United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 S. Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401

RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL SUBGROUP MEETING #10

Friday, June 22, 2012 (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM)

Meeting Location:
Holiday Inn Express
1391 South Townsend Avenue, Montrose, CO

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Angie Adams (EMPSi), Robbie Baird-LeValley, Bill Day, William Ela, Barbara Hawke, Bruce Krickbaum (BLM Uncompahgre Field Office), John Reams, Barb Sharrow (BLM Uncompahgre Field Office), Steven Weist, Kathy Welt

Public Attendees: Lori Molitar (representing The Conservation Center [NWCC]), Scott Streit (Congressman Scott Tipton's office)

Handouts: Agenda, Highlights of the Resource Management Planning Process to Date

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1. **Welcome** (Angie Adams)
2. **Introductions** (All Present)
3. **Planning Process to Date** (Angie Adams)

- Handout: Highlights of the Resource Management Planning Process to Date
- The internal draft Oil and Gas Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario was completed in February 2012. Have not released it to the public yet because the BLM Colorado State Office is still reviewing the internal draft report.
- The Wilderness characteristics report was completed in November 2011 and is on the RMP website.
- BLM is currently working with the BLM State Office and the US Environmental Protection Agency on the air quality report.

4. **Final Draft Chapter 2, Alternatives – Range of Alternatives**

- Angie Adams: The Proposed RMP and final RMP can select any combination of decisions from the various alternatives in the Draft RMP/EIS. The key is that a reasonable range of alternatives is considered in the Draft RMP/EIS so that there is flexibility in the Proposed and final RMPs. Right now it does not matter which alternative different draft actions fall; do not be too concerned about what is in the agency-preferred alternative.

- Robbie LeValley: Concerned about the labels for each alternative in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, and those labels project negative connotations and two ends of a spectrum. Alternative B: Could call it "Non-consumptive Resource Emphasis." **ACTION ITEM:** Need to work on the text in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 to explain that there will be commodity use in Alternative B, for example. In Section 2.3.2, first sentence, do not state "non-consumptive;" state "less consumptive." Overall Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 need a lot of work.
- RAC Subgroup: **ACTION ITEM:** Delete the "Resource Conservation Emphasis" label for Alternative B and "Resource Use Emphasis" for Alternative C. Do not use short labels for Alternatives B or C.
- Barbara Hawke: The alternatives do appear very polarized. When all conservation measures are in one alternative and not the other, that is too exclusive. Even in the Development alternative, various environmental protections would or should be incorporated. Various topics are all contained in only one alternative. For example, Watchable Wildlife areas are only in the conservation alternative, and that is concerning as those areas and the Development alternative should not be mutually exclusive. As other examples, all the SRMAs are in the Conservation alternative, and all the ERMAs are in the Development alternative. Robbie LeValley: See page 2-19, Climate Change (row 13): Alternative C includes no similar action, and when that is under the resource use alternative, it could be perceived negatively.
- Kathy Welt: **ACTION ITEM:** Consider labeling preferred alternative as "draft preferred" or "preliminary preferred" or something to indicate that BLM can choose from any of the Draft RMP alternatives when crafting the Proposed RMP using components (objectives and actions) Alternative A, B, and/or C. Also describe this in the introductory text in Chapter 2. Explain better that Alternative A is part of the range of alternatives and that parts of Alternative A could be selected in Draft RMP and Proposed RMP.
- Bruce Krickbaum: Each column or alternative could be an RMP.
- *Wildlife – Terrestrial*
    a. Ecological Emphasis Areas (row 99): Good concept. But overall they are not very detailed by alternative. Need to consider adding more areas:
        - A riparian Ecological Emphasis Area around Dolores River canyons or tributaries.
        - Gunnison sage-grouse: need to address subpopulations and connectivity via an Ecological Emphasis Area.
        - **ACTION ITEM:** Barbara Hawke will provide BLM maps of potential additional Ecological Emphasis Areas within the next week so that BLM can address this comment.
- Steve Weist: Can we get GIS of some areas so we can compare them to our other project areas? Bruce Krickbaum: Yes. Request specifically what you want in the next few weeks, and we will provide it.
- Steve Weist: Concerned about the definition of "climate change" in the glossary. **ACTION ITEM:** Delete "(e.g., through burning fossil fuels)" in the last bullet of the definition.
- *Fluid Minerals – Oil and Gas*
    a. Barbara Hawke: The range of alternatives has a gap. Some areas, such as *all* ACECs, SRMAs, or Ecological Emphasis Areas, should be considered for No Leasing in one of the alternatives. Other RMPs do this.
    b. Row 459: Alterative B proposes about 20% of the UFO for No Leasing. It includes several different areas as outlined in the bullets within this cell. Includes three ACECs. Most or all of the rest of the ACECs would be NSO under Alternative B.
    c. Barb Sharrow: If there is a specific ACEC or SRMA that should be No Leasing, then provide that specific information to BLM, as well as supporting rationale for why NSO is not sufficient for those areas. Barbara Hawke: Main concern with NSO is that it can be excepted or modified, whereas No Leasing cannot. **ACTION ITEM:** Barbara Hawke

