



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Record of the Northern New Mexico Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Dec. 2, 2022 Held via Zoom

Northern NM RAC Members (*indicates present):

- * Peter Castiglia: 1 - Energy/Minerals
- * Marcia Brueggenjohann: 1 - Energy/Minerals
- * Nolberto Hernandez: 1 - Federal Grazing Permit Holder
- * Paul Reed: 2 - Archaeological/historical interests
- * Jacobo Baca: 2 - Archaeological/historical interests
- * Larry Hersman: 2 - Dispersed Recreation
- * Richard Sertich: 2 - Dispersed Recreation
- * Norman Vigil: 3 - Elected Official
- * Cameron Martinez: 3 - Native American Tribe
- * Charles Price: 3 - Public-at-Large
- * James Ramakka: 3 - Public -at-Large

Bureau of Land Management Attendees:

Al Elser, Farmington District Manager (DFO)
Sabrina Flores, Albuquerque District Manager
Darren Scott, RAC Coordinator
Kymm Gresset, Rio Puerco Field Manager
Maureen Joe, Farmington Field Manager
Pamela Mathis, Taos Field Manager
Jillian Aragon
Allison Sandoval
Judy Culver
Eric Valencia
Adam Lujan
Elaine Lopez
Josh Freeman
Dave Mankiewicz

U.S. Forest Service Attendees:

Ryan Means
Christopher Nichols
Jeremy Galston
Christa Osborn
Peter Rich

Amanda Loye
Steven Hattenbach
Amy Simms
Joanna Wilson
Zachary Parsons

Public Attendees: 9

Meeting start time 8:05 a.m.

I. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Elser: opening remarks, introduction and welcome

Agency and RAC members gave brief info. Proceed to agenda.

II. Call for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair

Charles Price nominated Peter Castiglia for Chair. Larry Hersman seconded the nomination. During the vote, the Northern NM RAC unanimously supported the nomination of Peter Castiglia for the Chair.

Jim Ramakka volunteered for the RAC vice-Chair; Charles Price seconded the nomination. Northern NM RAC unanimously supported appointment.

III. RAC 101 Presentation and Overview of Northern NM RAC Charter

Presentation and discussion facilitated by Allison Sandoval. Additionally, information shared regarding how the Forest Service benefits from the Northern NM RAC for its fee proposals.

IV. Ethics Training Presentation

Facilitated by Amy Dahl, DOI Ethics Specialist

V. Taos Field Office overview

Presented by Pamela Mathis

- Part of the Farmington District Office and encompasses nine counties, with majority of work taking place in Santa Fe, Taos, and Rio Arriba Counties.
- Three major projects going on:
 - Target shooting: ongoing urban interface conflicts with dispersed target shooting in Santa Fe area. Proposing up to three target shooting areas.
 - Ohkay Owingeh land exchange

- Río Grande del Norte National Monument Plan Resource Management Plan, which is similar to a county land use plan, but for the resources the agency manages.
- More info on target shooting:
 - Homes are being build on the edge of Federal lands and stray bullets are now a strain on these residential areas.
 - Trash and debris from shooting are piling up
 - Showed Camel Tracks area map and the conflicts of shooting
 - Discussed focus group that contains New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, pro recreation, pro-environmental, and other user groups. Also, Santa Fe County.
 - Three public meetings were held for this proposal in November.
 - One proposal includes keeping the shooting within the current San Pedro area and constructing shooting lanes; designating camel tracks and building shooting lanes there; and open to any other ideas that the RAC or public may have for areas within Santa Fe County.

Richard Sertich asked if the agency was aware of other activities going on in the Buckman area that may cause conflicts if the agency were to establish a shooting lane in the area. Agency shared our knowledge of concerns and let the audience know that we are also looking at mitigation and open to their ideas.

- Ohkay Owingeh land exchange:
 - Approximately 83 acres
 - The agency would, in return, receive the Rio Nutrients area that includes strong riparian area and connectivity for habitat and providing wildlife values.
 - In return, the Pueblo would receive approximately 1,735 acres of ancestral lands that are adjacent to the pueblo that are of significance to the culture. This area is also a critical paleontological site.
 - Exchange is not based on acre to acre, but on value to value.
 - Agency will draft an environmental assessment document and conduct public engagement on this topic in the spring.

Question regarding if there is any known interest in the paleo area mentioned. The agency has not received any requests for excavation of the area recently.

- Río Grande del Norte National Monument Plan Resource Management Plan
 - Efforts were paused during the last administration.
 - In addition to resources on the ground, agency will look at Environmental Justice and climate change.
 - Agency will begin scoping and public process in late Spring
 - Agency will work with a contractor to develop the management plan
- Brief updates on:
 - Petroglyphs- continuing with Tribal consultation for best methods to clean up graffiti.
 - John Dunn Bridge- area is closed to allow Federal Highways to do maintenance in the area.
 - Agency closed scenic easement along Río Grande that many used to access Manby Hotsprings. When the area reopens, the public will use the John Dunn Bridge trail to access hotsprings.

- Great restoration efforts going for Río Grande Scenic easement.

