

**Bureau of Land Management – Arizona  
Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
September 16, 2015**

**BLM Arizona State Office  
One North Central Avenue, Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004**

**RAC Members:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Interest Represented</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>	<u>Present</u>
Bill Brake*	Scottsdale	Grazing	11/2016	Y
Emmett Sturgill	Kingman	Grazing	11/2016	Y
Krishna Parameswaran	Scottsdale	Energy/Minerals	09/2017	Y
Thomas Hulen	Tempe	Commercial Recreation	09/2015	Y
Maggie Sacher	Marble Canyon	Commercial Recreation	09/2015	Y
Michael Quigley	Tucson	Non-Commodity/Environmental	11/2016	Y
H. Maaik Schotborgh	Tucson	Non-Commodity/Environmental	11/2016	Y
David Tenney	Show Low	Non-Commodity/Dispersed Recreation	09/2017	Y
Dawn Ducan Hubbs	Hackberry	Non-Commodity/Historical/Archaeology	09/2017	Y
Carl Taylor	Flagstaff	Non-Commodity/Historical/Archaeology	09/2015	Y
H. Drew John	Safford	Local Area/Public-at-Large	11/2016	Y
Mandy Metzger	Flagstaff	Local Area/Elected Official	09/2017	Y
Gary Watson	Kingman	Local Area/Elected Official	09/2017	Y
Larry Howery	Tucson	Local Area/Academia	09/2015	Y
Jeffrey Sargent	Peoria	Local Area/Public-At-Large	09/2015	Y
Jim deVos (non-voting)	Phoenix	Arizona Game and Fish Department	n/a	Y

\*RAC Chair

**BLM Staff:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Present</u>
Raymond Suazo	Arizona State Director	Arizona State Office	Y
Amber Cargile	Deputy State Director, Communications	Arizona State Office	Y
June Shoemaker	Acting Deputy State Director, Resources & Planning	Arizona State Office	Y
Rebecca Heick	Acting Deputy State Director, Lands & Minerals	Arizona State Office	Y
Tim Burke	District Manager	Arizona Strip District Office	Y
Roxie Trost	District Manager	Colorado River District	Y

Tim Shannon	District Manager	Gila District Office	Y
Patrick Putnam	Acting District Manager	Phoenix District Office	Y
Dorothea Boothe	RAC Coordinator	Arizona State Office	Y
Kathy Pedrick	Special Assistant to the State Director	Arizona State Office	Y
Mike Werner	Realty Specialist	Arizona State Office	Y
Jeff Garrett	Mining Engineer, State Geologist	Arizona State Office	Y
Lane Cowger	Renewable Energy Coordinating Office Program <del>Manager</del>	Arizona State Office	Y
Dennis Godfrey	Public Affairs Specialist	Arizona State Office	Y
Wayne Monger	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Arizona Strip District Office	Y
Nancy Favour	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Arizona State Office	Y
Bill Coulloudon	Grazing Program Lead	Arizona State Office	Y
Bill Werner	Wildlife Biologist	Arizona State Office	Y
Susan Williams	Recording Secretary	Arizona State Office	Y

## Meeting Minutes

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**Agenda Item:** Welcome & Introductions**Presenter:** Bill Brake, Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Chair

- The RAC meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.
- Introductions – RAC Members, BLM Staff and members of the public: Dan Shein, Bill Civish, Robin Barnes, Kelly Norton, Dale Bennett, Jerry Browning, John Hamill, Dale Bennett and Kelly Norton.

**Agenda Item:** State Director's Introduction and Update on BLM Programs and Issues**Presenter:** Raymond Suazo, BLM Arizona State Director/Designated Federal Official

Suazo thanked RAC members for their time and commitment and informed them that the BLM appreciates comments and suggestions from the RAC. He also reminded the members when there are questions about how the RAC is operating, we should refer to the RAC Charter. The vetting process for new RAC member nominations is underway; the package has been vetted through the Arizona Governor's Office, and is currently with the BLM National Office.

