Bureau of Land Management
Arizona Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2014

BLM National Training Center
9828 North 31st Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. by RAC Chair Bill Brake. Bill welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. The working groups had a successful meeting on January 29.

Following the call to order and welcome, the Council members introduced themselves and the areas they represent. Members of the audience were also asked to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

AGENDA ITEM: Welcome and Introductions: Bill Brake, RAC Chair, RAC Members, BLM Staff, and Guests

Resource Advisory Council Members in Attendance:
Category 1 – Commercial/Commodity Interests

Stu Bengson
Bill Brake
Thomas Hulen
Maggie Sacher
Emmett Sturgill

Category 2 – Environmental, Dispersed Recreation, Archaeological/Historic, Wild Horse & Burro Interests

Glen Collins
Huibertje Maaike (Mica) Schotborgh
Michael Quigley
Carl Taylor
Doug Traub

Category 3 – Elected Officials, Native American, Public at Large, Academia, Local Government Officials

Dawn Duncan-Hubbs
Larry Howery
Harold "Drew" John
Jeffrey Sargent

Jim deVos, Arizona Governor's Representative

Absent: Gary Watson (Category 3).

BLM Staff in Attendance: Ray Suazo, Julie Decker, Deborah Stevens, Matt Thorburn, Dennis Sylvia, Mary D'Aversa, Roxie Trost, Ruben Sanchez, Dorothea Boothe, and Colleen Hickman from BLM Arizona. June Shoemaker came after lunch to give a Sonoran Landscape Pilot update.

Guests/Members of the Public: Jeremy Browning, GovGroup, contractors for ASARCO; P. Chris Pfahl, ASARCO; Gerry Hillier, Executive Director for Quadstate Local Government Authority visiting from California (Mohave and La Paz counties are both members); Francisco Valenzuela, United States Forest Service (USFS); Rian Bowers, representing the City of Sierra Vista Cochise County; Holly Taylor and Dan Shein, members of the public.

AGENDA ITEM: State Director's Update on BLM Programs and Issues

BLM Arizona State Director Ray Suazo thanked everyone for taking time to attend the meeting and engage with the BLM. Suazo welcomed the new RAC members and said he appreciates their participation and help in finding solutions to the issues and challenges the BLM deals with on a daily basis.

Suazo stated that the RAC selection process is a very structured framework. The BLM posts the call for nominations through the *Federal Register* and does outreach to solicit interest in the community, and it receives a variety of nomination packages. The BLM needs to select members with a balance of interests, and the diversity adds value to what the RAC provides to him as the designated Federal official. If a member was not re-nominated, it doesn't reflect on them or on their past input.

The Sonoran Landscape Pilot Project is just one example where the RAC's input has been very helpful. The RAC helps the BLM find opportunities and the chance to make a difference; they bring valuable advice and help the BLM see another person's point of view. Suazo noted he is excited about what this new RAC is going to bring to the table and their individual perspectives as he sits down with the District Managers and discuss how to best manage the public lands in Arizona.

Personnel Changes: A number of exciting changes have occurred in BLM Arizona's leadership team since the last RAC meeting, and Suazo briefed the group on departures and arrivals.

- Scott Florence, District Manager of the Arizona Strip District, retired in early January. Scott was a tremendous person who gave a lot to the BLM, and he will be missed. He has won the BLM Director's Excellence in Leadership Award and will be receiving it next week. Suazo said the BLM is working to fill his position as quickly as possible. In the interim, Matt Thorburn, who is the Associate District Manager of the Arizona Strip District, is in an acting capacity as the District Manager.

- Vi Hillman, former Associate District Manager of the Colorado River District, is now in place as the Tucson Field Manager. She is engaging on issues related to the Tucson Field Office together with Dennis Sylvia and Tim Shannon and the leadership. It was a critical vacancy, and having someone with the range of experience that she brings was timely.

- Ed Kender is officially onboard as the new Lower Sonoran Field Manager. He replaced Emily Garber, who retired last year. Ed most recently worked at the BLM National Training Center. He brings a lot of experience, is very solutions-oriented, and thinks about how to best to serve the public.

- Dave Scarbrough is the new Sonoran Desert National Monument Manager. He replaced Rich Hanson, who retired last May. Dave has a lot of experience in the district, including having worked on Operation ROAM (Restore Our Arizona Monuments). He is an action-oriented manager who will get things accomplished.

- Gera Ashton recently filled the post of Deputy State Director (DSD) for Business and Support Services behind David Hughes, who retired in June of 2013. Gera comes to us from the BLM's National Operations Center and has a broad range of experience, having worked with the Bureau of Reclamation, BLM Nevada, and the U.S. Air Force. She is focused on business processes and making the organization more efficient, so she will be an excellent addition to the BLM Arizona team.

Suazo shared some of his background to introduce himself to the new RAC members and to explain a little about his perspective and his approach. He is from northern New Mexico and grew up near the San Pedro Mountains raising cattle with his father, who was a permittee. From this experience, he learned about paying attention to and managing resources so they are available for another day.

Suazo said he believes that balance is key to BLM's multiple-use mission. The BLM works for preservation and restoration of ecosystems, riparian systems, and wildlife, but equally important are things like access, such as mining and minerals. As RAC members, you will see the variety of that spectrum. In order to use resources, the BLM has to think about protecting them and the balance that lies within. These are public resources that the BLM makes available for use, while also working to protect them. He asked that the RAC consider that balance when they work on the challenges they face.

In some of the RAC's most recent work, they have stepped up to help the BLM find solutions and options. The Sonoran Landscape Pilot Project is one with big challenges but also some very big opportunities. He appreciates the RAC's input in the BLM's process and the advice they give on a wide variety of issues.

Sequestration and Shutdown: Suazo said that the BLM is still trying to recover from those impacts. Sequestration is not a good process for budget management, as there is no flexibility to be strategic with funding, and that is a problem. Due to the shutdown, BLM workforce was off for about 3 weeks. This cost much more than just that missed time; there was also 3 weeks of preparation time before the shutdown, in putting contracts on hold and shutting down projects.

Following the shutdown, it took about 2 weeks to get ramped back up again. Suazo wanted to share this, not as a complaint, but so that the RAC understands why the BLM may not be as far along on its project work as it had hoped to be. He also said we hope not to see this again and that other options will be considered.

Secretarial Themes and Priorities: In part of today's meeting there will be discussion on how BLM Arizona connects to the Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary's initiatives. These include America's Great Outdoors (AGO), climate change, Native American nation, the new energy frontier, the water challenges across the west and the U.S., and engaging youth. Suazo said that BLM Arizona is already engaged in all of these areas and is discussing how it will align itself with the Secretary's priorities.

Suazo mentioned a meeting he attended in Tucson yesterday with the Chief of Border Patrol, some of the DOI Undersecretaries, and other resource agencies, including the USFS. He noted, the priorities are not just on interdiction at the border, but also impacts to the area, including climate change, water, etc., in the lands that these agencies are responsible for. This discussion is moving across the different agencies, and that's pretty exciting.

BLM Arizona Strategic Focus Areas: The State Leadership Team (SLT) has been talking about how to prioritize them. Staff has done some work to determine how to best align these priorities with the limited resources. The SLT is ready to discuss these priorities at its next meeting and decide where to take them from here.

For example, with the border strategy, the primary components are safety and security, resource protection, and working in partnership with the interested stakeholders. The BLM will now revisit that strategy and see if those are the goals they should be focusing on, and if not, refresh them. Suazo also said he wants the RAC to give him some information with regard to landscape-level approaches, which will fit in with this concept of clarifying these goals and outcomes.

Grazing Permit Renewal Action Plan: The Districts have worked to identify the workload they have and to try and get the resources needed to address that workload. Julie Decker is looking at it from a statewide strategy, and hopefully by sometime this spring, BLM will be in a position to prioritize that workload and to meet with the interested stakeholders about how we can get that work done.

Suazo remarked that Roxie Trost gave a good overview on the RAC grazing subcommittee's progress at yesterday's working group meetings. Any questions relating to that can be addressed during the Colorado River District's report.

