

**Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council
Minutes
May 28, 2009
Maybell, CO**

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

Dean Riggs, Category 3	Steven Gunderson, Category 1
Lanny Weddle, Category 3	Jeff Comstock, Category 3
Dave Cesark, Category 1	Jon Hill, Category 1
Pat Kennedy, Category 2	
Mike Perry, 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: Gary Bumgarner, Larry McCown,

BLM Staff

Steve Bennett	David Boyd	
Dave Stout	Jamie Connell	
John Husband	Hunter Seim	
Catherine Robertson		
Kent Walter		
Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Cris Dippel	USFWS	Browns Park
Mara Mallow	Browns Hole Homemakers Club	Craig
Bob Mallow	Citizen	Craig
Kathy Kitzmann	Aurora Water	Aurora

T Wright called meeting to order at 8 a.m.
A quorum is present

T Wright, new chairman, told the group that he and Pat (Vice) are changing the focus more to increase dialogue between BLM and the RAC. Field Managers report will now be shortened. RAC members will get it in advance and can read it before the meeting.

Rather than the “here’s what we’re doing” stuff, let’s get into some serious conversations.

Cris Dippel, new manager of Brown's Park National Wildlife Refuge

I've been with Service since 1989. There are more than 500 refuges across the country. Browns Park Refuge was established in 1962 after Flaming Gorge dam was put in to maintain wetlands. Have seven active wetlands units, working on another. \$1.2 million in ARRA funding to replace pumps, other money for other projects. Biologist and fire management officer positions are vacant right now. Trying to improve infrastructure – pumps, outhouses, get water where it hasn't been for a while, and we're seeing good response from birds. Funding is up from previous years. We have a cooperative agreement with Moffat County for road maintenance and weed spraying. We have released tamarisk beetles, good response. We have state grants for cottonwood regeneration. And we are redoing brochures. There are more than 250 birds documented at the refuge.

Mara, Browns Hole Homemakers Club

President of the Club. Have two or three events a year for fundraising. The group is all volunteer. We take care of this building, pay utilities. Hold dances, meetings. Here for the benefit of the community. Dottie is treasurer. This building used to be a school and main community center. This building is on the refuge, and we have a special use permit.

Hunter Seims, Standards and Guides

Powerpoint giving overview of Standards and Guides

Do at watershed and allotment levels

Local RACs came up with specific standards for local ecosystems

If not meeting standards, and livestock is causal factor, have one year (grazing season) to take action to remedy. None of the other programs have requirements in regulations that say we have to fix issue, grazing is held to higher standard. (others might be oil and gas, recreation)

Moving to more specific reporting about non-livestock causes for not meeting standards, this should help provide regulations for the uses other than grazing

Another issue – We have to report at the allotment level whether standards are being met, so if one small part of an allotment is not meeting standards, we have to count all the acres in the allotment as not meeting standards.

T Wright: perhaps we can have Hunter and range cons and some RAC members come up with how the RAC can help.

Hunter: national lead in Denver would be interested in coming to this RAC, next meeting?

T Wright: **Comstock and Hunter take lead on discussion on issues RAC can help with S&G issues. Steve and Dean will help.**

GLENWOOD RMP SUBGROUP DISCUSSION

Steve B: We have shared draft chapters with the RAC's RMP subgroup and allowed members to comment on them. Not sure what to do with comments. How do we handle subgroup comments? Comments are coming individually and focus on alternatives. Can make changes (still time), but want to see what big RAC wants to do. How should we handle these comments.

Jamie C: A lot of responsibility on RAC liaisons with these groups. OK for individuals to make comments at some level, but they don't represent consensus of the group.

Clare: Three issues: Are we asking for subgroup to come to consensus on the alternatives? Are we meeting FACA requirements – groups should be communicating with RACs, not BLM directly? and what do we expect from the NW RAC on this?

Glenn: Just came into it. Seems almost insurmountable task. These comments go way beyond scope of what I thought these groups were going to do. Need direction from RAC.

Jamie C: Why can't the subgroup reach consensus? OK for members to individually comment, but if group reaches consensus that alternatives represent adequate range of alternatives.

