

**Northwest Resource Advisory Council**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2004**  
 Holiday Inn, 755 Horizon Drive  
 Grand Junction, Colorado

**ATTENDEES**

Resource Advisory Council Members

Geoff Blakeslee, Category 2	Wade Haerle, Category 2
David Bailey, Category 2	Kathy Hall, Category 3
Dave Cesark, Category 1	Pat Kennedy, Category 2
Jeff Comstock, Category 3	Charles Kerr, Category 2
Ken Currey, Category 1	John Martin, Category 3
T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1	Larry McCown, Category 3

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

BLM Staff

Fred Conrath	Juan Palma
Dan Haas	Catherine Robertson
Steven Hall	Jane Ross
John Husband	John Ruhs
Duane Johnson	Traute Parrie
Mel Lloyd	

Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Steve Bonowski	Colorado Mountain Club, Republics for Environmental Protection	Golden, CO
Pete Kolbenschlag	Colorado Environmental Coalition	Grand Junction, CO
Eric Rechel	Self	Grand Junction, CO

**Opening Remarks/Designated Federal Officer and RAC Chair Time**

Chairman Geoff Blakeslee called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Today's attendance constitutes a quorum. Traute Parrie, the new associate field manager for the White River Field Office, was introduced.

John Husband is stepping down as the lead Designated Federal Officer. Glenwood Springs Field Manager Jamie Connell will take over this role beginning Jan. 1, 2005.

**Election of Officers**

Blakeslee is stepping down as Northwest RAC chair, and T. Wright Dickinson nominated Jeff Comstock, current vice-chair, as chair. Charlie Kerr nominated Charlie Yates, who is not present, but Husband explained that Yates prefers to not serve as an officer. That motion was closed and the Comstock nomination was seconded by Ken Currey and passed unanimously. Kathy Hall nominated Dave Cesark to be vice-chair; this motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Dickinson expressed appreciation for Blakeslee's service to the RAC, and Husband presented Blakeslee with a plaque. Cesark noted Husband's excellent service as lead DFO.

### **Western Slope Center Status Report**

Western Slope Center Manager Juan Palma explained the current structure of the WSC and his reasons for evaluating whether changes are needed. The Northwest RAC asked to play an active role in advising BLM prior to any final decisions.

### **Public Comment Period**

Steve Bonowski, representing Colorado Mountain Club, spoke highly of Grand Junction Field Office recreational staff Troy Schnurr, Andy Windsor and Amy Carmichael after meeting with them earlier this year. Bonowski also addressed his organization's issues with the BLM decision-tree process for travel management. Dickinson would like a copy of the CMC letter sent to the BLM Director.

Pete Kolbenschlag, representing the Colorado Environmental Coalition, commended BLM Field Managers Catherine Robertson and Barb Sharrow for their efforts on the Dominguez-Escalante Community Stewardship Project. The CEC supports this initiative and asks the Northwest RAC to endorse the CSP.

### **BLM Field Managers Update**

**Little Snake Field Office:** Husband reported that the Little Snake Resource Management Plan is being revised and a contractor, Booz Allen Hamilton, is working with the LSFO on this project. The LSFO is holding an open house for their new office building on Dec. 2.

**Kremmling Field Office:** Staff is busy completing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work on the Wolford Mountain Travel Management Plan. The Windy Gap land exchange is progressing, and they should hear back from Washington soon on other proposed land exchanges as well. The KFO is working with USFS Medicine Bow-Routt staff on an interagency agreement to sell their maps and permits.

**White River Field Office:** Parrie reported on the West Douglas Herd Area RMP. Their office has decided to withdraw the RMP amendment, and any decisions will be made under the existing RMP. Applications for permits to drill are expected to be 300 in fiscal year 2005. The Figure Four Gap EA will be finalized soon and range permit renewals are being processed. Several black footed ferrets were recently released, and two were located a few weeks later.

**Glenwood Springs Field Office:** The Roan Plateau RMP will be released soon, and the Grass Mesa GAP has been issued. APDs have steadily increased for both the Glenwood and Grand Junction field offices, with 300 expected for FY 2005 for both offices. Positions for a legal instrument examiner and petroleum engineer have been filled.