Tribal Forum: In 2012, BLM Arizona hosted a tribal forum and invited all the tribes in the state. The intent was to discuss the various renewable energy projects; to have a general 'get to know the BLM' to help communicate what the BLM's priorities are in each district and in the State; and to have a dialogue with the tribes on a local level about what is important to them. The feedback from the tribes who participated was positive, and the BLM hopes to do this again in spring 2014. Once this is scheduled, they will notify the tribal partners.

Yarnell Hill Fire: Regarding the Yarnell Hill Fire, the BLM is looking at the recommendations from the investigation team and looking at its own processes, capturing lessons learned, be forward thinking in its approach to the fires they deal with and the rehab and the work that comes after. There is a lot of discussion going on about catastrophic fire. California is very dry and is dealing with water shortages. BLM Arizona is really focusing on safety, both for the work force and for the communities they serve.

Suazo talked about a landscape-level approach to fire. The BLM is talking with its partners about what to do differently moving forward, knowing that many of these landscapes need treatment, but they are not likely to get the resources they need to get that work done, so they need to take a strategic look. He talked about last summer's Dean Peak Fire; BLM crews had done some pro-active work in managing those areas, which very likely kept the fire from being much worse.

So BLM needs to look at its fire program strategically and ask how to deal with budget shortfalls and still deal with wildfire management. Basically, what is the strategic approach to take? The BLM may come to the RAC for some input in this area, and the discussion will have to do with climate change, landscape mitigation, fuels approach, and so on.

Update on ASARCO Ray Land Exchange: BLM Arizona has briefed the RAC on the ASARCO Ray Land Exchange several times in the past. The proposed exchange will allow a mining project to move forward, while at the same time, allowing the BLM to acquire some valuable lands that are worth preserving. The BLM is working to finalize the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and is working to engage with all of the stakeholders and moving through the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. The BLM is committed, as is ASARCO to completing this exchange. If you have specific questions, there is more information on both BLM Arizona's and ASARCO's websites.

DISCUSSION:

Bill Brake said there has been a lot of change, and while change is good, it can sometimes be scary. He looks forward to working with the new BLM staff members. In the Phoenix District, Mary D'Aversa has done an excellent job of informing the public what the BLM does. Tim Shannon and Dennis Sylvia down in the Gila District are really getting things done. Matt Thorburn has some pretty big shoes to fill, taking over where Scott Florence left off. The RAC all respected Scott and truly valued his advice. Roxie Trost has brought some groundbreaking, fresh ideas that have been very fair and a brilliant new approach to some old problems that sometimes can't be resolved. Decker has been great and a wonderful resource for the RAC. Her knowledge and support have helped tremendously. Although most of the DMs are new, and the RAC will miss some of the background that was there, you have more than made up for it.

Even though the RAC only meets three times a year for a couple of days, some of the members put in a lot more time than that. They do it because they care. The members believe in what they are doing; as long as the BLM gives them substance that they can work on and listen to what their opinions are, they hope to be able to make a valuable contribution to the BLM.

Suazo acknowledged their commitment and absolutely recognizes that it is much more than just a two day commitment. They all give up their time, not for him, but for the public that they serve. Their commitment is clear and is very much appreciated. The best thing they can do as a group is if there are issues they want to get on the agenda that they work with the RAC Chairman. Suazo said he will sometimes come to the RAC with specific items that he wants their input on. He wants this RAC to do more than just get updates on BLM programs and that he wants and values their input.

Suazo shared that the Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) Working Group had provided the BLM with advice about a possible solution from a company called Senestech. He did carry the RAC's suggestions forward to BLM Headquarters, saying that BLM Arizona wants to be part of any possible solutions and approaches that are out there. The BLM nationally is focusing on looking at options in the WH&B program. He added that the company needs to submit its proposal and get engaged in the process.

Brake reminded the RAC that it needs to elect a new Vice Chairperson. Glen Collins nominated Carl Taylor, and Doug Traub nominated Maggie Sacher. Both nominations were seconded by Stu Bengson. The RAC members voted by secret ballot, and Sacher was chosen as the Vice Chairperson.

AGENDA ITEM: Department of the Interior (DOI) Themes & Landscape Level Opportunities for BLM

Suazo talked earlier about the Department's priorities, and Decker discussed how BLM Arizona's goals tie in to the Secretary of the Interior's six themes, which are America's Great Outdoors (AGO), climate change, Native American nations, new energy frontier, water challenges, and youth. From youth to AGO to the new energy frontier, BLM Arizona is moving forward with them in its regular work.

In the area of youth, the Phoenix District has been a leader in engaging youth through Phoenix College. In energy, Arizona has worked on the Restoration Design Energy Project (RDEP) and identified Solar Energy Zones (SEZ), looking for lands that are of the least conflict and are prime for energy opportunities.

The Native American theme mostly relates to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), but for the BLM, it's the consultation, such as the tribal forum Suazo mentioned earlier, and working on the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with some of the tribes to try and improve those relationships. Climate change and water are key to Arizona's strategic focus areas as part of the goal of sustainability; this includes water, ecological function, and working landscapes.

Climate change is also an overarching theme, and the agency is looking at a landscape level approach. Decker referred to those higher-level landscape assessments, known as Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REAs), where the BLM has looked for conflicts and areas where there are opportunities for improvement. BLM Arizona is working with the REAs and seeing how to take that data down from planning to the implementation. The BLM has also been meeting with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to see where they have been going with the

cooperative resource management process and how to best leverage resources together with agency partners and other stakeholders.

Decker finished by saying the BLM has started on that implementation, but she wanted to talk to the RAC to see if they have any ideas or any advice to make sure BLM is not overlooking anything.

Suazo thanked Decker for the overview. The BLM has met with NRCS and is ready to work with the other resource agencies, including Arizona Game and Fish, USFS, Nature Conservancy, Sonoran Institute, etc., to see where to move in the future with this landscape level approach, while also staying connected with the Secretary's themes. With today's limited resources, BLM Arizona needs to find long-term, strategic solutions and work in a broader approach. The agencies need to come together and pay attention to what is important for a landscape; if the agencies focus on that and start to pool their resources, they can be far more effective from a strategic standpoint.

One example is the BLM New Mexico's project, Restore New Mexico. They have pulled together people from oil and gas, the cattle industry, game and fish organization, and conservation groups to keep those lands viable and useful, while still paying attention to restoration and protection. DOI Secretary Jewell is very interested in having these discussions and in thinking about the impacts of all these things on the landscape and how to prepare for it. Suazo said BLM Arizona needs to be paying attention or it will be difficult to get the resources it needs.

Suazo pointed out this RAC is a diverse enough group to have some robust discussion about what is important at that landscape level, while focusing on the six themes, and to come back with some recommendations and concepts for the BLM and its partners to look at. That may be too broad and too general, so it can be refined, if need be. Suazo feels there is an opportunity to get the RAC's support and to get the BLM to focus on its very limited resources.

DISCUSSION:

Brake said it might help if he and Emmett Sturgill, who both live out on the land, could explain some of their background. Suazo suggested they discuss this through the various working groups, as each RAC member has his or her perspective. Brake said that the State of Arizona had relocated 14 antelopes from Prescott Valley and moved them near his area (Elgin), due to Prescott Valley's development.

While moving them was a wonderful and positive opportunity for everyone, it was going to cause an impact on his allotment. Brake said he had to work to get better utilization of the grazing and fencing to allow access to water and better rotation of his cattle. It took some coordination and some effort, but it ended up better for everyone. He also said he doesn't mind the regulations, but it shouldn't take two years to get something done.

Brake recommended everyone taking a good look and asking themselves what we can all do to make things better. Despite budget cuts, there are still funds out there. He suggested the BLM

take an active role in contacting the various organizations and institutions, show them how they can make an area better, and show them some tangible results so they are onboard.

