

Bureau of Land Management
Northwest California Resource Advisory Council

Field Tour and Meeting
Thursday and Friday, March 25-26, 2010
Middletown and St. Helena, California

Summary Minutes

March 25

Council members convened for a tour of the Dry Creek Mining District and a trip to Mt. St. Helena. Field trip discussions focused on the BLM's work to use federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds to clean up abandoned mine sites, cultural resource values associated with historic mining, management of communication sites on public lands, the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, and the proximity of major California population centers in the Bay Area to public lands managed by the BLM Ukiah Field Office.

March 26

Chairman Michael Kelley convened the meeting at 8 a.m.

Attendance

Category one: Stan Leach, Bob Warren. Two vacancies.

Category two: Diane Beck, Michael Kelley, Rondal Snodgrass, Ryan Henson.

Category three: Kendall Smith, Tony Shaw, Shirley Laos. Absent: Julie Rogers.

There is no majority present in category one, and therefore, no quorum of the RAC

BLM Staff: Central California District Manager Kathy Hardy, Arcata Field Manager Lynda Roush, Redding Field Manager Steve Anderson, Ukiah Field Manager Rich Burns, Northern California Public Affairs Officer Jeff Fontana, Central California Public Affairs Officer David Christy.

The council opened the meeting with a moment of silence and resolutions honoring the late Don Klusman and Sef Murguia.

Bob Warren noted that he does not officially represent the Governor in his participation on the RAC.

Agenda approval: An update on the Sacramento River NRA was added and the agenda was approved.

Kendal will report on a regional group working on energy and biomass.

The minutes from the July meeting were approved as mailed. Steve recommended that meeting agendas include a standing item covering BLM responses to RAC recommendations. The group agreed.

State Director's Report

Kathy Hardy presented the report on behalf of Acting State Director Jim Abbott.

National/State Issues:

- **New Leadership** – We're a little over a year into this Administration and all our key positions in Washington are now filled. Until a new State Director is chosen, Jim Abbott will serve as Acting State Director.
- **2010 Budget** – We're halfway through FY 2010 and of course already thinking about 2011. The President's budget is out and looks good for BLM. President Obama has proposed \$1.1 billion for BLM in fiscal year 2011, an \$8 million increase over last year. Renewable energy, youth, treasured landscapes, and climate change initiatives are among the priorities. Special attention is given to the wild horse and burro program with a proposed \$12 million increase, to \$75.7 million for 2011. There is separate, but related land-acquisition funding request of \$42.5 million for the purchase of land for one wild horse preserve.
- **Legislation** – We are now in year two of the 111th Congress. The large Omnibus lands bill was passed last year, which, among other things, codified the National Landscape Conservation System. As for pending legislation, we have about half a dozen proposals – including two in Northern California, Stornetta and Chappie-Shasta.
- **State Priorities:** Our statewide priorities are very similar to the National priorities: 1) renewable energy, 2) the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 3) Youth initiatives; and 3) the upcoming 10th Anniversary of the National Landscape Conservation System.
- **Renewables:** Statewide, we have more than 150 solar and wind applications, covering more than a million acres, most of that in the Desert. Here in NorCal, we have wind about 20 applications for wind projects, all still in the wind testing stages.
- **ARRA or the Recovery Act or Stimulus** – BLM-California received \$40 million to fund 115 projects on public lands in California. Contracts have been or are going up for bid right now with the goal of creating or augmenting jobs by putting boots on the ground. These investments will restore landscapes and habitat, spur renewable energy development remediate abandoned mine lands; and build roads, bridges and trails.
- **The National Landscape Conservation System** is celebrating its 10th Anniversary in 2010. Several areas in northwestern California are part of the system including the King Range National Conservation Area, Headwaters Forest Reserve, California Coastal National Monument, Trinity Wild and Scenic River, several wilderness and wilderness study areas. Events are planned throughout California to commemorate the anniversary.
- **Youth in the Great Outdoors** – Secretary Salazar is very committed to connecting our young people with the outdoors. This includes not only environmental education, but

hiring youth to work on public lands and with Interior offices and personnel. His new "Youth in the Great Outdoors" unveiled last month sets goals for this effort.

District Manager's Report

Kathy Hardy reported for Nancy Haug:

- Both DMs are heavily focused on ARRA coordination and reporting for their field offices.
- The DMs are coordinating with partner groups that work across district and field office boundaries.
- Nancy has been working with the group involved in the Klamath Basin settlement regarding removal of dams on the Klamath River.

Image and Identity (continuing discussion)

Field managers presented comments from their staffs on the recommendations developed by the RAC during the July meeting.