**Grand Junction Field Office:** Robertson's office held a community celebration for completing the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area RMP. Colorado State Director Wenker signed the Record of Decision and BLM Director Kathleen Clarke was a special guest. The NCA Advisory Council nominations are being reviewed, and Paul Peck reports in early January

as the new NCA manager. Park Ranger Schnurr is receiving the Department's Valor Award for saving a woman's life. The North Fruita Desert Plan Amendment has also been signed. A wild horse gather was conducted in the Little Book Cliffs Range and was successful largely due to efforts by the volunteer group Friends of the Mustangs.

### **Committee Reports**

**Cultural Resources:** Husband summarized the SO response to the Cultural Resolution. David Bailey explained outreach efforts for cultural exhibits and encouraged more participation by BLM.

**Invasive Species:** A Resolution was submitted to BLM earlier this year. The Colorado Weed Management Association is holding an annual conference and trade show Dec. 7-8 at Two Rivers in Grand Junction.

**Energy and Minerals:** No committee report, but Cesark announced that Williams Energy will be trying out a rare, high-tech drilling rig in early 2005. The rigs are very efficient and resources impacted less. The new rigs should help the industry meet stricter stipulations being enforced by the BLM.

### **Cultural Resources—Considering Effects of BLM Actions on Non-Federal Lands**

Dan Haas reported that BLM requires cultural surveys for any activity involving rights-of-way, oil and gas, and geophysical projects. The BLM cannot force a landowner to allow cultural inventories on their land, but if access is denied, an assumption must be made on what cultural resources might exist. Dickinson feels that the current process discourages collaboration between the Bureau and landowners in protecting resources. The Northwest RAC would like to meet with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and BLM staff to offer input on policy. The Cultural and Energy and Mineral Committees will meet on this issue.

### **Emerald Mountain Land Exchange**

Fred Conrath and Duane Johnson presented an update on this proposed 3-way land exchange among the State Land Board, BLM and the Emerald Mountain Partnership, a group of Routt County citizens. Scattered public lands difficult to manage and inaccessible to the public are to be exchanged for the 6,300-acre Emerald Mountain, which is currently closed to the public. The Agreement to Initiate the exchange was signed on Aug. 20, 2004.

### **BLM Planning Priorities and Planning Schedule**

GJFO Planner Jane Ross summarized the regulations that both guide BLM in its planning process and determine schedules for FOs. RMP revisions are comprehensive, while RMP amendments involve modifications in one or a few areas. The RAC asked to see the 4-year Director's Planning Schedule referred to in the presentation. The RAC supports priorities but these need to be clearly identified and justified by the Bureau.

### **RAC Community Stewardship Plan—Dominguez-Escalante Canyons**

Robertson summarized the joint planning initiative by the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre FOs. Robertson is asking the Northwest RAC to support community-based planning and feels it is important for both the Northwest and Southwest RACs to sanction this initiative. Dickinson

emphasized that community-based planning is important and encouraged the State Director to obtain funding for priority planning projects. Kerr made the motion to sign the Resolution. Dickinson motioned to support the Resolution if the last paragraph reads “shall” instead of “should.” The motion passed unanimously.

### **Oil and Gas Permitting Demand in Northwestern Colorado**

The LSFO is seeing an increase in activity, which will probably surpass last year’s 25 permits. Forage and weed impacts are also being seen. Parrie reported there are currently 9 rigs in the White River FO jurisdiction, with 30 expected for next year. There were 180 APDs in 2004, and 300 are expected in 2005. Impacts are very similar to those of the LSFO. Robertson reported 300 APDs combined with the Glenwood Springs FO, where the majority of these apply. Larry McCown stated that the numbers given are drilled on federal lands only. Numbers for private lands add significant impact. Ruhs reported increased activity with 20 APDs. This should be the same for next year.

### **Public Comment Period**

Kolbensschlag discussed Western Slope oil and gas activity. Eric Rechel spoke about community involvement and feels it should be emphasized in all activities.

