

RAC Notes

District Managers Reports 03/06/2012

Front Range District Overview:

- End of Dual Delegation
- Udall seeks national monument designation for Browns Canyon
- OTR record of decision came out in November. Project delayed one year to August 2015.
- Blanca Wetlands ACEC proposed expansion
- SLV geothermal lease
- Rio Grande Natural Area Commission – management plan with private landowners
- Zapata Falls campground Fee

Northwest District

- RAC openings
- RAC trip to Ammonite locality/river access/CO river
- Federal oil and gas unitization in Carbondale
- Piceance/East Douglas Gather successful
- White nose syndrome (bats in caves)
- Socioeconomic training -> underrepresented groups
- Leasing reform
- Dolores partnership –tamarisk removal/trapper mine
- White River RMP – natural gas technology improvements (advantage of multiple holes on one pad)

Southwest District

- End of Dual Delegation (separate ROD's) – New Tres Rios field office, field office moved from Durango to Dolores
- Planning Efforts: TRFO wrapping up plan in 2012
- UFO working on Land Use plan
- Wild and Scenic River classification: San Miguel (RAC members involved)
- Working with NW District on Dominguez-Escalante NCA RMP
- Canyons of the Ancient RMP signed in 2011, implementation occurring now
- Minerals: 3 coal mines in North Fork valley (modification applications), 1 in TRFO
- Oil and Gas: Kinder Morgan using horizontal drilling in CANM + TRFO
 - Active Oil and Gas leases with tribes in SW Colorado
- Lease Sale: EA coming very soon!
- Geothermal proposal in GFO sold to landowner
- Department of Energy is conducting an EIS for uranium (GJFO and Utah involved)
- Gunnison Sage Grouse closer to listing

- Gunnison – candidate conservation agreement
- Travel management plans are in various stages
- Mining and Historic District
 - Abandoned mines land:
 - GFO Ute/Uray) mine closure
 - UFO/TRFO uranium mine closure
 - Cement creek/animas cleanup
- Climate Change – partnerships
- Finstick Award
- CANM launching artist in residence program (4 artists for one month each)
- Poland university comes to CANM to study archeology
- Land tenure – isolated parcels/urban interface – Need help with priority list (training at RAC this week)

Questions: NLCS brochure – Shooting on public lands is a state decision, how does BLM claim authority?

Good Samaritan Bill – congressional action on mine cleanup Cement Creek/Abandoned mines

Will recreational flows below McPhee Reservoir on Dolores River be maintained?

Public Comment 03/06/2012

Sarah Sauter – Executive Director of NFRIA-WSERC Conservation Center

Handed out brochure with pictures – consider safeguarding North Fork Valley (NFV) from Oil and Gas development. Clean Air/Water/Organic Farms mean that Agricultural tourism is a main draw. NFV should be off limits to gas development. Air/Water economy – In August 2012 towns, community members requested that the lease sale be deferred until UFO RMP completed. Not asking for a total ban, just don't develop near homes, schools, etc. (see supporting documents)

Bill Harding – SW RAC, Garfield County 30 years as firefighter in SILT

Fire Marshall and fourth generation Coloradoan with homestead in Paonia. Would like to see homestead preserved. Accidents can and Do happen in gas industry. NF not a place for impacts seen in Garfield County. December 2011 – 22 parcels, 30,000 acres pending sale. EA's processed from 1989 plan. No public response has been this significant – public comment period extended. Towns, counties, ag groups, environmental agencies and public recommend deferred lease sale until RMP finished in 2013. New plan will reflect current resources, socioeconomic conditions, gas technology and a new EIS. Reasons: Existing RMP has little analysis of impacts and no analysis of cumulative impacts of gas development. Fracking, chemical spills, air/water quality not addressed, but a new EIS will consider those. Delta County population increased 47% next to public lands. Agro-tourism and recreation viable because of NP and NCA units. 2 scenic byways – all new since 1989. Serves as Catchment basin for NF valley. Lambart (sp?) mountain provides water for agriculture and includes two state wildlife areas. Delta County Info meeting had breakout sessions – not convinced EA process is good decision.