Suazo said we do all want the same things, and we all need to look at it more broadly. The BLM should challenge the working groups to have this dialogue and then bring it to the full RAC. Brake said each working group will look at those issues, report back to the full RAC, and then they will report back to the BLM.

Taylor asked Decker for a copy of the six themes so the RAC members know exactly what they are.

Dawn Duncan-Hubbs said being out on the landscape and being on the grazing subcommittee, she sees there is a desire for collaboration. One of the things that can help the grazing subcommittee is to reference Executive Order 3330, which ties into everything you are saying. There is a conundrum between development and conservation, preservation, and protection. It's very exciting to be able put together the RAC members' expertise and networking systems to give the BLM advice.

Suazo said when BLM Arizona is asked what it is doing about large landscape level mitigation, he wants to already have the RAC's input. Brake gave a great example of a real project, and Suazo wants those kinds of things to come forward in their working group discussions. That is where the RAC's input is so valuable.

Sacher agreed this is exciting because what the RAC can do is bring that community interface. This time, the RAC will be looking at a bigger area instead of a single project. The working group should always consider this. She said the BLM already does a great job of managing internally inside the land, but asked how do we take that information and integrate the communities back into it?

Suazo added that he doesn't expect a finished product at the next RAC meeting. He asked that they start these discussions and work out some concepts, thinking of the diversity of what each of you represent in this room. But being able to bring these working groups together and come up with a handful of concepts is great.

Brake said the RAC will need Suazo's input as well. The members want to make sure what they give him is what he is looking for. Taylor said in order to be effective, the RAC would need some staff liaison to help coordinate between the groups, and Larry Howery echoed this. Suazo said he would expect that. The idea is to have each working group look at all areas and give their input.

Howery said that having good strategies in place is very important. However, there are local issues that require tactics; everyone has different issues, and while there needs to be an overall strategy, tactics need to be involved to tailor things that are local but also feather up to the landscape level. Suazo agreed and said that when the RAC hands things to him, he will reach out to other partners and the DMs for local level implementation.

Sacher asked if the RAC could get some tools, such as the NLCS strategy, the three-year strategy, etc., so they have the information they need. Suazo said someone at the BLM will work something up.

Traub said he feels this is a great opportunity. Taylor suggested there be a standardized methodology to make sure the groups work in the same ways. If the BLM has fundamental views and policies in these six areas the RAC may need them to be a framework so the working groups are effective. Suazo asked Decker to work on this with the DMs so they can give the RAC a good framework.

Collins commented that some of the best meetings were the ones where the BLM asked them for something specific. Brake agreed and added that although a framework would be helpful, just give them some basis for what they should work on. Based on what Decker sends them, the RAC should take Suazo's general framework; if the BLM says exactly what they want, they may miss out on opportunities. Suazo offered to frame some questions that the RAC might consider so they can start that dialogue.

D'Aversa said for her, this is an opportune time to discuss this item. In mid-April, the Phoenix District Office has a fuels specialist coming on staff as a result of the State Office and the National fire office; part of that is tied to fuels treatment needs in Arizona. She is onboard and has had experience with this type of landscape planning. D'Aversa said she likes it because it allows for prioritization and for her to work with partners to achieve goals.

Brake said they can do all the planning, but someone has to get the money. The RAC members can take the planning and seek funds where they are available. There needs to be an overview first.

Dennis Sylvia said it might be valuable to include the District level dropdown strategies in the BLM's information package to show how they see the Arizona Strategies at their level. It also may be useful for the DMs to give an overview of their approach on the landscape issues they are dealing with. Suazo said this is a great idea.

Jim deVos said when you can do the environmental documentation at a very large scale, even though you may not have the funding to do it today, there could be year-end money or other opportunities to fund your plans. The money is out there; part of it is going big enough to have an effect on the landscape. By planning, you are fully poised and ready to go after that money or grants, and this is where resource agencies can make a real ecological difference. Suazo agreed and said it's exciting that the group is open to taking this task on.

Brake summarized the discussion by saying the BLM will give the RAC a framework to work with, a point person, and a little time to work on it. Then the working groups will meet and discuss each of the six items, and see where they are at. He doesn't expect them to reach an agreement by that time, but they can tell the BLM what issues they see.

Sacher asked if Arizona Game and Fish could also provide a point person for this discussion item and Jim deVos agreed. Brake was concerned about bringing in other agencies at this point; for

now, it should be the BLM only. Sacher added that their input would be helpful in brainstorming.

deVos responded that much of the information is available online. The Western Governors Chat (www.westgovchat.org) and HabiMap (www.habimap.org) have a lot of that data. Brake added that since deVos is in all working groups, he can work with all of them.

AGENDA ITEM: Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council

Bill Brake opened the meeting of the BLM Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RecRAC).

Glen Collins, Chair of the RecRAC Working Group, reported that the Working Group had met on the previous day, Wednesday, January 29, with 14 of the 15 members of the Arizona RecRAC in attendance. The Working Group spent two hours in a briefing/discussion session on five Forest Service cabins site rental proposals and one group campground rental proposal from the Forest Service. These Expanded Amenity Fee proposals are for:

- The Palisades Ranger Residence cabin, the Portal Bunkhouse, and the Portal CCC House in the Coronado National Forest in southeastern Arizona;
-The Big Springs Administrative Site Cabins and the Jump Up Cabin in the Kaibab National Forest on the Arizona Strip; and
-The Eagle Ridge Group Campground at Lynx Lake south of Prescott in the Prescott National Forest.

These Expanded Amenity Fee proposals are described in a January 7, 2014, USDA Forest Service Southwest Region (Region 3) Recreation Fee Proposals report which had been sent to RecRAC members in advance of the RecRAC Working Group Meeting.

The January 29 briefings at the RecRAC Working Group meeting were presented by Francisco Valenzuela, Director, Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources in the U.S. Forest Service Region 3 Office in Albuquerque, NM; Kathy Makansi, Archeologist on the Coronado National Forest; Mike Lyndon, Archaeologist on the Kaibab National Forest; and Susan Johnson and Ann May, Recreation Program Managers from the Prescott National Forest.

The cabins are old facilities that had either been Forest Service administrative sites or cabins used by the CCC decades ago. All have been recently upgraded by the Forest Service with new facilities to make them more attractive and useable by the public for rural/backcountry overnight experiences. The Eagle Ridge Group Campground is a new facility at Lynx Lake which can accommodate up to 100 users. The Forest Service has established a reservation system to authorize public use of the cabins and the group campground. The money from these recreation use fees will be used to pay for maintaining the cabins and campground facilities.

The proposed Expanded Amenity Fees for the cabins sites and the campground are consistent with fees charged at other similar Forest Service facilities. The Forest Service has publicized the proposals though various news releases, notices published in local newspapers, letters to users, and local public meetings. There is documented public support for each of the expanded amenity fee proposals. The only opposition that has been expressed came from five users of the Jump Up cabin on the Arizona Strip who had been using that unimproved cabin for free as a base for hiking in that area. They objected to the Forest Service renting the cabin. They wanted the Forest Service “to leave it as it is.”

Several RecRAC members from northern Arizona had concerns about whether or not the fee proposals for the cabins on the Kaibab National Forest had been adequately publicized in the small communities on the Arizona Strip like Fredonia. Francisco Mendoza agreed to have the Kaibab National Forest staff make telephone calls to local businesses in the Fredonia area and to have more information on that issue for the RecRAC Business meeting on the following day.

After discussion, the RecRAC Working Group voted to recommend approval of the proposed Expanded Amenity Fees for public use of the improved amenities at the six Forest Service fee sites to the Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council which will meet on the following day, January 30, 2014. This Working Group recommendation would be subject to further review and consideration of any public comments made during the public comment period scheduled for Thursday morning during the RecRAC Business meeting on January 30, and also subject to any further information regarding the Jump Up cabin site fee proposal obtained from Forest Service contacts with people and businesses in the Fredonia area which were to be made following the Working Group meeting.