will provide justification/rationale for which specific areas should be No Leasing under an alternative.

- Robbie LeValley: About 75% of the time, Alternative D is the same as Alternative B (in first third of the alternatives matrix). That is concerning that they are very similar. Barbara Hawke: My perception is the opposite, that with SMRAs and ACECs, the emphasis in Alternative D is from Alternative C, not Alternative B. Barb Sharrow: Need specific comments on row numbers where the range is not reasonable. Robbie LeValley, Row 26: Alternatives D and B are essentially the same thing. Alternative C's no similar action does not make sense if you have a nonfunctioning dam. **ACTION ITEM:** Alternative C does not seem to follow a consistent pattern throughout the alternative if we are looking at resource use; need to take a hard look at Alternative C and ensure it is consistent throughout the entire alternative. Need to change the alternative labels because Alternative C label implies that use is negative.
- **ACTION ITEM:** "No similar action" needs to be defined. It does not mean that actions are prohibited, rather that they are not a requirement. Also consider changing "no similar action" to something else that does not imply that that action would be prohibited under that particular alternative stating "no similar action."
- Robbie LeValley, Row 56: Good range of alternatives.
- Robbie LeValley, Row 72: No similar action in Alternative C implies riparian areas would not be protected.
- John Reams: Where it says "no similar action," consider adding explanations to some of these where it is covered under another program or action. Some instances do this, but need to do it more globally. For example, row 73 Alternatives B, C, and D could just state "Travel management limits…" rather than stating "No similar action; travel management limits…"
- Robbie LeValley, Row 153: This needs to be clarified so reader can see difference between alternatives. **ACTION ITEM:** Instead of "no similar allowable use" for stipulations, say "No stipulation under current RMPs" (for Alternative A) or "No stipulation under this alternative." Also check Glossary for any necessary definition changes.
- *Travel Management*
    a. Barbara Hawke, Row 398: More areas need to be managed for non-motorized recreation uses to have a reasonable range of alternatives. In Alternative B, only 14% of areas are closed to motorized use. Seems like that should be higher in this alternative. There is a very large and increasing demand for quiet or nonmotorized recreation for mountain bikes, horseback riding, hiking, etc., as shown by the high interest in the Ridgway Trails and Norwood Trails projects. The RMP should provide for this recreational demand. Barb Sharrow: This RMP does not specify quiet use because the RMP is bigger picture than that. Barbara Hawke: Perhaps the ERMAs could indicate that a proportion would be available for quiet or motorized recreation, etc. Barb Sharrow: This will depend in part on local communities' desires and will be done in future implementation-level travel management planning.
    b. Barbara Hawke: Could we state that in Alternative B, during travel management planning, BLM would consider local community input and place a higher emphasis on quiet use. Barb Sharrow: That is very vague and cannot be analyzed in impact analysis.
- Barbara Hawke: **ACTION ITEM:** Consider using some of the Colorado River Valley Draft RMP definitions of alternatives; see Section 2.2.
- Robbie LeValley, Row 280: **ACTION ITEM:** Consider adding a bullet in Alternatives B, C, and D that requires determining if it is livestock that is causing the issue.
- Robbie LeValley, Rows 288, 291: **ACTION ITEM:** Clarify that "no similar action" means that the action would not be prohibited; need general clarification of that definition.
- *Visual Resource Management*
    a. Barbara Hawke, Row 231: For a full range of alternatives, more areas need to be considered for VRM Class II, such as Scenic Byway corridors. Bruce Krickbaum:

