

**Bureau of Land Management
Arizona Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes**

August 28, 2013

**9828 North 31st Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona**

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by RAC Chair Bill Brake, who thanked everyone for attending and participating in the working groups and Business meetings.

The Arizona RAC Coordinator Dorothea Boothe introduced BLM Washington Office guest Lauren Luckey, National RAC Coordinator. This was the first RAC meeting Ms. Luckey has attended since taking over the position; previously, she worked in the Office of the BLM Director and Deputy Directors. Ms. Luckey attended the meeting to observe how the RAC functions. Mr. Brake added that Ms. Boothe has done an excellent job and that Lauren can learn a lot from her.

Following the call to order and welcomes, the attendees introduced themselves and the areas they represent.

AGENDA ITEM: Meeting Called to Order – Welcome and Introductions: Bill Brake, RAC Chair, RAC Members, BLM Staff, and Guests

Resource Advisory Council Members in Attendance:

Category 1 – Commercial/Commodity Interests

Bill Brake
Carolyn Loder
Maggie Sacher
Thomas Hulén

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

Carl Taylor
Glen Collins
Doug Traub
Eric Gorsegner

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

Dawn Hubbs
Larry Snead
Larry Howery
Jeffrey Sargent

Bob Broscheid, Arizona Governor's Representative

Absent: Stu Bengson (Category 1); Elizabeth Buchroeder Webb (Category 2)

BLM Staff in Attendance: Ray Suazo, Deborah Rawhouser, Julie Decker, June Shoemaker, Scott Florence, Dennis Sylvia, Mary D'Aversa, Roxie Trost, Kim Liebhauser, Elroy Masters, Aaron Wilkerson, Deborah Stevens, Dorothea Boothe, and Colleen Hickman from BLM Arizona.

Guests/Members of the Public: Geneva Richardson and Jeremy Browning from ASARCO; Gerry Hellier, Executive Director for Quadstate Local Government Authority visiting from California (Mohave County and La Paz County are both members of that organization); and Michael Turisk, Planning Manager with the Cochise County Community Development Department.

Mr. Brake said the working group meeting on August 27 was very successful. The Council discussed a number of issues and Brake believes they came up with some good advice for the BLM. He reiterated the RAC's role; to guide and help the BLM manage public lands.

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

BLM Arizona State Director Ray Suazo started by welcoming Lauren Luckey. He noted Ms. Luckey's experience with how Washington works will be helpful to her in her new duties as the National RAC Coordinator. He added to Brake's comments and thanked the RAC. The BLM is always in transition, and the RAC has also been transitioning to work out its processes so it can support the BLM in its mission. The diversity of this RAC is what makes it as powerful as it is.

Suazo also thanked the BLM staff for their efforts in the support they give to the RAC.

Personnel Changes: As the baby boomers are approaching retirement, you will see a lot of change in staff. It's part of the constant transition.

- David Hughes, Deputy State Director for Business and Support Services, retired in June. Kathy Pedrick is acting in this position until it is filled permanently.
- Ed Kender is on a detail as the Acting Lower Sonoran Field Manager, and Dave Scarbrough is also on a detail as the Acting Sonoran Desert National Monument Manager. Phoenix District Manager Mary D'Aversa is working to get these two permanent positions filled quickly.
- Vi Hillman, who has been the Associate District Manager in the Colorado River District, is now the Tucson Field Manager. Vi has a wealth of experience in recreation, fire, and resource management. She is a welcome addition, and will report in mid-October. Roxie Trost will be filling the Associate District Manager position for the Colorado River District.

- Dennis Sylvia left the Arizona Strip District as their Associate District Manager and is now onboard as the new Associate District Manager for the Gila District.

RAC Nominations: The Arizona RAC nominations have been vetted with the BLM office in Washington and the White House liaison. BLM Arizona is awaiting final word on the appointees from the Secretary of the Interior.

Sequestration: BLM Arizona has seen impacts as a result of sequestration. In the last few years, things have gotten lean in a lot of areas. Now the organization is so lean, it's lacking resources needed to get all of its work done. We are working on emphasizing and prioritizing those things that have the highest risk and are most important to the public.

In some districts, there just aren't the resources to hire people in certain functional areas. This is not only due to sequestration, but the trend in government that budgets are greatly reduced. To deal with that, BLM Arizona needs to be more strategic and focus its energy on where the greatest needs are and also determine what not to do.

Rapid Eco-regional Assessments (REAs): Suazo said BLM Arizona is excited about having the opportunity to use the REAs as part of a landscape level approach to managing public lands. Elroy Masters will give an update later and explain what it is and how this tool can be used. Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Sally Jewell is looking at things at a landscape level. She recognizes that resources are short, and the greatest opportunities exist where agencies partner up and cross boundaries to manage the land.

