

# **Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council Meeting**

BLM Miles City Field Office, 111 Garryowen Road, Miles City, MT

**Sept. 18 & 19, 2023**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic Options</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>Sept. 18</b> 10:00 a.m.	Meeting begins	Facilitator	Welcome; Admin Items, Ground Rules, Agenda & BLM expectations. New member recruiting reminder.
10:15	Introductions	ALL	Brief Self-introductions by attendees. Name/Category/Location
10:30	RAC housekeeping items	RAC - Chair/Vice Chair leads	Discussion. Election of vice-chair for coming term/year?
10:50	Understanding the Purpose/Process (re: ND RMP Subcommittee)	Kirsten Kaiser, NCMD Manager & RAC Designated Federal Official	Procedures overview
11:00	ND RMP Subcommittee Recommendation	RAC subcommittee	Subcommittee presents/provides recommendation to the RAC/BLM (Kristine "Krissie" Braun, EMDD).
NOON	Lunch	ALL	
1:30 p.m.	ND RMP Subcommittee Recommendation - continued	RAC subcommittee	Subcommittee presents/provides recommendation to the RAC/BLM (Kristine "Krissie" Braun, EMDD).
2:15	BREAK	ALL	Facilitator preps briefing staffers.
2:30	ND RMP Subcommittee Recommendation - continued	RAC subcommittee	Subcommittee presents/provides recommendation to the RAC/BLM (Kristine "Krissie" Braun, EMDD).
3:30	Public Comment Period	Facilitator	Public addresses the council.
3:45	Questions, clarifying comments	RAC & BLM staff	Tabled/shelved items; clarifications.
4:00	Adjourn	ALL	
<b>Sept. 19</b> 8:00 a.m.	Meeting begins	Facilitator	Welcome; Admin Items, Ground Rules, Agenda, BLM expectations. Travel procedures orientation.
8:30	ND RMP Subcommittee Recommendation - continued	RAC subcommittee	Subcommittee presents/provides recommendation to the RAC/BLM (Kristine "Krissie" Braun, EMDD).
10:45	BREAK	ALL	Facilitator prep for Public Comment Period.
11:00	ND RMP Subcommittee Recommendation & RAC Vote	RAC subcommittee	Subcommittee presents/provides recommendation to the RAC/BLM (Kristine "Krissie" Braun, EMDD).
Noon	Lunch	ALL	
12:45 p.m.	District Office Issues & Updates	District Managers	Overview and perspectives from Managers.
1:15	Public Comment Period	Facilitator	Public addresses the council.
1:30	RAC discussion, tabled items addressed.	RAC	RAC discussion on public comment & other items as needed.
1:45	Next meeting date, place, time.	ALL	Set next meeting date and agenda. Other items addressed as needed.
2:00*	Adjourn	ALL	

**Agenda to advance if topics are completed early. RAC may decide to extend meeting duration, if needed.**

**\*Note-taker: Donna Bradley, EMDD**

**Missouri River Basin Resource Advisory Committee (MBRAC)**  
**General Business Meeting Minutes**  
**September 18-19, 2023**  
**BLM Eastern Montana Dakota District Office, Miles City MT**

**Attendance:**

September 18, 2023, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

**RAC members:** Perri Jacobs, Jeff Schafer, Kevin Wagner, Trisha Tonn, Art Hayes III, Nathan Jagim, Doug Krings, Mark Good, Greg Jergeson, Miles Hutton (chair), Doug Kary, Stacey Barta, Jody Mason

**Public (Teams-virtual):** None

**Public (In-Person)** Sandra K. Brown, Todd Devlin, Dennis Teske, Christine W Keltner, Joey Grewell

**BLM (In-person and teleconference):** Wendy Warren, Kristin Kaiser, Regina Baltrusch, Lori (Chip) Kimball, Eric Lepisto, Greg Morel, Kristine Braun, Mark Jacobsen, Edward Kraft, Nate Arave, Ann Boucher, Zane Fulbright, Donna Bradley

