

**Bureau of Land Management – Arizona
Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Business Meeting Agenda
MINUTES**

September 10, 2014

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

AGENDA ITEM: Welcome and Introductions: Bill Brake, Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Chair, RAC Members, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Staff, and Guests.

The meeting was called to order at 8:42 a.m. by RAC Chair Bill Brake. Brake welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He mentioned that the RAC working groups met on September 9.

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

Resources Advisory Council Members in Attendance:

Category 1 – Commercial/Commodity Interests

Bill Brake
Maggie Sacher
Stuart (Stu) Bengson
Thom Hulen (present at WG Meeting only on Sept 9)

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

Doug Traub
Huibertje Maaik (Mica) Schotborgh
Michael Quigley

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

Gary Watson
Harold (Drew) John
Jeffrey Sargent

ABSENT: Glen Collins, Larry Howery, Dawn Duncan Hubbs, Thomas Hulen, Carl Taylor and Jim deVos (Governor’s Representative)

BLM STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Ray Suazo, Julie Decker, Amber Cargile, Roxie Trost, Mary D'Aversa, Tim Burke, Tim Shannon, Kathy Pedrick, Dorothea Boothe, Ken Mahoney, and Nicole Henry

Guests/Members of the Public: John Hamill, Arizona Field Representative, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; Bill Civish, ASARCO Consultant, Whippoorwills LLC; Jeremy Browning, ASARCO Consultant, GovGroup; Kelly Norton, President, Arizona Mining Association; Jody Latimer, Director, Arizona Wildlife Federation; Gerry Hillier, Executive Director, Quadstate LGA; Scott Jones, Board President, Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument

AGENDA ITEM: State Director's Introduction and Update on BLM Programs and Issues
The BLM Arizona State Director, Raymond Suazo, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He noted that RAC meetings are usually hosted at our National Training Center, but having it at the State Office is a way for the RAC members to see other offices.

Suazo recognized the importance of the RAC. When the members of the RAC begin their term, they attend training on subjects such as like standards and guidelines. They represent various entities and the BLM asks a lot of them. As the designated federal official, Suazo assured the RAC members that he takes the RAC very seriously. The RAC members come from all over the state and diverse issues are brought forward. The surface and subsurface acres that BLM manages include all the areas that the RAC members have an interest in. The success of the RAC is due to the diversity of the members and the input they give about projects and issues the BLM works on. BLM Arizona continues to work on streamlining and increasing transparency in the RAC process. Various issues are brought to Suazo and the RAC chairman and improvements are being made. As things come up, he asked that the RAC members continue to bring them to his and the chairman's attention.

Items the RAC has worked on over the past couple of years in program areas have been valuable to the BLM State Leadership Team (SLT). They help BLM to prioritize work, decide on strategic focus areas, and in future planning. Suazo thanked the RAC for their commitment.

Regarding RAC nominations and the new appointments – on September 21 terms will expire for: Stu Bengson, Glen Collins, Dawn Hubbs, Doug Traub, and Gary Watson. Fifteen solid nominations were received for the five vacancies. The nominations have been elevated to the WO, but Suazo hasn't been notified of the decision by the Secretary of the Interior. The announcements will probably be made in October or November.

ACTION ITEM: When scheduling the next RAC meeting, consider when the new RAC members will be announced.

At the last RAC meeting it was asked if Suazo could have the Secretary of the Interior streamline and expedite RAC member approval process. Suazo said that at the last Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meeting, several state directors brought up the issue. A change in the process would be made at the Secretary's level and out of the State Directors' control.

Suazo spoke about the 50-year anniversary of the Wilderness Act, which was on September 3, 2014. This is an opportunity to think about what wilderness means in Arizona, the value it brings to the state, our role in that and the engagement that we entertain through support of the RAC and the different organizations that highlight wilderness as a value in Arizona. It's something that we need to continue to work to protect and conserve as we move forward.

As part of the Wilderness Act Anniversary celebrations, the BLM hosted the Student Congress. This was a follow up to the National Student Congress held 2 years ago, which celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the establishment of the General Land Office (GLO). BLM-AZ worked together with the Public Lands Foundation, Forest Service, Arizona Wilderness Coalition and other partners to host another Student Congress. We reached out to a large number of universities who had resource programs and had them nominate students for the Student Congress. Through that process, they submitted their nominations and essays, and the Public Lands Foundation vetted them.

The group of students selected came together at the Black Canyon Conference Center for a wilderness experience and to do a number of activities to work with the BLM on the importance of wilderness. The Congress was asked what wilderness means to them, and to provide recommendations from a student congress-level about the kinds of things that the BLM should pay attention to moving into the future.

Suazo will share the Student Congress' finalized recommendations with the ELT. After that, those results will be brought as an update to the RAC to share their insights and thoughts from young students/future leaders who may one day manage these public lands.

Suazo met with many of the students at the Congress and said it's exciting to hear from the students and to know that there are young people who are interested in and know the value of public lands. There was interesting dialogue on the BLM's multiple use mission, sustained yield, and the role that wilderness plays in them. There was a lot of discussion about the issues and opportunities that BLM faces. The importance of telling BLM's story was also brought up. The students were aware that most of the public doesn't know who the BLM is and what we do. The BLM needs to continue to find the right avenues to engage the public for the multiple use and sustained yield mission, and the importance of protected areas.