Chairman Brake stated that since the same 14 members of the RecRAC Working Group were present for the RecRAC business meeting today, there was no reason to repeat the Forest Service briefing on the six Expanded Amenity Fee proposals. He asked Francisco Valenzuela for a report on the results of any further contacts made in the Fredonia area.

Francisco Valenzuela reported that telephone calls had been made to several motels in Fredonia, and the people contacted had no concerns about the Jump Up Cabin being in competition with their businesses in Fredonia.

Chairman Brake then opened the Public Comment Period for the Recreation Resource Advisory Council. No members of the public were present to comment on the Forest Service Expanded Amenity Fee proposals.

Chairman Brake asked for a motion on the Forest Service Fee Proposals.

Glen Collins Chair of the RecRAC Working Group, made a motion that:
"The Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council approves the expanded amenity recreation fee proposals described in the Forest Service's January 7, 2014 report for:
-The Palisades Ranger Residence Cabin, the Portal Bunkhouse, and the Portal CCC House on the Coronado National Forest,
-the Big Springs Administrative Site Cabins, and the Jump Up Cabin on the Kaibab National Forest, and
-the Eagle Ridge Group Campground on the Prescott National Forest."

The motion was seconded by Maggie Sacher.

Chairman Brake called for a vote, and the Motion was approved unanimously by the Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council.

Further Discussion of the Recreation Fee Program:

Traub added that he thinks this program is fantastic. He asked about future development plans for the cabins. There are a lot of cabins that need to be refurbished, and it would be good to see what kind of plans the USFS has for those cabins. Brake recommended this for a future meeting.

Suazo suggested it be done during a working group meeting, and Collins reminded the group that the RAC's role is with regard to the fees. Traub said a handout may be sufficient and that it could help with outreach and in the RAC's role as ambassadors. Brake also said if they could get more notice beforehand, it would be helpful.

Duncan-Hubbs said that if the program is expanding, it would be good to get a brief summary on their future plans and asked how they will improve on tribal consultation and participation. She added that with the landscape level approach concept, and as the USFS is an agency partner, she feels it fits in as it relates to cultural resources.

Suazo said he thinks this is outside the role of this RAC and recommended that the tribes contact the USFS directly for this type of update. Regarding direct information that supports the task at hand, the BLM can reach back to the USFS for some input for the working groups to use.

Traub added that he is part of the Havasu partnership agreement, which involves 17 other agencies besides the BLM that all have a part in the management of Lake Havasu. They all got together and agreed to who has jurisdiction over what. It's a difficult process but it can be done.

Regarding the hazards of open mines on BLM property, Traub said he now realizes that there are four-wheel organizations out there who want to partner with the BLM to actually go and explore the mines. Considering all that has to be balanced, there are some mines that, as long as they don't present a safety hazard, may be worth maintaining as part of our western heritage and history.

AGENDA ITEM: Arizona RAC Public Comment Period

Chairman Brake opened the public comment period. There were three people who asked to speak; with a total of 30 minutes allowed, each person was allotted 10 minutes.

Anna Lands from the Cascabel Working Group in the San Pedro River Valley spoke first. She wanted to bring the RAC's attention to the renewable energy program in their briefing packet. She asked that everyone visit their website (www.cascabelworkinggroup.org) and read their comments about the nonrenewable portion of the SunZia project.

Gerry Hillier spoke next. He is the Executive Director of Quadstate Local Government Authority, which is comprised of nine counties including two in Arizona (La Paz and Mohave). He said he has been to meetings like this in other areas and finds there is a similar thread through all of these issues. He wanted to talk about the recently completed Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REA's). While these have recently been made available to the public, there really has not been wide-scale knowledge of them outside of the agency. His organization is concerned about how the BLM is going to use them. Will they be used in future planning? He requested the RAC be included in that discussion and encouraged the BLM to get into the weeds and talk

about what the data shows and how it will be used. The fact that it was done on a landscape scale with no regard to agency lines was a good thing.

Brake asked Gerry Hillier to write a request and send it to him as the RAC chair and he would see where they can fit this in a future meeting.

Dan Shein was there as an interested citizen. One way for the BLM to get its message (what it is and what it does) out to the public would be to offer a much broader scope of its volunteer service opportunities. Make them available across the whole calendar year and spread into areas beyond being campground hosts. Consider resource management projects and making them for a weekend, 7 days, 10 days. Reach out to the baby boomers that are retiring and looking for something to do. Get the word out so they get to know the BLM and its projects, and they can become your advocates.

Brake appreciated Dan's comments and agreed that the BLM could do a better job of getting the word out. Maybe they need to use other channels to spread the word.

As no other members of the public asked to speak, Brake closed the public comment period.

AGENDA ITEM: Sonoran Landscape Pilot Update

Before June Shoemaker started her briefing, Suazo gave some background on this project for the new members. The BLM had asked the RAC for its input and recommendations on how to improve the concepts and the strategy, as well as how to work with the stakeholders. He wanted to update them on what has been done since they initially discussed this project.

Shoemaker, Branch Chief for Renewable Resources and Planning at the Arizona State Office, presented the RAC with a briefing that Ray Suazo had given to the BLM's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on the Sonoran Landscape Pilot Project. Suazo added that she is the focal point for this project, and he gave her kudos for all her efforts.

Shoemaker said this project is based on three key concepts: education, outreach, and communication. She talked about where the issue came from, the project specifically, and the path forward. Especially with the urban interface in Phoenix, there has been damage to resources (cacti, rock art, etc.), there is liability and public safety concerns, all while being mindful of the shooters and their wants. Not only is there a significant impact on the resources, it also costs a lot of money to do things like clean ups.

In recent years, the West has been getting much more urbanized, and these remote areas are getting intermingled with the urban areas. That means there are more people looking for places to be out on the land, and that includes shooting. So this issue is becoming more challenging.

The BLM Field Committee, which is composed of the Associate State Directors from all states with BLM offices, came up with a list of concerns about recreational shooting and its effects.

- Recreational shooting is seldom directly associated with land use planning efforts. The BLM doesn't deal with it unless it is a big problem, and they don't like closing areas to shooting.
- There needs to be more clarification on the legal and liability issues related to shooting.
- There are not a lot of tools available to deal with recreational shooting.
- When the BLM closes areas to shooting, it has an increased restriction and it has a bigger effect on the public.
- The BLM has not historically catalogued a lot of numbers related to shooting.
- Shooting sports are declining. There is a hunter's ethic but not a clearly defined recreational shooter's ethic.
- Environmental lead is a hazmat issue in some areas, which costs a lot of money and is very hard to manage. This is partly why the BLM does not just set up shooting areas.
- It is a difficult law enforcement issue.

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM) leaves the area open to recreational shooting, so the BLM has an opportunity to try and manage it. They have a desire to build concepts that can be transferrable across public lands in the 12 western states. The BLM always has the option to close the lands to shooting, if it becomes necessary; however, closure is the last thing the BLM wants to do.

So the idea is to develop an outreach plan that informs the public what the rules are; to foster good environmental stewardship and putting value on the things they go out and shoot; and to continue to support law enforcement programs. After the program has been implemented, they plan to do some monitoring and are hoping to see some measures of improvement.

Some of the partners are other land management agencies, industry, user groups on SDNM, private landowners and businesses, local government and elected officials, and science and academia. They are working with Northern Arizona University to do some of the monitoring before and after implementation.

This project was brought before the RAC in August of 2013 where they discussed the hunting ethic versus the recreational shooting ethic and what that meant. They had their first stakeholder's meeting in November, which was well attended and went very well. They had an opportunity to talk about what that ethic would be, so the RAC's input was really helpful, as well as using the strategy on other public lands. So they have developed some relationships. They are also working with Tread Lightly! who is doing a great job of getting the message out to businesses and local groups.

These are some of the outcomes they are working on: Updated their strategy document, working on developing baseline data, having national level conversations about how they can expand the tools that are available to them, looking at who is included and who has been missed, establishing talking points so their message is consistent, working with law enforcement and developing MOUs so they can assist in this effort. They have to engage the people who are being responsible shooters and get them to encourage those who are not to have better behavior.

