and Colorado SHPO are currently reviewing the agreement.

Could be good field trip for next meeting.

RMP Update: LSFO completed the Additional Air Quality Assessment to Support 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 an additional air quality analysis, which entails 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 was released for public comment on October 10. The comment period will run until around the first of the new year. We have met with cooperating agencies to discuss changes for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. LSFO and the RMP contractor are currently working on responding to public comments and putting together the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The Final is scheduled to be released May 2009.

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 33% of the new wells would be in Colorado. BLM is currently working through issues related to sage-grouse habitat and air quality. The Draft EIS is now scheduled to be complete in April 2009, and the Record of Decision is anticipated in early 2010. 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.

BLM responds to Moffat County concerns regarding lease deferrals – State Director Sally Wisely responded earlier this month to the Moffat County Commissioners' concerns about BLM temporarily deferring oil and gas leases in medium- and high-priority sage grouse habitat. Leases in these areas are being deferred until the Little Snake RMP revision is complete (estimated in early 2010). New information about oil and gas impacts to sage grouse has led

BLM to consider additional stipulations on leases in these areas. Leasing parcels in these areas now would forego BLM's opportunity to apply stipulations based on this new information. Deferred leases would be available with new stipulations after the revision is complete. There are currently 1,150 federal leases totaling 1,033,650 acres in Moffat County. These leases are not affected by the deferrals and oil and gas development can proceed as normal. Since May 2008, about 46,000 acres in medium- and high-priority sage grouse habitat have been deferred in Moffat County. One parcel in Moffat County was offered in the February lease sale. That 125-acre parcel that sold for \$81/acre, or \$10,206 total.

White River Field Office, Kent E. Walter

White River Oil and Gas RMP amendment update: The BLM White River Field Office (WRFO) is developing an Oil and Gas Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (Oil and Gas RMPA/EIS). Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 are in completed final Draft. Currently, the WRFO is in the Impacts Analysis Development phase of the Project. This particular phase includes modeling of the four draft Alternatives and development of the Alternatives GIS maps which will be completed early April 2009. The alternatives look at a range of development from 550 multi-well pads up to 2550 multi-well pads, with an average of 8 well per pad. The WRFO will launch the quantitative analysis for the development of Chapter 4, the impact analysis chapter, in spring 2009. The Colorado BLM is also working with the Utah BLM to ensure as much consistency as possible between the regional air quality modeling efforts.

- **Cooperating Agency Meeting:** BLM will schedule a meeting with Cooperating Agencies and the NW RAC subcommittee in late April 2009 to present the final draft Alternatives. There will also be a meeting with the Cooperating Agencies/NW RAC subcommittee prior to the release of the Draft RMPA/EIS.
- **Next Opportunity for Public Involvement** We anticipate a Notice of Availability for the Draft Oil and Gas RMPA/EIS to be published in the Federal Register in February 2010. This notice initiates a required 90-day public and agency review/comment period for the Draft RMPA/EIS, as well as dates, times and locations of public meetings/hearings that will be held during the same time period.

Oil Shale RD&D update: A new round of Oil Shale Research Demonstration and Development (RD&D) lease nominations began January 14, 2009, open for a 45 day period. Successful applicants would be eligible for a 640 acre RD&D lease tract, with no preference right acreage. Only nominations with differing technology will be considered, current lessees are not eligible to apply. Commercial Oil Shale Regulations have been approved and are being utilized for the existing Oil Shale RD&D leases. We expect to begin receiving Plan of Operations (POO's) from the four companies this year, Shell Frontier, Chevron and AMSO (formally EGL).

Kent updated the RDD second round. Second round withdrawn yesterday and will be reannounced with a 90-day public comment period.

Range Program: WRFO is working on the 2009 grazing permit renewals; plans are to finish all permit renewals by September of 2009. There are 31 renewals scheduled for 2009, to date 10 have been completed. Field work will start in the summer of 2009 for our 2010 permit renewals. Grazing Fees have been set for the 2009 Grazing Season, and will remain at \$1.35/AUM. Currently there are three prescribed fires on the agenda for summer of 2009 (East Jordan – 1800 ac., Badger Flats – 566 ac., Segar Mtn. – 1000 ac.).