Suazo shared some key facts: Overall the BLM manages 221 wilderness areas that total 8.7 million acres. The BLM Arizona has 47 units, which is approximately 1.39 million acres. There are quite a few scattered and diverse parcels throughout the west that other agencies manage. Information about wilderness areas and the 50th anniversary can be found on the BLM website.

There will be a conference in Albuquerque the week of October 15, 2014. Many land management agencies and other organizations will be coming together to highlight and discuss opportunities regarding wilderness areas and the 50-year anniversary. Information about the conference can be found on the website at www.wilderness50th.org.

Suazo spoke about the BLM budget: The trends over the past few years have shown flat or downward trend. Arizona continues to look at strategic focus areas, find opportunities to

leverage resources with partners, and pay attention to areas that pose the greatest risk for BLM in the public land management arena. Suazo will be paying attention to ensure the money Arizona receives is well spent. He will be looking at areas that need support from the RAC, either to develop strategies or ideas, or from other public entities, and working with partnerships. For example, Project Restore.

The BLM is reaching across federal and state agencies to make sure when we look at a particular piece of ground, that we talk to all other agencies and stake holders who have an interest to leverage the dollars for the best possible outcome. The BLM will also pay attention to where we have issues and where we can bring resources to bear that will make a difference. Suazo said that he didn't expect the budget trend to change in the near future. Budgets will continue to be flat or down trending. The BLM will need to have a stronger message and to leverage opportunities for partner projects and partner dollars.

At a national level, climate change, sage grouse, and wild horse and burro issues are areas of interest. Internally, there's a lot of focus on a landscape-level approach to the work that BLM does. From a landscape-level, thinking about the resources that we have, if we're going to make a change to a particular piece of ground shouldn't we pay attention to the broader landscape and work with all stakeholders for all opportunities? We're gearing up for that approach as we work through our planning processes. The BLM is paying attention to partner opportunities with other agencies and changing the way we think about projects and looking beyond single focus projects. The BLM is changing the focus to ask what's happening within an ecosystem or within a landscape area. There are a lot of questions as to what that means. Suazo said that as BLM works through this concept, there will be more coming to the RAC in the future about landscape-level planning and approaches to project management.

Suazo touched on GIS transformation: As an agency, the BLM needs to transform its technology so that it can be more responsive to the public it serves, partner agencies, and stakeholders. Often we go to the field and other agencies have tablets for information and BLM has hard copy maps. The BLM needs to be more effective and responsive. Geospatial transformation means looking at how to become more efficient with technology and make it more available for field-going personnel. Suazo has been very involved with the process because he believes that the more information we can share with the public, the better collaboration we're going to have. Also, as more people have that information, we're able to make better decisions.

Among the topics discussed at a recent SLT meeting was sustainability. Our sustainability business line includes a whole host of things, including water, ecosystems, grazing, natural resource use, etc. These are part of our multiple use and sustained yield mission. The discussion focused around what sustainability means to the BLM in Arizona. There was forward thinking and an outcome based discussion. Suazo expects to bring more information to the RAC as strategic focus areas are updated.

Suazo also mentioned telling the BLM story better. Communications and telling our story is something we hear all the time. The public needs to understand what the BLM is, what we do, what public land is and why it's important.

Suazo has had the opportunity to meet with important stakeholders over the last quarter. He recently met with the Arizona Mining Association (AMA). He was asked to meet with them at their annual conference. He felt it was a very valuable meeting for himself and the stakeholder. The meeting highlighted the importance of being engaged with people who have an interest in public land. Suazo is committed to staying engaged with the Arizona Mining Association and the topics that are important to them and how they play a role in public land management. The Arizona Mining Association has also reached out to our program leads for follow up information. The more we can engage other groups and help them to understand BLM processes and issues on public land, the better. Suazo was thankful for that invitation and will continue to work with the AMA.

Suazo also met with the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association at their annual conference. They discussed issues of interest to them. It was a very beneficial conference and he will continue to be engaged with them.

Many of the various stakeholders have asked to work with district managers and Suazo encourages that. At the AMA meeting, he outlined the process for working with the District and Field Managers.

Suazo is an associate charter member of the Arizona Commander's Summit. The Summit takes place twice a year and every installation commander throughout the state attends. Suazo pays attention to their interest in public lands, which usually involves renewable energy development, transmission, etc. The BLM works closely with them on issues with the public lands that they utilize. These lands are typically withdrawn lands. Suazo has been able to work with them on issues and get them resolved at a state level, rather than taking it higher. Suazo will continue to stay engaged with them as well.

Personnel updates: Tim Burke started in May as the Arizona Strip District Manager. Tim has a lot of experience across the BLM as a line manager. Burke is very good at using a collaborative approach.

Amber Cargile started this week as the Deputy State Director of Communications at the Arizona State Office. She worked with Immigration, Customs and Enforcement and the Department of Defense (DOD) prior to coming to BLM. She recently attended a tour with Suazo and Senator McCain's staff to discuss border issues. She will be helping tell our story better.

