

**Cooperating and Federal Agency Meeting
January 20, 2004 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, UT**

Facilitator – Diana Hawks
Recorder – Jamie Clark

Meeting Minutes

10:00 – 10:15 am Introductions – Diana
Marietta Eaton is in Denver and will not facilitate today.

10:15 – 10:30 am Review and Approval of August 5, 2004 meeting minutes - Diana

The motion was made to accept the minutes from August by Sue Pratt
Seconded by Luke. approved by all.

10:30 – 11:00 am Chapter 2, State Guidance (Information) – Diana, Dennis, Roger
The planning team had been waiting for guidance from state and Washington office. The handout of the IM on State Director guidance for Arizona Land Use Planning Efforts is that guidance – we received it in December and forwarded it to all of you via email. We'll discuss this and let you know what guidance we must follow and the subsequent changes that have been made to the decisions. Please bring up any questions of items that are not discussed.

Management Units

Arizona BLM wanted a consistent approach throughout Arizona for all the planning efforts ongoing at the present time. Now that we have the state guidance, we will keep management units the same polygons (Community Interface, Front Country, etc.) that you have seen before. The state guidance now requires that these go into Recreation Management Zones, rather than just as Management Units. Because the route evaluation/designations determined the AZ Strip Management Units (Front Country and Back Country, etc.) we feel now that we need to place the Management Units under Travel Management Areas. This is a brand new allocation in the new BLM land use planning handbook coming out the end of this month. So we will change names and move them to this location in the document. Travel Management Areas are new decisions that can be made, they are an allocation now. Before the Management Units were not a land use planning decision. Now, we will make them synonymous with the Travel Management Areas and they will be land use plan decisions. Recreation management zones will also exist. But these are separate from the Travel Management Areas and the Management Units. Tom Folks will be in this afternoon to discuss the Recreation Management Zones which are the Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs). Anything which is not identified as an SRMA is an ERMA.

Question from Sue Pratt, Coconino County: Marble Canyon area across from the highway was identified as Community Interface previously. Development should not be supported in the area across from current development. In the plan, keep development on existing side of highway.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

BLM has the authority to manage lands with wilderness characteristics; naturalness, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. We have the authority to maintain these areas, if we have them.

Mark Habbeshaw of Kane County asked whether the BLM has the authority and questioned where that authority comes from. Please provide that information. "Solitude" as a category...nothing wrong with protecting what you have but don't protect what isn't there. You should not be creating wilderness study areas. Non impairment does not apply. Cannot treat them as WSAs.

The areas having wilderness characteristics should not be confused with wilderness study areas (WSAs). We have no WSAs on the Arizona Strip. There is designated (BLM) and proposed (NPS) wilderness on the AZ Strip. The areas with wilderness characteristics may be managed to maintain these characteristics and this is a land use allocation. But they are not managed under the non-impairment standard like the WSAs.

Q Did the direction come from Washington? Or from the state office? The Washington Office is allowing each state to develop their own guidance for wilderness characteristic areas. The Washington Office has said that flexibility is the watch word. We can protect areas we have with wilderness characteristics. These areas on the Arizona Strip do not have roads in them. We are not creating areas with wilderness characteristics. We can put temporary roads in these areas for restoration, etc. But the roads will be rehabilitated afterwards. The guidance we have is from the Arizona BLM state office, this is specific to Arizona BLM lands.

Visual Resource Management

Visual resource management in this guidance will provide a more consistent approach statewide. Use the least restrictive class that still achieves objectives to attain desired future conditions. Where we have scenic values, we can use the classes to protect them. The only mandatory VRM Class 1 areas will be designated and proposed wilderness. We can propose Class 1 or Class 11 for areas with scenic values that we wish to protect.

Travel Management (Transportation)

Guidance on travel management is also listed in this IM from the state office.

Question – Can you better define "reasonable use of the shoulder?" We discussed these definitions at length with the state office in Phoenix. This was the terminology decided upon.

Forage Reserves

We will identify livestock grazing allotments to manage as "forage reserves." Tuweep, Pakoon Springs allotments are identified this way. We are hoping to compliment livestock grazing by allowing grazing in these areas when fires or restoration do not allow grazing in other areas. We hope it will support the livestock grazing industry on the Arizona Strip.

Question on who will maintain the improvements on these allotments? Does BLM have the manpower to keep it up and running? Permittees are concerned about maintenance.

That is a good question – we are hopeful that we will be able to maintain the improvements on these allotments.

