

Northwest Resource Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
 Thursday, Nov. 9, 2006
 Holiday Inn
 Craig, Colorado

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	Jon Hill, Category 1
Pat Kennedy, Category 2	Larry McCown, Category 3
Duane Dailey, Category 3	Forrest Nelson, Category 3
Clare Bastable, Category 2	John Martin, Category 3

Not present:

T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1

David Bailey, Category 2

BLM Staff

Peter McFadden	David Boyd
Jamie Connell	Jim Edwards
John Husband	Sherri Thompson
Catherine Robertson	Ken Straley
Kent Walter	
Renee Straub	

Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Cathy Kay	Western Colorado Congress	Grand Junction
Glenn Vawter	EGL Resources	Glenwood Springs
Creed Clayton	USFWS	Glenwood Springs
Shawn Helm	Encana	Parachute
Gail Gnirk	Rep. John Salazar	Grand Junction
Joe Neuhof	Colo Enviro Coalition	Grand Junction
Jay Fletcher	Sen. Ken Salazar	Craig
Jim Evans	Club 20	Grand Junction
Kim Kaal	Division of Wildlife	Grand Junction
Perry Will	Division of Wildlife	Glenwood Springs

Chairman Jeff Comstock called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Jeff acknowledged good field trip near Eagle the day before, in which RAC members visited a tamarisk treatment area, fuels treatment area near a community, a recreation site

developed in cooperation with a number of partners including the Town of Eagle, and wildlife habitat projects conducted with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

White River Field Office update, Kent Walter

White River Oil and Gas EIS scoping period closes – The scoping period for the White River closed September 30. The scoping meetings held in Rifle, Rangely and Meeker were attended by 114 people total. The Field Office received nine individual comments, one 75 page letter from an environmental coalition, one letter from an oil and gas company, one letter from the Colorado Department Natural Resource and more than 15,000 e-mail form letters from the Wilderness Society website. The comments identified a number of issues, including air quality, wildlife, hunting access, water quality, and oil and gas development technologies, among others. A scoping report is currently being drafted. The draft EIS is expected to be released for public review in the fall of 2007.

The Reasonably foreseeable development scenario should be completed by late Jan or Feb. The Draft EIS will have a range of alternatives. 85 percent or more of the Field Office is the area already leased, so the Amendment will be looking more at what level of development is appropriate.

Estimate 300-500 issues and concerns identified during scoping.

Jeff Comstock: What role will cooperating agencies play?

Kent: Gov't agencies have potential to participate. The Field Office has sent letters inviting government agencies to become cooperating agencies. We will work closely with them.

Jeff: Rio Blanco and Moffat counties are interested. I know they want to be involved in looking at scoping comments. Cooperators on the Little Snake RMP were brought in even before scoping started.

Jon Hill: Anything specific in 15,000 form e-mails?

Kent: They are concerned about air, wilderness, water, etc. We will group the 15,000 comments as one letter.

Claire Bastable: How much of the Field Office is already leased?

Kent: Upper 80s-90 percentile

Wild horses gathered: The White River Field Office gathered 262 wild horses from within the East Douglas/Piceance Herd Management Area this fall, removing 222 horses. Twenty-eight mares were treated with a three-year immunocontraceptive drug and returned to the range. An additional 60 horses that were outside the Herd Management Area were gathered and removed. Fourteen horses from this gather were adopted locally,

the remaining horses were sent to the BLM facility in Canon City. The Field Office also gathered and removed 38 horses from the West Douglas Herd Area. The Colorado Wild Horse and Burro Coalition filed an injunction in September to halt the gathers, and a Federal District Judge in D.C. ruled in BLM's favor.

Expect a final decision on the West Douglas herd soon. Reviewing protest response right now. Decision at this point is still to remove entire herd.