**Personnel Announcements:**

- A lot of employees are retiring and we are attempting to fill critical positions.
- Ruben Sanchez, Kingman Field Office (KFO) Manager, is on detail to the State Office as Acting Branch Chief in the Information Access Center.
- Ruth Zimmerman is currently the Acting Field Manager at the KFO.
- Leon Thomas has been selected as the Phoenix District Manager and reports on October 18, 2015, replacing Mary D'Aversa.
- Thanks to Patrick Putnam for his role as the Acting Phoenix District Manager.
- We also in the process of filling the position of the Lake Havasu Field Manager vacated by Kim Liebhauser.
- Jayson West is currently the Acting Lake Havasu Field Manager.
- The BLM, after hearing from various stakeholders has decided not to move forward with the merger of the New Mexico and Arizona State Offices. We are now ready to focus our energies on the core work in Arizona. Thanks to the RAC for their input.

**Abandoned Mine Lands (AML):**

- Importance in identifying resources to reclaim abandoned mines. A lot of work has been completed across the state, especially in the Colorado River District in Kingman.
- If resources are available through legislative proposal or partnership with industry, Arizona has a strategy to address AML.

### Other Updates:

- This is the 25-Year Anniversary of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990, and we are in the planning stages of commemorating the Act and figuring out event and activities to bring attention to areas designated as wilderness since 1990.
- I met with the Wildlife Hunting Heritage Council and briefed them on our Sonoran Landscape Project.
- Yesterday, the BLM issued a press release formally initiating the implementation of a court-ordered injunction to close 2 percent of the Sonoran Desert National Monument to recreational target shooting. We fully intend to comply with the Remand Order to re-analyze the decision on shooting. (Deadline imposed by the Court: September 2017). Have received a lot of positive feedback and engagement from the shooting community.
- We are working with our partners and stakeholders on a recreational shooter's ethic that teaches appropriate recreational shooting along with protecting resources on the ground.
- We're reaching out to the conservation arena on how to get the message out to the public.
- The *Every Kid in a Park* initiative was launched September 1, 2015. The ~~objective~~ **isobjective is** to get all 4<sup>th</sup> graders and their families to experience places that are home to our country's natural resources. Free passes are available and will be valid for 1 year (through August 2016) and can be obtained online at [www.everykidinthepark.gov](http://www.everykidinthepark.gov).

### Wild Horse and Burro Updates (June Shoemaker, Acting Deputy State Director):

- BLM Arizona has secured funding for on-the-ground work and burro gathers.
- Active gathers are taking place now; bait traps set out in 7 areas
- The target for a fall gather is 345 burros

Lake Pleasant: New River Road to I-17

- Target 50 burros - Gathered 53

Black Mountain: Twin Mill Pasture, Private land inside of the Herd Management Area (HMA)

- Target 75 Burros - Gathered 39

Pirate Cove – Outside of Chemehuevi Herd Area in California

- Target 40 Burros, but haven't started gathering yet (California side)

Bullhead City – Burros on highways and roads in town

- Target 30 Burros - Gathered 16

Havasu: Herd Area just north of Lake Havasu City

- Target 50 Burros – This gather has not started yet.

Cibola: The town of Cibola, outside of the Cibola-Trigo HMA

- Target 65 Burros – Gathered 65

Dome Valley: Farms just outside of the Cibola-Trigo HMA

- Target 35 Burros – Gathered 0

- Gather continues, rain and farm lands present obstacles to bait trapping

TOTALS: Target 345 Burros – Gathered 173

**Fire Season:**

- Mild fire season in Arizona due to the monsoon season.
- Willow Fire on the Colorado River District.
- Arizona firefighters were sent to other states.
- Currently at Fire Planning Level 3.
- Focused on keeping employees safe and the BLM will continue to help communities impacted by fire.
- Salt Cedar – Thanks to the RAC for their suggestions on focal areas and restoration.
- BLM received a letter from Flake, McCain, and Gosar asking what is happening with invasive Salt Cedar on the Gila River. The agency responded with what has been done and the opportunities to address the issue on the Gila River and areas across the State.
- We have started scheduling State Leadership Team (SLT) meetings in the field. The last meeting was in Safford and time was spent at the Gila Box RNCA, and the SLT also met with the local community and available County Commissioners to discuss issues that were important to them.
- Agenda item for considering for the next RAC meeting: Telling the BLM story and being engaged with youth.
- The *Northstar 2025 Project* is ongoing. BLM is trying to figure out what the impacts will be to public lands in the future and who will be the stakeholders. Arizona does not have oil and gas or sage grouse. The BLM Arizona has border issues, mining, recreation, concessions, NLCS, wilderness, etc. This will be discussed at the next Working Group meeting for RAC feedback on how to do a better job in telling our story.