Kenneth Sizemore from Five Counties will put in writing the concerns on Forage Reserves. Mark Habbeshaw - These area should be assigned to valid ranchers and make sure that highest use occurs. The Taylor Grazing Act allows for closing allotments for only three years or for a temporary closure for rehabilitation purposes. But the Supreme Court states that the allotments must be used for their highest use which is grazing. BLM should not be creating administrative allotments here for which BLM does not have the authority. BLM might be able to propose a forage reserve for small portions of allotments but not for the entire allotment. It would be better to have the ranchers to use these allotments as a community unit rather than BLM.

We are getting direction by review on this plan and these decisions on forage reserve may change yet. We recognize it as a hot issue.

11:30 – 12:30 pm Chapter 2, Conclude State guidance information, Alternative Decision Tables (Discussion) – Diana

Arizona Coalition wilderness proposals are on the wall for comparison with what we are recommending for the areas to maintain with wilderness characteristics. We started with their proposal and then did our own internal review of areas that have wilderness characteristics. We went through an extensive process to evaluate all areas having wilderness characteristics. These evaluation criteria and the ranking of the individual areas is in this handout, which we gave at a previous meeting. The managers used this information to select the preferred alternative.

Luke questioned the acreage presented in the VRM decision table. Since we just completed the decision tables yesterday, GIS has not had a chance to correct all the numbers in the decision tables. So don't refer to these numbers yet. All our numbers will be GIS generated for consistency in the Draft.

Luke continued that they don't wish to lose any opportunity to do work for wildlife habitat. Class 1 will restrict wildlife habitat management. It would be beneficial for AZGFD to know VRM classes and acreages.

As soon as we have those numbers, we will get them to you.

Luke - Wilderness Characteristics table, maintenance of land on BLM is a priority...I have a conflict with the wording. There should be an equal opportunity for all multiple uses, wilderness characteristics should not be the highest priority use. Wildlife habitat management should be equal with all multiple use management. Coconino County also picked up on the wording. Mark Habbeshaw - does it conflict with FLPMA? Monument management is under FLPMA with the additional protections provided by the Proclamations. Monument Proclamations do not talk about wilderness. PLEASE check wording for this and make sure that you have authority to determine highest priority uses.

Sue Pratt – It would be helpful if there were additions to the tables to indicate how numbers were determined. Why is there a difference in acreages among alternatives, for example? What is the reasoning behind it? Very good suggestion – that would help the public understand it better as well.

Schedule – since some of you will not be here later this afternoon, we can go over the planning schedule now. We are moving fast and have extremely fast deadlines. We must complete Chapter 4 by February 11 and then get it to Lake Mead specialists for their review and input. We need to have the Draft to the state office to begin their review by April 15. So we need your input asap. We will make sure you receive all the decision tables electronically. If you could provide us with comments on Chapter 2 tables by the end of next week, that would be good. We will get the numbers to you as soon as possible. There will be time for your input before April but if there are any critical issues, we need to know about those as soon as possible. When should this group meet again? March? March 31 set as the next meeting date for the Cooperating Agencies. Same time and same place.

Question on the specificity in the Fish and Wildlife section. Mule deer considerations on page 5 for the standards for survival. Shouldn't this be a state issue of fawn survival rates, rather than a BLM decision? AGFD met with BLM to discuss numbers. The numbers are based on general state recommendations. The state office is pushing us to put these specifics in the plan. Comments from several cooperators on whether it is truly appropriate. Wildlife goals are set by the state not BLM. And the state may change these numbers. Can you put in disclaimer language? Give the plan the flexibility. Numbers which change from the state would then have to be amended in the BLM plan.

Suggest adding language for new fences as well as existing fences in this table.

Predator control question on who is doing the authorization.. both AGFD and BLM do so in coordination.

Brent M. - Check the House Rock --Kangaroo Rat location. Look at the boundaries again. Kangaroo Rat is on the south side of the Colorado River, also on the Kaibab. It is a greater distribution than just House Rock Valley.

Page 2 question on wildlife enhancements... on NPS lands upgrade activity vs maintenance. Repair vs. expansion? No new water development on NPS lands, this is an existing policy. You can replace and repair but no expansion of the facility.

1:00 – 2:00 pm Continue Discussion on Chapter 2 Alternative Decisions Tables
Fish and Wildlife

Page 7 on antelope/pronghorn number. Historical data have not hit numbers proposed in this plan. If habitat issue needs to be addressed, then address it.

Is providing wildlife waters no more than 3 miles apart realistic? What is the current situation? Some areas we do have waters available every three miles, yes. But not in all areas. Will there then be major projects to accomplish these goals? Yes, under the constraints of this plan.

Soil/Water/Air Table

Page 2 BLM will apply for water rights on all uses.. BLM may not have the right to file on water. Can only be administrative use? Cannot be filed over/on top of permittees. Can for recreation sites? BLM claims ownership of wildlife? Can on part of the habitat?