Renewable energy/transmission: We continue to move forward with projects at various stages. Sonoran Solar, Quartzite, and Mohave County Wind Farm all have signed Records of Decision (ROD). The proponents are working on securing Power Purchase Agreements.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was issued in April for the Southline Transmission Project. The project is still moving through the public comment phase. We're looking to publish the final EIS in late 2014 or early 2015.

The Hassayampa to North Gila 2, the Arizona Public Service (APS) Transmission Line is under construction between Gila Bend and Yuma.

The SunZia Transmission Project remains a high priority. The final EIS has been published. There's been a lot of negotiation/discussion with DOD about concerns about the White Sands Missile Range. .

The Sun Valley to Morgan Transmission Project: the ROD was signed earlier in 2014. A 30-year right of way grant was issued to APS to construct and operate a portion of a 500/230 kV transmission line between the Sun Valley to Morgan substations.

Regional Mitigation: Stakeholder meetings were held for mitigation plans on the Solar Energy Zones (SEZs) - Brenda, Gillespie, and Aqua Caliente (roughly 8,500 acres). The meetings were held in April at the BLM National Training Center. The feedback is currently being evaluated.

Restoration Design Energy Project: In Arizona, though the trend was people were interested in renewable energy and development, they didn't know where the energy was going. Suazo sat on a panel with the Western Regional Partnership and this was discussed on the Energy Development panel. The trend from stakeholders was their wanting to understand Arizona's role in energy development and movement of that power throughout the west. There seems to be renewed interest and discussion by stakeholders and energy companies related to where it makes sense to develop that energy and who's going to buy it. Because of that, the BLM is doing a refresh to our Restoration Design Energy Project. In that project, we identified where it makes sense for renewable energy development. We considered proximity to load, impact to water, impact to resources, previously disturbed lands, etc. We want to encourage companies interested in renewable energy to develop in the lands that we've already evaluated for low impact.

DISSCUSION: Doug Traub said the BLM produces more revenue than it consumes, it's a profit center for our government and yet the budget is going to be cut back at the same amount as everyone else. We've heard about the possible fee assessments on grazing allotments, is there any other thing going on that might be able to keep that revenue neutral? Suazo commented that Arizona isn't an oil and gas state but there are inspection fees being considered. Congress has to pass the entire appropriation bill before it becomes a reality. In the meantime, one of the reasons we want to focus on what sustainability means to us is to make sure we're spending the limited resources we have on the important strategic issues and work for Arizona while paying attention to opportunities for partnerships. In addition, BLM needs to do a better job at telling our story. BLM receives \$4 for every \$1 spent and that's a story that needs to be told.

Traub commented that you have declining revenues and your largest expense is usually personnel costs, you're in an environment where you can't offer employees incentives for performance. Suazo said BLM Arizona is one of the smallest budgets in the bureau. We have to work hard on workforce planning to make sure that we're bringing the skill sets onboard that align with where our priority workload is and making sure we pay attention to where we have gaps.

Bill Brake mentioned that funding was discussed in almost every committee that met during the working group meeting. The bottom line is that the RAC would like to contribute in whatever way they can. They recognize that there are some limitations on what can be asked of them and

what they are able to do.

Brake requested that the RAC be brought up to date on Travel Management Plans across the State. Suazo suggested that an overview be covered as an agenda item at the next RAC meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM: Travel Management Plan Overview.

Brake asked about the renewal of grazing permits that the Districts were working on. Suazo responded that they're working on a grazing permit renewal strategy to address the backlog. The Districts have updated their plans and set up a new calendar to handle the cycle of the workload. We're working to build a strategy based on work the BLM Colorado River District did with permittees in Mohave County. The current process is to do workflow mapping, business process evaluation and getting rid of unnecessary steps to streamline the process. Suazo wants to go to the Washington Office with the strategy for the State this fall. He intends to ask for support and funding.

Brake asked how we solve the problem in the field with the wild horse and burro program. There is a public danger issue. Suazo responded that we're using the tools that we have to address the issue. The wild horse and burro holding facilities are at capacity and most of the funding goes to those facilities and emergency gathers. At a national level, they're working on a strategy to move forward. They are reviewing research proposals on sterilization, etc.

Brake mentioned, on behalf of two RAC members who were not present, that BLM makes sure they are working with and communicating with the tribes. He addressed Tim Burke and reminded him that he needs to make sure he's working with the tribes because he's managing an area with a lot of cultural resources. Suazo commented that working with the tribes on their interests is always a priority.

Brake brought up how the exercise that Roxie Trost did in the Kingman area regarding the dispute between the BLM and the ranchers did not become a national issue. Tim Burke has areas with a lot of issues and a lot of confrontation. This didn't happen in Kingman. He expressed his pride in the RAC and the work that Doug Traub and others did. The Kingman plan didn't look like a BLM or a rancher deal. Suazo elaborated: We're doing great things on the ground. We have concepts that have people talking about how you protect the public lands. Any time you can bring a diverse group together to work on concepts that could potentially end up as solutions BLM-wide is huge. This RAC has a history of working for the public good. If the RAC subcommittee wasn't involved we could have had a problem that nobody wanted. It's always better if we can come to the table and come up with solutions. This case was a wonderful example. Suazo thanked the RAC for their commitment and for serving the public. He also thanked Roxie Trost for her use of adaptive management.