ExxonMobil proposes Piceance Development Project – The White River Field Office released an Environmental Assessment for an ExxonMobil proposal to expand their natural gas drilling activities and related infrastructure in the 28,800-acre Piceance Development Project Area. The existing gas fields in this area have been in continuous operation since the 1950s. The EA analyzes the potential impacts of up to 120 new multi-well pads – each with as many as nine wells per pad – as well as a new gas plant, new pipelines and other associated infrastructure over 20 years. The Piceance Development Project falls within the scope of the original 1997 White River RMP, which addresses the impacts of a possible 1,100 single-well pads and 11,000 acres of associated surface disturbance throughout the Field Office. The comment period on the EA closed Nov. 3.

The EIS for the RMP Amendment will look at a new Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario, which will include cumulative impacts on air, water.

The nine wells per pad, 120 wells is the industry proposal, not anything BLM is requiring at this point.

Larry: Is there flexibility in numbers? In Garfield County operators are getting up to 22 wells per pad, for instance.

Kent: We are looking at this with the RFD. There is definitely room for technological advances.

Jeff: How can you do this EA when you have just started the new EIS for increased oil and gas development?

Kent: We still within the scope of the 1997 RMP. We are doing this EIS to stay ahead of the curve. We are not cut off at the 1,100 well-number analyzed in the 1997 RMP – we look at a cumulative analysis.

Surveys find two more wild born ferrets: This year's black-footed ferret spotlighting efforts in the Wolf Creek Management Area located nine individual ferrets, including two ferrets that were born in the wild earlier this year. The first wild born black-footed ferret in Colorado since they were first reintroduced was found last year, so the discovery of two additional wild born ferrets is significant. Biologists with the Division of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management and US Fish and Wildlife Service are planning to release 15 more black-footed ferrets in the Wolf Creek Management Area east of Dinosaur in the coming weeks. More than 200 ferrets have been reintroduced into this area since 2001.

Rock Crawlers Park: The 525-acre Rangely Rock Crawlers Park opened in October just south of Rangely. The White River Field Office worked closely with the Rangely Rock Crawling Club to designate the area. The Field Office was concerned about rock crawling activity around Mellon Hill, and the new park offers a more environmentally sound alternative. The area will be formally dedicated this spring.

Kremmling Field Office, Peter McFadden and Renee Straub

Volunteers construct technical 4x4 route: A one-mile technical 4x4 “rock crawling” route north of Kremmling was constructed on BLM lands by the Metal Mashers Club. The route -- approved through field office planning -- includes a series of rock structures constructed from boulders hauled into the site. It is believed to be the first "constructed" technical rock crawling route in BLM Colorado. See included article.

BLM is monitoring water quality, other environmental impacts.

Kremmling hosts another popular National Public Lands Day: The Kremmling Field Office participated in the 2006 Grand County National Public Lands Day event, which also included the US Forest Service Sulphur District, National Park Service and Headwaters Trails Alliance. Several projects were held throughout Grand County. BLM volunteers and staff worked to protect the 1920s-era Jesse W. Hockett homestead, constructing 300 feet of buck-and-rail fencing and installing a pedestrian gate.

Historic ranger station moved for preservation: In August the Kremmling Field Office and Grand County Historical Association partnered to move the historic Horseshoe Ranger Station from the Williams Fork Reservoir area to Kremmling, where it can be preserved. The 1920s-era ranger station was abandoned in 1964. The Grand County Historical Association has also agreed to take the lead in development of an interpretive sign to be placed at the original site of the ranger station.

Peter McFadden, Kremmling’s new associate field manager, arrives: The Bureau of Land Management Kremmling Field Office’s new Associate Field Manager Peter McFadden arrived Oct. 18. McFadden comes to Kremmling from Anchorage, where he was a senior realty specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to working in Alaska, McFadden worked for more than 12 years with the BLM as an assistant field manager and appraisal specialist in South Dakota, Montana, Nevada and Wyoming. He fills the position vacated by Dave Harr, who retired in January. McFadden earned a masters degree in natural resource administration from Colorado State University and a bachelors degree in recreation from Montana State University.