**Question/Discussion:**

- The University of Arizona offers a Noxious Weed/Salt Cedar short course every year in Farmington, New Mexico, and it is presented by Dr. Richard Lee, BLM Integrated Specialist (offered last week in July). This is a good opportunity to look at invasive plant problems. The cost is approximately \$300 (Larry Howery will give the course date for 2016 to Dorothea Boothe).
- Removing invasive plants is cost effective in preventing wildfire, along with ecological restoration.
- Next RAC Working Task: Dialog around restoration and Arizona-based efforts.
- Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) might address why we look at the landscape-level approach.
- Look at streamlining and addressing backlog in reference to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

**Agenda Item: Mining 101 Overview (Mining in Arizona on BLM Public Lands)**

**Presenters:** Becky Heick, Acting Deputy State Director for Nonrenewable Resources and Jeff Garrett, BLM Mining Engineer/State Geologist

- The United States is the largest producer of metallic, industrial, and fuel minerals.
- The BLM manages more than 700 million acres of Federal mineral estate. Most in the western United States.
- Provides stability to local and regional economies.

- The BLM manages three types of minerals: Leasable, Salable and Locatable
- The BLM shares a portion of the dollars from salable minerals to the state in which they were produced.
- Advances in management techniques have helped to minimize impacts.
- The minerals program is involved in Abandoned Mine Lands for public safety and to insure that reclamation occurs.
- The BLM provides Subject Matter Experts, through its Indian Trust Obligation, to assist tribes in mining on tribal lands, and to ensure that the tribes receive fair market value for salable minerals.
- Prior to 1981 mining was unregulated on BLM-administered lands.
- The BLM has the authority to determine valid mining claims.
- The BLM is responsible for recording mining claims and sites (Lode claims, Placer claims, Mill sites, and Tunnel sites), and adjudicate required filings, fees, and transfers.
- Mining fees are used to fund the mining law program.
- The NEPA policy is to create and maintain conditions on Federal lands under which people and nature can exist in productive harmony and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements for present and future generations.
- An Arizona Mining Permitting Guide has been created that gives guidance in who to contact, and an overview of the permitting process.
- There are currently no Federal-State Agreements between BLM Arizona and the State of Arizona so BLM Arizona and the State of Arizona deal independently with mineral development.
- The BLM endorses sustainable development.
- The BLM will continue to develop their E-Government solutions to make information accessible to the public.

### **Questions/Discussion:**

- The bonds with the BLM are for hard rock mining. Are there bonds for minerals?
  - Yes, every mineral is specific to the regulations that allow the BLM to dispose of the minerals. The regulations are specific to the bonding requirements that have to be met.
- How long can you mothball a facility?
  - Mining operations are reviewed every 5 years. After 5 years, the BLM would look at the specific situation.
- Comment: The Safford/Morenci mines take care of their mine site runoff by recapturing soils, and putting the soil back on the hill. Technology has helped mining to survive.
- How often do you conduct site inspections?
  - If there is an exploration notice, then inspections are once a year. They take the notice filing and regulations and check for compliance with the regulations and that they are complying with their Plan of Operations. Checked for what needs to be inspected and if there were any previous issues that need to be looked at again.