Questions: Is deferring off the table? In the context of the NFV, intensity of impact -> higher level of scrutiny = EIS + Hydrologic study. Draft EA coming out next week, I will read it and comment to ensure interests of public are accounted for.

Eric Reckle – Grand Junction

RAC Council – balance the use of various activities, but one group is not at the table – Wildlife. Wildlife a major concern when discussing BLM lands. NCA have Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA's) focused on recreation but need ERMA's that otherwise balance multiple use. Consider using ERMA's that incorporate wildlife habitat, corridors, wintering grounds. Studies on O+G and how it affects wildlife – need long term studies (3-10 year range). Results typically come in 8-10 years – long term studies will allow info on interaction. BLM bulletin: Hunting with ATV's: "A road density of 3 linear miles per square mile of land reduces area for elk" <- just for elk! All BLM lands should have less than 3 linear miles. "Recreational users are being asked to reduce impacts of activities." New vision – Wildlife important aspect of management decision.

Allie Henderson – National Wild Horse Advisory Board (represents a 9 member board)

Stats: 38,000 horses on range

+ 26,000 appropriate management level

12,000 too many horses.

75 million dollar budget, but \$35 million goes to captured horses in holding. 45,000 horses in holding is not sustainable! Next meeting in April.

END OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Internet Redesign – Kaveh Sadeghzadeh

New website designed with team of 12 BLM employees from FO's, State Offices and DC. Project goals:
Site inventory (87,000 pages!) and Audience Analytics

- 1) Visit BLM Lands
- 2) Business with BLM (permits
- 3) Info on BLM programs and activities
- 4) Jobs
- 5) Volunteer/Get Involved
- 6) Science info

Comments: Deliver info on quality of places and revenue generated.

Missing audience: comments on NEPA process

Keyword access – BLM Wilderness Study Areas

Navigation devices need info on public lands for car tours.

KS - Getting/providing info to Google, etc., to add BLM lands to maps

KS – New site – navigation on top, Bob Abbey has a page (helps give a face to our agency)

The phrase "Play" is good.

KS – Visit and Play Explore | Plan your trip | Accessibility | Places to see | Things to Do | Virtual Tour pages maintained at local level, vertically integrated.

Comments:

Current page lacks business with BLM info.

Add agreements: need a page so that business partners can come to the table informed.

Tagging? **KS** – Yes, tagging cloud

Programs – makes sense to public and isn't a long list, big picture categories. Navigation will be based on search bar analytics.

New webpage comments:

Clarity is most important feature – seems clear.

The phrase “rangelands” is hard to relate to (for the public)

Soil/water/air component -> lead into data – growing public awareness.

No acronyms!

“Center” isn't a good public word.

America's Great Outdoors in visit and play.

Should be able to “hover” and get a short description.

New webpage “pops”! Videos are great.

Fracking: Understanding Revised Regulations from the COGCC – Bob Randall, Deputy Director, Colorado Department of Natural Resources

COGCC –goals: efficient. Mineral right owners protected, as well as public health and safety. Promote development.

History – 1862 first well drilled.

49% of wells drilled in Weld County. 30% in NW Colorado, all other areas ~10%. O and G development occurs in half of Colorado counties. Colorado current has 47,000 active wells, 2700 new wells, 20 year life span.

Updated regulations in 2007/2008 – Colorado has some of the most comprehensive and protective rules

2007 – environmental and health viewpoints

2008 – protection for communities, wildlife, etc.

COGCC is science driven, 90% of staff engineers.

Lifespan of well: 1) Lease 2) Drill 3) frack 4) interim reclamation (reclaim pad site) 5) final reclamation 6) Bond released

Well permitting process: staff does technical evaluation (casing and cementing of well), checks required setbacks.

Permit notification – notify surface and property owners. 20 day comment period – up to 30 upon request. Local government has designee to act as liaison between state and company. Setback is 150 feet from buildings and 300 feet in high density areas. Division of Wildlife can put conditions on approval.