Kremmling FO issues motorized travel closure to protect resources: The Kremmling Field Office issued a temporary motorized-travel closure for a 12,630-acre area 10 miles north of Kremmling to reduce environmental damage from off-road vehicles. The closure includes the BLM lands adjacent to the Troublesome Wilderness Study Area. At least 12 miles of user-created routes have been found, some of which are providing motorized

access to the WSA and a U.S. Forest Service Roadless Area. The closure will protect public health and safety, prevent excessive erosion and damage to wildlife habitat, preserve areas with historical value, and protect the wilderness character of the Troublesome WSA. Homeowners near the area have expressed support for the temporary closure. The closure will remain in effect until BLM completes a travel management plan for the area, which is expected to be complete in 2009.

John Martin: This concerns me. People are doing what's OK -- constructing new routes in open area

Jamie: Just because an area is designated open does not make it ok to develop new routes

John: The area is designated open and people are riding off-road, which is permitted.

Larry: There is inconsistency on what they are calling roads. BLM needs to define what a road is.

John Martin: It's not typical to go straight to a closure if there are impacts. Usually some steps in between

Action Item: Dave Boyd will send Troublesome Closure and emergency closure information to the RAC members.

Jeff: Let's discuss this emergency closure issue further this afternoon. Where is the Blue Valley Land Exchange?

Renee: Staff is reviewing the EA for the exchange.

Duane: What is the timeline?

Renee: Sometime after Dec 15.

Duane: Why has it been held up?

Peter: Appraisal issues, so it is taking more time than expected.

Duane: What is the process from there?

Jamie: BLM will look at public comments, then has to decide whether the exchange should go forward.

Action Item: Dave Boyd will send Blue Valley EA to RAC when it is available

Duane: A lot of disagreement on this one.

Jeff: The RAC could develop working group to look at this issue to advise BLM on this issue if asked.

Grand Junction Field Office, Catherine Robertson

Community Development Plan for Palisade & Grand Junction Watersheds:

Coordination work began in October on the CDP for the municipal watersheds between Genesis Gas & Oil, the Town of Palisade, the City of Grand Junction, the owner of Saddle Mountain Ranch, and Mesa County. The working group anticipates a public outreach process to begin prior to the end of 2006 to gather concerns and issues from the public that should be addressed within the CDP. The CDP will be modeled after the CDP developed by Antero Resources and the communities of Rifle, Silt, and Newcastle.

CDP will identify best management practices and how community can work with industry. It will identify community issues and expectations. This is not the APD site specific analysis that determines where a well pad, well, etc. is located. It is a non-formal non-binding agreement.

CAM/Red Cliff Coal Mine: Public scoping has been held for the proposed Red Cliff Coal Mine and railroad ROW, with a meeting held in September. Public issues raised included: access, safety concerns on railroad crossings, visual impacts of new powerlines. Issues/concerns raised by cooperators also included habitat impacts to wildlife, social impacts, air and water quality. BLM will be meeting with cooperators once comment analysis is complete to begin alternative development.

About 50 people attended the scoping meeting. Most concern was about the new rail lines.

National Public Radio Shadowed Weed Crew for a Day's Work on the Colorado River: NPR's Jeff Brady tagged along with the GJFO weed crew on Tuesday, September 12. Brady, a reporter focusing on natural resource issues, experienced firsthand the crew's new and innovative 16-ft. whitewater raft that enables the 3-person crew to effectively and quickly treat purple loosestrife, tamarisk, Russian knapweed, tall whitetop, and Russian olive from public lands along the banks of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers. The raft has been custom outfitted with the help of a \$17,000 Conservation Riparian Wetlands Grant awarded in April 2005 by the Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation. Brady had the opportunity to report on the significant progress made by the GJFO weed crew in eradicating non-native and invasive vegetation from the Colorado River Corridor stretching from Loma, Colorado to Westwater, Utah.