### **Agenda Item: Reclaim Our Arizona Monuments (ROAM) Update**

**Presenters:** Kathy Pedrick, BLM Special Assistant to the State Director

- The three border states affected by the southwest border are California, Arizona, and New Mexico, and they have worked on impacts on public lands by illegal border activities since year 2000.
- The Border Patrol has two sectors California, San Diego and El Centro. Arizona has sectors in Yuma and Tucson, and New Mexico works with El Paso's sector.
- The Tucson Sector went from 300 Border Patrol Agents to 6,000 Agents.
- The BLM has a 100-mile border zone with the Ironwood and Sonoran Desert National Monuments in this zone. Most of BLM Arizona's impacts are in this area.
- Operation ROAM was initiated in 2010.
- The BLM provides dollars and to other agencies and partners for trash cleanup and restoration.
- Detailers were brought in from other states to help with border surges.
- This year the BLM has conducted eight border surges in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.
- Will be meeting soon to decide where and how many surges need to be conducted in FY 2016. Additional border work is also done outside of ROAM.
- Accomplishment reports are created every year for the BLM Washington and Congressional offices.
- We are moving forward with planning and working with partnering agencies.
- The BLM Border Strategies:
  - Provide a safe and secure environment for public employees and the users of public lands.
  - Protect public land resources and values from the effects of smuggling.
  - Coordinate and collaborate with border partners on safety, security, and environmental protection.
  - Work to increase cross-border cooperation.

### **Questions/Discussion:**

- Have you experienced a lot of illegal immigrant crossing and visitor altercations with public land users?
  - No, illegal border crossers and do not want to engage with citizens or BLM Law Enforcement. Illegal Border Crossing warning signs are posted at the Monuments so public land users stay vigilant.
- Is the Tohono O'odham Tribe able to help with ROAM?
  - The BLM has assistance agreements with the Tribe for resource protection, repairing fencing, picking up trash, etc. Normandy-style rail barriers have also been built to protect public lands.
- Comment: You do not want to go out along the border after dark. Issues are getting better, but are not all solved.
- The BLM will continue to evaluate and continue to move forward with ROAM and our border approach.

**Public Comment Period (30 minutes) - Three people gave Public Comments.**

**Public Comments #1 - ASARCO'S PUBLIC COMMENTS TO BLM ARIZONA RAC  
Robin Barnes, Corporate Land Manager at Asarco LLC and Project Manager of the  
Ray Land Exchange:**

Asarco facts and importance of the Ray Land Exchange:

- Asarco has two units affected by the exchange: Ray Mine and the Hayden Smelter.
- Last year, Ray operations produced in excess of 62M Lbs. of copper in the form of cathode and Hayden's anodes contained more than 316M Lbs. of copper.
- All the copper we produced at Ray and Hayden stays in the United States.
- Copper mines in the United States produce only about 67% of the copper needed by the American public each year, the rest is imported.
- Asarco now employs approximately 2,200 people in Arizona with 1,300 working Ray and Hayden. The payroll with benefits at these two units is about \$139M annually. We are one of the top employers in the copper corridor in Pinal and Gila Counties
- Asarco's purchased services, materials and supplies at Ray and Hayden and added an additional \$359M to Arizona's economy in 2014.
- We believe this exchange will have a positive effect on the Arizona's economy. We see this as a win-win situation because it is mutually beneficial for BLM, Asarco and the public. The exchange will reduce BLM's checkerboard ownership of property in Mohave and Pinal Counties and the public obtains environmentally sensitive lands that include riparian areas and other habitat for various threatened and endangered species such as the "southwestern willow flycatcher and western yellow billed cuckoo."
- Without the exchange, the public will not benefit from receiving these high resource value lands and Asarco will be free to file a Mining Plan of Operations with the BLM to mine this property.
- Painfully long process being worked on for 21 years.

Asarco proposed the exchange in 1994, the BLM approved the exchange in 1999, it was appealed in 2000, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals remanded the case to BLM in 2010 to conduct additional NEPA compliance work. We have worked with BLM and other agencies over the last 5 years for the release of a supplemental draft EIS to meet the requirements of the court. This is not a legislative exchange (i.e. Resolution Copper Exchange), but an administrative exchange following all of the BLM procedures mandated by Federal law. Asarco requests any assistance or support to move this process forward so we can get the draft supplemental EIS released ASAP.

**Comments:**

- The RAC is well aware of this pending exchange and your frustration, and want to be keep updated on this process. Thank you for coming to the meeting today.

