



United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
3028 East Main Street
Canon City, Colorado 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES April 27, 2011

Category 1

Bill Dvorak
Ed Nielsen
Virginia Patton
Keary Hallack

Category 2

Jay Heeter
Lucy Bambrey
Aaron Clark
Mike Nelson

Category 3

Loren Whittemore
Al Trujillo
John Stevenson
Christopher "Kit" Shy

ATTENDEES

Greg Shoop, Designated Federal Officer (Front Range District Manager); Keith Berger, Royal Gorge Field Office Field Manager; Cass Cairns, Front Range RAC Coordinator; Sue Swift-Miller; Shelley Freer, Front Range RAC Administrative Assistant.

GUESTS

Jack Placchi, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM Colorado State Office; John Bierk, Law Enforcement Ranger, BLM Colorado State Office

INTRODUCTIONS AND OLD BUSINESS

All RAC members, attendees and guests introduced themselves after the meeting was called to order by Loren Whittemore at 9:25 a.m. There was no old business.

Al thanked the group for assisting with the state-wide RAC meeting that was held in Salida. It was an excellent and well-attended meeting.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no responses.

RAC Ethics, Greg Shoop, Designated Federal Officer (Front Range District Manager), Front Range District Office

A concern was raised about Bill Dvorak's participation in Over The River (OTR) discussions related to the RAC as he is involved in the rafting business. An investigation was initiated and conducted by the National RAC Coordinator and the BLM Ethics Officer with the conclusion being that there was no violation. Kit inquired how a complaint is made; there is no formal process but any correspondence regarding an ethics violation will be reviewed.

RAC members cannot participate in RAC issues that pertain to the RAC member. The member must excuse themselves from discussing that particular topic. Greg distributed a hand-out with more information.

MANAGERS UPDATE

Bob Hurley, *Fire Management Officer, RGFO*

Bob distributed hand-outs regarding the potential fire outlook through September. Northern Colorado has been getting some relief from the recent significant moisture but other parts of the state are extremely dry. There is potential for a severe fire season this year. Funding for fire suppression comes from a national fire fund.

Keith Berger, *Field Manager, RGFO*

The Four Mile Canyon fire in Boulder encompassed approximately 1300 acres of BLM land located in the middle of the fire area. BLM and several other entities are now working on an emergency restoration and stabilization plan. Mulching projects were completed as of last Monday. We are currently developing a process to assist individual landowners with rehabilitation on their private land.

The New Elk Coal Lease Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project has been completed and has been distributed for public comment. An issue concerning greenhouse gas has been brought to BLM's attention. We are hoping to have this completed by the end of this summer.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Destiny Mine project is continuing. This project is for an 80-acre gold mine and gravel pit near the town of Fairplay.

The South Park Bison EA is being finalized and should be out this summer.

The new Park Center well has been drilled but additional funding is needed for completion. Fish kill is also being mitigated.

We are in the final stage of completing the OTR Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Over 4500 comments have been received thus far. The EIS should be completed in early June with the Record of Decision (ROD) following 60 days after the EIS is released.

There have been three public forums regarding hydraulic fractures. Presentations and power points are available from these forums for the public.

Sue Swift-Miller, *Acting Associate Center Manager, San Luis Valley Public Lands Center (SLVPLC)*

The San Luis Valley (SLV) is working on a geothermal EA. It should be ready for public review in late spring or early summer.

They are working on a preliminary solar project EIS that involves internal scoping and an internal review.

They have received twelve oil and gas nominations which will probably be delayed until the February sale.

A new commission has been appointed to work on the Rio Grande National Area. A kick-off meeting will be held this summer.

There have been many horse and livestock trespass issues in the SLV recently. Greg Shoop requested that the RAC be involved in giving advice and recommendations. John Smeins and Aaron Richter have volunteered to be on a horse trespass sub-committee to assist.

Woolly mammoth remains were discovered in a gravel pit with excavation being planned for later this summer.

The Penitente campground will close in August for an upgrade. They will have a campground host at this location next year. The Zapata campground has not opened yet and will not open this summer.

The Vista Grande recreation site project is being completed with Saguache and will provide trails and youth orientated activities in the area.

Letters have been sent to permittees on the current drought.