Weed Management: WRFO will continue its weed program for 2009. We plan to hire a career seasonal employee to oversee field operations and will hire one seasonal employee to spray weeds during the summer. There will be a contract offered to continue helicopter spraying in certain treatment areas. Currently we have received 25 pesticide use proposals (pups): 10 are for BLM and 15 are from O&G industry. Of the 25 pups received, 10 have been completed by our office and sent to the state office for approval. Last year, we approved 29 pups, 4 were for range users, 6 for BLM, and 19 for O&G industry.

Wild Horses: There was a hearing in Washington D.C. on Jan. 17, 2009, regarding West Douglas Herd Area. No decision has been rendered yet. Tentative plans are to gather horses on Magnolia Bench east of Piceance Creek - approximately 16 head. We will gather approximately 100 head in West Douglas herd area, pending Washington Office approval and funding. We started wild horse census flights in the fall of 2008 and counted 174 head in Piceance Basin of the Piceance Basin/East Douglas Herd Management Area. We still need to finish census in the East Douglas part of the herd management area, and finish census in West Douglas Herd Area. Our currently estimates are that there are approximately 250 head in the Piceance/East Douglas Herd Management Area and 150 head in West Douglas.

Seismic Projects: Recently approved one seismic survey which is currently underway.

Pipelines and Infrastructure Projects: Currently completing environmental analysis and documentation for numerous pipelines, power lines, roads and a gas processing plant.

Grand Junction, Catherine Robertson

RMP Revision: BLM received 775 unique comments and 13,000 form letters from the Wilderness Society, CEC, and an OHV group during the public scoping period, which closed in January. Recreation and travel management received the most comments (19% of comments for each). Energy development was next with 13% of the comments. GJFO is working on a number of special reports including the Community Assessment, Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report, ACEC Report, RFD, Mineral Potential Report, Recreation surveys, Wilderness Character Report, and VRM assessment. BLM will start alternative development in May.

Red Cliff Mine: BLM released the Draft EIS for the proposed Red Cliff Mine in January. The 60-day public comment period closes March 17. BLM has decision authority over the coal leasing and two rights of way. A public open house and hearing was held in 91 people signed in and seven people provided verbal comments. Four written comments were received at the meeting. Most of those who provided verbal or written comments expressed support for the proposed project because of the anticipated employment and economic benefit to the community.

Some commentors expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the railroad spur on emergency vehicle response times for residents living north and west of Mack, potential impacts to wildlife, air quality and the possibility of a mine explosion. All substantive comments received during the comment period will be included with responses in the Final EIS, and a preferred alternative will be identified. The Final EIS is currently anticipated to be issued in late July or early August.

Travel Management Workshops highly successful: More than 200 people attended the six travel management workshops the field office hosted during the past two weeks. The Grand Junction meeting was attended by 93 people. Participants provided BLM very specific information about roads and trails within the Field Office. The Field Office has inventoried roughly 3,200 miles of routes within its boundaries. These routes will be designated open, limited, or closed through the RMP revision planning process. Comments on the roads and trails within the Field Office will be accepted until March 20. Maps and comment forms are on the Field Office website.

McInnis Canyons NCA: Over the next six months, the NCA staff will begin to analyze a potential fee/permit system for the Colorado River Corridor. During the 2009 season, a seasonal park ranger will be contacting boaters at put-in and take-out sites to obtain accurate use information; environmental data will also be collected (previously presented to the RAC as the River Corridor Monitoring Plan). The proposal will be developed through an open public process and will be submitted for consideration by the Recreation RAC, with the objective of having a system in place by 2011. Any fees collected in the future would be reinvested back into projects to benefit the river and river users.

Katie Stevens: NLCS managers will be working to draft a strategy. RAC can help identify action steps to achieve strategy. Will come to RAC for feedback.

Catherine: RAC can help prioritize science priorities as well.

Next meeting agenda: May 27-28 at Lodore Hall on Brown's Park NWR. Likely be camping.

10-year report on standards and guides from each office.

Field Trip standards and guides, vermilion canyon site as well

Resolutions from statewide meeting: air quality, socioeconomic

Wild horse discussion/resolution

Glenwood RMP endorsement

August: CDOW presentation on Piceance Project, incorporate field trip? Kent will check out.