

Rio Grande Natural Area Commission Cultural Subcommittee Meeting Notes
8.24.2012, La Jara BLM Office
Angie Krall, Cultural Program Lead, San Luis Valley Field Office, BLM

Local Advisory Subcommittee Participants: Harold Anderson, Loretta Mitson and Mike Willet
BLM: Paul Tigan, Ken Frye, Angie Krall

Paul Tigan provided overview of legislation noting 66% of the RGNA is on non-federal lands. BLM will be developing plan with the Cultural Subcommittee providing guidance in that realm. We discussed the ongoing BLM ethnography and the tribal input that may be incorporated into the plan.

The group brainstormed about the various cultural resources within the RGNA that include: the de Vargas Crossing the historic ferry (Demetrio Valdez), Stewarts Crossing (N. of Los Sauces first crossing north of Espanola), Old Military Road (Ft. Garland to Alamosa), Old Spanish Trail, Big Prehistoric Camps along the River, King Turquoise Mine, Rock Dam, Battle of Kiowa Hill, Rock Art, Old Stage Coach Rd. and Stage Stop, Uranium Mining, and cable car and gauging station north of NM state line (1908). Discussed need for more archaeological inventory within the RGNA (what funding?).

Group agreed that interpretive signs could be identified in areas 'off site' of de Vargas and rock art sites such as the Lobatos Bridge and the 142 bridge (possible 'Portal Areas'). Discussed looking into the BLM buying or exchanging land for Costilla County side of de Vargas Crossing.

The group discussed the merits and pitfalls of closing certain roads in the area. Need to do more cost benefit analysis with regard to accessing certain rock art sites for educational purposes. The group agreed that Stewardship and Education of RGNA cultural resources will need to be stressed in both the BLM and non-federal land plans.

The group identified the following sites that warrant interpretation and protection within the RGNA:

- De Vargas crossing (5CN23/5CT213)
- Rock Art Site 5CN204
- Rock Art Site 5CT262
- Lobatos Bridge
- Valdez Ferry (5CN23)
- Dam Site (1940s/1950s)
- Rock Art Site 5CT263
- Paleoindian Site at Rio Grande Cave (needs cadastral survey)

Themes that can be carried forward:

- Aboriginal Riverine Use and Occupation
- Water Development: Water is Life
- Transportation/Travel Corridors
- Early Mining (Turquoise/Uranium)