BALD HILL FEDERAL UNIT, *Jimmy Dickerson, Renewable Resources Supervisor, Royal Gorge Field Office*

Two Application for Permits to Drill (APDs) were submitted on two wells in Park County; one was later withdrawn. They are working on unitization of the area. Unitization benefits everyone as it conserves surface resources by drilling only the wells necessary, minimizes impacts to the environment, provides for a centralization of facilities, and limits unit surface operations to a single operator. This is an on-going project.

FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACTS (RECREATION FEE DETERMINATION PROCESS), *Jack Placchi, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM Colorado State Office*

The Recreation Fee program will be undergoing changes under the new authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). This Act provides agencies with recreation fee authority for ten years, which will allow the agencies to improve the efficiency of the program, provide better facilities and services to the visitors, employ greater use of technology, and enter into more fee management agreements with counties and other entities to provide additional services to visitors. Agencies are currently reviewing all existing fees; where the existing fee program is inconsistent with the Act, changes will be made. Fee revenues are retained at the site of collection and used to enhance visitor services, including repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement. Typical uses of fee revenues include maintaining campgrounds, habitat restoration directly related to wildlife-dependent recreation, fixing boat launches, offering interpretive displays and tours, and providing toilets and other amenities that many visitors

expect. Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) will be consulted and given opportunities to provide recommendations on implementing new fee areas, eliminating current recreation fees in certain areas, and expanding or limiting the recreation fee program.

GUFFEY GORGE RECREATION SITE, *Kalem Lenard, Recreation Planner, Royal Gorge Field Office*

Kalem gave a virtual presentation showing the trip from Canon City to Guffey Gorge using Google Earth. Guffey Gorge is a popular recreation site with attendance climbing steadily every year. The area has several ongoing concerns such as liability for neighbors, concern over increase in use, displacement of local use due to crowds, increased search and rescue response, pedestrian safety, and insufficient parking. Some potential solutions include installing signs to an alternate location when Guffey Gorge is at capacity, sharing law enforcement duties, increasing parking area, installing guardrails or other barriers along the highway so parking is only available in the lot, and recruiting volunteers for public education. The field office staff is working on correcting these issues and making Guffey Gorge a safer destination.

BLM's USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, *Cass Cairns, Public Affairs Officer, Royal Gorge Field Office*

BLM has entered the social media arena to broaden outreach to more audiences, engage youth with public lands, and draw traffic to the BLM Colorado Internet. BLM is currently using Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Cass showed the group these websites and instructed them on how to use them. An email group has also been set up for the Front Range RAC.

FINAL SUPPLEMENTARY RULES ON CAMPING AND OCCUPANCY ON PUBLIC LANDS, *John Bierk, Law Enforcement Ranger, BLM Colorado State Office*

There is currently a state-wide ban on fireworks. It is anticipated that we will have a high fire season.

Seasonal employees may be hired state-wide this summer to assist with grants on OHV monitoring. \$153,000 was approved from the State Parks pilot program for this effort.

New camping rules were initiated on July 12, 2010 and are designed to increase the effectiveness in managing issues related to recreational camping and occupancy; protect the natural resources; provide for safe public recreation and public health; reduce the potential for damage to the environment; and enhance the safety of public lands users. The new camping and occupancy rules are:

1. You must not camp longer than 14 days in any 30-day period, at any one location, including any campground on public land.
2. After the 14 days have been reached, you must move at least 30 air miles away from the previously occupied location.
3. You must not leave any personal property or refuse after vacating the campsite. This includes any property left for the purposes of use by another camper or occupant.
4. You must not leave personal property unattended in a campground, designated recreation area, or on any other public lands for more than 48 hours. Vehicles left parked for the purpose of backcountry camping, hiking, river rafting or other authorized recreation activities are exempt.

5. You must not establish occupancy, take possession of, or otherwise use public lands for residential purposes except as allowed under 43 CFR 3715.2, 3715.2-1, 3715.5, 3715.6, or with prior written authorization from the BLM.
6. If an area charges fees, you must register if required, and pay fees within 30 minutes of entering the fee area.
7. You must not violate any State of Colorado or county laws or regulations relating to public health, safety, sanitation, building or fire codes while camping, occupying, or using public land.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Gregory Shoop, Designated Federal Officer
Front Range District Office
Bureau of Land Management

Loren Whittemore, Chair
Front Range Resource Advisory Council