Shoemaker showed some photos of a recent cleanup where volunteers picked up trash left on public lands, some of it by careless recreational shooters. The National Rifle Association (NRA) did a cleanup in the Phoenix District; there were 220 volunteers, which included 60 recreational shooters and 30 NRA members. So that was great.

Suazo mentioned the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) Ambassadors. The RAC had suggested the BLM talk to them. They have had success in working with them by not having to close off areas to OHVs and by encouraging proper respect and behavior on public lands. Also, many of the OHV users are also recreational shooters, so there is that crossover. The community is getting excited that the BLM is doing this kind of work. The December 7th cleaned at Box Canyon resulted in up to 13.15 tons of trash being cleaned up.

A video was shown that was taken at the Box Canyon cleanup.

Suazo wanted to bring this issue back to the RAC to give them an update. This project is obviously just at the beginning. Closing areas to recreational shooting doesn't really solve anything. As was done with the OHV Ambassadors, the BLM can get the groups to hold their own members accountable; if they can move these concepts to other states, imagine the impact it will have on public lands. Not only can they be protected, but they can be kept open to recreational shooting. He thanked the RAC for their input.

DISCUSSION:

Bengson asked if the BLM had tried involving the media. Shoemaker said there have been news releases as well as making direct contacts with the groups themselves. Suazo said they are thinking about doing a segment on *Horizons* public television.

deVos said this is a great program, and recommended the BLM put the word out on YouTube. Arizona Game and Fish has several videos on YouTube, and they have had 5.5 million hits. The traffic is out there, and it's a cheap way to get your message out there. deVos also recommended separating recreational shooters from destructive, irresponsible type and thinking about how to get the message out to these groups. He noted, the trash is not just from shooters.

He recommended using a target media approach in order to reach the offending shooters. Focus on continued access to the areas for shooting.

Shoemaker said that is part of the message: "Respected access is open access." One place they can put the message is where ammo is sold. Billboard and television advertising is expensive, but the hope is as they get more partners, they can get some outside funding to help with that.

Drew John said to keep in mind that you don't want to alienate the responsible shooters.

Hulen thanked Suazo for mentioning that Friends and conservation groups are helping with this effort. This is not a target shooting issue, but a vandalism issue. He also said the Arizona Game and Fish Department has an excellent series of shooting ranges. Tread Lightly! recently said it

was having problems finding money to help pay for this; Shoemaker said this happens every year, but they are working on securing funding.

Traub asked why the BLM does not just put up signs that say 'Shooting Allowed Here.' Shoemaker said that the BLM has been talking about signage and how they can do a better job. From a policy perspective, they don't currently have the ability to say 'here is where you can go shoot.' They are having that conversation with Washington.

Suazo has raised that issue with the Executive Leadership Team and expects to have some discussion on what those policy items are. If the BLM doesn't have the tools it needs, then there will be limitations. He said he will report that back to the RAC. This is how your input is going beyond the state of Arizona.

Sacher said contact the Sherriff's Department; they do a lot with anti-vandalism billboards. She suggested putting photos of destroyed cacti on them and have their department pay for it. They're very expensive plants, and they're also protected. To damage them is a crime. By showing the saguaro, people may start connecting that it's vandalism, not just shooting.

Brake added that the folks that probably pick up the most trash on BLM lands are the 1,300 permittees, because they live out there. Sturgill (who is also a BLM permittee) echoed his sentiments. They see all sorts of trash, including dumped appliances, broken bottles, shotgun shells, and dead computers. The people don't do it to be mean; they just don't think about it.

Brake also said not to blame everyone for the actions of a few violators. Suazo said if the BLM can help change the concepts and the thought process, then these issues can be fixed. They will continue to do this and will bring updates to the RAC.

When the BLM does close an area to recreational shooting, Brake recommended they put up a sign that gives an alternate area, or people will get frustrated. Shoemaker agreed and said they are committed to having those conversations.

deVos asked if BLM Arizona has the locations of the State and private shooting ranges on its website, which they do not. It might give the shooters some other options.

Jeff Sargent said not only is the BLM educating the shooters, they are educating others who don't understand why people want to practice target shooting. They enjoy this activity, and they have a right to. So it can be eye-opening for the non-shooters as well.

Traub told Sacher that he loves her idea about using the billboards and public service announcements (PSAs). He talked about empty billboard space; sometimes the advertising companies will charge just production costs (rather than have the sign be empty), and if the costs were split up between the four agencies, it could really have an impact for a relatively low cost. The picture of those saguaros is powerful stuff. Suazo said he would be interested in this.

Maaike Schotborgh reminded the group that large appliances can be recycled and said she can provide more information on that. It costs about $50.00 to donate a refrigerator that has Freon,

and there are places to recycle broken computers. She also suggested using different frames on a rotating billboard to show various messages and to discourage the trash being left behind.

John said there are billboard companies that will put up public messages. He was in an ad about illegal dumping in his county. The company only charged the art charge and gave them a year or until the sign was filled. It was a very effective campaign, so consider looking into that.

Suazo said the DMs are engaged with this project in their respective units. He also said how much he appreciated this discussion and hearing all these different viewpoints.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Questions on BLM District Reports

Suazo expressed his appreciation for the leadership in the districts. They have all stepped up and done what needed to be done, whether it be taking action on a project that is ready to go; taking a step back and regrouping; taking the time to engage the public; or thinking over whether the solutions they are considering are the best for the land. Thank you all for the work you do.

Arizona Strip District: Acting District Manager Matt Thorburn gave an update on uranium mining in the district. The Pine Nut Mine is in full production and actively working two shifts. Arizona One Mine is doing what is called condemnation drilling; they have mined out what they think the resource is and are doing some exploratory drilling to make sure. They will be withdrawing and moving into reclamation. The Kanab North Mine is in active reclamation and backing off the footprint of that mine.

The oversight team, which is primarily the Federal agencies involved in the withdrawal, met to look at funding that is available for supporting the studies and what level of uncertainty they can address within that funding. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) will take another look at that and provide a report to the Executive Group.

The District has an MOU with the Hualapai Tribe and is working on one with the Kaibab-Paiute Tribe. Thorburn sees this as a good trend, as it clarifies that working relationship with the tribes and gives them a venue to work out their issues. They also met with the Hopi and Navajo tribes to provide them with similar opportunities, and they expressed some interest.

The Interpretive Association (who works with the Strip) has a new executive director, Ken Sizemore. Sizemore has provided some managerial sophistication for the organization, so they are now on better footing in regard to their grant from the BLM. Thorburn continues to stay engaged with the board on fundraisers and looking for new partnership opportunities. Their board now includes an attorney and someone with retail experience, which are all good additions.

Arizona Strip Field Office: They are working on completing the first of three parts, which is the western-most portion, of its Travel Management Plan (TMP). At the request of some of the communities near Beaver Dam, Field Manager Lorraine Christian delayed it so she could engage with the seasonal visitors; there still wasn't much participation, and they are working out some of

the last routes that are in question. They will continue working toward the east to complete the TMP. They're looking at February for the first of those three decisions.

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (VCNM): Regarding the VCNM TMP, rehabilitation and signage has largely been closed. Some of their volunteers are working with the recreation staff to put icons on the signs to help distinguish the trails, so that looks pretty good.

On the Lake Powell Pipeline, the District remains actively engaged in this issue. Much of the discussion centers on whether the Kaibab Paiute tribe wants it to run through the reservation or to avoid the reservation and run further south. This conversation is ongoing with representatives from BIA, Kaibab, BLM, and FERC.

The VCNM is anticipating a draft business plan for public review coming up this fall, and that may include some fee increases. They will be coming to brief the RAC on that, if that works in with the agenda.

Thorburn added that the VCNM Friends Group has an artist in residence named Sheila Kovach, and her work is very good.

Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument: They had a Parashant Partnership meeting in November where they discussed the 60,000-acre Uinkaret Vegetation Management EIS, which is for vegetation treatment and is one of those landscape level projects. Thorburn and his staff will be reviewing some Notice of Intent (NOI) documents and work to move into the notification and the scoping process. There will be lots of opportunities for the local community and the tribes to participate, which dovetails nicely with their MOU and the scoping process for the Uinkaret vegetation management.

Taylor asked about the consultation with the Kaibab Paiute on the pipeline going through or around their reservation. Thorburn said that no decision has been reached. The main focus of conversation has been access to water and the physical location of the pipeline. Taylor also asked if the tribe has any leverage or not. Thorburn said for the BLM, he doesn't see it as a foregone conclusion. Taylor added that he thinks it's pretty reprehensible.

Regarding the uranium issue, Taylor said that Coconino County, for example, and many other organizations were against uranium mining in the Strip. This industry has a history of closing up when the price goes down and moving out leaving its problems behind. But as a result of the lobbying for uranium mining by the uranium mining companies, the Canyon Region Economic Development Alliance (CREDA) collapsed, because if the folks disagreed on the uranium issue, there would be no economic development in the region. Now the mines are closing down, and the companies are walking away, and the people are feeling betrayed. He is very upset that because one industry lobbied for it, a diversified economy, which would have really helped that region, was the victim of the interest of a particular industry. They did the same thing on the South Rim. It derailed something that could have been good and could have made a difference economically. All of the tribes were against it.

Sacher agreed, saying that most people in the area were opposed to the mines. They were still waiting to see how good the cleanup can be. There are some quality cleanups, and they are hoping for that.

Taylor added that the history of 'mothballing' mines has not been good. If they finish a mine, they will reclaim it; however, if the company just mothballs it, then the mine just sits there untended but not remediated. He suggested that if the companies pull out again, the BLM needs to make sure there is a bond for ongoing maintenance on any mothballed mines.

Brake said that the RAC did not vote whether or not to allow mining but to require that the mining industry should be conscientious of the environment, like any other industry, and against the companies leaving unattended mines like they had in the past. The mining companies assured they would be responsible. Taylor and Brake both said they were disappointed in how some of them were handled.

Decker clarified that what came to the RAC was the proposal for the withdrawal of one million acres from uranium mining, which the Secretary of the Interior did sign. Suazo added that existing mines were not part of that discussion.

Colorado River District: District Manager Roxie Trost had given a presentation on Wednesday on the grazing subcommittee. She talked about how that fits in with the Grazing Strike Team, which is working to make sure that land health evaluations, monitoring, and schedules all align with permit renewal.

In the area of Law Enforcement, the rangers spent a lot of time and effort in support of the Diamond Bar Road closure; it was a coordinated effort between the BLM and the BIA.

The District's fire management program was very successful this year. The goal is safety first, every job, every time.

Kingman Field Office (KFO): Ruben Sanchez's office has a number of projects ongoing, including a couple of wind testing projects. There are also several projects in Kingman and throughout the District that require tribal consultation, specifically the Freeport MacMoran Bagdad Mine. They have also consulted with the Hualapai on the Diamond Bar Mine. They are doing some steward training in cooperation with the tribe.

The KFO has taken a very proactive approach with regard to ethnographic studies. They have sought funding and worked with the tribes to do them across landscapes, not necessarily tied to projects, so they can have that data for use in the future.

On Abandoned Mines Land (AML), Kingman has a group on their staff that does the survey work and works with the State to identify which mines will be closed; they do the work in-house, and it's pretty impressive. They build bat gates, etc.

Regarding workload, the KFO is working on some big projects, including a number of EISs, and even though there are third party consultants, the review work for the BLM staff is still significant.

On grazing permit renewal and the Grazing Strike Team, those projects for this fiscal year are located within the KFO. Brake asked Trost where they are on permit renewal, and she said they are a year behind because they requested to initiate the RAC subcommittee. This is part of what the Grazing Strike Team is going back and analyzing; that way, if this ever happens again, they could move forward on different permit renewals.

Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO): With regard to TMP, they completed the Decision Record of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and are now in the process of beginning implementation. It was a great coordinated effort with many of the local partners, and there were no appeals.

Trost talked about Lake Havasu's cooperative management agreement. Lake Havasu (the lake itself) actually has a number of jurisdictions, and the LHFO has been working with a number of agencies and making determinations. They have signed an MOU with LHFO and Lake Havasu City to manage the areas around the parks.

The Topock Remediation project is coming along with 60% design in the near future. That fits in with the District's tribal consultation as well.

The LHFO is involved in a concessions development plan, with some of the concessions looking to do new things along the Colorado River. They are working with Bullhead City on Section 12, which is going through the NEPA process. They initially had quite a petition and a proposed referendum to have the public vote on it; given that, the BLM decided to take another look at it and make sure there was enough public input and communication.

Yuma Field Office (YFO): They are working on the La Posa TMP, which is a year behind. They didn't want to render a decision in the summer to be sure they included their winter visitors; they are getting ready to do that in the next month. The YFO is also working on their next TMP and is doing some scoping with the local communities.

They are also very engaged in a number of rehabilitation projects along the Colorado River, including a fire rehab project called Betty's Kitchen and a cooperative project that will tie several of Yuma's parks together. The area is currently overgrown with salt cedar; they are looking at removal and planting native vegetation.

Sargent asked about the wind energy projects, if they are up and running, and how effective they are. Roxie said the two mentioned are just wind testing. We don't have any information at this point; normally, it's a three-year process where the company starts with testing, then they come back and provide a plan of development to take it to the next phase. Taylor mentioned that APS said they're not going to buy any more wind, so all the wind projects in Coconino County had gone away.

Regarding these wind projects, Schotborgh asked if the District is in contact with Bat Conservation International (BCI) about bat species in the area for future consideration of design and speed of wind turbines. Trost said that will be part of the public scoping process; currently, they just have anemometers on site. (Wind turbines have more impact on bats than on birds.)

Hulen asked if the dove hunters are picking up their shells. Trost said she had not heard about that, but it is an issue.

Traub asked who was paying for the Topock remediation project. Trost said it is PG&E. Schotborgh commented that PG&E is very active with regard to wildlife. She offered to contact them to see if they could provide any new information in this area.

Hulen asked about the volume of polyurethane foam that was used in the bat gates. Schotborgh said it usually fills up the whole opening and is between four and seven feet thick. It has a 24" to 36" culvert at a level so bats can get through but people can't. They face it with rock, so when it becomes hard, it becomes hard to break through.

Gila District: Dennis Sylvia, Associate District Manager, filled in for District Manager Tim Shannon. He started with solar energy updates. There is no ROD on Sun Zia Transmission Line at this time; they were hoping for this in January, but there may be a supplement to the Final EIS.

On the Southline Transmission Line, the Draft EIS is almost finalized. The Notice of Availability (NOA) has been sent to Washington but has been not published yet. They anticipate public meetings will take place in April.

The District provided input on the Southern Arizona Project. The report is being finalized and will be made available to the RAC.

Tucson Field Office (TFO): Regarding the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS), they have completed phase 1 of 2, the smaller one by the San Pedro on the eastern side, and they will be working on the larger one shortly. They expect the remediation to be completed by the end of March.

Sylvia talked briefly about the Rosemont Copper Mine, saying it is a very contentious issue. The USFS is the lead agency; the BLM is a cooperating agency and has provided its comments to the USFS, who will eventually be publishing the Record of Decision (ROD).

Regarding the Pueblo del Sol water issue, the BLM is concerned over the water rights as they relate to the San Pedro RNCA (SPRNCA). Oral arguments are scheduled for April 7.

He talked a little about the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS). They have been using it for looking at mining activities, such as AML and the hazards associated with them. That is a large project area. Some folks from the KFO will be coming down to help them close some of those mines and put some bat gates in.

Development of the SPRNCA management plan is a big project for the TFO. It's a good example of engaging the public. It's been very collaborative, which has increased the time and the cost, through the process of education as well as through the scoping efforts. The scoping report has been completed and is on the SPRNCA website.