Range Strategy: A lot of time has been spent with each of the districts in developing a range strategy, and BLM Arizona is working on a broader strategy to address permit renewals. BLM Arizona is currently evaluating how it can streamline the process and is working on a plan to take up the chain to garner support so we get the needed resources to deal with permit renewal backlogs.

Border/Operation Reclaim Our Arizona Monuments (ROAM): Over the last 2 to 3 years, much has been done to improve the resources near the border. BLM Arizona has worked with a number of law enforcement partners on the ROAM surges, including Border Patrol and county sheriffs, to reduce the impacts caused by illegal aliens, smuggling, drug traffickers, and so on. Go to the BLM Arizona website to see statistics on impacts to the resources.

There was a ROAM summit in June to review what has been done in this arena and to see where they are going in the future. The District Managers involved (Gila and Phoenix) are talking about how they are going to engage in putting together that strategy for the next 2 to 3 years. They are looking at what areas need emphasis and reaching out to the partners for support. The goals of the border strategy are safety and security for the public and employees, resource protection for the Monuments, and working in partnerships.

Planning Efforts: There is one Resource Management Plan (RMP) in progress. The San Pedro River National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) was awarded funds to initiate the preplanning

effort. They have been very focused on reaching out to the public to get them engaged and educated on all the issues in this planning effort.

ASARCO Ray Land Exchange Project: This is a project that involves 11,000 acres of BLM-administered lands near the town of Kearny that are proposed to be exchanged for 7,300 acres of environmentally sensitive private lands that are mostly located mostly in Mohave County. This is an opportunity to allow appropriate use of these resources and for the BLM to get some pristine lands and protect them. The project is moving along.

Some of the next steps are finalizing the Environmental Impact Study (EIS), holding public meetings on it, and creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) plan with the tribes. BLM staff has met with ASARCO several times and are working to make sure the timeline is still on track.

Wilderness 50th Anniversary Celebration: Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. The BLM and other agencies will be involved in partner spotlights and celebrations. Nothing is scheduled at this time, but we are figuring out what areas BLM Arizona wants to highlight and the partnerships we will engage in. As events are planned, we will bring this information to the RAC.

Strategic Focus Areas: Ray reiterated his belief that there is a need for a plan, especially when resources are short. Having one makes things easier and helps make everyone more effective. The districts have done a really good job with this, and although they don't have everything they need, should resources become available, BLM Arizona would know where they should be put. Some of these areas are sustainability, ecological function, public safety, and recreation. The BLM Arizona State Leadership Team (SLT) reviewed and discussed strategic focus areas at meeting in early August, and a lot of the things that BLM Arizona is focusing on align very well with the goals of Secretary Jewell. Suazo mentioned that BLM Arizona is poised not only to be part of this broader effort of landscape-level, science-based management, but also to bring it down to the local level.

DISCUSSION:

Bill Brake said when the RAC first started working with Ray as the State Director they considered other ways to run these meetings. They talked about having the meetings without the district managers (DM) attending, but later decided the meetings would not be as effective without the DMs. He added that the RAC appreciates the time the DMs commit to this process.

Maggie Sacher expressed her appreciation for how many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and Friends groups were mentioned in the Strategic Plan. She also thanked BLM Arizona staff for helping Friends of the Vermilion Cliffs qualify for and get a science grant. With all of the cutbacks this year, they know they were very lucky to receive that funding.

AGENDA ITEM: Rapid Eco-regional Assessment (REA) Briefing

Elroy Master briefed the group on REAs and what they can do for the BLM. The following is from the BLM's national website and gives some of the background on REAs and how the BLM as land managers plan to use them:

In response to climate change and other environmental influences in the western United States, the BLM has launched 14 Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REAs) since 2010 to improve the understanding of the existing condition of these landscapes, and how conditions may be altered by ongoing environmental changes and land use demands.

The REAs examine ecological values, conditions, and trends within ecoregions, which are large, connected areas that have similar environmental characteristics. Examples of ecoregions include the Sonoran Desert and the Colorado Plateau. Ecoregions span administrative boundaries and typically encompass areas much larger than those managed by individual BLM field offices.

The REAs, in summary:

- identify and answer important management questions;
 - document key resource values, which are referred to as conservation elements, with a focus on regionally-significant terrestrial habitats, aquatic habitats, and species of concern;
 - describe influences from four environmental change agents: climate change, wildfire, invasive species, and development;
 - assess the collective effects of projected trends;
 - identify and map key opportunities for resource conservation, restoration, and development;
 - identify science gaps and data needs; and
 - provide a baseline to evaluate and guide future management actions.
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Visit http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/Landscape_Approach/reas.html for more information and links to a specific REA.

