

Bureau of Land Management
Alaska Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Campbell Tract Facility
Anchorage, Alaska
April 6-7, 2010

Day 1: Tuesday, April 6, 2010

Council members present: Verne Rupright, Michael Wald, Jim Posey, Charlie Boddy, Rachel Klein, Amalie Couvillion, Suzanne McCarthy, Mike McDougall, Scott Hala, June McAtee, Mark Hanley, Greg Beischer.

Council members not present: Sandra Key Holsten, Teresa Imm, (Steve de Albuquerque has resigned)

BLM representatives present: Julia Dougan, Ruth McCoard, Pam Eldridge, Bob Schneider, Gary Reimer, Jim Fincher, Lenore Heppler, Nancy Beres, Rob Brumbaugh, Dave Howell, Ron Dunton, Dave Mushovic, Bill Overbaugh.

Members of the public present: Stan Leaphardt of State CAFCA, Mary Patania.

Call to order: 1:10 PM

Chair Suzanne McCarthy called the meeting to order and began a recap of all the changes that took place since the last Resource Advisory Council (RAC) meeting in 2009; a new administration, new charter, new RAC appointments, and announcing Steve de Albuquerque's resignation due to being transferred to Australia. Mark Hanley moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting; Jim Posey seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Acting Chief of Office of Communication, Ruth McCoard began introductions of BLM staff, discussed general housekeeping issues, and gave a reminder that the nomination period is open for this year's RAC election.

Acting State Director Julia Dougan introduced herself and talked about former State Director Tom Lonnie's retirement. Dougan gave the RAC a general overview of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the upcoming August oil and gas lease sale, and other ongoing projects including energy development initiatives, and climate change in Alaska: BLM is collaborating with Native entities, and a Climate Change office in Anchorage (USGS & UAF), NOAA.

Various topics discussed included the 10th anniversary of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), ongoing land use planning, the president's youth program initiative, and Alaska land conveyance which marked milestones in 2009. Dougan explained the president's budget reduction of 40 percent in land conveyance expenses means that BLM-AK has had to develop a plan in preparation of next year's budget cut and potential reduction of staff in order to meet the

budget reduction. BLM-AK has identified 107 surplus employees and requested incentive authorities. BLM will continue to survey and convey land, but at a dramatically reduced rate.

BLM staff presentations to the RAC:

Nancy Beres: Gave a presentation about American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects, described an Alaska Fire Service (AFS) water conservation project, all funding of ARRA projects must be completed by June 2010 and the projects must be completed by the end of this fiscal year. All ARRA projects are on track.

Rob Brumbaugh: Brought the RAC up to date on the Drew Point legacy well where coastal erosion measures 50-300 feet per year. Gave history of the well and how it got to today. Described the processes of remediation in winter. The project is on-schedule for completion by April 12, 2010.

Bill Overbaugh: Describes the Youth Initiatives and the purpose for the initiatives; problems with youth not engaging in the outdoors, thereby losing the understanding of our environment and natural resources. Identified trends that revealed youth spend 30 minutes per week outside and 45 hours indoors with electronic media. Ways to reengage youth are through schools and youth groups, outdoor careers, and "Take it Outside" partnerships.

Ron Dunton: Gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Alaska Natural Gas Pipelines.

Vanessa Rathbun: Gave a demonstration using the Internet demonstrating the BLM-AK homepage, where to find geographical data, maps and other features, and asked for feedback about navigation and content.

Ted Murphy: Talked about the lease sale for Northeast NPR-A AK that will take place in August, 2010. He distributed a map showing the lease sale area. Red Devil Mine is a historic cinnabar mercury mine and described characterizations of the site. Two native corporations have interests in obtaining the area. BLM will conduct muscle tissue sampling of three fish species in the Kuskokwim for metals (burbot, pike, shefish); water quality tests in the river; in the autumn a characterization of the site. BLM will hold various public meetings in the future.

Meeting was recessed at 4:45 PM and will resume tomorrow morning at 9:00.