### **Fiscal Year 2005 Meetings and Training**

Four regular meeting dates were set with one special meeting scheduled contingent upon the release of the Roan Plateau Draft RMP:

January 20-21, Delta (joint RAC meeting on afternoon of Jan. 21)

February 9, special meeting on Roan Plateau Draft RMP, Rifle

May 11-12, Meeker

August 10-11, Walden

November 9-10, Grand Junction

Field trips will start at an earlier time, and meetings will start at 8 a.m. Field managers need to reserve locations for their meetings and provide that information to the RAC coordinator for publishing in the Federal Register. Subcommittee membership will be updated and a sign-up sheet will be distributed.

### **Potential Meeting Topics:**

Socio-economics

Recreational permitting requirements

Dominguez-Escalante CSP (January meeting)

Cultural resources

WSC status update (January meeting)

Renewable energy

Oil and gas development; impacts and best management practices

### **Training Topics:**

Rangeland Ecology

NEPA

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.



## NORTHWEST AND SOUTHWEST RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCILS JOINT RESOLUTION 2004

### RAC Members

#### Northwest RAC

Jeff Comstock, Chairman  
 David Bailey  
 Geoff Blakeslee  
 Dave Cesark  
 Kenneth Currey  
 T. Wright Dickinson  
 Wade Haerle  
 Kathy Hall  
 Jon Hill  
 Patrick Kennedy  
 Charles Kerr  
 John Martin  
 Larry McCown  
 Forrest Nelson  
 Charles Yates

#### Southwest RAC

Kathy Welt, Chairman  
 Don Bennett  
 Mallory Dimmitt  
 John Field  
 Tony Gurzick  
 Andrew MacCleod  
 Ann McCoy Harold  
 Howard Heath  
 Art Goodtimes  
 Andrew Gulliford  
 Nik Kendzioriski  
 Andrea Robinsong  
 Alan Staehle  
 Ellen Stein  
 Kelly Wilson

A Resolution of the Colorado Northwest and Southwest Resource Advisory Councils hereby stating their belief that the Dominguez and Escalante Canyons deserve special attention by the Bureau of Land Management. The Dominguez and Escalante Canyons in Western Colorado, remote and dramatic tributaries of the Gunnison River, provide a scenic backdrop and favorite destination for people throughout the West.

Whereas this 238,000-acre area contains outstanding red rock canyons, perennial streams, a large herd of Desert Bighorn Sheep, prehistoric rock art, historic pioneer cabins and settlements, as well as incredible recreational opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, 4-wheeling, boating and many other types of recreation; and

Whereas the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Study Area enjoys local support for official designation, and the newly commissioned Old Spanish Trail winds its way through the area; and

Whereas the BLM has a tremendous opportunity to be proactive about this area's future management, balancing increased impacts from the dramatic population growth on Colorado's Western Slope, especially in Grand Junction and Montrose—two burgeoning urban centers less than 30 minutes from this spectacular area—with the public's increased expectations of BLM in managing this area;

Now therefore be it resolved by the Colorado Northwest and Southwest Resource Advisory Councils that the BLM's Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices shall undertake a Community Stewardship Plan, with key points described as follows:

1. Planning efforts shall engage the surrounding communities in managing these lands for future generations.
2. Western Colorado RACs have a long history of working with local BLM Field Managers to truly build the 4-C's concept from the ground up, as evidenced by the success of the Colorado Canyons and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Areas.
3. The process we envision would build upon these successes by actively engaging both RACs in the planning process, providing input guidance, and sanctioning this community-based planning effort.

The Colorado Northwest and Southwest Resource Advisory Councils support and encourage the BLM to begin this critical planning process for the Dominguez and Escalante Canyons Community Stewardship Plan.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004.

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Kathy Welt  
Chair, Southwest RAC

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004.

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Jeff Comstock  
Chair, Northwest RAC

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004.

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Received by Barbara Sharrow  
Southwest RAC Designated Federal Officer

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004.

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Received by John E. Husband  
Northwest RAC Designated Federal Officer