Water issues: prevention approach to water contamination: steel casing and cement protect aquifers, pressure is monitored during fracking. Set back from waterways.

Fracking has been occurring since 1972, and 90% of wells are fracked now. Frackfocus.org will disclose chemicals and concentrations, most transparent rule in country. Groundwater sampling occurs now, past regulations in specific areas only.

Front range fracking water use: 16,000 acre feet in 2012, projected at 19,000 acre feet in 2015 – this amounts to 1/10 of 1% of state's annual water use. Companies required to buy water on the local market, adhere to state water law.

Questions: Info good, but your water figures are misleading. 3-5 million gallons per well, not enough water. 2 problems: Where is water disposed and how? What happens with the water in the well. What's the definition of promptly? (fluids dangerous) **BR** – 85% remains in ground, 15% pumped out. Lots of unanswered questions remain. In 40 years there has been no induced seismic activity – no long term problems. Disposal wells are 8,000 feet below surface and can't get to surface aquifers.

Q - Injection well discharged fluids 12 miles north of well site – disposal is 10-12 thousand feet deep, below formations – there are naturally occurring problems (e.g. seismic activity). **BR** – Well you are talking about predated 2008 rule. Rule does not define promptly.

Comment: Gas field workers not allowed in ambulances – promptly too vague – please reword.

Andrew Gulliford: Largest Fine levied against a company? **BR** – N/A

AG – Damage to soil and water – then story disappears with non-disclosure agreements. The public needs more follow up. **BR** – O & G doesn't publish, need specific violation number to follow up.

AG – As a member of the public, info isn't transparent. **BR** – Need complaint number or violation number then go to COGCC website

Barbra Vasquez – North Park Basin Jackson County Watershed – wilderness area noticed a lack of requirement for a setback from riparian areas and wetlands – wells adjacent to Michigan river and tributaries – well site in willows. You focus on human health and safety but riparian areas need more consideration. **BR** – Heavily discussed, commission can add conditions – setback isn't a silver bullet and is site specific. **BV** – That requires personnel – is there enough people (NO). **BR** - Adding staff

? - Commission Inspector onsite during cementing? **BR** – No. Cement logs are double checked by staff.

? What is the interplay between states and feds – compliance with federal stipulations? **BR** – 2009 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BLM -> identifies a process for the state to participate with feds to ensure no conflicts. Operators must comply with both feds and state.

? – Is the 20-30 day comment period sufficient? **BR** – I believe so...

Does timing work if BLM is deliberating – can state slow down? **BR** – N/A – operator cannot go until approved by both.

? - Air quality – 80% of toxic emissions come from gas pads – consider tighter regulations.

? - Technology to reclaim water – encouraged or required by COGCC? **BR** - Incentive to reuse is economic – industry agrees with regulation.

? – Can companies treat water and discharge into streams? **BR** - Industry doesn't buy-in – too sketchy. Need discharge permit. ? – Filtering process? **BR** – 2 step process suspended and dissolved solvents.

Air Quality Panel

Kate Faye – Senior Advisory, Energy and Climate, EPA Region 8

Kent Custer – Oil and Gas liaison – Colorado Department of Health and the Environment

Melissa Hovey – Natural Resource Specialist, BLM Colorado State Office

KF - BLM – Lots of potential oil and gas production in Region 8, and a lot of development in Colorado. North Dakota has 193 rigs drilling right now. There is little infrastructure to recapture gas bi-product of drilling. EPA's is working to support O&G production while protecting environment. EPA – host of National Laws passed since the 1970's – NEPA, Clean Air, etc – EPA regulates/implements law, states can come to EPA to take authority. Tribes are separate entities, in Colorado Utes have control. EPA oversees work of states and develops standards based on categories of pollution. Sources of air pollution is new territory for O&G development. New national standards on April 3rd raised the bar for public health. EPA doesn't have much direct responsibility with O&G development – states take the lead.