Alternative B does include all National and BLM Byways. Barbara Hawke: Highway 141 (scenic byway) is not shown on the map as VRM II; neither is west of adobe badlands on Highway 50; these areas should be considered for VRM Class II. **ACTION ITEM:** Consider these areas for VRM II in an alternative.

- *Overall is the range of alternatives reasonable and adequate?*
    a. Steve Weist: If BLM modifies some of the definitions and address today's action items, then I am satisfied with range of alternatives.
    b. Robbie LeValley: Address labeling (or not) the alternatives. Also look hard at Alternative C and ensure that it is consistent throughout the alternative.
    c. Bill Ela: RMPs are generally flexible and provide discretion to the BLM. The range of alternatives is broad and fine.
    d. Barbara Hawke: Two areas where one end of the range of alternatives is not reasonably full are: 1) No Leasing areas; and 2) Nonmotorized areas. Need to address this.
    e. John Reams: I feel good about the range of alternatives. Do not want the entire process to be too influenced by the vocal North Fork citizens.
    f. Bill Day: Range of alternatives is adequate and enough.
    g. Kathy Welt: With better definitions as discussed today, and with the addition of text describing the purpose of NEPA and the purpose of the RMP, the range of alternatives is adequate.

5. Public Comments (11:00am)

- Lori Molitar (representing The Conservation Center [NWCC])
    a. Are there any places in the RMP that will specify areas closed to leasing? Angie Adams/Bruce Krickbaum: Yes. They vary by alternative. These are based on different criteria (row 459). Lori Molitar: Want to ensure there are No Leasing areas in the North Fork.
    b. Want the RMP to address protecting water supplies with No Leasing restrictions so that agricultural irrigation water is not being used for drilling operations. The setbacks for public water supplies that are included in the internal draft RMP alternatives are good. Concerned about contamination of supplies via diesel fuel, etc.

6. Next Steps

- Refer to the opposite side of the agenda for the general schedule:

General Uncompahgre RMP Schedule *(as of June 4, 2012)*

BLM State Office Review of Preliminary Draft RMP	*November 2012*
BLM Washington Office Review of Preliminary Draft RMP	*January 2013*
Public Review of Draft RMP/Draft EIS (90-day comment period)	*spring 2013*
Public Review of Proposed RMP/Final EIS (30-day protest period)	*Winter/Spring 2014*
Sign Record of Decision	*Summer 2014*

7. Other Items Not on the Agenda

- Bruce Krickbaum: The Oil and Gas Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario report (internal) discusses potential development of oil and gas resource development in the Field Office; it does not address impacts. An Environmental Assessment addresses impacts on resources and a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) addresses the significance determination.
- Bruce Krickbaum: The lease sale originally scheduled for August 2012 is deferred; some parcels may be deferred for a lease sale sometime relatively soon and others may be deferred until after the RMP. The majority of the lease sale parcels were on BLM surface lands. Barb Sharrow: BLM

received thousands of public comments on the preliminary Environmental Assessment. BLM is still analyzing those comments and, when finished, will most likely be posting some or parts of parcels for future lease sale in the next year or so. There will be a 30-day protest period, and the sale will occur 90 days later. It is being deferred until BLM has time to do a complete analysis. It was deferred/delayed because BLM did not have adequate time to analyze the comments and information provided. Other portions of parcels could be deferred until after the RMP is completed.