Volunteers For Outdoor Colorado Project Completed Construction of Loop Trail:

Nearly 100 volunteers constructed a two-mile loop extension of the Rabbit's Ear Trail located near Rabbit Valley on September 30-October 1, 2006. The project was coordinated by the Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) and the Bureau of Land Management GJFO and McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (NCA) and

marked the 13th annual National Public Lands Day. Project support was provided by Williams, an energy production company. The Rabbit's Ear Trail was marked for expansion into a loop in the Resource Management Plan recently completed for the McInnis Canyons NCA.

Volunteers “Restore a Sense of Natural” to Portions of Palisade WSA: On September 30, 2006, GJFO recreation staff was assisted by two teams of volunteers from the Colorado Environmental Coalition with projects in the Palisade Wilderness Study Area near Gateway. One crew of volunteers accessed a side drainage of West Creek, north of Gateway, to remove several hundred feet of black plastic pipe, left there since an illegal patch of marijuana was discovered about five years ago. Located in a rugged and remote area, the volunteers hauled the pipe out on their backs, bushwhacking through stands of poison ivy and over boulders and fallen trees. The other crew had it easy—those volunteers naturalized two sections of an unauthorized two-track road. Rocks and tree snags were carefully placed and desert shrubs transplanted to camouflage any trace of the road. This is the fourth year that CEC has assisted BLM with on-the-ground projects benefiting WSAs in the GJFO.

Catherine also thanked Claire and Colorado Mountain Club for adopting the Flume Canyon WSA and helping with the area's management.

MOU with Arizona State University and Mesa State College Signed: The GJFO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the School of Community Resources and Development, Arizona State University, and the Natural Resource and Land Use Policy Institute, Mesa State College. The purpose of the MOU formalizes a cooperative relationship for the purpose of completing visitor and resident preference assessments and monitoring studies to facilitate more effective development and implementation of BLM Land Use Plans and recreation activity or implementation plans. Projects may involve several dimensions, including, but not limited to on-site interviews and studies, recordkeeping, data compilation, and data entry and analysis, but all under the auspices of ASU. The partnership is expected to be critical to the success of Benefits Based Management surveys that will be conducted for the GSFO/KFO RMP as well as one for the Gateway Activity Management Plan.

Public Forum on Dominguez/Escalante Management Area to be Hosted by the Public Lands Partnership: PLP hosted a Public Forum to solicit input regarding future management options for the Dominguez/Escalante area on November 2, 2006 at the Bill Heddles Recreation Center in Delta, 6-9 p.m. It is anticipated that a subsequent forum may be held in Grand Junction.

Alternative Mitigation Project Agreement with Laramie Energy Completed: In late October, the GJFO finalized an alternative mitigation agreement with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Laramie Energy. Under the agreement, BLM will grant a season-long, one-year exception to the standard winter timing limitation that would restrict drilling and completion activities on big game winter range. Laramie will concentrate drilling activities in the northern portion of the East Plateau field, leave approximately 660 acres of pasture ungrazed by livestock from summer 2006 through

spring 2007 (forage will be left for deer and elk winter use), and construct approximately one mile of fence to exclude livestock from sensitive riparian areas. The agreement has allowed Laramie to better apply directional drilling technology, which minimizes surface disturbance due to road and well pad construction. The agreement allows BLM to participate in providing low-elevation big game winter range that is higher quality than the BLM winter range in question, allows CDOW a great deal more input and involvement in the process of evaluating winter range exception requests, and results in both short-term, direct mitigation (winter forage) and longer-term habitat protection for many species, including non-game (through riparian restoration). The process developed for this pilot effort will be documented and evaluated for potential use as a model for other areas.