Masters explained that REA is a landscape approach to land management meant to be used as a planning tool for a region. It is not intended to replace local planning, but instead will be used to set the context for landscape issues. They give users the option of looking at how various influences, such as fire, urban growth, invasive species, etc., might affect the region as a landscape.

BLM Arizona has done three REAs (Sonoran Desert, Colorado Plateau, and Mojave Desert). All three of these REAs addressed these four change agents: wildfire, climate change, invasive

species, and development. That was the core of every assessment BLM did. However, the REAs are not limited to these four agents; if there are other factors, those can be considered.

One of the challenges of the REAs was finding geospatial data at the landscape scale. They did not go out and collect new data; the idea was to take readily available geospatial data that could be used at a landscape or eco-regional scale. Other systems may have better data, but the REAs need to go across a region; you can input better data if you are working on a smaller project.

Users can tweak the data by taking out one of the components. The model gives you different outputs based on what issue or management question you want to focus on.

DISCUSSION:

Masters went over one of the tests they did with the Hassayampa Field Office (HFO) staff, who was working on a travel management plan (TMP) and had a question about soil, and they were able to use it to help frame their question in their planning area.

Masters said he hopes that they can step it down and see where they are on the land use planning. They need to define what the current issues are. The next step is to share the data with BLM's partners and fill in any gaps.

Carolyn Loder asked if this is a better tool or the RMP? Masters said the RMP would have the information at the local level, so it would be more refined.

Larry Howery said that this scale is much broader spatially, but how will this be used or integrated with rangeland health evaluations? Masters said this will be our data input. This gives a more landscape look and can help refine some of the questions. He reiterated that this is not to replace local current information. Also, they need to consider how they get that local information into the geospatial model so that it can be improved?

Thomas Hulen said he feels this it is a useful system. It shows the relationships between resources and the changes that affect them, and it can help BLM decide where to put its resources. He also asked if something like this is happening in northern Mexico because they are related. Masters said not from an agency aspect. Other groups are gathering that data, but it's not a part of this assessment.

When asked about misuse or misinterpretation of the data, Masters reminded the group of the disclaimer on the website. Suazo added that the local data is still very important because it is being monitored at the local level. Masters agreed and added that the long-range projections could help land managers make sure they are monitoring the right indicators now to be able to pick up on those trends in the future. The long-term projections are limited, and the data certainty is low or fair.

Eric Gorseigner said there are so many other agencies that are involved in planning efforts, and they all have a lot of data. They may want to look at having a "data summit." With all the data that's out there, this has a lot of potential for informing public policy at that higher level.

Masters said they do have partners and are looking for existing data and at pulling in data from and sharing data with others.

Dawn Hubbs asked how data was collected across Tribal lands. Masters said they were invited to participate, and they did on some level, but most of the data was readily available on the web.

Glen Collins mentioned the subsurface lands, which BLM also manages, and asked why the contractors didn't evaluate it. Julie Decker said that was included in the REA, but Masters did not include it as an example in this presentation.

Loder feels that at the RMP level, the mineral information from the mining side and the energy side is inadequate. So if that information isn't getting in at the local level, then it is inadequate at this level. Masters said they would have to rerun that model based on the data to address that question.

AGENDA ITEM: Arizona Renewable Energy Program (Information)

Julie Decker, Deputy State Director for Resources, gave an update on BLM Arizona's renewable energy projects. Renewable energy remains a high priority for the DOI. At the last RAC meeting, there was concern about the number of solar projects with technology that will require a lot of water. The list this time is significantly shorter, as BLM continues to do its due diligence on current applications to verify whether these applications are all still viable.

BLM Arizona has a short list of active projects in the works. Several proponents have decided not to continue with their projects. Decker summarized the following solar and wind projects.

Sonoran Solar: This is near Buckeye. The grant was approved in December 2012. Although it seems to be an ideal site due to its location, there is still no power purchase agreement.

Quartzsite: The "power tower" in Quartzsite was approved in May 2013, and will proceed. Western Area Power Authority (WAPA) is the lead agency on this project.

Mohave County Wind: BP Wind got a signed Record of Decision (ROD) in July 2013.

Hyder Valley: This project is still under EIS analysis; it will use parabolic trough technology (high water consumption).

Marisol Solar: This is the newest application, and it falls under the variance process. BLM expects to have a Federal Register Notice (FRN) posted in early fall.

Here are the current transmission projects:

SunZia: This transmission line comes from New Mexico to Arizona. There is some complexity with the military installations in the area, but a final decision is expected later this year.

Sun Valley to Morgan: BLM is presently working through a couple of protests on this, so it's nearing the end of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Southline: This is in a similar area to SunZia. BLM anticipates a Draft EIS sometime this year.