O&G pollution sources: Hydrocarbon emissions from leaks. VOC + NOC = smog – winter ozone is a new condition. HAP = Hazardous Air Pollution. Particulate matter (dust) is a significant issue with haze, especially near national parks. Cumulative effects for region creates a broad view NEPA process. “Non-Attainment” in DJ basin – struggling to obtain standards. Attainment = clean air. Trends – 1500 existing wells with plans for 10,000 more. Lots of uses and potential O&G development can lead to troubling trends. Uinta Basin in Utah is designated unclassifiable due to winter ozone problem - 146 parts per billion of hydrocarbons – as high as ever recorded in LA – basically just power plant and wells EPA has \$5 million for studies.

KC – CDPHE – Both state and federal rules are incorporated when issuing permits. 2 part step = need for Air Pollution Emission Notice (APEN) when discharging 2 tons per year or more of volatile organic compounds (11.8 pounds per billion barrels) – permit good for 5 years. APEN required for 5 tons per year = 848 barrels of flow through (about equal to 125 vehicles passing by a house in a year)

4.2 people do inspections currently – moving to 5 soon. 336 inspections completed in FY 2011. 6 air monitoring sites in Colorado track changes in ozone. Monitoring is based on EPA's 6 criteria. Non-attainment in Denver metro area for ozone.

(Map Notes) PM₁₀ = 10 microns in size or smaller PM_{2.5} – 2.5 micros (can go deep in lungs and cause health issues)

Cost for ozone and meteorology monitoring site is \$70,000, with an annual cost of \$40,000. Winter Ozone happens when high pressure, low winds, and topographic trapping prevent the recirculation of air. Snow cover and sunny days have effect too.

Future issues:

- Keeping up with expansion of O&G (boom and bust)
- Complaints – Dust/odor/noise/spills/health
- Visibility issues (class 1 = national parks)
- Emissions from tank flashing + leaks
- Ozone reduction
- Fires/beetle kill

MH – BLM – Works with lots of partner agencies. BLM does not regulate air quality but still have same responsibility. FLPMA mandates that BLM manage Air Quality and the NEPA process. How does BLM manage air quality? NEPA – look at project as a whole (including air quality) through Monitoring, Modeling, Mitigation. Monitoring = air monitoring stations. Modeling = computer simulations. Mitigation = voluntary – collaborate to redesign project to meet standards. BLM has MOU with EPA (principal) and numerous other federal partners that establishes criteria for air modeling and allows for discussion of mitigation – creates a new path forward.

Questions: Which agencies are part of MOU? BLM, USFWS, NPS, EPA, USFS

Wes McStay – What happens with Non-attainment? **KF** – EPA doesn't do anything – states come up with plan to figure out pieces of the pie (who is polluting what?) – create plan for obtaining standard. Then approval, then legislation then EPA. **WS** – What happens when pollution moves across state lines? **KF** Ozone transport issues – some summer ozone comes from CA – winter ozone doesn't appear to transport. Pollutants travel hundreds of miles with the wind. Ozone levels of 75 ppm + non-attainment = permit. 2 tons controls 95% VOC reduction.

Barbra Hawke – Field Offices are working with the State office – RMP's air quality analysis is old – how to address air quality in consistent ways? **MH** – Through modeling analysis (current RMP's is recent). Beginning new modeling study for GJFO and UFO. Collaborate with agencies and states for modeling studies. CDPHE cooperating – agency reviews plans.

Barbra Vasquez - How do you take into account international pollution? **KF** - 3 levels – Global, National, local (project or geographic). Geoskim accounts for global emissions.

Al Trujillo – In reference to the Raton Basin, what is the driver for placing monitors? **KC** - Locations where there are concerns – limited budget based on need. EPA works with state to determine trends and process requests. **AT** – Would uranium mine receive monitoring station? Possibly – permits require monitoring.

Kent Walters – BLM placed monitors for baseline data.

Sage Grouse – Jim Cagney

In the 1930's the sage grouse was almost extinct, but populations increased since then – We've been here before! The core sage grouse habitat is still doing well. Numbers trending down – extinction

outside of core habitat. 2 situations – Rocky Mountain and Great Basin. Great basin is seeing increase in cheat grass, changing fire ecology and eliminating sagebrush.