**AGENDA ITEM: BLM Feedback on RAC Recommendations on Department of the Interior (DOI) Themes
Kathy Pedrick, Special Assistant to the State Director**

At the last RAC meeting we went over the Secretary's six priority areas. We combined them

into two areas and chose to defer discussions on Native American issues and renewable energy since we're going to do additional work on those areas later. The two areas were America's Great Outdoors/youth and climate change/water challenges/healthy landscapes. As a group we brainstormed and came back and made recommendations to the State Director with six items under each category. We took those recommendations and discussed them with our district managers and our leadership team and came up with an initial response, knowing there's a lot more work to do on these.

America's Great Outdoors/Youth

1. Develop prototype recreation & stewardship programs or projects and expand throughout the State.

Pedrick: There are good examples out there that are successful, but the recommendation was that we need to model those in other parts of the State and also finish up all the great projects that we haven't finished. So, one of the things that we need to do is go back to the district level and identify what those projects are and do an inventory of those and prioritize the ones that we can finish and be successful with. There is clearly a commitment to move forward with that recommendation.

2. Expand the Phoenix College model statewide to other schools and campuses.

Pedrick: The BLM has a curriculum component with them where we're talking about land management and fire resources. The idea was to expand this model across the state and not just focus on those areas, but to also focus on mining, natural resource management, etc. We are working on a youth program strategy which you'll see mentioned a number of times. A lot of these incorporate youth and how we're going to educate, engage, and employ them in the future. It's a big commitment from the community. We need willing partners who can bring resources to the table and engage.

3. Citizen Science Programs for Youth

Pedrick: There are a lot of people out there that can help with this, i.e. retirees, volunteers, etc. It needs to be coordinated. We're looking at pursuing that through our Youth Strategy Program, which is still under development. Suazo added: Last time we met we talked about who's going to be engaged with us managing public lands if we don't do a better job of getting youth engaged. What you told us is to create media, explain programs and do better outreach through recruitment. We're pushing youth outreach to our stakeholders. We're finding it difficult to hire people with expertise in certain areas. The Mining Association is reaching out to boy scouts and telling their story about why mining is important and what role it plays. In each arena, across the board there's an opportunity and we need to ask what are we doing to engage our youth? If we don't, we're going to have problems in 10-20 years. As you get ideas send them to Pedrick.

4. Establish State/District volunteer coordinator positions

Pedrick: There are three things that tie in together; the college model, the citizen science program, and the volunteer coordinator position. We are looking at a volunteer coordinator position, but we don't have the resources or capacity to have a full time person in each of our districts. We are looking at how we can maximize our approach statewide.

5. Create a Youth Oriented Brand

Pedrick: This is tied to the college model, citizen science program and volunteer coordination position. How do you get the word out? What is BLM? How do you do it? At the student congress, we asked about how to get the word about wilderness out to your peers? We're going to work with Amber Cargile in Communications and do things less traditionally. We're going to approach how we communicate and how we approach partnerships a little differently. So, you'll see new ideas over the next year.

6. Partner with existing organizations, agencies and tribal youth programs

Pedrick: We do some of this, but it's not as well-known as we'd like it to be. We need to enhance what we're doing, but also to get the word out to people to understand what we're doing.

DISCUSSION:

Pedrick: These six items are tied together. We're working on a youth strategy, partnership strategy, youth partnerships, etc. We're working on how we can do better in all these areas. We were challenged to look at all the areas where we currently have partnerships that are working with us and whether they're still viable. We're looking at partnerships that we may need to grow a little bit more. We're also looking at the gaps. We shouldn't limit ourselves to traditional partnerships.

Maggie Sacher clarified our discussion focused more on partnering with industries and businesses.

Bill Brake said there are organizations out there who want to be a partner and who want to bridge that gap. If there's something worth them making expenditures, then you would solve some of the funding problems. He's suggesting BLM look outside the box.

Sacher also inquired why we don't ask ATV manufacturers to contribute when their customers are driving on BLM lands. We've never asked, but we need to tell them our story and make it worth their while.

Doug Traub asked are we looking to utilize sponsors for dollars to offset dollars for BLM to do existing or new programs.

Suazo explained this shouldn't turn into a discussion on working to augment budget shortfalls. BLM-AZ is interested in non-traditional partnerships and looking for other opportunities. For example, the Walton Foundation (Wal-Mart) provides funding for projects that they're interested

in. We need to look at partnerships that have an interest in public lands that we are not utilizing.

Mica Schotborgh said she notices there is interest from industry, trade associations, etc. that want to get with the BLM on youth engagement. Trade associations are aware of what companies would like to achieve with youth engagement and voluntary projects for resource management. She encouraged the BLM to have this conversation with trade associations and other industry representatives.