DISCUSSION:

Bill Brake said he is getting mixed opinions about solar and the BLM and the future of solar. Since no one is getting power purchase agreements, it appears that these are slowing down. He mentioned a nuclear power plant that was shut down in California; would this create an opportunity for solar?

Decker said solar has potential, but it's still all speculation. The issue is how California will take power from out of state and how they will work through that administratively. Arizona is primed and ready. It's such a speculative industry.

Suazo added that the BLM doesn't have as many applications now, and those that have been issued ROWs are waiting for power purchase agreements. He said that the RDEP really set the stage for a balanced approach for renewable energy in areas that are low impact. At the Western Governors' Association meeting last December, they were asking how the states are going to work together to supply the power its residents need. What are the neighboring states going to do, and where is the demand going to be? Where does Arizona fit into that picture? Decker said there is an increase in transmission line requests.

Gorsegrner said there is a massive amount of shift to gas and fracking, and that is changing the economics of the utility industry. The work that has been done here is good work. Hopefully, BLM Arizona doesn't have to deal with the fracking issue. It has been a game changer.

Brake said these installations take a lot of land and change a lot of characteristics of that land. If there is no agreement, why are they built? Suazo answered that none are being built without power purchase agreements, because it isn't economical.

Carl Taylor mentioned Secretary Jewell's statement that now that DOI needs to get another 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy, without reference to capacity or any process. It seemed somewhat arbitrary. What can be done with minimum conflict on the environment? He was also concerned that the Department of Energy (DOE) is extending loan guarantees to qualifying developers. Decker said she didn't know about what incentives are available. Taylor is concerned about the possible backlash when enterprises fail. It's an interesting policy, but it can be a successful one.

AGENDA ITEM: Use and Formation of Subcommittees on the RAC

Roxie Trost approached the RAC about the possibility of forming a new subcommittee to look at grazing permit renewals in the Kingman Field Office. The RAC discussed this at the working group meeting and voted unanimously to add it. Brake added that the RAC felt that the State Director would not be opposed to it, knowing his views on the issue. Doug Traub will chair the

subcommittee, and Dawn Hubbs will help out, since both live in that area. The subcommittee will be called the Colorado River District Rangeland Subcommittee.

Suazo remarked that after looking at the RAC's Charter, he sees this as a good idea and approves it. In this instance, he felt that getting a subcommittee together to take a look at some of the work that needs to be done there is a good idea. He thanked Trost for her efforts.

DISCUSSION:

At Tuesday's working group meeting, Taylor asked if this subcommittee would need a mediator, and it was decided that it might need a facilitator, and if mediation is needed, it was expected that the RAC Chair would function in that role. While Taylor appreciated that RAC members Traub and Hubbs were willing to step forward, he added if mediation skills are needed, they should be able to ask Trost for it.

Trost said the expectation is that Traub or Hubbs wouldn't have to mediate, but the facilitation is in place, so they will have the opportunity to do that if needed.

AGENDA ITEM: Recreational Target Shooting on BLM Lands

Glen Collins went over the RAC's recommendations on the BLM Arizona's education, outreach, and engagement strategies for dealing with recreational shooting on the Sonoran Landscape Project area. The RAC commended Suazo and the BLM staff for what they have done on this initiative. They endorsed the way that BLM Arizona is proceeding with its respected, open access and education campaign to promote responsible recreational shooting. It is also important to develop an ethic for it.

Collins mentioned that when off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) first showed up 40 to 50 years ago, they were perceived by the BLM to be the destruction of the public lands. The BLM dealt with the new recreational use issue then, and it will deal with recreational shooting now.

The RAC's Recreation and Communities Working Group discussed the recreational shooting issue yesterday and provides the following report and recommendations to the full RAC.

On August 27, 2013, the BLM's Arizona RAC Recreation and Communities Working Group discussed the BLM's draft "Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategies" for the Sonoran Landscape Project. A copy of that draft Strategy is included below. Thirteen of the 14 RAC members participated in the discussion, along with the Governor's Representative Robert Broscheid.

The RAC commends the Arizona BLM staff for developing this strategy for expanding the existing **Respected Access is Open Access** education campaign into an education, outreach and engagement initiative that promotes responsible recreational shooting on public lands. It is

important to develop an “ethic” for recreational shooting, similar to the “hunting ethic” that is shared by those who use guns for hunting activities.