Image and Branding

Field Manager Rich Burns shared a written report from his staff (attachment). The report summarized the actions taken on Ukiah managed lands to reach a varied audience with land use information, outreach activities targeted at youth and diverse audiences, and outreach directed at off highway vehicle users. The staff recommended that the RAC focus on developing and sharing a public land use ethic with public land visitors, possibly by developing a list of best practices for posting at recreation sites. They also suggested that the RAC work on a set of standards and guidelines for responsible shooting on public land.

Bob Warren noted that there seems to be a general lack of public understanding about public lands. There is also confusion about the differences between state lands and federal lands. He said people view public lands as parks. From a marketing perspective, Bob noted that developing a brand is critical to developing an image. He said the BLM brand in northern California should be that the agency manages special places. Tony Shaw there should be a common "phrase" used by the BLM agency wide.

Steve Anderson said the field office agrees with that concept and has focused on consistent signing to make the BLM "brand" recognizable. The effort has been successful, as indicated by the increasing rate of positive responses during periodic BLM presentations to Shasta College students.

Steve added that there is a need for image and branding internally as well in order for the agency to be competitive for funding and staffing.

There was discussion about the role of BLM law enforcement rangers in developing and sharing BLM's image. Members generally agreed that the presence of uniformed officers can help reduce criminal activity on public land. Rondal Snodgrass stressed that law enforcement officers need to treat all contacts equitably and to be aware of concerns about racial profiling in various communities.

Ryan noted that the Mendocino National Forest is creating logos for various parts of the forest, taking the idea from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. He suggested the idea might have merit for BLM. Rich Burns said the BLM is considering similar ideas, and noted Arcata's success with locally developed branding in the Mattole area.

Lynda noted that National Landscape Conservation System promotional materials are being developed with a consistent, professional look and feel, as an example of BLM's understanding of the need to improve branding and image.

Tony Shaw suggested that uniforms and vehicle logos can be effective at improving agency presence and may even help reduce vandalism in some areas.

Steve Anderson said the Redding Field Office is vastly improving kiosk design and has adopted a consistent look for informational kiosks and information.

Diversity

Rich Burns highlighted his office's work with colleges, use of the SCEP program, and staff participation in career fairs as methods increase workforce diversity.

Michael Kelley suggested that the RAC discussion should include ways to increase the diversity of public land users. Lynda agreed that the RAC role might be more appropriate in recommending land user diversity rather than employment diversity, which is probably outside of the council's chartered responsibility.

Kendall Smith suggested pursuing the land use ethic suggestion, finding opportunities for focus on youth and diversity in these image efforts.

Michael also suggested that BLM keep the concept of relevancy in mind when developing and implementing outreach actions. He said the BLM must make public land experiences relevant to the groups targeted by outreach, branding and identify efforts.

Kendall said BLM should also explore economic development angles as part of the effort to build image and identify.

Bob Warren noted that there are big segments of the California population that do not use public lands, and this poses a challenge for outreach, image and identity building efforts.

Steve noted that for Redding, there is no problem attracting use. When trails are built, people use them. Relevancy for Redding is providing use opportunity for community residents. Redding area public lands are relevant because recreation opportunities are free, high quality and safe.

Ryan noted that the keeping public land opportunities affordable leads to diversity. Making opportunities free and affordable attracts people of all ethnicities and economic status.

Lynda noted that BLM facilities reflect the unique qualities of each area, and the demands and desires of local communities and partners.

Youth

Rich Burns noted that his staff works to reach young audiences by targeting messages in events such as county fairs and career fairs

Steve Anderson noted that field office struggles to keep up with demand. He said staffing has not increased, while the Redding area population has more than doubled. Partnerships are the key to getting things done.

Arcata focuses heavily on partners for youth outreach. Humboldt State University students are important, school programs are in place and expanding across the field office jurisdiction.

Michael suggested high school mountain biking organizations are a key to reaching youth

Rondal stressed the importance of the RAC's role of bringing public ideas, perceptions and concerns to the BLM.

Next Steps:

Michael expressed willingness to synthesize today's discussion and share ideas with members. He may bring suggestions back to the next meeting.

Public Comments

Peter Eaton, AltaGas, provided a handout on the company's proposed wind energy development at Walker Ridge (attachment). The company focuses primarily on natural gas, but is moving into wind energy. He discussed the proposal for the wind project along the border of Lake and Colusa counties.

The proposed project is 60 to 70 megawatts (25-29 towers on the ridgeline). The company has filed a plan of development with the Ukiah Field Office. The BLM will oversee a public process to develop and environmental impact statement. The company hopes to start construction in 2012.