Pedrick asked Schotborgh to email her suggestions - some partnerships may need to be approached from the RAC because the BLM can't appear to be lobbying or asking for money. Pedrick stated we're lumping this into the non-traditional strategy, but it includes all the things we've been talking about.

Brake mentioned communication is the problem. He said don't be afraid to do things in a non-traditional way. Go to entities that have a vested interest in public lands.

Sacher said we can go to organizations and rather than telling them what project we want to do, we should ask them what they want to do. Schotborgh seconded Sacher's comment.

Drew John said we're putting too much emphasis on the message, when the question just needs to be asked. That's where the priority needs to be.

Sacher noted that the energy field is another one that would probably come up with things to engage people.

Schotborgh added you'd probably be surprised if you asked industries what they're already doing to target these things.

Climate Change and Healthy Landscapes

1. Develop a comprehensive strategy/approach for Invasive Species across State

Julie Decker noted this is an ongoing effort for the State. We have an invasive species specialist who is working with fuels staff (fire program) in the Districts. The fuels staff will be the point of contact and will be helping write plans for invasive species treatment, etc.

Brake said this has been an ongoing thing for a while. As a permittee, when I go in to renew a permit, we talk about what we're going to do about invasive species. He wondered why this was being treated like a new problem.

Decker mentioned that Mica Schotborgh brought in a buffelgrass environmental education document for us. Getting the message out, and creating new partnerships is always an opportunity to do cooperative weed management.

Sargent added something the committee was talking about was that with climate change species are changing, so we're suggesting staying ahead of the curve.

Decker explained you can't let weeds get away from you. You have to keep it in the forefront of the conversation.

Schotborgh asked if Darryl Tersey from the BLM Tucson field office and Buffelgrass Board is reporting back to the State Office. Decker said that he's still reporting within his office and then his office reports how they choose to. She didn't think he'd be taken off of the Buffelgrass issue.

Suazo added invasive species have been a discussion item for a long time and aren't going away. This is an area where the discussion should be about who has an interest in making some change on the ground and where there's an opportunity.

Schotborgh said regarding the buffelgrass education document she gave to Decker and Mary D'Aversa, the buffelgrass working group has put together a curriculum that's STEM related to go out to whoever wants it in the next couple weeks. Darryl will probably feed that up the chain as well. It's a good example of how you can combine a concern that you have for resources with youth engagement. Industry is very interested in the curriculum because it's something they can introduce in their programs for schools. They can also partner with BLM for on the ground action.

Brake said he's concerned with all the fires and the seeds that are used for rehabilitation. What's the coordination between the universities, BLM, federal agencies, etc.? There's an invasion of Lehmann's lovegrass which is now a native species in his area.

Suazo responded that the BLM seeds with only certified products; kept at the national seed warehouse.

Brake asked the question are we seeding something today that, with climate change, won't work tomorrow.

Sargent's concern in the past has been with ADOT. When they go through and do restoration; who controls the seed mix that they use? Some of the areas cut through public lands. Maybe there's an opportunity for BLM to coordinate with State efforts. For example, when some of these projects go through state areas, if BLM is an interested party, BLM could review the contract and specifications.

Decker responded in fire rehab we work closely with State Forestry on the burn plan afterwards. With ADOT, most of that is on right-of-ways and we do have standing MOUs on vegetation management. We coordinate with them on treatment of vegetation and seeding.

Brake mentioned that there are a lot of entities around next to public land that don't know about the seeds they're planting and are spreading invasive weeds unknowingly.

2. Sustain, grow and model the Greenhouse Program (Safford) partnership with Eastern Arizona College (re-landscape opportunities affected by invasive species)

Pedrick said Safford partners with Eastern Arizona College and they grow native species to use

them in restoration areas. The general idea was that we could model this somewhere else, it could be an opportunity for additional partnerships, and sustained funding.

Suazo has talked to Decker about the integrated veg team. They're looking at all vegetation concepts, not just fuels and fire. Asking what we want to accomplish on landscape level. There may be an opportunity to use Safford resources. We're going to get a sense of the need to develop other programs like Safford elsewhere or if we can utilize their resources.

3. Identify critical landscapes

Pedrick said we have a number of efforts and landscape approaches that we utilize throughout Arizona that are starting to engage, i.e. Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REA), Renewable Energy - we've tried to look broader rather than just focusing on a project. We need to continue to share the ones we're working on and get the RAC's feedback on the more specific.

Decker mentioned the time Elroy Masters came in and discussed the value we're finding with REAs. The landscape data will soon cover the whole State. BLM is working on what we want to do with those next. Good starting point to identify critical areas and to look at resource conflicts.

Schotborgh inquired if someone from BLM was representing this concept on the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative? Decker replied BLM has one seat on the steering committee and she represents Ray on it.

There was discussion on conservation districts and whether the BLM was a part of the NRCS. The concern was that all these organizations are working on landscape planning, but if they aren't communicating then they are duplicating planning. On the REAs, the planning involved multiple State and Federal agencies. The information is being shared across and up and down. In addition, BLM's field offices are engaged with planning in the conservation districts.