Additional issue: Catherine said the Field Office is looking at potential closure in Timber Ridge/Glade Park area. It's an area where vehicles must stay on existing roads and trails, but new trails are pioneering from private land. Aerial photos show the new routes. CDOW concerned about impacts to wildlife habitat and asked us to take real hard look at what is going on there. Invites RAC members to sit down with BLM and discuss issue. The permitted outfitter in the area has raised the issue as well. Closure would affect his ability to outfit, and he won't do it next year. Catherine said that it appears unauthorized outfitting is being conducted by others.

Claire: What is the status of Billings Mountain Jeep Trail monitoring? What are the impacts?

Catherine: Monitoring is going well. BLM's agreement with the Jeep club is a huge asset. Most damage in this area was not from that user group. It was more teenagers in large vehicles drinking alcohol. This is good model.

Pat: What about the closure for Bangs Canyon?

Catherine: Gates have been ordered and will be installed when we get them. The decision for this closure has been made, we're just waiting to get gates installed. We will be rehabilitating the area.

Charlie: When is the next Dominguez meeting?

Catherine: Maybe January

Little Snake Field Office, John Husband

Notice of Decision availability issued on Emerald Mountain Land Exchange: The Little Snake Field Office issued a Notice of Availability of Decision authorizing the proposed Emerald Mountain Land Exchange in October. Under the proposed land exchange, BLM would acquire the 4,139-acre Emerald Mountain parcel just west of Steamboat Springs from the Colorado State Land Board in exchange for 123 isolated BLM parcels in Routt County totaling 15,416 acres. Public access to the Emerald

Mountain parcel will not be allowed until the exchange is complete and the parcel is in BLM ownership, which is expected to occur in early 2007. A 45-day public protest period follows the release of the Notice and will close Nov. 27, 2006.

Moffat County files R.S. 2477 assertions: Moffat County recently requested BLM make non-binding determinations on five R.S. 2477 assertions in the county. Two of the five routes lie partially within Wilderness Study Areas. Little Snake Field Office is working with the Colorado State Office and Solicitor to make the determination. A non-binding determination is a finding about the likely validity of a R.S. 2477 right-of-way. A finding that a R.S. 2477 right of way is likely still does not create binding legal rights to travel the route, or to make improvements to the route. If a determination is made that a route may be a valid R.S. 2477 assertion, the claimant must consult with agency before improvements beyond routine maintenance.

Charlie: Different magnitudes of importance for various R.S. 2477 claims. Do you take into account wilderness values, for instance?

John Husband: We are not sure how the process will work, but we will use a NEPA-like process.

Jeff: Moffat County feels strongly that it is a simple decision. Need to determine: Was it in existence before 1976, and was it used by the public?

Charlie: No motorized use now on the WSA, correct? If the determination is for a valid RS 2477, does it mean motorized use in WSA?

John H: County not proposing that at this point

Jeff: The County's goal is to make sure public access is maintained for public lands. Not trying to take the roads under county authority. Keeping traditional public access.

John H: Remember that it is not a binding determination. Does not relieve agency of responsibility of managing adjacent resources

Hiawatha scoping period ends: BLM received 27 letters and submittals that included 386 unique comments during the recent scoping period for the Hiawatha EIS. The EIS is analyzing the impacts of a proposed energy development project that could include up to 4,200 new wells in the Little Snake and Rock Springs field offices. About 66% of the new wells would be in Wyoming. The comments covered a wide range of issues, including air quality, NEPA policy, wildlife, and oil and gas development practices. Eighteen members of the public attended a scoping meeting in Craig, 13 in Rock Springs. Planners are now developing the Draft EIS, which is scheduled to be released for public review in 2007.

Jeff: We have already had three cooperating agency meetings on this project.

Larry: Depth of wells?

Jeff: 7000 and 15,000 feet. Two layers. Most of the new ones will be in the deeper layer.

John H: Proposal is not for multiple wells per pad

Jeff: The Cooperators are pushing for more directional drilling, however.

Little Snake Draft RMP revision to be released in January: The Little Snake Field Office's Draft Resource Management Plan Revision/Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be released for a 90-day public comment period in January 2007. Planners are currently incorporating comments and recommendations received during the Cooperating Agency review of the pre-draft. A Record of Decision is anticipated in summer of 2008.