Bob Warren suggested a field trip to a wind energy development to build RAC understanding of wind energy developments.

Ryan Henson expressed his appreciation for Walker Ridge and said industrializing the area will be opposed by the California Wilderness Coalition. He termed with proposal “horrendous.”

There was discussion about expected public concerns and the upcoming public NEPA process.

Bob Schneider, Tuleyome, updated the RAC on items being worked on by his environmental organization, including trail projects, wilderness proposals, public trail easements to provide public land access, acquisitions to improve public land access, participation in TMDL hearings and other topics associated with abandoned mine lands. Tuleyome is also working on a vegetative management plan associated with fire management in wilderness, the Road 41 bridge issue in Yolo County, and the Berryessa Snow Mountain proposed National Conservation Area (handout). He said the organization will participate in the Walker Ridge wind energy proposal, with a focus on mercury issues associated with soil disturbance.

Coastal and NLCS Topics:

Marcia deChadendes, partnership and outreach coordinator for the BLM’s California Coastal National Monument, presented information on completion of the geotourism map guide website: visitredwoodcoast.com. The site was developed through a partnership involving the BLM, National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations and the North Coast Tourism Council. It aims to help travelers plan trips and focuses on tourism that will sustain the character of the North Coast, not alter it.

She explained the background of the website, the collaborative process used to develop it, and the process for the public, including the RAC, to nominate sites.

Rich Burns briefed the council on the Marine Life Protection Act and the relationship to onshore BLM-managed public lands, such as Stornetta. Discussion continued about the MLPA and its intent.

Sacramento River Bend Management

Ryan Henson and Bob Warren reported on the status of a legislative proposal to create a National Recreation Area on public lands managed by the BLM in the Sacramento River Bend Area. The Tehama County Board of Supervisors will vote again on whether to endorse the proposed legislation by Sen. Boxer. The senator and Representative Wally Herger have been working on the proposal.

Field Managers' Reports

Redding: In addition to his written report, Field Manager Steve Anderson noted that BLM's acquisitions in the Sacramento River Bend have benefitted agriculture interests by protecting river frontage from development. He also noted that trail development has benefitted local bicycle businesses. Bob Warren noted that ARRA funded projects have contributed greatly, and added that his tourism organization, the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, will spend funds marketing Redding bicycling opportunities when the trail projects are completed. Steve also noted that the transfer of Bureau of Reclamation-managed lands back to the BLM (Sacramento River Rail Trail) is moving forward. The RAC has supported the transfer. The Reading Island channel issue, also discussed at an earlier RAC meeting, is being resolved through cooperation among the BLM, DFG and the private landowner. There have been concerns that the channel was drained. Steve also noted that BLM is moving forward with creating Areas of Critical Environmental Concern at Clear Creek and Grass Valley Creek.

Stan Leach noted that there is a proposal to build a biomass power plant at the Weaverville sawmill, providing an outlet for brush created in forestry projects.

Arcata: Lynda Roush provided a written report (attachment). Additionally, she said groundbreaking is set for May for the skills park in the King Range Paradise Ridge bike trail. 10 miles of trails will be constructed this summer. Landscaping is being completed at the train barn. The buildings have been removed. Scoping will start in May on development of an activity plan for the Lost Coast Headlands.

Ukiah: Rich Burns noted that the field office has just accepted donation of a parcel near Montgomery Woods State Park from Save the Redwoods League. He also discussed activities at South Cow Mountain.

Closing Business

Additional items from members:

- Tony Shaw will develop a proposal for BLM to link agency websites with Google Earth. The idea is to enable the BLM to overlay public land site information onto a Google Earth layer. .
- Rondal requested that salmonid recovery issues should be on a future agenda.
- There was discussion about structuring meeting agendas to allow for small group breakouts and to have a standing agenda item for the BLM to report to the RAC on how recommendations were implemented.
- Kendall Smith briefed the council on the North Coast Integrated Water Quality Planning Group work with AB811 for energy retrofits for homes and small businesses.

Next Meeting:

July 15-16 in Redding. A field tour will be held the first day. Details will be determined by the Redding Field Office.

Agenda topics: Update on Cow Mountain Access, salmonid recovery (including impacts of climate change), forest practices, Walker Ridge wind energy proposal (including a field trip to the site of a wind farm development west of Burney), update on Sacramento River Bend.

Proposed Joint Meeting with Central California RAC

The group expressed no sense of urgency to hold a joint meeting, but agreed to discuss the idea periodically. They agreed to let emerging issues drive the decision on whether to meet jointly.