Day 2: Wednesday, April 7, 2010
BLM Campbell Tract Facility, Anchorage, Alaska

Council members present: Verne Rupright, Michael Wald, Jim Posey, Charlie Boddy, Rachel Klein, Amalie Couvillion, Suzanne McCarthy, Mike McDougall, Scott Hala, June McAtee, Greg Beischer.

Council members not present: Sandra Key Holsten, Teresa Imm, Mark Hanley was called away to Juneau (Steve de Albuquerque has resigned).

BLM representatives present: Julia Dougan, Ruth McCoard, Pam Eldridge, Bob Schneider, Gary Reimer, Kent Slaughter, Tami Devries, Randy Goodwin

Members of the public present: Jennifer Hillman, Jeremiah Millen, Mary Patania

Chair Suzanne McCarthy called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM.

Ramona Chinn: Gave a presentation about the Alaska Lands program, described goals, acreages patented and unpatented, the difference between interim conveyed and conveyed, records issue with activity, an explanation of land over-selection by more than one entity, and the Land Acceleration Act.

Randy Goodwin: Travel management and off-highway vehicle use, BLM travel management planning as part of the land use planning. Travel issues such as what routes are important to people in the state and how to keep them safe and improve them, but keep a balance between recreational, traditional, and resource development on BLM lands.

Lenore Heppler: Discussed the Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan (RMP). The scoping report is now on the web. Described why BLM needs a RMP, what type of decisions are made in the plan, the planning processes, and the next steps of the plan, including 90-day public comment period and public notifications. The RMP will have a 20 year lifespan. New plans are benefits-based with newer policies and procedures, cover new issues such as invasive weeds and noxious weeds, recreation and special recreation designated areas. Also included are D1 withdrawals, utility corridors, and mining issues.

Gary Reimer: Presented the Anchorage District Office (ADO) update. Bering Glacier camp will be held in 2010, discussed the Campbell Tract Land Use plan processes and the history of the Department of Interior emergency management on the Tract. Various projects and issues included:

- A draft management plan of the Delta, an EIS, and a Wild and Scenic River plan
- BLM is at the start of the Bering Sea/Western Interior plan
- The Haines plan will include recreational helicopter activity and mountain goat habitat
- Discussed various aspects and progress of the Red Devil mine recovery project
- One successful ARRA project is the Iditarod safety shelter cabins
- Other ARRA projects are trail maintenance at Campbell Tract that involve youth

- A completed ARRA project in the Glennallen area is a bridge at Paxson Lake that also involved a boy scout troop
- A possible ARRA project the RAC might visit is the Top of the World Trail where we've done work in the Glennallen area
- On-going work regarding unauthorized occupancies in various areas throughout the ADO; last year ADO finished 77 unauthorized use cases
- Youth involvement has been successful in Glennallen
- There will be a public presentation in Paxson about the Delta River management plan to discuss proposed restrictions
- BLM has had longstanding easement issues in the Cantwell country
- Donation and relinquishment is where Ahtna will be donating new easement areas and relinquishing the old easements. Also where to put site easements created multi-user issues until Ahtna suggested two half-acre site easements. This also included the Alaska Railroad, National Park Service, Alaska State Department of Transportation.

-Lunch break-

Meeting resumed at 1:05PM.

Public Comment: Jennifer Hillman, “serve as a watchdog, but also as an aid. Eastern Interior resource plan. Delay it so more stakeholders can be involved in the plan process. Area of critical environmental concern. Make well-informed decisions. Draft comment period soon and we would like Alaska specific guidelines in this national plan, in specific 810 policy. One thing we would like to request is that a mandatory 810 analysis be triggered when a mandatory EIS is triggered. One of the things that happens in these situations is there is not an 810 consultation with tribes until after an EIS draft has come out. If an 810 is automatically triggered, then a lot of the information can get into the documents a lot earlier and building those relationships with tribes a lot sooner. The final issue I want to address is predator control; we don't have a stance on this issue at this time, but one thing I've learned is that a NEPA review might be required for intensive management on BLM lands.”

Bob Schneider: In the 14 months since the last RAC meeting a lot has happened.