**Public Comment #2 - COMMENTS BY JOHN HAMMIL, ARIZONA FIELD REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP (TRCP) (passed out two handouts):**

My organization is a sportsmen's conservation organization. Our mission is to guarantee all American's quality places to hunt and fish. We work mostly on Federal issues, land management issues, budget and policy. Our organization is currently working on a Sportamen's Values Mapping Project. It's a project to go out to sportsmen and get them to tell us where their highest values are in the State for hunting and fishing. We have implemented this project in collaboration with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD). Earlier this week about 7,500 surveys were sent to people who purchases hunting and fishing licenses in Arizona to ask them to go online and draw on their computer screen the areas that they value the most for hunting and fishing. We will take all of this information and compile it together to produce maps that will show where these areas are located throughout the State. There is a lot of social consideration to where people hunt and fish. Areas may be close to home, an area traditionally hunted you're your family, an area you can draw a tag on so there are a lot of things besides the biology that determine where people hunt and fish. This is a data gap that we are trying to fill and we see this as useful information in BLM and Forest Service planning process to help the AGFD figure out where they should be putting their resources in terms of doing things on areas that are important to sportsmen. Some of you who hunt and fish and have purchased fishing licenses may receive a postcard in the mail. If you receive a postcard, please, go online and follow the instructions.

| One of the most important aspects of public lands is from ~~a hunting~~ and fishing standpoint and general wildlife conservation or large intact pieces of habitat that are un-fragmented. If you look at AGFD's strategic plan it talks a lot about habitat fragmentation. More roads, more people, more people doing things, more development pressures on the land so the BLM manages a lot of lands that are still undeveloped, largely intact pieces of habitat that provide great hunting and fishing opportunities. My organization at the national level is working in the new planning guidelines that the BLM has created (Planning 2.0) to come up with a concept called Backcountry Conservation Areas. These would be areas that would help identify where the areas are located that provide high-value habitat that are still un-fragmented and once again try and provide emphasis to maintenance of those areas as un-fragmented habitat to continue to provide access to those areas to allow for active habitat management. So that's a new concept. When I was hired years ago they wanted me to take that concept and apply it in the Safford and Kingman Resource Management Plans. For whatever reason, those things have been delayed for some time. Asking for money is delayed. This is a new concept that we hope to have implemented in the new planning guidelines. There has been a lot of effort at the national level to do this. We are applying this backcountry concept in four or five other states right now. This is in the test phase.

As sportsmen-based organizations, we are alarmed that some decision makers are promoting the idea that Federal public lands should be transferred to individual states or sold to private interests. We strongly oppose this misguided approach. We ask that you take steps to voice your support for America's public lands legacy and reject efforts to dispose of, sell or transfer Federal public lands.

**Questions/Discussion:**

- If you are a hunter/fisherman and don't get a survey, the how can you get one?
  - We have done a random sample of folks so you may receive a postcard.
- Is the information being collected favorite spots?
  - After they identify a spot, we ask them why this location is important to them. Is it because it's close to home and have you hunted there before, great scenery? What are the factors that make the location important to you?
- Is the data gathering being done this year?
  - Yes, postcards were mailed this week (Monday).
- Will this be done on a recurring basis?
  - Possibly, this is the first time we have done the survey.
- Can I access the results?
  - Yes, online. Postcards were mailed out this week. This will be on a periodic basic and not a recurring basis. Right now this is a test of the system along with participation and results.
- What does conservation of wildlife mean to the land owner?
  - We will work with the BLM, Forest Service, and AGFD to help maintain access to the areas. Habitat deteriorated and opportunities to improve habitat (building water structures, removing weeds, etc.). We are not trying to create wilderness areas or restructure. Access is important to hunters and fishermen in the State, and we want to make sure these areas are there for future generations.

**Public Comment #3 - Kelly Norton, President, Arizona Mining Association**

Thanks to Ray and Bill for putting Mining 101 on the agenda. I think there was some good healthy conversation with everybody. I want you to know that my door is always open if you have questions of any type about mining or any mining companies in Arizona. The page that was handed out earlier has our economic numbers from 2013, and also has our contact information. Thank you.