They recently hired a lead project manager from industry, David McIntyre, who is working with Amy Markstein. There are some upcoming public meetings and BLM will be developing some alternatives. The meetings will be scheduled sometime in February or March, probably in UA South in Sierra Vista. They are also planning a tour on February 22, and if anyone wants to attend, they should contact David McIntyre for the particulars. Dorothea Boothe will send the RAC members a copy of the press release about this tour.

Taylor said it's great that the BLM is opposed to the Pueblo del Sol development. Arizona is unique, as it has two agencies that regulate water (one for surface and one for subsurface). He is curious that the BLM is prepared to go to court. This will be a major test of the BLM's water authority and asked Sylvia for his comments on that, who turned to Ray Suazo to take the question. Suazo said the BLM can't say anything at this point because of the pending case, but you know what the BLM's concerns are. Taylor said he appreciates the BLM's efforts.

Safford Field Office (SFO): Sylvia had no further information on the SFO outside of the report but did say that they are fully engaged. They are the district's largest office and recently brought on two new range management specialists to move forward on some of their permit renewals. Brake said he is glad to see that SFO is getting onboard with those renewals and that they have some more help in that area.

Phoenix District: District Manager Mary D'Aversa said that her District had some heavy turnover in its NEPA staff, which will impact their ability to move those permit renewals through. Those positions should be filled by about April.

This past fall, the Phoenix District worked to address special recreation permit backlog by coming up with a permit renewal process that would allow permit holders to come in and update their permits and identify permits that need to go through the NEPA process. It was a good way to reach out to the public, and it was very successful.

In the area of youth, the District applied for a $75,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to put additional funds in their youth program. Phoenix District is really at the forefront of some of the Bureau and Department's youth initiative. They hired and trained six interns this fall that did a variety of natural resources work for them.

One of their partners, Audubon Arizona, won the 33rd Annual Arizona Forward Environmental Education/Communication Award. Their River Pathways program works on tours of the Agua Fria National Monument. The Phoenix District continued with the resource field management certification program, which is part of their partnership with the Phoenix College.

Suazo gave D'Aversa kudos and thanked her for all her work on the youth initiatives. She has really done a great job of getting youth onboard and getting them out on the land and doing important work.

Schotborgh asked D'Aversa about the El Rio project, which is out near Goodyear and involves restoration of the Gila River. She said she would talk to Mary later.

Hassayampa Field Office (HFO): The ROD for Sun Valley to Morgan was signed, as well as the plan amendment. Unless there are some unexpected protests or litigation, this is ready to go. They are resolving some concerns about placement.

The HFO also received about $250,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase some key inholdings for the Agua Fria National Monument. It was a good opportunity for the BLM, there was a willing seller, and it will have some real tangible benefits as far as monument management.

Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM): They have had two lawsuits filed. One was by the Western Watersheds Project on a grazing issue, and the other was by National Trust for Historic Preservation, Archaeology Southwest, and the Wilderness Society associated with recreation target shooting. They are coordinating on these and cannot comment on this because they are going through the legal process.

They issued a grazing permit this last fall and are hoping to continue that effort.

There have been three ROAM surges so far this fiscal year, which resulted in 650 feet of reclaimed road and about 5,000 pounds of trash. They are about at the midway point. These often include the youth they have on staff or the Youth Conservation Crew.

Regarding the Sonoran Landscape Pilot Project, they conducted a cleanup in an area called Box Canyon in association with Tread Lightly!, a local shooting group, and the NRA. They collected and hauled off about 40 yards of trash.

On the topic of mineral management, the PDO has one of the largest mineral materials programs in the Bureau. They have had a couple of sales this year totaling almost 2 million tons of rock products provided for local vendors for commercial development in their uses.

She added that Ed Kender recently attended the Four Tribes Meeting; it was incredibly beneficial. She said she is very pleased with the way he is engaging and the commitment he is showing with the tribal coordination process.

Sacher asked if any bat populations had been inventoried before the bat gates are installed. D'Aversa said when there is potential closing, a wildlife survey is conducted, and then it is decided whether to put up a bat gate or plug the opening. Sacher inquired if there was any bat population data. She is concerned that if white nose bats continue to move west, there would be some kind of inventory where they don't have to take gates off.

deVos commented that Arizona Game and Fish has several biologists that do bat surveys on a routine basis. In many of the caves, they have both species composition and numbers that occur there.

Hulen looked at the inholding that was purchased in the Agua Fria National Monument, and he thought it was a great deal for the public.

Brake commented that despite the challenges that D'Aversa has, she is doing a great job. If there is anything the RAC can do, let them know, so they can keep helping to get the word out to the public. It is harder for the BLM because they don't have the image or get the same level of support as the Forest Service or the National Park Service.

Collins said he recently participated in a USFS listening session where they bring small groups of people together to exchange information and ideas. The people in attendance said that when it comes to dealing with the public, the BLM acts like a neighbor. Collins was impressed with the approach the USFS was taking. D'Aversa said she and her staff have gone to these meetings to observe their planning process and to see how they can become more engaged with that.

Sargent said his particular interest is the urban-BLM interface; as many of the major communities in Arizona border on BLM lands, this is becoming more important. The public really appreciates the BLM for the recreational opportunities it provides. He said D'Aversa and her staff have been doing a great job in dealing with the city and in getting the BLM name out there in what they have done with recreation and with the youth. It's exactly what the metropolitan area needs.

Traub mentioned the image of the BLM and how it is branded to the public. The BLM is competing for funds; how can the BLM improve its image and get that message out to the public?

Sacher said this is improving, for example, the renaming of NLCS to National Conservation Lands so people can understand it better. One of the things that can be done locally is that interface between the Friends groups and the NGO's, and they can help get the message out. That partnership is starting to bring that recognition. She said she will ask Brake to put this on a future agenda.

Suazo agreed with their comments and said the BLM does need to do more in this arena. He reminded them that every $1.00 invested in the BLM brings $4.00 back into the U.S. Treasury. There is a lot to tell about what the BLM does, including the commodity side, the grazing, the minerals, as well as the conservation side and the recreation opportunities. This is something that should be addressed, and it's something the RAC can provide value and input on.

Brake thanked the DM's for their reports and for attending and offering their updates. They all did an excellent job, and he also thanked Suazo.

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>: RAC Committee Reports

Grazing Subcommittee: Trost said she will need the Grazing Subcommittee's recommendations by April 15 in order to get it in this year's workload. She recommended they meet around the 1st of April. Brake asked if they need a decision from the RAC on the subcommittee's conclusions by April 15. Trost said that the RAC Grazing Subcommittee will present the information and recommendations and then ask the entire RAC to adopt their recommendations. She suggested it be done by conference call prior to the next RAC meeting.

If the Grazing Subcommittee reports to the full RAC before April 14, even by teleconference, would this count as a public meeting that has to be announced in the Federal Register? Suazo said this subcommittee was created for a special purpose and that it can report back to the RAC. Dorothea Boothe was tasked with researching this question with the BLM National RAC Coordinator Lauren Luckey.

Bengson asked how they will comply with the open meeting law and notifying the public that there will be a public meeting when the RAC meets by teleconference. Suazo said they will need to get some advice on that; maybe because it is a subcommittee that was put together for a specific purpose on a set timeline, it may be different. Brake also said that as this is their first subcommittee, it will set precedence. The entire RAC has an opportunity to comment on what the subcommittee does, and Suazo agreed, but the BLM staff will determine the correct way to do this.

Taylor said that the public comment has to do with actions; since this is just the RAC serving an advisory role, it does not need to follow open meeting laws, unless they take a vote. Collins said that the RAC is an "advisory" Board, not a decision making Board, and that we give advice to the State Director, not to the individual District Managers. The Grazing Sub Committee which Doug and Dawn are serving on is a group that was established by the District Manager, and is the kind of group which is authorized by the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and Livestock Management. He believes that this Grazing Sub Committee does not need the full RAC's review and approval to report their recommendations to the District Manager. The entire RAC will have the opportunity to review the BLM's decision on this situation if the State Director brings the issue to the RAC. Suazo agreed and said that the BLM staff will determine the correct way to do this.