- Projects to Consider in the Cumulative Effects Analysis
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Solar project in Paradox Valley. This may need to be included in the cumulative projects list.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** **BLM (Bruce): email the draft cumulative impacts projects list to the RAC Subgroup members for their review. RAC Subgroup members: email any additional projects to Bruce by Friday, June 29, 2012.

8. Action Items / Next Meeting

ACTION ITEMS:

1. BLM (Bruce) and EMPSi (Angie will do first draft edits and send to Bruce): Need to work on the text in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 to explain that there will be commodity use in Alternative B, for example. In Section 2.3.2, first sentence, do not state "non-consumptive;" state "less consumptive." Overall Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 need a lot of work.
2. BLM (Bruce) and EMPSi (Angie will do first draft edits and send to Bruce): Consider using some of the Colorado River Valley Draft RMP definitions of alternatives; see Section 2.2.
3. EMPSi (Angie will do first draft edits and send to Bruce): Delete the "Resource Conservation Emphasis" label for Alternative B and "Resource Use Emphasis" for Alternative C. Do not use short labels for Alternatives B or C.
4. BLM (Bruce) and EMPSi (Angie will better describe how PRMP is developed; do not rename preferred alternative in DRMP/DEIS): Consider labeling preferred alternative as "draft preferred" or "preliminary preferred" or something to indicate that BLM can choose from any of the Draft RMP alternatives when crafting the Proposed RMP using components (objectives and actions) Alternative A, B, and/or C. Also describe this in the introductory text in Chapter 2. Explain better that Alternative A is part of the range of alternatives and that parts of Alternative A could be selected in Draft RMP and Proposed RMP.
5. Barbara Hawke: Provide BLM maps of potential additional Ecological Emphasis Areas within the next week so that BLM can address this comment.
6. EMPSi (Kate): In "climate change" in the glossary, replace "(e.g., through burning fossil fuels)" with "(e.g., driving automobiles)" in the last bullet of the definition.
7. Barbara Hawke: Provide justification/rationale for which specific areas should be No Leasing under an alternative.
8. BLM (Bruce): Alternative C does not seem to follow a consistent pattern throughout the alternative if we are looking at resource use; need to take a hard look at Alternative C and ensure it is consistent throughout the entire alternative.
9. BLM (Bruce) (in MSWord working version of Chapter 2 in reviewing/track changes mode): "No similar action" needs to be defined. It does not mean that actions are prohibited, rather that they are not a requirement. Also consider changing "no similar action" to something else that does not imply that that action would be prohibited under that particular alternative stating "no similar action."
10. BLM (Bruce) (in MSWord working version of Chapter 2 in reviewing/track changes mode): Instead of "no similar allowable use" for stipulations, say "No

stipulation under current RMPs" (for Alternative A) or "No stipulation under this alternative." Also check Glossary for any necessary definition changes.

11. BLM (Bruce) and EMPSi (Kate): Row 280, Consider adding a bullet in Alternatives B, C, and D that requires determining if it is livestock that is causing the issue.
12. BLM (Bruce) and EMPSi (Kate): Rows 288 and 291, Clarify that "no similar action" means that the action would not be prohibited; need general clarification of that definition.
13. BLM (Bruce): Consider Highway 141 (scenic byway) and west of adobe badlands on Highway 50 for VRM II in an alternative.
14. BLM (Bruce): Solar project in Paradox Valley. This may need to be included in the cumulative projects list.
15. BLM (Bruce): email the draft cumulative impacts projects list to the RAC Subgroup members for their review. RAC Subgroup members: email any additional projects to Bruce by Friday, June 29, 2012.

NEXT MEETING:

- The purpose of the RAC Subgroup was initially to approve the range of alternatives. The three RAC members here today should discuss this up at the October 2012 RAC meeting to determine if this group will continue or not.