



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Glenwood Springs Field Office
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81602

RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2009 (6:00 PM – 9:00 PM)

Meeting Location: BLM Energy Office
2425 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs, CO

SUMMARY NOTES

Attendees: John Bailey (EcoTrails), Chris Beebe (Red Hill Council), Steve Dahmer (wildlife/recreation – hunting), Michael Kennedy (Roaring Fork Climbers Coalition), Ken Neubecker (Trout Unlimited), Kurt Schultz (Colorado Outfitters), Steve Smith (The Wilderness Society), Tom Turnbull (livestock grazing), Steve Bennett (BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office [GSFO]), Brian Hopkins (BLM GSFO), John Russell (BLM GSFO), Angie Adams (EMPSi)

Handouts:

- Agenda
- “Roles and Responsibilities for the BLM and Cooperating Agencies”
- “Things to Remember during your Internal Review and Comment of the Preliminary Sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement”
- “Chapter 3: Affected Environment, Working Draft for GSFO Cooperating Agencies & RAC Subgroup – Not for Public Release (February 2009)” (maps not included)
- “Chapter 2: Alternatives, Working Draft for GSFO Cooperating Agencies & RAC Subgroup – Not for Public Release (February 2009)” (maps not included)
- “SRMAs (Working Draft – 2/11/09), GSFO, BLM”
- “Wilderness Characteristics and WSAs (Working Draft – 2/11/09), GSFO, BLM”
- “ACECs (Working Draft – 2/11/09), GSFO, BLM”

WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS

Tom Turnbull welcomed everyone. This was followed by a round robin of introductions.

- BLM going through reorganization and re-establishing District Offices. Jamie Connell is transitioning from GSFO Field Manager to new District Manager. BLM GSFO is in process of filling Jamie’s position.
- John Russell is new GSFO planner and will take over project management on RMP effort.
- Brian Hopkins is transitioning into the wildlife biologist position at GSFO.
- Larry McCown is no longer on Northwest RAC so RAC will need to appoint someone new to be liaison to this subgroup.
- Sherry Long (oil and gas representative) and Karen Witt (Rifle Chamber representative) positions on RAC Subgroup are now vacant. Would be nice to fill these positions: oil and gas or minerals industry and a chamber member. Steve Bennett (BLM GSFO) will try to identify someone from the oil and gas industry. If RAC Subgroup members have name suggestions that Steve Bennett should take to the larger RAC meeting in Grand Junction in a couple of weeks, then email those to Steve by Monday, February 23, 2009.
- Taylor Hawes (Colorado River Water Conservation District) has a new job; the District is represented on the wild and scenic rivers stakeholder group so is represented in that fashion.

UPDATE ON THE RMP PLANNING PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

- BLM has not yet made any decisions; we are still in internal draft stage.
- Public Draft RMP/environmental impact statement (EIS) is expected to be issued in Fall 2009. Will be a 90-day public comment review period. Some of the air modeling efforts that are being done could result in additional delays to the schedule.
- See handout “Roles and Responsibilities for the BLM and Cooperating Agencies.”
- Since the last time the RAC Subgroup met last year, BLM has been working on refining the draft alternatives, writing the draft affected environment (Chapter 3) and drafting the environmental consequences (Chapter 4).
- Field Office review of Chapters 3 (affected environment) and 4 (environmental consequences): late February to March 2009
- Today we will distribute some materials for RAC Subgroup members’ review, including internal draft Chapters 2 (alternatives) and 3 (affected environment). These are internal working documents not for distribution outside the RAC Subgroup.
- Future meetings are as follows:
 - February 11, 2009, meeting: Discuss the preliminary range of alternatives (Chapter 2) and provide overview of preliminary draft Chapter 3 (affected environment).
 - March 11, 2009, meeting: Receive RAC Subgroup comments on and discuss draft Chapters 2 and 3. Begin review of supporting documents.
 - April 15, 2009, meeting: Receive comments on draft supporting documents. Begin review of preliminary draft Chapter 4 (environmental consequences).
 - May 13, 2009, meeting: Receive comments on preliminary draft Chapter 4. Overview and discussion on selecting the preferred alternative. All comments due on all chapters so that BLM Field Office specialists can consider them while they are reviewing the full preliminary Draft RMP/EIS in May 2009.
- The key during the RAC Subgroup members’ reviews is to focus on fatal flaws, not editorial information.
- State Office review of full preliminary Draft RMP/EIS: July 2009
- Washington Office review of full preliminary Draft RMP/EIS: August 2009
- Public Draft RMP/EIS: published in Fall 2009, followed by a 90-day public comment review period.
- The Draft RMP/EIS will identify a preferred alternative, but in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS can pick and choose different elements of the different alternatives considered in the Draft RMP/EIS.
- After 90-day public comment period closes on Draft RMP/EIS, then BLM considers public comments and develops the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, which is a combination of any of the four alternatives that are considered in the Draft RMP/EIS. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is not limited to being the same as the BLM’s preferred alternative that is identified in the Draft RMP/EIS. RAC Subgroup will have a role in developing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.
- See handout “Things to Remember during your Internal Review and Comment of the Preliminary Sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.”