Glenwood Springs, Jamie Connell

Cooperative project uses helicopters to remove beetle-infested trees: Helicopter loggers removed about 250 beetle-infested Douglas fir off the Storm King Ranch and adjacent Bureau of Land Management-administered lands northwest of Glenwood Springs last month. The goal is to catch small infestations early and remove the infested trees before the beetles emerge in the spring seeking new trees. The private landowner funded the costs of the helicopter, ground crew and log hauling. The logs were taken to a local mill in Silt. Following the removal of the stricken trees, the landowner, the State Forest Service and BLM will continue to work together on a five-year forest management plan for the area that would be effective beginning in 2007. BLM anticipates releasing an Environmental Assessment this winter on the cooperative five-year management plan for the forest.

BLM to hold national Pilot Office listening sessions in Denver next week: BLM will hold two public listening sessions at the Denver Renaissance Hotel Nov. 14 to gather views and ideas on implementation of the energy Pilot Project to improve Federal oil and gas permit coordination. The first session will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and a second session from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The listening sessions will begin with an overview of progress on the project to date. Participants who request to speak will then be given a set amount of time to provide their comments. The Energy Policy Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to report to Congress by August, 2008 on the results of the Pilot Project and make recommendations to the President regarding whether the Project should be implemented throughout the U.S. Information gathered at the listening sessions will be useful as implementation proceeds in current Pilot Offices and for purposes of the later report and recommendation.

Claire: What sort of comments are they looking for?

Jamie: General comments about the pilot offices, not comments on site specific projects.

Cesark: How many people are now in Glenwood's pilot energy office?

Jamie: About 19. We still have three vacancies

Glenwood Field Office partners for winter deer study: This winter the Glenwood Springs Field Office, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Williams, and Colorado Mule Deer Association will begin a collaborative, multi-year study addressing mule deer response to oil and gas drilling activity and habitat enhancement in critical winter range. The study will assess whether impacts to mule deer can be lessened by clustering natural gas development in specific, limited areas, which would allow development to take place as quickly as possible and take full advantage of the new, high efficiency drilling rigs. In adjacent areas, drilling and completion operations would be deferred, and habitat would be enhanced through measures such as grass and alfalfa seeding. Global positioning system (GPS) satellite radio collars fitted onto 30 adult female mule deer will provide location fixes every two hours. An additional 60 fawns will be fitted with conventional radio collars that will allow biologists to track their movements and survival. To facilitate the study, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office will issue exceptions to winter big game timing limitations on 880 federal acres near Parachute and 720 federal acres near Rulison. Williams will voluntarily avoid winter development on some of its adjacent private lands containing critical winter range, as well as contribute \$600,000 to the study. The Colorado Mule Deer Association supports the study.

More than 1,000 hunters pass through Rifle hunter's tent: Glenwood Field Office staff joined the Forest Service, Division of Wildlife and City of Rifle operating the Rifle Hunter's "Tent" at the Rifle Information Center for the second and third big game seasons. More than 1,200 of hunters stopped in, most purchasing BLM or Forest maps and asking specific access questions (along with "Where are all the elk?"). Dozens of hunters have also been stopping by the Glenwood Springs Field Office daily with access questions and map requests.

Glenwood BLM teams with DOW, Mule Deer Association on habitat projects: Mule deer habitat was improved on more than 200 acres this year near Rifle Creek through removal of pinyon/juniper and sagebrush cutting. The objective of the treatments is to maintain sagebrush parks by removing encroaching pinyon/juniper trees and improving sagebrush age class composition and structural diversity. BLM, the Colorado Mule Deer Association and Division of Wildlife funded the project. One hundred acres were treated last year, and more acres are planned for future years.