The RAC recommends that the following items be incorporated into the draft plan:

- Define “shooting”, and perhaps the types of guns and levels of concern related to different types of guns used for recreational shooting on public lands.
- Include consideration of paintball shooting activities.
- Coordinate with local law enforcement on proposed rules and impacts.
- Native American Tribal Councils need to be involved in decision making and land management.
- The process of educating the public should include preliminary research into local issues before addressing the public in larger meetings. Local leaders, adjacent land owners and users, and ranchers must be consulted early in the process.
- Maintain “no shooting” buffer zones (of not less than a mile in width-?) along established recreational trails, around private properties, commercial operations, etc., and develop brochures and signage explaining why recreational shooting is discouraged/prohibited in these buffer areas.
- Use the terms “Lower Sonoran Public Lands” and “Hassayampa Public Lands” instead of “Lower Sonoran Field Office” and “Hassayampa Field Office” in describing the Focus Area covered by this Strategy for the Sonoran Landscape Project.
- Reduce or eliminate noise pollution from Wilderness Areas and areas with heavy concentrations of hikers, campers or other outdoor recreation users.
- Educate the public about the impact of lead bullet contamination of the environment and wildlife.
- Automatic firearms may require special consideration as to siting and use.
- BLM should have the authority to designate recreational shooting areas on BLM Public Lands
- Designate areas for recreational shooting, and also identify areas which are not appropriate for recreational shooting.
- Define “reckless discharge”, making sure that the public knows that it is clearly illegal to combine alcohol use with firearms and recreational shooting.
- Outreach efforts should particularly focus on youth and stress gun safety, shooting ethics, etc.
- Developing a “recreational shooting ethic” is an important objective of this effort.

The RAC also recommends that this same Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategies approach should be used in future planning for recreational shooting in other areas on BLM Public Lands in Arizona.

These recommendations were approved by the BLM Arizona RAC at the August 28, 2013 meeting.

Maggie Sacher said this is an outstanding process. During the Working Group Meeting, Sacher suggested changing the names of the Lower Sonoran Field Office and Hassayampa Field Office to Lower Sonoran Public Lands and Hassayampa Public Lands. The RAC agreed that “Public Lands” was more informative than “Field Office” when talking about the area being administered by a field office.

Ray Suazo thanked the RAC for its efforts. This is the kind of thing that they should weigh in on. Arizona is the only state that is taking this on, and many states could learn from Arizona’s efforts. BLM will look at these recommendations very closely. Suazo added that his intent all along was to make it broader than just the Sonoran Desert. The opportunity to recreate on public land is a great opportunity, but it needs to be done appropriately and safely.

He also added that this is not about responsible shooters. If an area is simply closed to recreational shooting, that doesn’t really solve the problem. There needs to be outreach and education. This is a unique opportunity to be on the forefront of finding solutions and to reach out and share them with other public lands and states. Suazo said this is a great piece of work and thanked the RAC for their efforts. This is exactly the kind of discussion he was looking for, and the BLM is now poised to move forward.

Bill Brake said that the RAC would like to continue to be involved in this project so that as the BLM goes out to the public, they will be better prepared to answer some of the questions. He thanked Suazo for the opportunity and said the RAC feels this is a situation that does need to be addressed.

Glen Collins pointed out that the Sonoran Landscape Project document that June Shoemaker gave them has some very good work and that the RAC’s recommendation document just adds some of the things they want to emphasize. He clarified, the suggestion that Bob Broscheid made, that they are trying to create a recreational shooting ethic.

MOTION: Glen Collins made a motion to adopt the recommendations, and Doug Traub seconded the motion to submit the document above to the State Director.

DISCUSSION:

Eric Gorsegner said that he thinks this is doomed to failure because no agency can create an ethic. In his opinion, the idea of engaging stakeholders to educate them is just not going to work. He feels for those who use public lands for other purposes, which includes hunters, as they have to worry about the people who are shooting. Gorsegner thinks this is the wrong path and the wrong kind of appeasement and accommodation. If they are on the front line of creating a national policy, he recommended they be on the right side of the issue.

Gorsegner said if he could make a substitute motion, he would recommend striking bullet point 12 of the above recommendation: “Dispersed shooting on BLM lands is prohibited other than in specifically designated and signed areas which explicitly allow it. This prohibition does not apply to hunting.” This is Gorsegner’s feeling on this issue just as a person who cares about public lands. In 5 years, he thinks we will regret this.

Traub said that there is a need for balance and common sense. So often, the rights of one group infringe on the rights of another group. He said that he supports the motion because he sees this as a toolkit the BLM can use.

Thom Hulen said he reluctantly supports the recommendation and wants to try to look at it landscape-wide to help form this new behavior. Despite these efforts, he feels there will be some people who will never be convinced their behavior is wrong. He is disappointed that the SDNM was left in the project and feels that BLM Arizona did an excellent job in its analysis and that Washington caved to pressure from the NRA and other groups. There are some areas that should not be sacrificed, including the National Monuments.

Jeffrey Sargent said he thinks that automatic and semi-automatic weapons don't have any place on public lands. He supports this document but is concerned about the where the public goes out to recreate. He said he doesn't want to start a debate about the Second Amendment, but he hopes that they can have some serious dialogue about these types of weapons. Collins added that this is only meant to supplement what the BLM has come up with.