- Talked about the successful White Mountain Race that took place in winter 2010 and required a lot of coordination between users and BLM
- Squirrel River plan covers about one million acres where caribou are known to cross for their summer feeding grounds. Villagers depend on the caribou, and recreational hunters and guides also use the area for the caribou. BLM is working on managing all aspects of the guiding and motorized use/access in the Kobuk Seward Peninsula area, including easements and rights-of-ways
- In NPR-A, BLM has a hydrology information station to determine where the flood plain is, taking water flow measurements and the information is transmitted so staff does not have to be on the ground to monitor it. USGS is testing old wells, using old deep wells to take temperatures of the permafrost
- Wainwright Dew Line site, which is actually part of the NPR-A, is used by the Air Force for military exercises, discussed the old dump and the clean-up project as it is conducted through the different seasons. Also discussed the Point Lonely Dew Line site clean-up

project and explained removal of contaminated materials. Talked about the remediation processes of the J. W. Dalton Legacy Well and the Atigaru Point well and their reserve pits

- ARRA projects include Drew Point, monitoring of the habitat restoration of the Anaktuvak Pass fire in 2007, the 26-mile Pinnell Mountain trail maintenance in the Steese National Conservation area, Northwest Arctic Borough trails marking project, Fort Egbert trails marking project in the Eagle area, Taylor Highway water system upgrades, Nome Creek riparian project, construction of the White Mountains administrative site for BLM crews, water damage on the Nome Creek road from Moose Creek, on the Taylor Highway improving parking turnouts for public safety and to provide better access for people, complete the Dalton Highway weed management plan and the two-phase NEPA process
 - Showed a slideshow of the 2009 Eagle flood and described the water station BLM set up for the residents and volunteers, talked about how BLM offered temporary stays at the campground and BLM facility for affected residents and volunteers.
- 15 minute break -

Kent Slaughter: Describes working with other agencies on a master agreement on a department manual, explained the Master Cooperative Wildfire Management and Stafford Act Response and Agreement, and how the Alaska Fire Service coordinates with other agencies and Native Corporations or other entities who have jurisdiction on the land where the active fire is burning. Mentioned how to find maps on the Internet that shows where the fires are, talked about the BLM lightning detection system and the increase of lightning on the North Slope. PowerPoint presentation of highlights of 2010 fire activities, brief overview of AFS.

Tami Devries, Fire Management officer for military lands in Alaska.

- Explained projects with the U.S. Army, ARRA projects to remove old underground fuel tanks in McGrath and has maintenance of the station
 - Galena has taken over the utilities of the old Air Force facility after the Air Force withdrew from it and BLM received ARRA money to demolish a building there and move a building;
 - Tanana buildings are removed
 - Energy upgrade for Fort Wainwright facilities
 - Burning vegetation on land where military exercises take place
 - Hazard fuel reduction in the spring
 - Fire response plans with the military department
 - Trail system and helicopter spots, interagency fire training
 - General fire suppression
- In 2010, there are twelve prescribed fires

End of presentations.

RAC General Discussion period: After presentations by the BLM staff, RAC members discussed how they could best serve the BLM in the current year, versus how the RAC had worked in the recent past. For the new members, the RAC explained land-planning issues, what

the RAC resolutions are and the RAC's role in advising the BLM on issues, the benefit of field trips, and specific projects the RAC chooses to be involved in. Members shared their experiences and recommendations as to how to proceed in the current year and what topics interest them.

BLM suggested distributing an activity calendar to show upcoming public meetings the RAC can attend. At this time, however, BLM-AK does not have software ability to create a calendar for its website, but offered instead to send a static calendar through email to the RAC. All were agreeable to that suggestion.

In addition, it was agreed that the RAC chair and vice-chair will schedule a meeting with the State Director, Chief of Communications and the RAC Coordinator to identify issues the RAC would be interested in.

The location of the proposed summer field trip was discussed and a query of when most members might be available. Also discussed was the upcoming nomination period for seats expiring in 2010, including the seat vacated by Steve de Albuquerque when he was transferred by his company, and BLM encouraged the current members to think of who they could recommend to the Council.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:58 PM.

###

*Handouts are available upon request. Please call 907-271-5555.
pe*