

**Southwest Resource Advisory Council**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Friday, October 28, 2011**  
**Durango, Colorado**

**Southwest Resource Advisory Council Members**

Ken Emory, Jim Cochran, Renzo Delpiccolo, John Reams, Andy Gulliford, Eric Sanford, Dan Morse, Peter Mueller, Wally White, Andrea Robinsong, Barbara Hawke, Kathy Welt

**Staff**

Lori Armstrong, Barb Sharrow, Bill Dunkelberger, Heather Musclow, Shannon Borders, Brian St. George

**Visitors**

Kitty Benzar, John Whitney, Ty Churchwell

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Kathy Welt at 9:05 a.m. Everyone introduced themselves as there are new RAC members. Barbara Hawke moved to approve the agenda with the following discussion items added to the agenda including a field trip and transition plan for Tres Rios Field Office. The motion was seconded by Ken Emory and was approved unanimously. The minutes were reviewed with the following suggestion. On page five it should read knapweed midges. Jim Cochran moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting with the suggested amendment. Andy Gulliford seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. A quorum for the meeting was determined.

**Public Lands Internship Pilot Program-Bill Dunkelberger**

See attached PDF with the document titled "Public Lands Pathways to Employment: Developing Careers I Resource Management

**Dolores River Dialogue-Peter Mueller & Shawna Jenson, FS**

See attached PDF with the document titled "Dolores River – Management Alternatives to Protect the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the lower Dolores River, October 23, 2011, update"

In 2007, the San Juan Resource Management Plan found that the Dolores River was found preliminary suitable. Therefore, the San Juan Public Lands Center formed the Lower Dolores Working Group. This group met over 13 months to get up to speed and then they decided to pursue a National Conservation Area as an alternative. The attached report gives an update on the working group's activities.

Ken Emory asked if this group was also working in Montrose County. Shawna explained that Montrose County has been approached, and they are working to build contacts. Ken Emory also asked what the boundaries of the NCA would include. Shawna explained that the boundary would go beyond the river in some areas including some roads and trails. Peter Muller said they are working with recreational uses in the area to maintain the trails without adding new trails. Ken Emory asked to be involved to help maintain motorized use. Eric Sanford said that someone needs to look at mineral ownership and those

rights come with rights to access. Therefore, this needs to be studied, because those access rights need to be studied. Eric Sanford said he would like to be involved as well. Ken Emory said he would like to have maps of the NCA boundary. Ken Emory also asked why they are considering a wider boundary. Shawna explained one of the significant values is recreation and they want to honor those values.

The RAC members would like to have maps of the area to better understand the interests in the area.

Peter Muller said that this group is trying to change how the water resources are managed looking forward to a possible endangered species listing while maintaining agricultural and other interests. Renzo Delpiccolo asked why Wild and Scenic River wasn't considered. Shawna Jenson explained federal water rights must be part of Wild and Scenic River act. Two concerns are suitability and threaten and endangered species. Lori Armstrong said there's a similar NCA discussion in the northwest and that would leave the Paradox Valley out of the NCA.

### **Land Tenure Transactions-TRFO, CANM, UFO, GFO**

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument-Heather Musclow reported that the Veach and Lower Sand Canyon are finished. Currently, the staff is working on NEPA for four additional parcels (about 1600 acres). One parcel is an edge holding and the other three are inholdings. They have not gone public with names. Andy Gulliford said it's exciting to have the Monument, but we need a very good map for the public beyond an 8 ½ by 11 that shows the roads. Heather Musclow said that they are working on the funding for the maps and the implementation. Eric Sanford suggested getting a Colorado mineral title opinion. Lori Armstrong said the BLM attorneys do the title search. Renzo Delpiccolo asked if they received push back from the public. Heather Musclow said the county commissioners usually send a letter opposed, but the willing sellers usually explain the situation to the commissioners.

Tres Rios Field Office-Bill gave an overview of the field trip and explained the challenges of managing the Durango urban interface. LaPlata County would like 56 acres at the gravel pit for a multi-event center. The city would like about five acres in the center in town for drainage collection. Grandview.... See his agenda. Lori would like input from the RAC to provide input on the exchanges and acquisitions. Dan Morse said Southern NV public lands management act intent was to simplify the management pattern regarding urban interface. It wasn't well received, but the concept could be reviewed to help us manage urban interface effectively. Silverton-conveyance of 100 acres to the town of Silverton, historically have leased this. Standard Metals EA is complete and BLM is interested in moving ahead.

Uncompahgre Field Office-The Falls Creek trespass was resolved after five years, and the buildings have been moved. Currently, the staff is working on two land exchanges involving occupancy trespasses. One is south of Montrose and the other is in the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. The BLM is acquiring a parcel within the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area from a willing seller. The Conservation Fund in the third party working on the transaction. Bear Ranch is a proposed legislative exchange. When the legislation is drafted, then management decisions will be made. Andrea Robinson said Bear Ranch is Bill Koch ranch that is east of Paonia reservoir. There's a strip of public land in the center to connect to deep creek trail. Bill Koch wants to do a land exchange to connect his ranches. The exchange must be legislative because it's multi-state transaction.