Sacher asked if allotments are being looked at for areas of critical concern and if that's how BLM is creating the bigger picture. Decker responded that BLM does an annual report on the condition of federal lands, allotment by allotment. It's one data source that is used in coordination with other efforts.

4. Travel Management Plans (TMP)

The suggestion was to add a planning filter to include landscape resiliency and climate change. The TMP process is a coordinated approach used by several agencies and organizations. BLM does not propose to modify the current filters or process without the consensus of the larger effort. BLM is trying to be consistent across all jurisdictions.

5. Increase coordination with other agencies/land managers/counties/tribes/NGOs

The BLM Arizona currently works closely with numerous other agencies, tribes, groups and organizations, local and state government. We are committed to continuing these efforts and

expanding as the opportunities arise. This is an ongoing effort.

6. North American Water and Power Alliance (1955)

Glen Collins brought up the fact that there have been efforts in the past to deal with drought in the southwest and this was just one historic example. There wasn't much to follow up on here other than to suggest that everyone take a look at this example.

Kathy Pedrick will go back through the recommendations, clean up the language and send them back out to the RAC in a few weeks or so. She asked that the RAC make comments and send them back to her rather than wait for the next RAC meeting. Suazo mentioned that his intent is to take the top priorities and recommendations to the SLT meeting for discussion. Doug Traub commented that he likes to see that the BLM takes the RAC comments seriously. He suggested that a survey be created on Survey Monkey so that the RAC members can quickly prioritize the 12 items and BLM would get instant feedback.

ACTION ITEM: A survey will be created in Survey Monkey listing the Secretarial Priorities, so that the RAC can rank them in order of importance. This will be done in addition to Pedrick sending out the recommendations again for further comment.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period

Kelly Norton, President of Mining Association of Arizona – thanked Ray for coming to speak to them. She also thanked Jeff Garrett, who came to their lands committee meeting and gave a presentation September 9. The Mining Association is glad to participate in any way that they can with BLM.

Jody Latimer, Director of the Arizona Wildlife Federation (affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation) encouraged BLM to prioritize the completion of the travel management plans. As the National Forests complete their plans, OHV traffic is pushed onto adjacent properties. Public lands are being degraded and cultural resources are being damaged. Latimer requested that this topic be discussed at the next RAC meeting.

Brake commented that Latimer's request was timely, as it was agreed earlier in the meeting to add an overview of the travel management plan to the agenda for the next RAC meeting.

John Hamill, representing the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) spoke about his background working with DOI and the Fish and Wildlife Service. He gave an overview of the TRCP and handed out an informational sheet which covered the mission, partners, work, and current legislative priorities of the TRCP. One of their focuses is to encourage BLM to provide additional emphasis on protection of fish and wildlife habitat and hunting and fishing opportunities in Arizona and throughout the west. TRCP wants to work with BLM field offices on conserving backcountry areas and on making sure they are included in resource management plan revisions. They would also like to have BLM involved in their workshops where sportsmen help them identify and prioritize hunting and fishing areas of value.

Suazo thanked Hamill for coming and encouraged him to meet with the field offices. He also suggested that Hamill meet with him, Julie Decker & Amber Cargile.

ACTION ITEM: Suazo wants to setup a meeting with John Hamill to explore partnership opportunities.

Gerry Hillier, Executive Director of the Quad State LGA, gave an overview of his organization. He expressed his appreciation for BLM and their responsiveness to public comments and input. He stated that the Winkelman National Resource Conservation District put together a comprehensive paper on best management practices for the desert tortoise. This was in response to the Fish and Wildlife Service's upcoming review to list the desert tortoise. Hillier wants to make sure BLM reviews this paper, as most desert tortoise habitats are on BLM lands. He will get Julie Decker a copy of the Winkelman paper.

Hillier discussed a planning grant that was brought up in the last Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative meeting. He expressed his questions and concerns. He also corrected a comment that Julie Decker had made earlier about her role on the LCC steering committee. He said she represented all of BLM and not just the Arizona State Director. (Editor Comment: BLM holds one seat on the DLCC steering committee and the responsibility for filling that seat is BLM-AZ's. The state director has delegated the responsibility to Decker, DSD for Resources).

AGENDA ITEM: Value of Friends' Groups & Partnership Strategy

Maggie Sacher, RAC Member, Friends of The Cliffs; Ken Mahoney, BLM NLCS Program Lead and Scott Jones, Board President, Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument

Maggie Sacher thanked Ray for acknowledging that this topic was valuable enough to put on the agenda. She said BLM affiliated friends' groups are all over the state. They do a lot of work that is often unnoticed outside of BLM or is not recognized as a BLM affiliated group. Friend's groups work with their districts mainly and focus on things such as: events, public education, recreation, environmental issues, clean ups, etc. Friends of The Cliffs have been around for over 3 years and have been given grant money from BLM to do on the ground science work. Arizona leads the way in the 3-year step down strategy. Friends' groups and other NGOs do a lot on the ground, but want a more solid partnership plan with BLM. Sacher, Mahoney, and Jones are now trying to pull together an Arizona-wide umbrella organization.

