

# Northern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council Meeting – Notes from meeting 10/6 – 10/7

## Roll Call

- David Pierce (RAC)
- Jeanne Nations (RAC)
- Bill Wolf (RAC)
- Julie Hughes (RAC)
- Greg Deimel (BLM Elko)
- Kyle Hendrix (BLM Battle Mountain )
- Jon Sherve (BLM Battle Mountain )

## Administrative Business

- Meeting was called to order on time (1:00PM, 10/6)
- Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed by RAC members
  - A motion was made to make one change to the previous minutes; RAC voted to add the sage grouse subgroup as an item that was discussed during the 8/11 meeting
  - The motion to change the minutes was approved.
- RAC group had a discussion regarding the upcoming Tri-RAC meeting and asked if there had been a proposed date for that yet.
  - A date has not yet been set for the Tri-RAC meetings but BLM staff interjected saying that it will most likely be scheduled sometime in the spring.
- RAC group discussed if an additional NGBRAC meeting should be scheduled prior to the Tri-RAC
  - A point was made that with long breaks between meetings some pressing items may pass the group by
  - A suggestion was made to hold a VTC NGBRAC meeting in January
  - **The group agreed that an additional meeting should be held on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in the afternoon.** Meeting will be held using video teleconferencing systems available at all BLM District Offices.
    - Group voted and approved the following as agenda items for the January meeting: update on the grazing, sage grouse, and WH&B subgroups.
    - Updates from districts on Travel Plans.

## District Reports

### *Elko BLM District*

- All fire ESRs were approved and submitted
  - The process for seeding will begin in a few weeks

- Elko BLM will be putting out a news release on ESRs efforts as they happen.
- Fire update: This year Elko saw a much higher number of human-caused fires than normal and focused on messaging that promoted safe firearm use.

#### *Battle Mountain District*

- Representative from the BMD provided an update on mining projects and have a summary of projects with heavy workloads associated with them.
- A brief description of this year's National Public Lands Day event was provided – Desert clean up of an old R&PP in the town of Tonopah, done in coordination with Nye County.
- A brief description of the Hickisen Campsite Restoration project was provided – improvements to the campsite such as new fire pits, trail maintenance, and table re-painting. Project was done through a partnership with Nevada Conservation Corps.
- Update on the status of the Argenta Settlement Agreement was provided.

#### *Ely District*

- The Ely District provide updates to the RAC group regarding the following:
  - Minerals projects
  - Basin and Range National Monument
  - Outreach/special events (included Ely's National Public Lands Day Event)
  - Oil and Gas
    - *See district report for details*

#### **Recap on WH&B Advisory Board Meeting**

- RAC members who attended the Advisory Board meetings provided input that is summarized below:
  - The board was an impressive group
  - Was an extremely productive meeting
  - The group who attended the field trip portions saw several different groups of wild horses.
  - One RAC member did not have favorable opinions regarding the boards' chairman

#### **BLM District Updates – Wild Horse HMAs**

##### *Battle Mountain District*

- A presentation was given that illustrated AML (high & low), what the numbers are currently, and in what HMAs we are having the most issues with regards to overpopulation
- An update on the Stone Cabin Wild Horse Gather was provided and included; number of horses gathered, number of mares treated with fertility control, and number of DNA samples collected.
- An update was provide to the RAC on the Special Stone Cabin Adoption event held in Tonopah

### *Elko District*

- A presentation was given that illustrated AML (high & low), what the numbers are currently, and in what HMAs we are having the most issues with regards to overpopulation

### *Ely District*

#### **Water Canyon Research Project Update**

- GonaCon was administered to 12 mares
- 11/12 had foals this season but were already pregnant and will not reflect the effectiveness of the fertility control drug until the next foaling season.
- Initial results of the study are positive, animals are healthy and seem to be receiving the drug well
- This same area will be gathered next year and monitoring will occur in the hope of tracking the effectiveness of the gonaCon drug
  - See hand out for detailed description of this presentation

#### **WHB Fertility Control Methods**

- A presentation was given advocating for the BLM to 'use every tool in the tool box' when managing wild horses – there are many different tools available, some good for situations that others are not, and the BLM should be able to use all of what is available rather than being limited to simply gather/removal into long term holding.
  - See PowerPoint presentation for details
- A presentation was given that emphasized the importance of looking towards other solutions before considering sterilization, unprohibited sale, or slaughter. One of the suggestion made in the presentation was the further investigate wild horse sanctuaries and investigating the merits behind BLM managed wild horse sanctuaries.
  - See PowerPoint presentation for details
- RAC group discussed the merits of fertility control vs. slaughter as population suppression methods.

#### **Public Comment Period**

##### *Public Comment #1*

- This public comment was not made on behalf of any formalized organization

- Comment focused on the potential of expanding on the Northern Nevada Correction Facilities' wild horse adoption program and encouraged the RAC to consider/support an expansion of this concept to Ely.
- Commenter made the following points as to why this should be supported:
  - Benefits the inmates
  - The horses
  - The purchases/adopters
  - Good for BLMs struggling PR efforts in the WH&B program
  - The prison in Ely has already been contacted and supports the potential project

#### Public Comment #2

- The individual delivering this comment was representing the N-4 Grazing District
- Comment focused on currently HMA numbers and how far over AML they are (specifically in Ely district)
- Commenter touched on the rate of growth and how in a few years the numbers will be absolutely out of control
- Projections were given for the year 2028: the state of NV could potentially have 276,245 wild horses by then.
- Something must be done

**10/6 Northern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council Meeting was adjourned**