September 19, 2023, 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM

**RAC Members:** Perri Jacobs (vice chair), Jeff Schafer, Kevin Wagner, Trisha Tonn, Art Hayes III, Nathan Jagim, Doug Krings, Mark Good, Greg Jergeson, Miles Hutton (chair), Doug Kary, Stacey Barta, Jody Mason

**Public (Teams-virtual):** Dennis Teske

**Public (In-Person):** Christine W. Keltner, Lance Kalfell

**BLM (In-person and teleconference):** Wendy Warren, Kristin Kaiser, Regina Baltrusch, Eric Lepisto, Greg Morel, Kristine Braun, Mark Jacobsen, Nate Arave, Ann Boucher, Zane Fulbright, Shane Findlay, Donna Bradley

**September 18, 2023**

Mark Jacobsen welcomed members and the meeting was brought to order, housekeeping items for the meeting were reviewed. Brief self-introductions were completed by attendees; each person was asked to include the number of years of Natural Resource experience each one brought to the meeting. The total was 642 years. The RAC member briefing packet contained the BLM pamphlet, Our Public Land Heritage: From the GLO to the BLM, 2023 EMFZ Fire Information, a brief summary of the North Dakota RMS/EIS alternatives and the Consolidated Subcommittee Recommendations and Comments.

Mark Jacobsen and Wendy Warren reviewed the travel reimbursement process. RAC members were asked to complete forms and provide receipts timely to prevent end of the fiscal year issues resulting in delayed reimbursement.

The June MBRAC minutes were discussed, and errors noted. Doug Kary made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, Perri Jacobs seconded, all members voted in favor of accepting the minutes.

Kelley Lewis (Vice-Chair) resigned from the Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council. Miles Hutton (Chair) thanked Kelley for her service.

Miles Hutton called for nominations for a Vice Chair from the current membership. Stacey Barta nominated Perri Jacobs, Greg Jergeson seconded the nomination. No discussion followed and no others were nominated. Doug Kary asked that nominations be closed. Miles Hutton called for a vote, all in favor, none opposed. Miles Hutton welcomed Perri Jacobs as the Vice Chair.

Applications are currently being accepted for new RAC membership to fill this vacancy, and the terms that will expire January, 2024.

Miles Hutton provided a consolidated list of recommendations for comments and suggested amendments to be considered by the full RAC.

Members asked several questions regarding process, subcommittee actions and how all members were to receive the information prior to a meeting. Some members requested more information be available to all members to enable them to be prepared to discuss the recommendations from the subcommittee.

Kirsten Kaiser indicated that the RAC charter is the best source of information for member duties, responsibilities, what makes a quorum and ethics for the subcommittees, etc. She instructed members that the subcommittee should bring their final recommendation written and ready for the full RAC to review, discuss and edit during the meeting. The goal today is to develop a final document from the RAC to forward to the BLM. The document sent forward must have a consensus agreement on all items.

The meeting agenda was to review the ND RMP Subcommittee Recommendations. Kristine Braun and Greg Morel shared the presentation Draft RMP EIS North Dakota so members could be familiar with the RMP Alternatives before the discussion to formulate a RAC recommendation. Each topic was discussed. Greg Morel, Kristine Braun, Kirsten Kaiser, Wendy Warren, Mark Jacobsen and Regina Baltrusch answered the questions by RAC members regarding the clarification of the RMP/EIS document.

The RAC members discussed the subcommittee recommendations, making changes to reflect consensus. Miles Hutton asked for a call of support/rejection for each item. If consensus was not reached, the comment was not carried forward as a recommendation to the BLM. Regina Baltrusch was the scribe for the document. Miles Hutton will write a cover letter and send the document to the ND RMP/EIS team.

#### **Public Comment:**

A Public comment period was facilitated both days. On Sept. 18, Todd Devlin, Prairie County Commissioner and Dennis Teske, Prairie County Commissioner, addressed the RAC.

Todd Devlin asked the RAC to support the commissioners' efforts for public access related to the Milwaukee Bridge. The bridge surface and road need repair. Funding is available through a FLAP grant, but delays have increased the estimated cost from \$1.4 million to \$9.2 million.