Public comment period

Jim Evans, Club 20. Oil shale task force chair. Passes out resolution and highlights points 5-8

Club 20 believes BLM has authority to encourage industry to make direct contribution to state and local gov'ts for socioeconomic or environmental projects, then credit that

against their royalties. The idea is to make the contributions get to the affected areas more quickly.

Club 20 feels that commercial leasing should go forward. Keep RD&D lease program open to new proposals. That would serve region better.

Club 20 disappointed that some companies were turned away from the RD&D leases, including ExxonMobil. Need to be able to do research programs

Charlie: Read #7 on the resolution as saying no leasing should be granted until technology is proved

Jim: Trying to use language from Energy Policy Act, want sound practice

Jay Fletcher, Senator Salazar's office

There will be a biomass meeting in Frisco Dec 8. It will probably be an all day meeting. Jay will get information to Dave Boyd to distribute to the RAC.

The Senator is looking at a Garfield County for an energy summit. More information on that to follow.

Joe Neuhof, West Slope Field Director Colorado Environmental Coalition

We feel purpose of RD&D is to look at impacts. The group doesn't support leasing oil shale commercially before the results from the RD&D projects are known. CEC appreciates the transparency of RD&D process so far.

Main message: Take it slow on oil shale.

Oil Shale Presentations

BLM provided an update on the oil shale RD&D leases, commercial leasing PEIS, and proposed rulemaking.

Jeff: How will state Oil and Gas Commission be involved in oil shale leasing?

Jim E: We are meeting regularly with the government agencies involved. State will issue mining permits. We are working to reduce duplication in permitting with the State

Jon: Did you receive applications for surface mining and retort?

Jim: In Colorado we received 1 underground mining and 1 surface mining proposal. Proposals would not advance technology. In Utah a number of projects for surface retort from old White Mountain site

Jon: When you go to commercial leasing, could surface retort be used?

Jim: Yes

Dave: Familiar with technologies used in Alberta?

Sherri: I am familiar, they aren't that similar of resources. They are using surface mining and surface retorting.

Charlie: Looking at commercial leasing in 08. Shell says won't know if tech viable until end of decade. How can you lease before you know what the technology will be?

Jim: Nothing in the Energy Act says to wait. Other companies are interested in addition to the three with RD&D proposals

Charlie: It's not in the Energy Act to actually lease in 2008, just to be ready by then

Jim: Agree

Sherri: BLM will consult with the governors before going forward with leases

Charlie: It's too soon, 2008, to be leasing for oil shale

Jim: We are looking at the best case. It could happen in 2008. It doesn't depend on RD&D results. Other people interested in trying technologies

Charlie: Unproven technologies?

Jim: NEPA would be done

Kent: Congress has directed us to accelerate program. We will be prepared in 2008 because Congress told us to be.

Larry: Unocal has experience, could apply their experience without doing another RD&D, for instance. They would qualify for commercial leasing in 2008. BLM just getting ready in case this occurs.

Jim: If you are going to bid on a tract, and possibly lay down millions of dollars, you better have stuff together.

Kent: This is a huge resource in the Piceance

Charlie: No one has yet been able to sustain oil shale on commercial basis. Not appropriate to lease yet.

Claire: Clarify that RD&D would go on for five years before they could show technology works

Kent: It's possible they could have a five year extension

Claire: So other companies could come in 2008 and lease before the RD&D companies can lease?

Kent: RD&D companies have preferential rights on those 5,100 acres already identified. They could lease other areas when commercial leasing is allowed.

Cathy Kay, CEC: Will BLM issue leases before technology is known? Will you address comments submitted in RD&D EAs?

Kent: No issues raised in the comments that we didn't analyze. We did re-run model for the EGL EA, but the results didn't change. There were about 75 commentors, and 380+ comments. EA will make our responses to the comments clear.

Cathy: When do they get lease?

Kent: Still have to issue lease, with stipulations. Still have to work with other agencies like state. 3 to 6 months probably.