Bob Broscheid recommended a minor change to the introduction of the document, saying that the RAC liked the document that the BLM produced and that these are additional comments from the RAC. Collins offered to make it more specific.

Bill Brake reminded them that there was already a motion on the floor. He asked the group, since this is not part of the motion, could they vote on it like that? Sacher said that the motion can be amended, as long as the second agrees to accept the amended motion. Brake said the RAC had agreed to change the title, to include all areas instead of just the SDNM. Since the content has not changed, they can continue with the vote.

Brake called for a vote. The votes were as follows:

11 Yes

1 No

The motion passed to give the RAC's recommendations to BLM State Director Suazo.

Brake thanked everyone for their work on this effort. He said there was a lot more debate in the working group meeting, but what happened just now is a sampling of what was discussed. Many more points came out that the BLM will have to answer to.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period

Brake asked if there were any members of the public present who wanted to make a comment. There were none in attendance, so he continued on to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Questions on BLM District Reports

Arizona Strip District: District Manager Scott Florence said that his District has made significant progress with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kaibab Paiute Tribe that is similar to the one they have with the Hualapai Tribe. Carl Taylor asked if the tribes had opposed or were in favor of the uranium mines. Florence said the tribes have pretty much been opposed to the mines, but the BLM gives them updates so they are informed.

Relevant to the permit renewal process, the District administers 150 grazing allotments and approximately 164 permits, and they have recently completed all land health evaluations for the District. By the end of fiscal year 2013, they will only have 2 or 3 reports left to finish, and those are all in progress. This will allow them to focus solely on the remaining permit renewals; they have a five-year schedule to accomplish them. This year, the District had a target to fully process 6 permits; they expect to have them out by end of September and expect there will be protests.

Brake wanted to clarify that these are not renewals for permits. These are more of what the land health is now, and what the rancher can and cannot do. This is a management plan for a piece of land the rancher is leasing from the Federal government. There are many aspects, such as rainfall, are the cattle being moved or being left there, etc., so it isn't just 'rubber-stamped' and it's over. This is an agreement on both sides. The ranchers need to have their lease in order to finance their operations. Brake also said he appreciates that the districts have stepped up to deal with this issue (permit renewals).

Florence said the public scoping for Uinkaret Mountains Vegetation Management Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to begin sometime in the fall.

Regarding the Ninth Circuit Court's Decision on the Resource Management Plan (RMP), this is the last of two lawsuits. That court fully upheld the lower court's decision. This was a really good decision for the BLM. The protestors had 45 days from the decision to seek a review from the appeals court, which they didn't do. The Records of Decision (RODs) was signed in 2008, and they are just now finishing with the lawsuits.

There are meetings next month on the proposed Lake Powell Pipeline with the BLM, the Kaibab-Paiute Tribe, and the proponents. There are several proposed alignments, one that goes through the Kaibab Reservation following Highway 389 and another that will go south of the Reservation and avoid their lands. They began the scoping 3 or 4 years ago and are still about a year from finishing a Draft EIS to go out for public review.

Gorsegrner asked for more information on this project. Florence said it is a water delivery project to provide water to meet the projected growth and needs of St. George, Utah. Kanab is more or less secondary. Cedar City was originally part of the project but decided not to be involved; and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is involved because of the hydroelectric component to offset the cost of having to pump the water up and over the high points.

This is a water right that the state of Utah has and currently is not used. The water conservancy districts will purchase the amount, and the projected full use is 90,000 acre-feet per year. There is still a whole EIS process to go through, and BLM Utah has the lead on this project.

The Arizona Strip Field Office (ASFO) recently held three public meetings in St. George, Colorado City, and Kaibab Village on its Travel Management Plan (TMP). A total of about 70 people attended, and there was some really good discussion. The draft TMP Environmental Assessment is out as of August 12 for a 30-day comment period, and then it will be finalized.

Thom Hulen asked approximately how many miles of road are in that. Florence said he didn't know but the density for the two National Monuments was an average of about 1 mile of road per square mile. This TMP may be a little bit higher than that.

The Business Plan for the Paria Fee Area was supposed to be available for RAC review by now. Florence explained that this has slipped to sometime in the winter, mostly because the staff's time has been diverted dealing with the three recent fatalities on the Wave. Sacher asked if they would open up the comment period again, and Scott said he would expect that they would.

On uranium mining, the Pine Nut Mine recently restarted operation, the Arizona One Mine is still in production, and the Kanab North Mine is starting its initial reclamation. They are removing some of the infrastructure, but it will probably take several years to complete. When Arizona One shuts down, they are going to haul part of the waste rock from Kanab North over to Arizona One because they have more capacity.