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUEST

- In summer 2008, some counties and municipalities made a request that BLM do a health impact assessment as part of RMP process that assesses impacts of BLM draft decisions on human health. Garfield County did a fairly comprehensive health impact analysis in 2008 that could be referenced in the BLM’s EIS on the RMP. It is specific to impacts of oil and gas and makes monitoring recommendations that BLM could adopt and commit to as part of the RMP.
- BLM sent an email response to counties’ and municipalities’ requests and provided them the website where the Garfield County study is published; the email asked the counties and municipalities what else needs to be done. No responses have been received.
- The Garfield County study is more of a baseline study and does not assess future impacts of BLM decisions.
- The draft EIS will identify impacts of the draft BLM decisions (alternatives) on human health topics, such as public health and safety, air quality, etc.
- Air modeling efforts are being done in conjunction with BLM in Vernal and Meeker Field Offices. Two different types of modeling are being done by GSFO: cumulative modeling for larger airshed and a near-

field modeling that covers the Interstate 70 corridor. The GSFO air modeling results are needed to complete the draft EIS that accompanies the draft RMP.

- The GSFO Cooperating Agencies recommended this morning that BLM respond to the requesting agencies formally (via letter) referencing the Garfield County study. The letter needs to explain how BLM will use the Garfield County study will be utilized in the RMP/EIS.

DUTIES AS OUTLINED IN THE MOU

- See discussion under “UPDATE ON THE RMP PLANNING PROCESS AND SCHEDULE,” above

PROPOSED TASKS THROUGH THE PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT RMP/EIS

- See discussion under “UPDATE ON THE RMP PLANNING PROCESS AND SCHEDULE,” above

DISCUSSION ON “AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT” (CHAPTER 3)

- See handout “Chapter 3: Affected Environment, Working Draft for GSFO Cooperating Agencies & RAC Subgroup – Not for Public Release (February 2009)” (maps not included)
- John Russell provided an overview of the Chapter 3 layout and content.
- The affected environment or existing conditions are the baseline of what is out there now. Important that this baseline is accurate.
- John Russell emailed a comment matrix to the RAC Subgroups earlier today for their use during review of Chapters 2 and 3.

DISCUSSION ON “ALTERNATIVES” (CHAPTER 2)

- See handout “Chapter 2: Alternatives, Working Draft for GSFO Cooperating Agencies & RAC Subgroup – Not for Public Release (February 2009)” (maps not included)
- See map handout “SRMAs (Working Draft – 2/11/09), GSFO, BLM”
- See map handout “Wilderness Characteristics and WSAs (Working Draft – 2/11/09), GSFO, BLM”
- See map handout “ACECs (Working Draft – 2/11/09), GSFO, BLM”
- Maps do not represent any particular alternative; they just show areas that fall within one or more alternatives.
- Angie Adams (EMPSi) provided an overview of the Chapter 2 layout and content.
- Brian Hopkins (BLM GSFO) walked through some key points of Chapter 2 and differentiated the action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, and D) and the no action alternative (Alternative A, or current management).
- Soils and water resources are generally protected by Land Health Standards.
- Recreation, page 2-109: Separate Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA) can be identified in urban-growth areas. An area does not need to be managed as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) in order to get funding.
- Comprehensive Trails & Travel Management: Field Office wide, the BLM must go to a designated route system. There are no open areas in GSFO identified in any of the draft alternatives. Travel management maps will be prepared for the May 13, 2009, RAC Subgroup meeting. Some areas would be open to over-snow travel and other areas would be closed to over-snow travel (see page 2-121).
- Wilderness characteristics outside Wilderness Study Areas: All areas are being considered for protection in Alternative C. The wilderness characteristics assessment report will be an appendix to Chapter 2.
 - RAC Subgroup comment: None of the over-snow travel closures encompass wilderness characteristics areas. BLM response: This is an example of a good comment to make on this section.
- RAC Subgroup comment: Was enforceability of travel management decisions considered when developing alternatives? BLM response: Chapter 4 public health and safety cumulative impacts need to address this.
- Wild and scenic rivers (page 2-156): All eligible segments are found suitable in Alternative C. Some eligible segments that best meet the suitability criteria are found suitable in Alternative B. The US Forest is doing suitability study on segment of Colorado River on Forest Service land. The BLM stakeholders group looking at the Colorado River segments will present a proposal to BLM that will be included as a sub-alternative to Alternative B.

- No surface occupancy (NSO)/no surface-disturbing activities and controlled surface use protections can overlap, so acreage figures in Table 2-1 can be misleading because of this overlap.
- RAC Subgroup comment: When members email comments on Chapters 2 and 3 to John Russell (by March 10, 2009), cc all RAC Subgroup members.

OTHER ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

- None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

- None.

NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday, March 11, 2009: BLM representatives present will include Carla DeYoung – ACECs, Kay Hopkins – wilderness characteristics and wild and scenic rivers, and Brian Hopkins – recreation and wildlife
- Wednesday, April 15, 2009
- Wednesday, May 13, 2009

ACTION ITEMS

- Steve Bennett (BLM GSFO):** Identify someone from the oil and gas industry to potentially serve on RAC Subgroup.
- RAC Subgroup Members:** If members have name suggestions for new RAC Subgroup member from a town/city Chamber of Commerce, email those to Steve_Bennett@blm.gov by Monday, February 23, 2009.
- RAC Subgroup Members:** When members email comments on Chapters 2 and 3 to John Russell (by March 10, 2009), cc all RAC Subgroup members.

AMA – February 11 & 18, 2009