Cathy: What about well monitoring data? Only one company has data. What about access? Not still public land if lease areas are fenced

Kent: Don't know what it will look like.

Joe: Energy input requirements high. What is thinking on how this would be done?

Sherri: Considering this question in the Programmatic EIS

Pat: A number of us have been through this process. Everybody walked away, not just industry. These guys haven't proved technology, and we are going down same path again. I am not comfortable with this.

John M: I am more comfortable. In 1982 there were far fewer restrictions

Next meetings:

Feb. 22,23 (meeting on 22nd) Grand Junction

May 16,17 Meeker or Craig

Aug 15,16 Kremmling (tour metal mashers trail)

Nov. 14,15 Glenwood

Public comment

Joe Neuhof – Comments on Roan. Acknowledges RAC and BLM's hard work on the plan. Two items: local Garfield county and public would have liked to have commented on Proposed Plan. Local government calling for public comment period on items not in Draft.

CEC is disappointed in lack of undeveloped settings on top of the Roan.

Larry: Not a real extensive recreation use up there. First hunting season was very sparse.

Kim Kaal, CDOW – She is the Energy Liaison. CDOW is working on pilot winter drilling studies with GJ and GS. Very positive. We are looking at how we can make some difference on the ground. Do winter stipulations benefit wildlife, or are there better options? Not evaluating impacts on GS study, it's more about asking whether it can all coexist

Larry: This came out of Roan Plateau effort, all of us working together

Catherine: Another challenge. Need to expand this winter effort. Companies need to work with competitors and landowners

Glenwood/Kremmling RMP update, Jamie

Presented a Powerpoint. The offices are jointly revising their RMPs. A single planning effort and EIS, but separate RMPs. Should have scoping meetings around February.

Jeff: Would like to see greater citizen involvement than just Cooperating Agencies, such as was done for the Little Snake RMP revision.

Jamie: We are looking at how we will do that

Roan Plateau Proposed Plan update, David Boyd

Presented a Powerpoint detailing the history of the Roan and Planning effort as well as the Proposed Plan.

Highlights of the Proposed Plan include limiting development on top to no more than one percent surface disturbance at any one time, more than 50 percent no surface occupancy stipulations throughout the planning area, well pads no closer than ½ mile apart, 21,000 acres designated as Areas of Environmental Concern, and 35,000 acres of winter timing stipulations.

A federal unit would be established on the 35,000 acres on top of the Plateau to allow BLM better control of how, when and where development takes place. All costs and profits would be shared by all the lessees based on the leases they have.

BLM is currently reviewing the protests it received.

Claire: Clarify what you said about not being able to see development from the East Fork Box Canyon and Waterfall.

Dave B: The area is a Class I VRM designation, so no development can be visible on BLM. We don't have jurisdiction over the private lands, you could see development on private lands while you are on BLM.

Claire: BLM says only 210 wells on top over 20 years. Think that is an underestimate.

Dave B: We used that number in the analysis, but it is not a cap. However, limiting surface disturbance to no more than one percent on top at any one time is a major limiting factor for development.

Emergency/Temporary Road closures:

Catherine: Formal process, internal discussions. Formal federal register process

John M: Emergency closure gives reason, and an idea of how long it will last so that it's not de facto management decision.

Jamie: They go all the way to DOI for approval.

Kent: There are a lot of difference emergency/temporary closures. They address a specific use in a specific area. You might have a closure to shooting, for instance

Steve G: Past experience is that these are bad, unauthorized things that are happening

John M: My concern is that there is no public input on emergency closure

Action Item: Kremmling will provide more specific info on Troublesome Closure. Catherine will provide information about emergency/temporary closure regulations

Recreation group will look at the Temporary/Emergency Closure information

Energy group drafting resolution related to Club 20 resolution

Next meeting

Blue Valley Land Exchange

Wild and Scenic River

Recreation group update on emergency closures

Little snake RMP

Energy committee update on oil shale resolution

Elections??

Planning/nepa overview send materials