Archaeological Cultural Resources Working Group: Here are the group's minutes.

BLM RAC meeting

Wed., Jan. 29 Work Session

Archaeology sub-group:
- Thom Hulen
- Dawn Hubbs
- Jeff Sargent
- Carl Taylor
- [Julie Decker]
- Susanne Rowe (BLM State Lead Archeologist/Deputy Preservation Officer)

Future discussion
- What is management/administrative role of the BLM at National Guard, F.S., Natl. Park, etc.

lands? Julie will look into this.

Nominations for new members are due: openings: 1 in Category 1; 2 in the other two categories.

Look at BLM website, including RAC activities and info

Jargon debunking:
CRT;
TRT: Composed of Agency folks and contractors. Is a Technical Review Team.

Update on the Co. River District Grazing Subcommittee (Roxie Trost):
- Report due to BLM through RAC by May.
- Send ideas and concerns to Doug Traub, cc: Bill Brake.

Section 106 Consultation Process (Susanne Rowe)
- Thom Hulen new chair
- Susanne Rowe to poll archaeologists to see what is needed; will let Thom know
- Meet by phone when we know the needs; make plans
- Susanne also looking at potential grant funds

F.S. Recreation Fee Proposals:

Mike Lynette (archaeologist on Kaibab N.F.)

Requested fees approved by majority. Maggie concerned about notice to Fredonia and Kanab businesses.

Horse and Burro issue:
- No idea why Senestech has apparently lost interest. Larry and Carl to follow-up with scientist in Colorado.
- Mica will contact a company doing horse and burro management in Idaho
- Dawn wants to be a part of the H&B subcommittee

End of Working Group Minutes

Carl Taylor said they transferred the chairmanship of the archaeological working group to Thom Hulen. As the BLM Lead Archaeologist for the State, Susanne Rowe volunteered to poll the other archaeologists as to their areas of concern. She will get back to Thom Hulen in a couple of weeks with some things that the BLM archaeologists think would be useful. Taylor said he appreciates Susanne's help.

Sacher mentioned that Susanne Rowe will also check on possible grants for historic projects, either through the BLM or some type of NGO, so there could be some resource assistance.

Recreation and Communities Working Group: Glen Collins said the USFS should not dominate our meetings. FLREA has expired, along with the right to collect fees. Congress is working to extend it; Kitty Benzar of the WFNSC says she is confident there will be no more RAC involvement, but no one knows. He also stated that the next RAC meeting should be built around the BLM, and if the USFS can be fit in, then that's fine.

Brake said he understood his concern, and he and Suazo have had some discussions on this topic. The Forest Service had requested even more of the RAC's agenda time, and it was cut. Collins said this is just his advice.

Next, Collins asked them to change the working group's leadership to someone else. Brake recommended adding a vice-chairman to the group so when Collins steps down, there is someone to take over. He also said there are RAC members who live in the rural areas, and many of the issues the RAC deals with involves the interaction between urban and rural areas. If Collins has any recommendations for vice-chairman, discuss it with Brake.

Wild Horse and Burro Working Group:

At Wednesday's meeting, Larry Howery brought the new working group members up to speed on where they are on the Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) program. They discussed the letter the group had written last August and given to the BLM Arizona State Director Suazo.

Howery said if any program needs a strategic approach, it's the WH&B program. They asked the BLM to use this RAC to develop guidelines for WH&B to help meet the standards for rangeland health. They developed Standards and Guidelines for livestock grazing in 1995 and later did the same for recreational vehicles. So it set a precedent.

The group recommended sharing the letter with the Secretary of the Interior and the National BLM Director, and also to consult with other RACs to see if they share some of the Arizona RAC's concerns with respect to wild horses and burros. Howery asked Suazo for his reaction to their letter.

Suazo said he appreciated their input and he supports those ideas. He delivered their message to Washington and told them the Arizona RAC wants to be a part of the solution. Suazo also told them there is a company that can provide Horse Birth Control. There has been a request for proposals, and the provider needs to get their proposal in so he can carry that forward.

Taylor gave an update on this, saying that even though there has been a lot of support, the company stopped responding and won't answer calls or e-mails. They had several partners lined up and could not wait to get the project going. Taylor said he will try to find out what is going on. He believes the company does have the knowledge to do this, but something else must be happening.

Taylor mentioned that recently there is even more interest in finding solutions, including the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest which is being overrun. Horses are just being dumped on the land by owners due to the recession. Suazo said he told Washington that there is broader interest beyond the RAC.

Schotborgh offered to help with the conversation with the fertility control company. She also said there is a certified project to manage wild horses with Motorola Oil in Wyoming. She had sent Julie an e-mail about them. They do horse fertility control; it is a different ecological

situation there, but she will get more details about it. She and Sturgill want to be on this committee.

Sturgill added that although opposing the WH&B program is a 'feel-good' thing for the public, horses in the wild are a big problem. People are just bringing them out on the range and leaving them. He has had five horses dropped off on his ranch in the last two years, and some of them have been very unhealthy. Horses don't automatically know where to find water.

deVos said that due to ecological damage left by these animals, it is causing problems across the West. The Association of International Fish and Wildlife Agencies has taken up wild horses as one of their primary issues. The animals are also hurting fish populations because they eat the forage on the creeks, which normally helps keep the water cooler.

Brake said he will talk with the National Cattle Growers Association and get their viewpoint on it. He also recommended that when choosing a test area, they avoid having a rancher just pick a range. He feels it would be more effective and would have more credibility.

Howery thanked Suazo for his support. There is a lot of collective interest in this, and while everyone is coming from a different paradigm, they are all focused on the resources and the mission of the BLM.

Taylor added that he suspects the company may have their hands full. The effort and paperwork to submit a government proposal can be overwhelming. It may help if someone knows of a benefactor or a grant that could help them do the study. It's possible they don't have the means to do a $100,000 study. Is there some way the group can help them get their proposal done?

Schotborgh asked Decker if she can get information on that group in Wyoming and see how they do it. Decker said it is a very small herd and they are able to do darting to manage it. Suazo added that it has been hard to use those methods with the larger herds. The darting used in Wyoming is effective for 1 to 2 years and because the herd is small.

Taylor said the he will continue to pursue the company and see what they can do.

DISCUSSION:

Decker gave some information in response to some questions that came up at the Working Group Meeting on Wednesday.

1) As to how many horses and burros are at the Florence facility, Decker said there are 380 horses and burros being held there now.

2) How many allotments does the BLM have standards and guidelines for? They have completed a land health evaluation, which is a step in the process of renewing a grazing permit. In FY 2014, there were 84 evaluations completed.

> In FY 2013, they changed some of the reporting requirements, breaking it down to the fundamentals of rangeland health: upland watershed, riparian watershed, ecological processes, water quality, and habitat quality for T&E and special status species. So you can't get take the old years and come up to that cumulative total. But up to FY 2012, the cumulative total was 669 allotments were meeting standards or making progress toward meeting standards; 45 allotments were not meeting standards or making progress.

Brake asked how many of the animals at the Florence facility are from Arizona, and Decker reported none because the burros removed in Arizona are sent to another holding facility, which is Ridgecrest in California. Brake also asked what has been taken from Arizona in 2012; Decker said she would find out. In FY 2013, there were two emergency gathers of about 65 burros in the Colorado River District. Suazo added in 2012, there were 350 gathered in the Cibola herd management area.

ACTION: Decker will come back with the number of animals that have been sold out of Florence.

Duncan-Hubbs asked if Decker could tell the RAC who bought them to see where the animals are going, and Decker said she would check on the privacy information of that.

WRAP-UP AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Hulen reminded them that this is the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and lots of organizations are doing activities.

The next RAC meeting will be in May. Dorothea Boothe will send out a poll and see what works for everyone. She said they also need to schedule the Standards and Guidelines training for the new members.

The USFS will be coming back on some fee proposals for Sabino Canyon, which Brake expects to be contentious.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40.