Prairie County Commissioners told the RAC and BLM staff present, that they have supporting documents for a ROW to the portion of the road that crosses private property (and accesses the bridge). Mr. Devlin requested the RAC send a letter of support to be included in their application for the FLAP grant. Mr. Devlin then deferred discussion on an application regarding gravel pits on BLM lands, to Dennis Teske.

Dennis Teske expressed the difficulty the county is having obtaining a BLM permit to mine gravel from a BLM gravel pit. Maintenance of the county roads has been deferred and the road base is becoming dangerous. Residents need to transport product from farms and ranches to market. Public access is limited for recreationists that wish to use public land.

The commissioners also need to complete an application for the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Mr. Teske requested the RAC write a letter of support for Prairie County to get a permit by winter. Mr. Teske would like to have the gravel available when the ground freezes and road work can be accomplished. He said he appreciated the emergency use permit that BLM issued a year ago due to road damage from rain. Field Manager Eric Lepisto suggested that a Community Pit be considered as the process would be simpler and place the paperwork and the assessment of the gravel removed from the pit(s) on the Miles City Field Office and spare the county the trouble. The Prairie County Commissioners declined.

Doug Kary made a motion that the RAC write a letter to relevant political representatives and the BLM informing them of the issue with a request to resolve this by December 1, 2023, Art Hayes III seconded the motion. The motion carried. The letter will be written after the ND RMP agenda item is completed. \*Note: Prairie County has since employed a contractor to assess and complete the needed paperwork required to submit a proper application to the BLM, to access gravel mined from public lands, to include the existing pits in question. The county is projected to receive the necessary permits and conditions for mining gravel in early 2024.\*

Potential agenda items for the next meeting in 2024 were proposed and a field trip might be included.

The meeting was adjourned.



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council  
Montana/Dakotas State Office  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

October 18, 2023

In Reply Refer To:  
1784 (MT91000)

EMAIL TRANSMISSION – 6/30/2023  
Memorandum

To: Eddie Kraft  
Acting Field Manager, BLM North Dakota Field Office

From: Miles Hutton  
Chair, Missouri Basin RAC

Subject: MBRAC comments re. North Dakota Resource Management Plan

The BLM Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) met September 18-19, 2023, in Miles City, Montana. A major focus of the meeting was to formulate comments on the BLM North Dakota Field Office's proposed North Dakota Resource Management Plan. The RAC comments were approved by consensus vote to forward for your consideration and are detailed in the attachment.

The RAC's comments take the form of recommendations, comments and suggested amendments in section-by-section discussion. Under the Energy section, the RAC could not reach a consensus, which is noted.

Should you have any questions regarding the RAC's comments, MBRAC Chair Miles Hutton is available at (406) 301-1033 or by email at: [mhutton@blainecounty-mt.gov](mailto:mhutton@blainecounty-mt.gov); or from the Designated Federal Official (DFO) listed below:

Kirsten Kaiser, North Central Montana District Manager: (406) 538-1978, [kkaiser@blm.gov](mailto:kkaiser@blm.gov)

 *Missouri Basin RAC Chairman*

cc:  
Wendy Warren, BLM Eastern Montana Dakotas Acting DM  
Kirsten Kaiser, BLM North Central Montana DM/DFO  
Sonya Germann, BLM Montana/Dakotas State Director

## **North Dakota Resource Management Plan Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council Sub-committee**

**Sub-committee Members: Trisha Tonn, Doug Krings, Nathan Jagim, Miles Hutton, Kelley Lewis, Doug Kary**

*The BLM Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) met September 18-19, 2023, in Miles City, Montana. A major focus of the meeting was to formulate comments on the BLM North Dakota Field Office's proposed North Dakota Resource Management Plan. The RAC comments were approved by consensus vote to forward for the BLM North Dakota Field Office's consideration and are detailed below.*

### **Recommendations, Comments & Suggested Amendments**

#### **Air Quality**

1. p. 2-16, row 20. The MBRAC agrees with the BLM encouraging operators to seek economically viable opportunities for utilizing alternative-energy powered tools & equipment, provided it is not a requirement.

#### **Soils**

2. p. 2-17, row 33. The MBRAC recommends developing a detailed travel management plan.