Kent: Comments from WRFO came individually, RAC didn't accept them. RAC told me subgroup needs to reach consensus.

Pat K: Still need these groups? At what point do we sunset groups? Is there still work to be done?

Clare: That's the question. After we get range of alternatives, what do we want from the groups now? Original purpose to ensure reasonable range of alternatives, groups want to keep meeting.

Jamie: A 20-page letter from one member of the subgroup is not a subgroup comment, it's a comment from the individual. Purpose of subgroup is to reach consensus where they can. OK if they can't always.

T Wright: Difficult for these publics to take next step of having a role in decision, tendency to keep throwing rocks. Don't want to stymie initiative of subgroups, but if the subgroups want to take the next step, let them, but tell them how they are to operate.

T Wright: Do we all agree that KFO and GSFO have adequate range alternatives?

Dave S: Yes, already voted on this as a RAC.

T Wright: Need to tell groups they met that objective, then give them new direction about what we want now.

Jeff C: NWCOS made a recommendation on the parts of a preferred alternative that they agreed upon., about 80 percent. Then explained areas where we couldn't reach consensus. In this case the subgroup would tell the RAC where they agree and where they don't.

T Wright: Tell groups, if this where you chose to go, here's how we want you to do it. Responsibility of groups needs to decide how they are going to share the piece of the pie.

Jamie C: We didn't give group direction on how to vote. Should have done that.

Dona: WRFO subgroup understands that they are there to reach consensus. Know that up front.

Kent: Need to have completed impact analysis before you select preferred alternative. Need to help groups understand that.

Clare: Need to come to resolution on this today. Like proposal of Jeff's that report what group reach consensus (means everybody agrees) on, what they can't. Report consensus/not consensus to RAC, not BLM. Needs consensus on what they can, not certain members. Individuals can comment to BLM directly as individuals, but not as subgroup. Can bring consensus comments through group.

Charlie: Incentive for groups to reach consensus, because that carries a lot of weight. If you can't reach consensus, then send individual comment and BLM will consider it.

Kent: Individual comments should come through regular public comment period, when it's open. Concern that they are seeing things general public cannot, so don't want to consider individual comments unless they come during regular comment period.

Group is agreeing they want subgroups to meet to find reasonable range of alternative. We support if the group wants to keep meeting. Report to RAC what they came to consensus on, what not. Report this to RAC. RAC reports to BLM. Need to have complete impact analysis before they work on preferred.

Dave S: Don't agree it's group's responsibility to comment line by line on impact analysis.

Kent: Want group to use impact analysis to help them determine what alternative. If they see fatal flaw in impact analysis, they should tell us.

Jeff: at NWCOS we helped BLM avoid fatal flaw by including economic impact of livestock, eg.

Dave S: Coop agency is where I would be looking for more input on impact analysis, they have jurisdiction. Language drafted and unanimously agreed upon:

Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council
Guidance for RMP Subgroups
May 28, 2009

The Resource Management Plan subgroups were originally formed to ensure that BLM is considering an adequate range of alternatives.

The Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council encourages the subgroups to continue to meet if they choose to. If they choose to continue meeting, the NW RAC requests the following:

- The subgroup should use the impact analysis (Chapter 4) to help discuss alternatives. The NW RAC is looking for consensus on fatal flaws in the planning process.
- The subgroup will report to the NW RAC where they have reached consensus related to the range of alternatives, fatal flaws in the impact analysis, the preferred alternative and the proposed plan, and the areas in which they have not.
- Each subgroup should determine the process they want to use to reach agreement – i.e. is this based on consensus of members present at a decisional meeting, or does everyone get a vote.

McInnis Canyons Advisory Council

Pat K: This group will decide whether it wants to continue as a separate group or be under the NW RAC this summer.

Mike Perry: any thought of merging Friends of McInnis Canyons and the Council

Catherine: Separate groups, separate purposes

SUBGROUP UPDATES

KFO

Met last in February

WRFO

Asked for formal recommendation that range of alt was adequate
Recommendations about how to keep public informed/involved
Recommendations on how to help select preferred alternatives
Recommendations on how to use input from coop agencies
Group feels there should be more representatives of additional interests.