Gunnison Field Office-The staff is waiting for an updated Resource Management Plan revision that bundles land transactions together. An RMP revision is not in the foreseeable future due to budget constraints. In Lake City, there are two leases one for expansion of the ski hill and they are working on this. The other is to identify isolated parcels for exchange on the Alpine Loop abandoned mine land. Additionally, there is interest in Sage-Grouse habitat near the Gunnison urban interface. Willing sellers have been identified, but staff limitations have prevented movement on these transactions.

Lori Armstrong explained land tenure transactions are discretionary and are helpful when managing urban interface and isolated parcels. The new Associate District Manager will be tasked with land tenure transaction and will need RAC involvement in the future.

Reports from each field office and the district managers as follows:

### **Southwest District**

The Washington office reported the new Resource Advisory Council nominations are at least 30 days from being completed. Lori expressed her appreciation for all of the RAC members' support.

- New contact information for the RAC was distributed
- Fireworks rules – The new rules are published in the Federal Register. No fireworks on public lands.
- Camping rules – A new draft is not available. Based on discussions with the state office the proposal based on moving 10 miles every 14 days as per the SW RAC's recommendation. As soon as a draft is available it will be distributed.
- Currently, the Continuing Resolution runs until Nov. 18. We anticipate the budget will be 1.5% less than last year.
- Service First change -On Oct. 1, the move away from dual delegation between the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service transition occurred creating the newly named Tres Rios Field Office (Dolores, San Miguel and Animas Rivers). The new Field Manager is Connie Clementson and she was acting over the summer. She will start on Jan. 3, and will be duty stationed in Dolores. Bill Dunkelberger will be reporting to the state office to work on climate change when Connie Clementson reports for duty. Lori Armstrong said we are still working on the transition and we're working to make sure customer service is maintained.
- Matt Azhocar was selected as the new Associate District Manager. He will be reporting on Dec. 5 and will be duty stationed in Durango.
- The Office of Surface Mining will be merging into the BLM by Dec. 1. More details to follow.
- The new National Landscape Conservation Strategy will be sent to the RAC members via email. Ken Emory requested that the RAC discuss this at a later meeting.

### **Tres Rios Field Office Reporter**

See attached PDF with the document titled "Tres Rios Manger's Report"

### **Canyons of the Ancients National Monument/Anasazi Heritage Center**

- Travel Management-Currently, implementing road and route closures. About 85% of the project was completed using Southwest Conservation Corps. They've had four county meeting and open houses to continue discussions and education with the public.
- The Sand Canyon parking lot is under contract for analysis. Currently, they have found three archeological sites in the area and are working on a new design.
- KinderMorgan is drilling one of the six wells. They will be working on eight more next year, and the staff is working on access issues with the company.
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds were used for about 70 youth to perform various public lands projects.
- Currently, the staff is evaluation five range allotments decisions.

### **Uncompahgre Field Office**

See attached PDF with the document titled "Uncompahgre Field Office"

### **Gunnison Field Office**

See attached PDF with the document titled "Gunnison Field Manager Update"

### **Public Comments**

Ken Emory reported that he is writing a grant for a safety project. The grant would be used to improve a road to bypass the Poughkissippee Gulch Road. He asked to see if the committee can make a recommendation to support the project. It is in San Juan and Ouray County. The current safety hazard road is on BLM, but the new road would be on a county road. The BLM road is extreme, and it brings in recreationist. The new road will let less experienced drivers bypass the area. The San Juan county commissioners asked for support letters. Kathy Welt asked if they wrote this letter would it indicate there's a liability. Brian St. George said it's an extreme jeep trail and it must be managed accordingly.

Bill Dunkelberger said he could make the decision after looking at the route. Andy Gulliford said he would like to write an article if the grant is received. Dan Morse asked to be briefed in the future.

John Whitney and Ty Churchwell stopped by to get up to speed on the tours.

Kitty Benzer referred to the RecRAC training and said that slide 7 was incorrect see her handout in the attached PDF for the definition. She said in the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area there's a special fee to hike into the wilderness area. Although they are not asking the RecRAC to do anything at this time, she would like to see if the RecRAC would like to take up this issue. Andrea Robinsong asked if the fee was for going on the water. Barb Sharrow explained that it takes extra management in the Gunnison Gorge and all funds go back to the National Conservation Area. Kitty Benzer said she does not want it to generate revenue for the agency. The fee is \$3 for the day, \$10 for the first night and \$5 for the second night not to exceed two nights. Peter Mueller said that he commends BLM for their management of this area and the fee to discourage abuse in the area.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Field Trips**

- Coal mine tour at West Elk
- Air quality and air emission inventory
- Climate change
- Science at CANM
- Land Tenure R&PP
- RAC Roundtable
- Increased public participation

Southwest RAC Meeting Dates-Jan. 26-27 (Roundtable) Ridgeway, Apr. 26-27 (Hotchkiss, Gunnison), July 26-27 (Hotchkiss, Gunnison), Oct. 25-26 (Dolores)

#### **Agenda Items for the Next Meeting**

- OSM combining with DOI
- New NLCS Strategy
- Economic impact from BLM
- Land Tenure
- More interactive agenda items

#### **Nov. 15 Sub-RAC meeting in Montrose**

#### **Adjournment**

Ken Emory moved to adjourn the meeting. Wally White seconded the motion. The motion carried.