<b>END OF PUBLIC COMMENTS</b>
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### **Agenda Item: Solar Program Mitigation Strategy Update**

**Presenters:** Becky Heick and Lane Cowger, BLM Renewable Energy Coordinating Office Program Manager

- Lane showed a 1-minute Solar Energy Zone (SEZ) video released this week of the Gillespie SEZ.
- The SEZ are selected that are close to existing transmission lines.
- All part of Arizona being renewable ready.
- The BLM Arizona had three SEZ identified in 2012 and 2013.
- There are two permitted solar projects/Quartzsite and Sonoran Solar, and 2 permitted wind projects).
- Rulemaking is ongoing at the National level for competitive leasing.
- Workshop planned for tomorrow, September 17, 2015, and a per-acre fee will be discussed to fund offsite mitigation projects.
- No current proposals for solar development on the three Arizona Solar Energy Zones.
- Mitigation: Avoid Impacts, Minimize Impacts, and Offset Unavoidable Impacts.
- Draft Strategy: The BLM requests comments by October 2, 2015.

### **Discussion/Questions:**

- There is a growing amount of impact of solar fields on migratory birds and animals. Do you have wildlife crossings included in mitigation?
  - This will be project-specific permitting, and if it's an appropriate project location.
- The range is not based on solar technologies.
  - It is what is based on the ground.
- Is there any mortality data of birds available?
  - Do not have mortality numbers at this time. Currently working with partners in California and Argonne National Labs looking at the concentrated solar troth.
- After Arizona Public Service said they are no longer interested in wind is there anyone else interested in wind projects in Arizona?
  - Pending projects are looking at Nevada and California.
- Many Counties through comprehensive planning or other policies have tried to address solar and wind energy development.
  - Arizona is not currently a big market for wind energy at this time.
  - The BLM is a step ahead by being ready.
- Is any other state in a better position for renewable energy development?
  - Projects in other states (California) are moving forward. Applications are in a downward trend from the years that we were in a fast-track mode.

### **Agenda Item: RAC Committee Reports**

**Presenter:** Bill Brake

- Nothing new to bring forward.
- Maggie's group: Francisco from the U.S. Forest Service has created a small committee to help them work on their presentations and how to present them to the Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC). They are not ready to bring anything to the RRAC at this time.

**Arizona Friends and Partners Committee (Submitted by Maggie Sacher):** The BLM Arizona Friends and Partners Committee recommends the RAC submit the BLM Arizona Friends and Partners Action Plan to Director Suazo as a recommendation for adoption by BLM Arizona. The plan is substantially the same as presented at the September 15, 2015, Working Group Meeting. The only change is to strengthen the agreement section between Friends Groups and the BLM that identifies the Friends will consult on all sensitive resource disclosure prior to providing locations to the public.

So the new language is Bullet 15 under “coordination” will now read: Friends Groups will consult with the BLM prior to publishing or publically disclosing the location of sensitive cultural, archaeological, historical, natural and environmental resources.

**MOTION - To approve by Jeff Sargent, Seconded by Thomas Hulen: To accept and adopt the Friends and Partners Action Plan as written with amendments and minor modifications. Motion Approved by all present.** Note: Sections Part II and Part III will be completed very soon now that the Plan has been approved to move forward.

#### **BLM District Reports (See District Report Handouts):**

##### **Tim Burke, District Manager, Arizona Strip District:**

- Flash flooding on the Arizona Strip. The BLM has a ranger and Matt Thorburn helping with the City of Hillsdale tragedy.
- Had some flash-flooding at the Cedar Pockets Campground along the Virgin River. Conducted a swift-water rescue yesterday.
- Up to 5 people in the Paria Canyon expected to be out today that haven’t returned. Also, a couple of other people missing in the area.
- Lots of roads have been washed out.
- The annual Paiute Indians Camp with kids 10-12 years old is scheduled for Friday through Sunday this week; hopefully it will not be cancelled due to flash flooding.
- Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Arizona Strip Field Office are preparing the Draft EIS for release in winter of 2015-16.
- The Dellenbaugh-Shivwits Resilient Landscape area request received initial \$9,500 in funding and conducted successful prescribed burns.
- Continuing to support studies determined necessary by the Management Oversight Team for the Northern Arizona Withdrawal to gather additional information on potential impacts to the Grand Canyon watershed from uranium mining.
- Comments have been addressed on the preliminary Travel Management Plan/Environmental Assessment for the Colorado City and St. George Basin travel sub-regions. The last step is to meet the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act and consult with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office on the proposed route network.
- Moving the permit system for the Paria Canyon-Coyote Buttes Special Management Area online to the Recreation.gov permit system and will include fee adjustments. A Draft