Wilderness Table

Luke – Question on whether the AGFD can continue to maintain facilities within wilderness areas. Yes.

Natural Quiet

Ken – Are their military training flight corridors on the Arizona Strip? Do any of these cross areas having wilderness characteristics? Are you proposing restricting this training? Yes, there is a military flight training corridor across the entire northern portion of the Arizona Strip. We are not proposing any changes to the Department of Defense regarding these training routes. The plan needs to show where these training routes are. It is a valid use and the public should be aware of it.

Luke - What have been the results of the meetings with FAA on these overflight and airport issues? Air tour management plan for Lake Mead meeting occurred. The overflights over NPS lands on the Parashant are all within the special flight rules for Grand Canyon NP. Discussions already occurred 7-8 years ago.

Trail and Travel Management

New land use allocation and section for BLM in the new land use planning handbook. The new allocation is for travel management areas. We will be using these travel management areas as our Management Units .

Luke page 15 question - Will hunters be able to get downed animals via motorized access? Should AGFD look at this as not being able to go off road to get downed animals? We had extensive discussion on this issue at the state meeting in Phoenix. This may be in conflict with state law. AGFD will clarify from their end – BLM will check with the state office.

2:00 – 2:30 pm Update on Special Recreation Management Areas (Information)– Tom

SRMAs-land use plans require identifying recreation management areas. A new process with better concepts and more details is in the new Land Use Planning Handbook. We are proposing SRMA's which focus recreation activities. It should have come out of the community based planning with proposals from the communities. But that didn't happen. So we relied on the scoping comments we received to propose these SRMAs. We are hopeful that we will get some meaningful input from the public, the communities, the counties on these SRMAs so that we can focus efforts and provide the appropriate recreation activities in the best places.

Concern expressed that recreation use will displace other multiple uses. And that this may concentrate uses.

Ken Sizemore – Concern expressed that there may be no need for SRMAs in the monuments. This is another chink on the multiple use mandate.

ATV use is a growing concern. The St. George Basin will be managed fairly intensively. The Strip will propose no ATV trails. We hope to set the scene for future use. If we don't provide opportunities there may be problems.

Mark Habbeshaw – Concern expressed about creating increased use in the St. George SRMA.

2:45 – 3:00 pm Update on Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences - Diana

**3:00 – 3:15 pm Information on Wilderness Society report on the Arizona Strip
“Protecting Northern Arizona’s National Monuments: The Challenge of Transportation
Management, Effects of Transportation Routes on Wildlife in the Arizona Strip”
(Information) – Diana**

Presentation made by the Wilderness Society to our office, the state office and to the Washington Office. The Arizona Wilderness Coalition was responding to our request for more specific information on the effects of transportation management on wildlife on the Arizona Strip. The report, however, cites literature that shows the effects of traffic on paved roads and at high traffic speed. Most of the roads we have on the Arizona Strip are unpaved roads and the traffic is low speed. So we didn’t think it was directly applicable for our plan. We did follow up with additional information on the references cited in the report. AGFD prepared a critique of this report and the literature cited.

The Wilderness Society and the National Trust for Historic Preservation is also conducting cultural resources inventories on the monument in Arizona. In November they were on the Vermilion Cliffs and Parashant monuments conducting inventories. They have hired a qualified research out of Flagstaff who is doing a good job. We are working with them. We will see the report on the results of this inventory sometime in February. The Wilderness Society is also working with the National Trust to get the cultural resources on these monuments listed on the Trust’s 10 most endangered places list in 2005. We support this listing because it may highlight the funding problems BLM currently has for cultural resources. It could mean more future funding. We cautioned the Wilderness Society against specifying any national monument and it’s resources in order to protect the sites. We support a general listing of all BLM national monuments.

Arizona Game and Fish response to this report (Information) – Diana .
Luke- the Wilderness Society report provided evidence not applicable to the Strip. Paved vs. dirt roads, for example.

**3:15 – 3:30 pm Information on Sonoran Institute’s recent publication “Prosperity in the
21st Century West: The Role of Protected Lands” (Information) – Diana**

Report handed out. Mark Habbeshaw – we felt that their interpretation of the data was as biased as the environmentalists. Use this report with caution. It ignores all the data we had gathered on the effects of livestock grazing on the economy.

Next meeting = **March 31st 10:00am**

FINAL COMMENTS

Roger Taylor - Thank you for coming. We are getting close.
Dennis Curtis - Mother of all plans! We’ll take your comments up to the last minute.
Bill Dickinson - Appreciate all input!

Attendees:

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