Scott Jones gave a brief background of his work with friends' groups over the past 8 years and talked about the Conservation Lands Foundation and the subsequent creation of a large network of friends' groups. He discussed the value that friends' groups provide to the BLM as well as the challenges they've faced with regard to funding and staffing. Friends' groups initially had full time paid staffs and now have a single volunteer handling administrative tasks, etc. A statewide meeting of friends' groups was held earlier in 2014, and the challenges were discussed. There was strong interest in creating an umbrella organization that would consolidate administrative tasks so volunteers can get back on the land. They're still in the initial phase of creating this umbrella organization. They have secured the ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation to help facilitate the process. Jones stated that creating this organization

will help make BLM's life easier, because one of the challenges has been consistency and communication with how the various friends' groups interact with the BLM.

Ken Mahoney provided a handout to the RAC showing BLM Partnership Resources and Arizona Partner Accomplishments. He pointed out that Arizona groups have been awarded the Secretary of the Interior's "Partners in Conservation" Award for the past three years. Mahoney has been working with Sacher and Jones on the umbrella friends' group organization. They have identified some issues and challenges with friends group's partnerships. One of the ways to meet some of the challenges is through information. BLM needs to work more closely with partners and staff to identify what the questions are and what the challenges are. There are a lot of different resources for BLM partnerships online, but the information should be consolidated and more easily accessible to people in the field.

Mahoney also provided the RAC with a copy of "The BLM's National Strategy and Implementation Plan to Support and Enhance Partnerships." He discussed the National Strategy and said that this document will be a key guiding document to start to address issues and challenges.

Sacher commented that she and Jones have identified the importance of continuity. They want to create a policy on how the BLM interacts with friends' groups and other NGO's. She suggested drafting the document as a committee project within a subcommittee on the RAC, which can then be brought back to the full RAC.

DISCUSSION:

Suazo commented on the role friends' groups have with the BLM and how their support correlates with the success of BLM. He also mentioned why he felt the umbrella organization was a topic worth discussing and how the final product will be a good opportunity to work with volunteers and partners. He supports the idea of having a policy on how BLM works with friends' groups and once a recommendation is brought up, he will bring it up to the national level.

Sacher mentioned that no other state is doing anything like this. Arizona is first and this will set the stage for friends' groups nationwide.

Brake asked for more information on how friends' groups are started and what they entail. Sacher responded – Friends' groups are nonprofit organizations aka 501(c) 3 under the tax law. Their mission is to support the BLM with events, clean-ups, data collection, etc. People choose to belong to specific friends' groups because they are invested in the land. The groups have a relationship with the BLM districts and monument managers and work together to better the land. The hope for the umbrella concept is to allow the friends' groups to continue their on the ground work and have the administrative requirements handled at a state level.

Drew John commented that with an umbrella group listed as a 501(c) 3, you can have friends' groups affiliated with it without becoming 501(c) 3's themselves. Sacher mentioned that one of the requirements of a 501(c) 3 is that you have to have a Board for the first year. You have to meet, conduct business, keep minutes, have bylaws, etc. The umbrella group can take care of all

of that and can apply for grant money. Jones added that as a larger, statewide organization you have a higher profile and can attract more donors.

The umbrella group will be specific to BLM lands and affiliated friends' groups initially. Because areas and projects tend to overlap, there may be opportunity in the future to extend it to other groups and organizations.

John stated that the State Parks Foundation is looking at merging with a trails group. But, because their by-laws mention directly "working with the State Director" in it, they have to change the by-laws & other documentation. They may have to change the 501(c) 3 title, company name, dba, etc. This may be something to consider when setting up the umbrella group.

Sacher commented that friends' groups are place based and the mission is to support the BLM. Some of them have BLM agreements and others don't. Since there's an across the board disconnect, the goal is to streamline the process for BLM. By creating a policy, new district managers would know what document they're working with and what to expect from their friends' groups. She asked the RAC to create a committee to draft a document to that end.

MOTION by Stu Bengson:

To establish a subcommittee of the RAC to work with BLM staff to develop a draft document regarding the interface between BLM and friends' groups.

MOTION SECONDED by Jeffrey Sargent

VOTE: Motion Approved

Sacher mentioned that this will be a short term project. She would like to have the draft document done by the end of the year. Brake asked Sacher to chair the subcommittee and she agreed. The group will be open to anyone on the RAC, but the responsibility for the document will fall on 2-3 people.

MOTION by Drew John:

To form a subcommittee of members of the RAC to work on the document to present to the State Director through the RAC. Maggie Sacher will chair.

MOTION SECONDED by Michael Quigley

Roxy Trost suggested that rather than a subcommittee this should fall under a working group.

MOTION ADDENDUM by Drew John:

To form a subcommittee under the Water and Healthy Landscapes working group.

MOTION SECONDED by Michael Quigley

VOTE: Motion Approved

Suazo mentioned that this topic ties into the discussions from earlier in the day about leveraging resources, finding partnerships, and trying to be more effective on public land. This is an opportunity to get all federal agencies and friends' groups/partners on the same page. As you build the umbrella, keep in mind – how to help BLM and how to bring resources together on the ground.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Questions on BLM District Reports

Colorado River District: Roxie Trost, District Manager

Updates –

Fire Management Program: Fire restrictions have been lifted in the District.