Business Management Plan has been prepared to guide future business practices for the area, and is out for public review.

- During the last weekend of July 2015, Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument sent their summer interns into the ponderosa pine forest of Bryce Canyon for the Parks's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual GeoFest event.
- One active uranium mine, the Pinenut mine. Reclamation will start soon.
- Study currently underway on the Northern Arizona Withdrawal by the U.S. Geological Survey studying impacts of uranium mining on the Grand Canyon. This is a requirement for the withdrawal. The current withdrawal runs through 2032.

**Roxie Trost, District Manager, Colorado River District:**

- Have hired new Chief Ranger, Jonathan Azar.
- The Fuels Program has been working with Pine Lake and Pinion Pine communities to enhance their fire breaks as well as the Boy Scout camp levy.
- Tribal Consultation has been extensive and has consulted and coordinated on numerous projects, mining plans, in the Yuma Field Office.
- Continue to work with the Western Area Power Administration for the re-route of transmission lines.
- Have continued to work on the ongoing Topock project.
- Continue to consult on the Bagdad stockpile expansion.
- Coordinating with Fort Mojave on an ethnographic study with the KFO.
- The KFO and the issuance of the grazing permit for CQFM. This is the project sponsored by the RAC and State Director. Went out and solicited for seats as a sub-committee and has been in the works for about 2 years now. The proposed decision was sent out on July 1, 2015, with one protest that was subsequently withdrawn. Fifteen days later this became the Final Decision. If there were no appeals, then they would be able to issue the permit. The permit is signed and in the hands of the permittee.
- Had a grazing range improving meeting on August 19, 2015, to talk about range improvements and process better to track.
- Have evaluated the race permit for the Parker 425. Now dealing with personally-owned droids and how they could cause issues on the race course. The race organizer is looking into this and will provide suggestions.
- Looking at issuing a lease to LaPaz County for the Sandy Cove area. This has been sent to LaPaz County and is waiting to issue a notice to proceed pending input from the Bureau of Reclamation.

**Patrick Putnam, Acting District Manager, Phoenix District:**

- Changes in personnel: New District manager, Leon Thomas, will be replacing Mary D'Aversa. Pamela Mathis is now the Associate District Manager for the Gila District Office. Jeff Brown will be the new Administrative Officer filling the position vacated by Pamela Mathis. Filled a GIS Specialist position. Hired Adam Eggers as the new Public Affairs Specialist.
- Have the Draft Biological Assessment for the herbicide Environmental Assessment. This is attached to the Arizona Public Service and Salt River Project and allows them to treat

and maintain their right-of-ways with the use of herbicide. Should be out for public review in the first quarter of 2016.

- Have a District weed strategy for effective use of the weed control program. Do the cultural work up front in addressing weed issues.
- Have a successful youth program through the last 4 years in the Field School Program. Unique this year is thinking ahead and employing through internships in doing work on both BLM and Forest Service land.
- Had a couple of small low-intensity fires on the Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) that were managed for resource benefit to burn off woody species and help promote perennial native grasses.
- On the Lower Sonoran a huge rain washed out the Painted Rock Campground entrance and the campground. The campground was closed for repairs and is now open.
- The Lower Sonoran continues to work on tamarisk along the Gila River. Have a 2016 plan for 75 acres of mechanized removed, 60 acres of herbicide treatment, and an additional 190 acres of treatment if funding is available.
- The Sun Valley to Morgan Transmission project it was determined that an EIS needs to be done and the Record of Decision was signed January 2014. APS has since submitted their plan of development to the Phoenix District for review. Hope to have back to APS by the end of this month. Hope to issue a notice to proceed early to mid-summer 2016 with construction beginning by late summer.
- The Harquahala Mountains Wilderness Management Plan is out for public review. Address 22,888 acres of wilderness area 110 miles west of Phoenix (designated in 1990). Comment period closes September 25, 2015.