Grouse Year – Spring is breeding time – easiest to locate and identify. Nesting-brood rearing happens early and they forage on last year's grass. Baby sage grouse eat insects, adults eat plants/brush. Fire = complete withdrawal – no food available. SG have lots of migration patterns that we don't know about – can travel 50 miles, even as babies. So that makes it more complicated than distance around leks.

Sage grouse tend to avoid man-made structures - power poles invite raptors. SG are stuck in their ways – its all about predators. They did better in the 1950's when we were poisoning on a large scale. Solutions need to be habitat based.

Warranted but precluded – not enough time for analysis. USFWS will finish by 2015, which means that BLM needs to finish studies by 2014. BLM Sage Grouse Expert team conducted national technical report. What's best for grouse? Stringent stuff – EIS to analyze report. We need to rely on existing documents due to time constraint. Clear conservation measures will prevent listing. Listing of SG would result in level of procedure that would bog everything down. The impacts would be significant but inconsistent – most SG habitat is in Jackson and Moffat Counties in Colorado – impact there will be huge but less so in other parts of the state. Big impact on energy and minerals – very restrictive (no leasing in habitat)

Questions: **Wes McStay** – Poisoning is bad! There are real concerns about fairness for surface owners – shared responsibility. Who will be impacted? **JC** – Shared impacts by everyone – Everyone is involved.

Andrew Gulliford – Buffer zone for leks? **JC** – It was ¼ mile in the past – but that's not relevant because a lek based perspective won't work. **AG** – Will recreational access be impacted or prohibited? **JC** – Special recreation permits will ensure no conflict. Existing uses will continue to be allowed.

Kenneth Emory – What about motorized travel? Economic impact? **JC** – We are conducting a first rate economic analysis and are expecting comments in the tens of thousands.

Camping rules – Vanessa Delgado

Original rules were from 1990. Rules published in 2010 – new rules: 14 day period moving distance changed. Previously it was 30 air miles that you had to move, now it is 10 road miles. You can return to your camp after 28 days now, before it was 30 days.

Question: What is the public process? Federal register/press release/RAC Members

RAC Reports

Marcia deChadenedes – NLCS

NLCS units need consistent branding and marketing. Differences between NLCS units and “plain old vanilla” BLM lands needs to be explained. NLCS units need to get on Google maps. Clubs and groups should be involved/encouraged. Work with youth corps on NLCS lands.

Leigh Espy – Integrated Vegetation Management Across Colorado

Interdisciplinary team in State Office. Goals – landscape approach. Priorities – Team needs to do more work to get RAC input. Use 3 landscapes as opposed to one. Flexibility with permit holders – e.g. restoration of rights of way. Develop baseline data at beginning. Clarity from managers – what are priorities? Goals – consistency. Support co-op projects e.g. Dolores river tamarisk removal team- Understanding/learn from success of past projects.

Jim Cagney – Not in My Backyard Perspective

Looked at North Fork Valley. Real estate impact. BLM can be an inconsistent partner with political changes. Polarized groups.

What happens when you get too many comments? Industry should pay. (they do –ex: WRFO – RMPA) but the ultimate cost is paid by consumers as it is passed on by industry.

How to develop trust?

Wild Horse and Burro program is becoming cost prohibitive.

Local public can make most informed and value added comments, but everyone gets a say.

RMP's last 20 years but take 6 years to develop. NEPA more complicated. More adaptive to plans – adaptive management needs specifics.

Management decisions affect everyday life.

REC RAC Update -Pat Kennedy and Kit Shy

PK – Frustration last year! Ruby Horsethief -fee system implemented to limit overuse and abuse. Commercial users didn't like first plan. 3 months later and the public didn't like the new plan. REC RAC was dysfunctional. Finally a one year trial plan was established – RAC will provide resolution this week.

KS – Same tasks as NW district. Looked at fee increases at Zapata Falls campground, Penitente Canyon and Shelf Road Climbing Area. These areas receive heavy use and have improved amenities. Fees were increased in all areas. This process proved that REC RAC can effectively manage recreation fee increases.