#### **Wildlife**

3. p. 2-24, beginning with 168. The MBRAC recommends continued compliance with federal regulations concerning T&E listed species.
4. p. 2-23, row 156. It appears Alternative C is less restrictive than B. B) manage big horn sheep crucial habitat as a ROW exclusion area versus C) manage crucial habitat as a ROW avoidance area.
5. p. 2-23, row 165. Prairie Dog Habitat. As described under Alternative C, the MBRAC recommends defining only areas currently occupied by prairie dogs.
6. p. 2-26, row 205. The MBRAC recommends managing areas within 0.5 miles of active Bald Eagle nest sites, rather than 1 mile.

#### **Vegetation**

7. p. 2-26, row 193. The MBRAC recommends managing under B) NSO New Surface Occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.25 miles of special status plants or habitat rather than 0.50 miles.
8. p. 2-26, row 195. Manage as ROW avoidance area, rather than exclusion area.

#### **Cultural**

9. p. 2-32, row 281. The MBRAC recommends Controlled Surface Use to manage Surface Occupancy and use within most visible areas. Recommend aligning with National Park Service recommendations for use in the Fort Union area (3 miles).

**Lands and Realty**

10. p. 2-35, row 312. The MBRAC recommends deleting rifle ranges (recreational purpose) from hazardous waste disposal references.

**Energy**

11. MBRAC members' positions on future fossil fuels development are diverse and a consensus recommendation could not be achieved.

**Nonenergy Solid Leasable Minerals**

29. p. 2-45, row 404 (ref. row 282). The MBRAC recommends Alt. C for nonenergy solid minerals.

**Recreation**

30. p. 2-47, row 437. The MBRAC recommends Alt. C for any energy development in the Schnell Ranch SRMA.

**Transportation, Access, Trails**

31. p. 2-49/50, row 445-446. The MBRAC strongly recommends developing a detailed travel management plan. Until then, the MBRAC supports Alt. B.

**Grazing**

32. p. 2-51, row 472. The MBRAC recommends Alt. C.

**Special Management / Designation**

33. p. 2-49, row 438. The MBRAC recommends Alt. B for BCAs.

34. p. 2-54, row 506. The MBRAC recommends Alt. B for the addition of the Mud Buttes as an area of critical environmental concern.

35. p. 2-55, row 519. The MBRAC recommends Alt. B regarding the 3-mile visual CSU as applicable to mineral resource activities. Application of CSUs should be flexible depending upon site-specific conditions.

36. p. 2-55, row 520. The MBRAC recommends Alt. B regarding the 3-mile visual CSU as applicable to mineral resource activities. Application of CSUs should be flexible depending upon site-specific conditions.

**--- END OF COMMENTS ---**



Prairie County Commissioners  
217 W Park Street  
PO Box 125  
Terry, MT 59349-0125

Dear Prairie County Commissioners:

The BLM Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) supports Prairie County's application for Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and Montana Coal Endowment Program (MCEP) funding assistance to rehabilitate and reopen the Milwaukee Road bridge over the Yellowstone River.

The RAC has been advised by the Prairie County Commissioners that the county has committed as much of their available resources to rehabilitate the bridge, but it was nowhere near what was and is needed. After all the county's efforts to rehabilitate the Milwaukee Road bridge, it was closed. Without FLAP and MCEP assistance, rehabilitation of the Milwaukee Road bridge will not be possible, and it will remain closed.

The Milwaukee Road bridge provides the only reasonable vehicle access from the town of Terry to the BLM's Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and its surrounding badlands. The bridge also provides the most direct route to connect recreationalists, local residents, and sportsmen to the WSA and badlands. Closure of the bridge has created undue hardship on landowners, as well as state and federal agencies who have relied on the bridge to access their property. This bridge needs to be rehabilitated to reclaim access to the public lands that are vital to local and regional economies. The Terry Badlands is a major generator of economic activity in the region.

Once again, the BLM Missouri Basin RAC supports the rehabilitation and reopening of the Milwaukee Road bridge.

Sincerely,

Miles Hutton  
Chairman

Perri Jacobs  
Co-Chairman