**Tim Shannon, District Manager, Gila District:**

- Pamela Mathis was selected as the new Associate District Manager and Melissa Warren was selected as the Tucson Field Manager.
- BLM Record of Decision approves SunZia electrical transmission line through New Mexico and Arizona. The SunZia project is expected to enter the line siting process with the Arizona Corporation Commission in late summer 2015.
- Final EIS for the Southline Transmission Project is undergoing administrative review with a Final EIS publication anticipated for early fall 2015.
- Moving forward with the RMP Amendment and Draft Supplemental EIS for the Ray Land Exchange. Expected release is fall 2015.
- Progress continues on the development of an RMP for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. Draft EIS expected to be released in early 2016, and followed by a 90-day comment period.
- Developing an Ironwood Forest National Monument monitoring plan that is expected to be released soon for public input.
- The BLM continues to stay engaged by providing the U.S. Forest Service with information regarding the potential impact to the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area from the proposed Rosemont Copper Mine.
- Preparing to finalize a Decision Record for the Aravaipa Canyon Ecosystem Management Plan and revised EA.

- Treated 1,015 acres on the Oak Creek Allotment to reduce woody vegetation and improve watershed and wildlife habitat.
- Implementation underway for restoration program in Navajo County to restore native grasslands and improve wildlife habitat for grassland species.
- Seeking public input on changes to the Recreation.gov website for Aravaipa Canyon permits.
- Collaborative work between the City of Safford and the BLM continues in an effort to renew the document guiding operation of the city's Bonita Creek municipal water supply, located within the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area. The MOU between the BLM and the city expires in 2016.

### **Agenda Item: RAC Questions on BLM District Reports**

(Q&As and Discussion) - RAC Members, State Director, District Managers and BLM Staff

#### Discussion:

- Thanks to Roxie for the Mohave County grazing permit renewals issue being settled.
- The Lake Havasu Field Office Project Meeting with the NEPA person attending had positive outcomes; especially with the large amounts of ranchers participating. No protests.
- Concerned about winter visitors coming to the Colorado River District and are they prepared for all of the visitors?
  - Roxie has a concessions meeting next week and will report back after the meeting.
- Ace Youth Program – Do you hire them after their internship?
  - There has been a lot of work with engaging youth. Because of changes in different programs there were not good hiring authorities. These individuals come in on the open to all public hiring lists and Veterans have hiring priority. The youth can compete on an entry-level job.
- There is a huge open gold mine on the AFNM and the fencing is down and needs to be repaired.
- Did the Phoenix District have any allotment protests?
  - There were no protests.
- Are there any flooding impacts on BLM land on the Arizona Strip?
  - Matt Thorburn is on site and keeping Tim Burke updated.
  - Most of the road impacts are in Colorado City.
  - There is a huge hole formed on Hwy 89A from a prior storm.
- There will be a California condor release on September 26, 2015. A Friends of the Cliffs dinner is also planned.
- How are we doing on the San Pedro Resource Management Plan (RMP)?
  - It is moving along and received input in June/July on Draft Management Alternatives. Inventory reports will require more work. Addressing issues up front will help minimize protests. Hope to have the RMP out in 2016.
- Thanks to Tim Shannon for an excellent job on the Gila District.

**Recognition Ceremony for Outgoing RAC Members – Raymond Suazo**

- Thanks to the outgoing RAC Members for committing their time and energy working on the RAC.
- The State Director presented each of the outgoing members with a glass appreciation plaque.

**Wrap Up/Future Agenda Items/Next Meeting Dates/Adjourn**

- Tentative dates: Week of January 10, 2016, or January 20-21, 2016.
- Dorothea Boothe will send tentative dates to the RAC via a Doodle Poll.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:30 p.m.