

# **NORTHWEST RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Battlement Mesa Activity Center  
0398 Arroyo Drive  
Parachute, CO 81635

Thursday, October 30, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Geoff Blakeslee, Chairman.

## **Attendees:**

Resource Advisory Council Members: Category 1: Ken Currey, T. Wright Dickinson, Jon Hill, Dave Cesark; Category 2: Charlie Kerr, Pat Kennedy, Geoff Blakeslee; Category 3: Jeff Comstock, John Martin, and Forrest Nelson. A quorum of members was present. Members absent were Category 1: Charlie Yates; Category 2: David Bailey and Wade Haerle; Category 3 Kathy Hall and Larry McCown.

BLM: John Husband (Little Snake Field Office Manager and RAC Designated Federal Officer), Raul Morales (Grand Junction Associate Field Office Manager), Kent Walter (White River Field Office Manager), Jamie Connell (Glenwood Springs Field Office Manager), John Ruhs (Kremmling Field Office Manager), Ron Wenker (BLM Colorado State Director)

<u>Visitors:</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Town/City</u>
Mike McKibbin	Grand Junction Daily Sentinel	Grand Junction, CO
Shirley Willis	Grand Valley Citizens Alliance	Parachute, CO
Holly Stevens	Congressman McInnis	Glenwood Springs, CO
George Rossman	Senator Campbell	Grand Junction, CO

## **Introductory Remarks**

Geoff Blakeslee Welcomed new RAC members and new BLM managers and described the consensus decision making model.

Council members introduced themselves with a little background and perspective on RAC involvement:

- T Wright: Rancher NW Moffat County, grazing allotments in three states, Club 20 Chairman and former County Commissioner, participated in the development of the first RACs. Hopes to implement continuing education piece to RACs.
- John Martin: motorcycle shop owner, OHV coalition – but represents the public at large
- Pat Kennedy – native Coloradoan, trails issues in Mesa County, River Front Commissioner, urban trails and river front trails, Board Member for the Monument, Executive Director COPMOBA.

- Charles Kerr: western slope resident for near 30 years, teacher, involved in USFS issues for 20 years, learning rangeland issues, founding member of the Concerned Citizens Resource Association – opposing pollution in Grand County.
- Ken Curry: Colorado pioneer too! CSU graduate, worked for BLM as a range conservationist and surface protection specialist, Field Superintendent for Beartooth Oil and Gas, active Jeepster! Supports responsible multiple use.
- Jeff Comstock: Moffat County employee, focus on federal land management including T&E fish, fire planning (focus on citizen involvement), Family runs a horsemanship/riding program in Moffat County.
- Dave Cesark – Williams Petroleum Environmental Specialist, Chicago native but a Coloradoan at heart. Geology degree from U of Wyoming and loves the outdoors. Supports a balance approach to public land management.
- Geoff Blakeslee: The Nature Conservancy manages Carpenter Ranch for TNC near Haden, CO. Long time rancher. Supports the RAC for its potential for providing public input into the BLMs process. Protect and conserve the lands for future generations while allowing responsible use.
- John Hill: Family in the area since the 1800s and assistance in the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act. Family has ranched in western Colorado ever since. John assisted in the development of Grazing Standards and Guidelines.
- Forest Nelson: County Commissioner for Rio Blanco. Lang family history in Colorado. Rancher, hunter supports responsible multiple use.

Ron Wenker also made a few introductory comments:

- 30 years with the BLM management CA WY OR NEV and Wash DC
- Recently, assisted with the initiation of the Healthy Forest Initiative in DC
- Worked with advisory boards for many years: grazing advisory boards, district advisory boards and Provincial Interagency advisory Councils (in the NW US), RACs.
- Ron supports the use of RACs to provide advice to the Bureau as we work our way through very difficult and complicated issues.
- Key current issues; Energy and Minerals, Roan Plateau – look forward to RAC involvement.

### **Sustaining Working Landscapes (SWL) Policy Development**

The RAC discussed Sustaining Working Landscapes (SWL) initiative. They used the draft resolution developed by the SWL subcommittee as the basis of their discussion. The subcommittee had used comments generated in previous meetings to develop the draft.

Numerous typographical or minor editorial revisions were made to the draft.

The substantive discussions were generally centered on the following topics.

- The voluntary agreements envisioned in the SWL proposals should not be used as a means to permanently retire currently authorized grazing use.
- The voluntary agreements may take longer than the grazing permit term of ten years to

achieve the desired results and this needs to be recognized.

- The voluntary agreements should clearly spell out criteria for use of an area and responsibility for various management actions
- Compatible uses should be encouraged while preserving existing livestock grazing values.
- There should be some assurance that the voluntary agreements will not be unilaterally changed at some future time.
- The SWL concepts should be applied not only to grazing permittees, but to other users of public lands where feasible and appropriate.
- Any non-use of AUMs through voluntary agreements should have a management plan to avoid benign neglect of natural resources.

After considerable discussion on the above mentioned topics and others the RAC agreed on a resolution. (Attached)

**Resolution:** John Martin moved to accept the resolution as edited. Ken Curry seconded. All present were in concurrence.

### **Public Comment**

During the public comment period Shirley Willis, a concerned member of the public in the Grand Valley expressed a concern about gas development. She lives in an area of gas development and stated that water quality must be protected while we develop natural gas resources. The BLM is doing a good job but must continue to protect the water.

### **Next Meeting**

There will be an informational field tour of the Colorado Canyon's National Conservation Area on November 12. RAC members should meet at the Holiday Inn in Grand Junction at 12:30pm. After the tour there will be a BBQ at John Martin's house for RAC members, spouses, BLM managers and staff.

The RAC meeting will be held on November 13 at the Holiday Inn in Grand Junction. Agenda items will include election of officers, scheduling of 2004 meetings, Roan Plateau Draft Management Plan, BLM National Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy, report on Energy Policy and Conservation Act implementation and others.

Meeting adjourned 2:10 pm.