



United States Department of the Interior
 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 Front Range District Office
 3028 East Main Street
 Cañon City, Colorado 81212



RIO GRANDE NATURAL AREA COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Rio Grande Water Conservation District Conference Room

March 9, 2015

ATTENDEES

Andrew Archuleta, BLM San Luis Valley Field Manager; Tom Heinlein, BLM Front Range District Manager; Steve Vandiver, Rio Grande Water Conservation District (Chair); Rio de la Vista, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (Vice-Chair); Harold Anderson, Costilla County Rancher and Costilla County Conservation Board Member; Michael Willett, Conejos County Rancher; Craig Cotton, Colorado Division of Water Resources; Mike Blenden, Project Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Rick Basagoitia, Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Mike Gibson, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District; Kyle Sullivan, BLM Public Affairs Specialist; Chris Ivers, Rio Grande Water Conservation District HCP Coordinator; Charlotte Bobicki, Assistant to Senator Bennet; Brenda Felmlee, Assistant to Congressman Tipton; David Montgomery, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council; Molly Pitts, writer/editor; Clay Hudson, Private Property Owner; Wayne Schwab, Trinchera Irrigation; Barbra Maat, Citizen.

STEVE VANDIVER CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 10:00 A.M.

INTRODUCTIONS, REVIEW LAST MEETING, APPROVE MINUTES

Meeting minutes from the Jan 22, 11 2015 meeting were approved. Mike Willet motioned to accept and Mike Gibson accepted.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ben Doon has been in contact with Dieter Erdman regarding the Brownie Hills property and the county is supportive of Western River Conservancy's efforts.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Andrew Archuleta provided an update on the maps, there is one more technical glitch before they are ready. The official maps need to be signed by the BLM State Director. Andrew will have draft maps available on 03/10/2015.

Andrew brought up that Judy Barnes has a vested interest in the horses on Wild Horse Mesa and lives on the mesa. Ben stated that Judy is coming to the county commissioner meeting on March 17. Judy wants to lease land and she will manage horses, the problem is that there are hundreds of land owners.

Rio – If Western Rivers acquires Brownie Hills, PZP should be used to control the horse population.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The committee reviewed the newest Draft copy of the RGNA Management Plan. The Draft plan that the commission was working off of will be posted to the RGNA Commission website, as well as a track changes version of the draft to show the edits that were suggested during the course of the meeting.

Of note, the Commission came to a consensus regarding the spelling of Los Sauces.

WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY – DIETER ERDMANN

Dieter Erdmann, of Western Rivers Conservancy, provided an overview of the organization. The organization is based out of Portland , OR and has a staff of 15 spread across 13 western states.

The group is working on acquiring Music Mesa, which is a large property with relatively little river frontage. Brownie Hills property is under contract and will convey to BLM. BLM would utilize LWCF funding to acquire the property.

RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS RESTORATION PROJECT – EMMA REGIER

Lower Rio Grande Study – Implement 2001 Study from S. Fork to Arkansas River. See powerpoint on RGNA website.

ACTION ITEMS

Submit edits to Molly Pitts (ColoradoPitts@gmail.com) by May 1, 2015.

May 12, 13, 14 Public Meetings

Draft public on May 6

Identify maps needed for the management plan.

Identify and submit photos for inclusion in management plan.

AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Finishing touches on draft management plan ahead of public meetings.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Rio Grande Natural Area Commission is scheduled for June 17, 2015 at the Rio Grande Water Conservation District Office in Alamosa, Colorado. Future meetings were scheduled for Sept 16, 2015 and Dec. 9, 2015.

Public meetings were scheduled for the evenings of May 12, 13, and 14, 2015 to unveil the draft management plan and obtain public comment.

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:00 P.M.

Andrew Archuleta, Designated Federal Officer
Front Range District, Bureau of Land Management

Steve Vandiver, Chairman
Rio Grande Natural Area Commission