Colorado River District: District Manager Roxie Trost said that the permit was issued for Greenwood Community Allotment.

The TMP for the Lake Havasu Field Office is really close to signature. The Yuma Field Office has decided to hold one more public meeting in the Quartzsite area on their TMP. They are looking to release that in late October to early November.

Trost also said that the Kingman Field Office (KFO) recently conducted a bait trap gather for nuisance burros, and so far, 34 burros have been relocated. Doug Traub asked about the Department of Transportation putting up fences along Highway 95 coming off of Interstate 40 in Lake Havasu City to help deal with the burros. He mentioned \$5 million in funding for that project and asked if BLM was involved in that. Trost said they have not contacted her about that project.

Loder asked about the Moss Mine. Roxie said it is mostly on private property near Bullhead City. BLM's involvement is for right of ways (ROW).

Brake said that in the grazing industry, they are under the impression that BLM no longer has funds to count the burros and wild horses, which makes it very difficult to manage them. We need to have a yearly count, so BLM should work to get those funds back, because people and burros are getting hurt. Trost said she appreciates that. CRD is looking for other opportunities and have been in contact with Arizona Game and Fish.

Regarding the Tribal consultation meeting that was scheduled by the KFO, Hubbs said she regretted that her office had to cancel. The next one is scheduled for October 17, in Peach Springs. As discussed earlier, she and Carl Taylor would like to discuss the site steward program and recommended they have that meeting on that same day, since KFO staff will be there, and YFO and LHFO staff would also be invited. Trost said that would be great. Lake Havasu field manager Kim Liebhauser reminded Hubbs that's also the same week of the Topock meeting.

Gila District: Associate District Manager Dennis Sylvia attended for Tim Shannon. They just completed the relocation of their Sierra Vista Office, which is called the San Pedro Project Office, to co-locate with the Sierra Vista Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service.

The new Gila District Manager will be installed on October 2 in Tucson, probably in the Interagency Fire Building. GDO Public Affairs Specialist Diane Drobka will be sending out invitations soon.

Regarding the San Pedro River National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) RMP, this is a big plan in the TFO and staff is concentrating a lot of energy on it. They have done a lot of work with the public on this plan and have extended the public comment period an additional 120 days in order to provide more educational forums. Public scoping has occurred in Tucson, Benson, and Sierra Vista already and will end on September 26. These public forums have been very well received by the public, with about 50 people attending each one. They are also available on the web.

The Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) RMP was signed in February, and it closed the Monument to public shooting. Sylvia shared maps that show some of the areas BLM is looking at to see where they have legal access on some of the adjacent lands where recreational shooting is permitted. The TFO outdoor recreation planner is looking into that and trying to find some additional sites.

Glen Collins asked if Cochise County and Sierra Vista are supporting the BLM's plan on the water rights issue. Sylvia said they are not and that is under the state of Arizona. There is an issue of the connectivity between the surface waters and those that are required for the SPRNCA under the legislation that established the NCA. The City of Sierra Vista is looking at some large areas of real estate development that is expected to impact the aquifer. So they have a counter-interest.

On grazing permit renewals, there has been a big effort in the Gila District. They intend to post their 16 proposed decisions on the website.

Regarding the Sun Zia transmission line, the Final EIS was published on June 14.

The Tombstone Motorized Rally is scheduled for September 20 to 22 in Tombstone. The GDO is working collaboratively on public safety with the Cochise County Sheriff's office and the Tombstone Marshall's office to make that happen.

Phoenix District: District Manager Mary D'Aversa talked about their fuels management and prescribed burns. They did about 564 acres of prescribed fire pile burning and about 200 acres of herbicide treatments.

On renewable energy, the District recently received and is working on two protests on the Sun Valley to Morgan transmission line project. They held two public meetings last week on the proposed Sonoran Valley Parkway. Many of the comments received were actually outside the scope of this project, including the extension of Loop 303 and the potential Interstate that will go up to Las Vegas.

Some of Senator McCain's staff recently toured the Table Mesa area. This has been held up as an example of how BLM has been proactive in managing superimposed recreation issues, such as shooting, cleanup, etc. It's good there is an interest out there in what staff has done and what they have done in terms of partnerships.

Mary mentioned that the QR codes had received a national level award from the American Recreation Coalition. There has been a lot of interest of using it as a pilot and to possibly export it to other places in the agency.

Regarding Native American consultation, the District is trying to be more uniform and comprehensive in this area. As a relatively new manager, Mary is working to establish some of those relationships to help facilitate cooperation.

The District has several ongoing youth programs which are quite successful, including the interns who receive 12 credits through Phoenix College by working with the District. A lot of the interns are performing range work as wildlife technicians; this gives them some real, valuable field experience and expertise.

