

Bureau of Land Management

Northern California District Resource Advisory Council

Business Meeting

Sept. 18, 2025

Summary of Federal Advisory Committee Meeting

Committee Name: Northern California District Resource Advisory Council

Designated Federal Officer: Dereck Wilson, BLM Northern California District Manager

Chair: Leonard Moty

Meeting Dates: September 18, 2025

Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting

Summary of Meeting:

Seven of the 11 seated RAC members were present, but the meeting lacked a quorum due to missing members from one category (Ryan Henson and Bill Kuntz). The meeting was conducted virtually due to BLM travel restrictions limiting non-essential travel.

Opening Business

The meeting was called to order at 8:17 AM by Vice Chair Dan Efseaff due to technical difficulties with Chair Leonard Moty's connection. Leonard joined at 8:20. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved by motion and second. The agenda was accepted by consensus. Due to lack of quorum, no formal votes could be taken.

Ólak Ólohtem-Lost Coast Redwoods

Collin Ewing presented management considerations for the 4,500-acre coastal property acquired by BLM in December 2024 for \$54 million. The acquisition includes 7 miles of coastline, old growth and second growth redwoods, and coastal prairies. Key management challenges include the 2.5-hour driving distance from the Arcata Field Office, need for staff housing, and development of recreation and access plans. The presentation highlighted ongoing collaboration with tribal partners through the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council for co-stewardship opportunities. Tribal representatives Deborah Ramirez and Melinda Hunter provided statements emphasizing the area's cultural significance and the importance of tribal involvement in land guardianship and management.

Forest Service Business Plans

Shasta-Trinity National Forest: Jennifer Womack presented a comprehensive fee proposal covering 50 sites including 17 day-use sites, 22 campgrounds, 5 group campgrounds, 5 lookout/cabin rentals, and 1 special recreation permit. The proposal includes new \$5 daily/\$40 annual day-use passes and campground fee increases ranging from \$10-25. The Mount Shasta Summit Pass would increase from \$30 to \$50 annually. Public involvement in 2021 resulted in 270 comments with 149 supportive. Some fees were reduced based on public feedback.

Lassen National Forest: Janie Ackley presented a fee proposal for 33 sites including campgrounds ranging from \$12-24, group sites at \$85-120, and Christmas tree permits increasing from \$10 to \$20. The forest would maintain 47% of sites as fee-free. Limited public response included 21 total comments with 11 supportive.

Wild Horse Management

Derek Wilson provided updates on Carter Reservoir, Coppersmith, and Buckhorn HMAs. Current estimated population is 727 horses against an appropriate management level (AML) of 134-195. An Environmental Assessment was completed in April 2025 for gathering operations, but no gather has been scheduled pending Washington office approval and availability of holding facilities. Emily Ryan discussed a new partnership with Return to Freedom for fertility control programs involving cataloging animals and implementing darting programs. The office adopted 121 animals through various adoption events and online sales in 2025.

Public Comment

Seven members of the public provided comments, primarily focusing on wild horse management. Speakers including Amelia Perrin (American Wild Horse Conservation), Deborah Clemente, Autumn Moss, Janine Dallow, Steve Paige, and Laura Leigh advocated for higher AMLs, opposed roundups, and supported increased use of fertility control. Carla Thomas provided written comments supporting collaborative management of the Lost Coast property.

State and District Reports

Field managers provided updates on staffing changes, infrastructure projects, fire season activities, and fuels reduction work. Notable departures included Jeff Fontana (retirement) and several early retirement departures across offices. Significant projects include office building remodelings, campground improvements, road maintenance, and forest health initiatives totaling millions in grant funding.

Recommendations

No formal recommendations were made due to lack of quorum. RAC members expressed unanimous support for both Forest Service fee proposals and indicated they would likely approve them at a future meeting with full attendance.

Decisions

The RAC decided to schedule a special meeting specifically to vote on the Forest Service fee proposals once Federal Register notice requirements are met. Target timeframe is December 2025 or January 2026. Future agenda topics will include land use planning processes and implementation of Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan decisions. Regular meeting schedule for 2026 to be determined.

Comments

Despite lacking a quorum, the meeting proceeded with all planned presentations and public comment. Both Forest Service proposals had been delayed since 2021, making the presentations particularly important. Strong public interest in wild horse management issues demonstrated ongoing community concern about AML levels and management practices. Technical difficulties with virtual meeting platform affected some participants but did not prevent substantive discussions.

Date prepared: September 19, 2025

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