VI. Farmington Field Office Overview

Presented by Maureen Joe

- Used map to show where the field office is and how Chaco Culture National Historic Park is the heart of the field office.
- Major focus right now is recreation planning, Tribal cultural resources within landscape, energy (to include renewable), and grazing.
- Conflicts include cultural landscape values vs. multiple use
- Continuing to partner and develop relationships with Tribal Nations
- Ongoing Resource Management Plan Amendment is near completion; waiting for the programmatic agreement to catch up. Lag in the programmatic agreement due to the pandemic, but now meeting regularly.
- Chaco Public Lands Withdrawal: proposed to withdrawal approximately 10 miles of public land minerals from the Chaco Park boundary. Approximately 338,000 minerals would no longer be available for entry under the US mining laws and the mineral lease act. This is only for Federal minerals; fee, state, and tribal minerals are not included.
 - 30-day comment period for the Environmental Assessment took place from Nov-Dec 2022. Two public meetings were held. Comment period ends Dec. 10, 2022.
- Honoring Chaco
 - DOI effort
 - DOI hired a contractor to mediate
 - Two planning sessions have taken place with tribal nations

VII. Rio Puerco Field Office Overview

Presented by Kymm Gresset

- Rio Puerco comprised of five counties, with most of work being in Sandoval County.
- Oil and gas, grazing, rights of way, and conservation areas. Kasha Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument.
- Josh Freeman, Assistant Field Manager, gave updated on oil and gas:
 - Three O&G lease sales since Dec. 2018.
 - Litigation to review NEPA adequacy
 - Supplemental Environmental Assessment posted: updates included information and findings in regard to greenhouse gas emissions and social cost of carbon. Public comment review period closes Dec. 16, 2022.
- Elaine Lopez, Assistant Field Manager, gave updates on recreation
 - In 2021, RAC approved the fee increase for Kasha Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument
 - Tent Rocks remains closed due to the pandemic. NM Route 22 is within this area and remains available for limited travel by member only. A working group is hoping to find a way forward to reopen the area.

- El Malpais National Conservation Area: RAC approved site fee in 2021. National Public Lands Day event held here in 2022 with a good turnout. Also, along with the Public Lands Interpretive Association, El Malpais is working to highlight the natural beauty and traditional uses of the landscape by local artists.

LUNCH BREAK

Meeting resumed at 1:07 p.m.

VIII. US Forest Service's Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act Proposals

Facilitated by Ryan Means

- Overview of the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and RAC's role
- Three forests have FLREA proposals:
 - Carson National Forest
 - Cibola National Forest
 - Santa Fe National Forest
- Fee proposals and increases support operating costs and decrease the discretionary budget. Some forests have not had any fees ever or they have not been updated in over 18 years.
- More in depth discussion on operating costs and how the operating costs are continuing to increase, therefore there is a need to add or increase fees.
- Peter Rich from Carson National Forest presented the need for new rec and increased fees.
 - 76 developed rec sites within the forest
 - 10 of the 76 have fee proposals and 14 fee change proposals
- Chris Nichols from Cibola National Forest presented the need for new fees or increases.
 - Forest includes Sandia and Mount Taylor Ranger Districts.
 - 174 developed sites
 - Want to provide uniform and consistent pricing between like sites and experiences
 - Proposed 17 new fee areas; increases at 30 sites; and one site fee decrease.
- Jeremy Galston from Santa Fe National Forest presented info for new rec and increased fees.
 - 104 sites throughout forest
 - If approved, roughly 50% of current sites will have fees
 - 37 new fee proposals and seven site fee increases
- Ryan Means closed out with the following:
 - 64 new fee proposals; 61 fee increase proposals
 - Forests proposing a state-wide annual pass for \$40 and a \$5 day pass that will be available at Forest Service offices.
 - Considering having one fee for all similar type of campgrounds:
 - \$10- remote location, a fee station reservation through rec.gov. Also includes fire ring/grill/picnic tables, garbage receptacles, gravel road parking, vault.
 - \$15- same as \$10 location but will include drinking water and camp site host
 - \$20- same as above, but will also include interpretive kiosks, RV hookups with water/electric.
 - Carson and Santa Fe are also proposing \$5 vehicle fee
 - \$12/night for equestrian sites
 - Various group site fee proposal for each forest

- Overview of previous public involvement for this fee proposal/increases

IX. Public Comment Period

Began at 3 p.m. No public comments received. Closed at 3:30 p.m.

X. Voting on Fee Proposal

- RAC asked: What efforts have been made to work with New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Initiative Axi Novis? Forest stated that they have presented to Axi and received support from the ORI. However, we do not lobby them.
- Forest also discussed collaboration with stakeholders such as user groups and local government entities. Also, that they are continuing to work through their tribal liaison to ensure tribal nations are able to conduct cultural ceremonies without access concerns. Also looking for ways to meet land grant needs. Info for length of stays, up to 14 days, for these sites. Increases fees may also help with law enforcement patrolling of areas if funding is available.
- At 3:44 p.m., Charles Price motioned to support the US Forest Service fee proposal and fee increases. Larry Hersman seconded the motion, and the Northern NM RAC unanimously voted in support of the proposals.

XI. Determine future meeting dates and topic discussions

- Darren Scott will work with RAC to identify next dates, a field trip and topics for discussion.
- Meeting ended at 4 p.m.