In terms of land use plan implementation, the District is developing implementation plans for the Lower Sonoran and for the SDNM to set their highest priorities as they tie into budget requests. They also had a periodic review of the Hassayampa and the Agua Fria NM plans. She feels like they are in a really good place to build off that.

They are planning for FY 14 of Operation ROAM. It is a fairly successful program that results in resource restoration and rehabilitation.

The District's permit renewal workload is pretty significant. They are looking at adjusting their table of organization in terms of positions to make sure that they are able to do environmental assessments, not only for permit renewals but for other activities as well. For the first time in 5 years, we issued a permit and are looking forward to building on that. Mary added that they have four more permit renewals they hope to complete sometime in the October to November period. Brake added that he appreciates the efforts that Suazo and the districts are putting into the permit renewals.

The SDNM plan is under litigation in Federal district court regarding livestock grazing issues. The Western Watershed Partnership sued 6 to 8 weeks ago, and the Phoenix District is working through the legal process on that.

Sacher complimented the PDO on their weekly highlights that Pamela Mathis puts together. She said she also forwards it to other people as well.

Hubbs thanked Mary for the information in the Tribal consultation section. It was very informative, and she appreciates that. Suazo added that in FY 12, BLM had a Tribal consultation forum, and he hopes to host another one, if funding is available.

Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) Update from RAC: At the RAC working group meeting in November 2012, the RAC assigned Larry Howery to write a letter to the State Director. In this letter, Larry tried to capture the working group's thoughts, keep it factual and science-based, and set the stage for what the RAC felt the issues were on wild horses and burros. They hope that the BLM can use this letter as a springboard to involve the RAC to help the BLM. Changes were incorporated and include feedback from BLM staff, which was helpful. Brake said the next step is for the State Director to move on to the second stage.

Suazo said there are a lot of good recommendations and suggestions as to why to move forward. He needs to look at it and see how he can elevate it to his superiors and to think about having the working group move on to phase two. He said it is a good idea and that's why the BLM has a RAC. Suazo also said he welcomes the RAC's input and will look at the material the RAC has put together and see how to use their recommendations.

Brake asked RAC members to contact Larry Howery with any thoughts they might have on this issue before the next meeting. The RAC has asked for and received permission to go forward, and they hope it will be a help to the BLM and to Arizona.

AGENDA ITEM: Recognition Ceremony for Outgoing RAC Members

Ray Suazo took a few moments to recognize and thank the outgoing RAC members for their service. The members whose three-year terms expire November 22, 2013, include Bill Brake, Elizabeth Buchroder-Webb, Eric Gorseger, Carolyn Loder, and Larry Snead. Suazo added that they have all served their constituencies and the state of Arizona well, and he appreciates their dedication to this Council and their commitment to public lands.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Before asking for future agenda items, Brake asked the RAC members if they had any additional comments for the State Director. Both Collins and Traub commented on the quality of the RAC minutes and how helpful they are. Traub also mentioned how much he appreciates the efforts of the BLM staff for getting the information packets out to the RAC well in advance. He was also glad to see the RAC address some issues that are really important to Arizona, and he looks forward to the next year of his term.

Suazo said he appreciated Traub's comments and agreed that Dorothea Boothe has done a great job. Brake and Suazo were committed to getting the topics out early in order to provide BLM staff enough time to get the material to the RAC so that they could give meaningful input. This is a trend he hopes will continue.

Sargent said he has served on many boards, but being a part of this group makes him feel that he is doing something and making a difference. He appreciates everyone's attitude. The BLM has an incredibly professional staff and appreciates the service they are doing for the public and the State.

Brake added that the BLM staff is very helpful. It is great working with Trost on the grazing issue and with Decker. Things happen here because you have people who want to make things happen.

Sacher announced the Friends of the Cliffs is having its Condor Release date on September 23, 2013. Please come join them at the site, and she passed out posters for the event.

Taylor announced that the Archaeological Resources Cultural Team is contemplating meeting this fall. They want to see about working with the Kingman Field Office to look at a collaborative pilot project, similar to the Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Project that Rose Houk briefed the BLM about at the May 2013 RAC meeting. Taylor recommended bringing in people from the BLM and other agencies, tribes, and site stewards; he will contact Rose Houk and work to arrange this. Traub will also work on this project.

Lauren Luckey thanked the group for allowing her to come in and observe them and said it was a great experience.

Following comments from the group, Brake reminded the RAC members to submit their agenda items 60 days prior to the next meeting. They discussed when to hold the next meeting, possibly in early December, but decided to wait until the new RAC members are chosen and announced before the meeting dates are firmed up. Suazo suggested Boothe sends out an informal poll in the next few days to start planning.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.