Grazing: The Kingman Field Office (KFO) grazing permit renewals - The Environmental Assessment (EA) went out. The comment period was open until July 18. There were about 15 comments. The KFO is working with 3 highly qualified experts from the University of Arizona (2 in grazing and 1 in adaptive management) to finalize the document. They are working on responding to the comments as well.

Mining – KFO has set the date for the Bagdad Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) public scoping meeting for October 22.

Phoenix District: Mary D'Aversa, District Manager

Updates –

Wild Horse & Burro Population Survey – this has moved into a trapping operation; 10 burros have been caught thus far

Maggie Sacher commented that the Phoenix District newsletter is very informative. Bill Brake also complimented the newsletter.

Gila District: Tim Shannon, District Manager

Updates –

Rosemont Copper Mine: In May, the Forest Service announced that they will reinstate the Section 7 consultation with Fish and Wildlife Service. In July, Hudbay Minerals acquired Augusta Resources taking over the Rosemont project. The BLM has been in several meetings and provided input to the Forest Service as we are charged to protect the interest of the BLM and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

Karen Simms and Tim Shannon provided assistance on a Congressional tour of the Rosemont project. They looked at the project and met with Hudbay. Simms and Shannon also took them on a tour of Empire Gulch.

Youth Engaged Stewardship (YES!) Program: Completed its nine-session program. A number of the sessions were filmed and will be available on the Arizona Public Media webpage.

Ray Land Exchange: Proposing a trade of acreage of split estate BLM lands and the Ray Mine. The acquisition will provide BLM with valuable resource lands. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence is completed. We're working with tribes and the Solicitor's office

and hope to have public meetings on the draft EIS in January 2015.

The Navajo Vegetation Management Final EA passed the comment period with no protests or appeals.

DISCUSSION:

Bill Brake commented that the Empire Ranch group is a nationally acclaimed group. The BLM and the community have been very supportive of that. Sacher mentioned that the Empire Ranch group is part of the Friends' Grassroots Network.

Brake asked Shannon to work with Border Patrol on the resource damage they create when doing their job, there needs to be some mitigation. Shannon said that he has a border task meeting in October with Kathy Pedrick and it will be brought up. Brake mentioned that the problem is communication. He wants to know what can be done to mitigate the damage and protect the property and who's going to pay for it. Kathy Pedrick suggested that Brake contact Don Jones with the Public Lands Liaison Program.

Arizona Strip District: Tim Burke, District Manager

Tim Burke introduced himself and discussed his education and background as this was his first RAC meeting as the District Manager of the Arizona Strip District

Updates -

Uinkaret Landscape Restoration Project: The Notice of Intent (NOI) is still in Washington. Public meetings are expected to happen this fall in St. George and Mesquite.

Paria Business Management Plan on the Vermillion Cliffs: Currently there is a lottery system to go into The Wave (20 slots online/20 walk in). They're looking at changing the process. A draft business plan will be completed this fall and the final plan will be presented to the RAC. Sacher commented that this will most likely be a contentious issue. She stated there will be a lot of opposition from out of state if the lottery system changes.

Arizona Strip Travel Management Plan: The draft plan was released. BLM is still in discussion with the SHPO. The TMP decision will probably be released in a few months.

There was a discussion about the Uranium Withdrawal oral arguments that were held in the District Courts on September 9. Suazo mentioned that he attended the arguments and that the BLM is focused on pulling together a process for study plans. We're trying to gather all the information needed so the future Secretary can make an educated decision on an extension or future withdrawal.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Committee Reports

Brake went through the list of working groups and some of the things that were discussed during the working meeting on September 9.

1. Archaeology & Cultural Resources: Wanted to make sure BLM is keeping the tribes informed in archeological sites.
2. Wild Horse & Burro: Reiterated concern that was addressed earlier in the day. Suazo commented that BLM is working on this and once we have closure on the proposals and know the strategy we'll let the RAC know.
3. Rangeland Health & Livestock: Want to make sure that permit renewals get done quickly. This was also addressed earlier in the meeting.
4. Recreation & Communities: Jeffrey Sargent is the new Chair of this working group
5. Formed a working group subcommittee: Maggie Sacher will Chair
6. Energy & Minerals – The board member who chairs this working group is up for renewal so they're going to wait to fill it until the RAC appointments/reappointments are made.
7. Water & Healthy Landscape: Michael Quigley is the new Chair of this working group.

During the working group meeting there was a discussion and decision to review the terminology of the working groups to see if they're still applicable. Michael Quigley is going to take the lead on this.

AGENDA ITEM: Recognition Ceremony

Suazo presented the RAC members whose terms were coming to a close with an award recognizing them for their outstanding service.

Stu Bengson
Doug Traub
Gary Watson
Dawn Duncan-Hubbs (absent)
Glen Collins (absent)

AGENDA ITEM: Wrap Up/Future Agenda Items/Next Meeting Dates/Adjourn

At the next RAC meeting there will be an appreciation party for Glen Collins.

The next meeting will be sometime in January after the new RAC members have been announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 pm.