Recommendations will come to NW RAC.

GJFO

Mike and Steve are liaisons. Looking for a replacement for Mike. Information stages right now.
Breaking out specific issue areas where they will begin talking about range of alternatives.
Taking veg and wildlife issues first. Look at recreation, energy as well.

Dean will serve as replacement for Mike.

Air quality resolution discussion

Charlie Kerr leads discussion, reviews resolution with the group

Jeff agrees with the be it resolved, not with the whereas'

Dave C agrees

Steve G: drop second and third whereas'

Dean: Add environment in fourth whereas.

T Wright: want something about fuels and fire. BLM has responsibility to manage all the fuels.

Charlie: doesn't deal with specific elements. That should be separate resolution

Dave C: Add whereas that doesn't preclude use of prescribed fire

Group votes and resolution passes unanimously

Wild horse resolution

Dona Shue: national issue about 30,000 horses in captivity, taking large amount of horse budget. One solution would be lifting ban on shipping horses to other countries. Start with backlog, once addressed, level playing field to try to take another look at management

Jamie C: can make general recommendations, can't specifically say change a law. BLM can't take a stance on changing laws, DOI can.

T Wright; The wild horse and burro act specifically prohibits BLM from shipping horses out of the country. BLM has authority to do most else what it needs to do. Public only accepts about 5,000 horses a year for adoption. Have to recognize that. To get us out of this mess, it will take a one time dispensation of all the horses in captivity, however that is appropriate. Could bring forward resolution at a meeting of the wild horse and burro council meeting. Dona and T wright and anyone else interested will draft resolution, send through e-mail for approval.

Socioeconomic resolution

Same as developed at statewide meeting. Passes unanimously.

Dominguez-Escalante

Signed by president March 30 this year. Waiting for SW District Manager to get on board. Lori Armstrong and Jamie Connell will meet to discuss how to manage this area once she's on board (this fall). Interim manager Katie Stevens focused on deliverables including development of a charter for advisory council, preplan, will be doing surveys, legislation provided language to allow exchange to resolve ag trespass, budget packages. Council will sunset year after ROD on management plan. Legislation also specifies that water rights will be filed by state. Right now she is not working on the resource issues, will continue to manage through field offices. Working

on dedication ceremony, don't know when it would be. John Fielder has donated photograph for poster, new logo designed by State Office, updating kiosks.

Shed antler

Catherine: Shed antler issue may be one that RAC would want to weigh in

John H: Gathering information, how big of an issue is it, how is it being done. Impacts to wildlife, resource damage, commercial activity

T Wright: Wildlife committee can look at

Dean Riggs: At this point not DOWs to enforce, it's BLM's. Other states have regulations, Colorado does not.

Oil shale projects, future of oil shale

Glenn Vawter, National Oil Shale Association

Powerpoint

Field Manager Updates

LSFO John Husband

Jeff C: concerned that "significance" designation for eligible cultural sites is too loose. Making things significant that really aren't

Catherine: seems to be a difference in what one field office finds significant, eligible

T Wright: Archaeologists are somewhat of a kingdom unto themselves as a result of Antiquities Act, not subject to the same oversight from managers

Jamie Connell: Colorado State Director Sally Wisely is retiring in July.

Dave Boyd will draft letter for T Wright and Pat to sign expressing appreciation for the work Sally Wisely did and the support for the Colorado RACs.

Send out reservations for Meeker meeting e-mail

Next agenda items

Cultural resources significance criteria, consistency among field offices

Shed hunting (Dean will have someone from DOW as well); focus on policies BLM is considering

Encourage subgroups to come to big rac meeting

Tour – energy, shed hunting, east douglas

June 9 conference call for agenda items Kent Walter, Jamie, Pat T Wright

Lanny: Re field trip I have seen much better sagebrush spraying than what we saw yesterday. Think more areas, higher concentration of 2,4D being used.