



United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
3170 East Main Street
Cañon City, Colorado 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
CANON CITY, COLORADO
January 29, 2008

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Group 1

Virginia Patton
Keary Hallock
Gene King
Chuck Rech

Group 2

Donna Murphy
Aaron Clark
Tom Olson
Frank Yeager

Group 3

Michael Bush

GUESTS: SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society

BLM/USFS/ PERSONNEL: Roy Masinton, Cindy Giles, John Dow, Diana Kossnar, Glenda Torres, Mike Gaylord, John Smeins, Ed Skerjanec

MANAGERS UPDATE:

San Luis Valley-Oil and Gas Lease Sale

Diana Kossnar, Assistant Center Manager of the San Luis Valley Public Lands Center, stated that the public comment period is over for the oil and gas lease sale in February. The sale will be coming up in May 2008. She also stated that they are looking for additional parcels for the land exchange in reference to the Anderson Ditch Exchange. On one particular parcel there is potential to develop a solar energy field.

Wolf Creek EIS

Wolf Creek negotiations are still ongoing for a settlement with Colorado Wild. A new EIS will be started once all the preliminary procedures are complete. Roy also reiterated the original actions that prompted the Wolf Creek actions.

San Luis Valley-Dual Delegation

Diana described the structural delegations in the San Luis Valley as an interagency public lands center. She explained how the two-tier organization will become a three-tier organization and that the decisions for continuing dual delegation have not been decided. She stated that the BLM State Director will be making decisions on dual delegation prior to development of an organizational structure. Roy reassured the RAC that the co-location and Service First concept will continue regardless of the dual delegation issue. Roy stated that dual delegations make sense in some offices and not in others. Decisions will be based on the locations where it may be necessary to continue the

dual delegation. Diana also informed the RAC how shared funding is in place for some interagency positions.

Heath Case

Roy Masinton, Royal Gorge Field Office, updated the RAC regarding the Heath case. Mr. Heath has recently cited cases where others have not been required to place a bond in response to the RGFO requiring him to place a bond. Roy explained, anecdotally, why the BLM is requiring a bond from Mr. Heath.

Office Move

Linda McGlothen, Associate Field Manager, Royal Gorge Field Office, provided the RAC an update on the new building. She stated that the BLM plans to open the new office around February 19, 2008. She also stated that a tour will be offered to the RAC once the building is ready. Linda finished her presentation by stating that future RAC meetings will be held in the new building's spacious conference rooms.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed Federal Energy Corridors

Roy discussed a document (included in RAC packet) which explains the draft proposal for energy corridors on Federal lands. He explained how this will affect the Front Range in terms of private landowners and the Federal lands corridors.

Keary Hallock stated that some energy resources like wind and solar are currently being identified, in addition to other resources. She named four corridors along the Front Range that could be used for such purposes.

Southern Delivery System

John Dow reported on the Southern Delivery System (SDS) DEIS. The SDS project, if approved, would allow Colorado Springs Utilities to access water rights from the Fry-Ark project. Springs Utilities believes that the no-action alternative could be completed without triggering a NEPA action. Their plan, however, includes the BLM-owned Blue Heron property, which would require a NEPA evaluation. John stated that there has been an issue of water and water quality between Pueblo and Colorado Springs for a long time. Roy added that this will be a sizeable pipeline and that Penrose also wants to use this as a source for their water needs. John explained the alternatives and the Bureau of Reclamation's involvement in the process. Roy stated that zebra mussels, which are very destructive to pumping systems, have been found in the Pueblo Reservoir. If Colorado Springs Utilities requests right-of-way permits from Pueblo County, the County intends to invoke the 1041 process, which allows counties to make final rules regulating where pipelines can be located.

Over the River Project

Roy gave an update on where RGFO stands on the Over the River project process. Access to public information can be obtained on the BLM website. Detailed information about the proposal was provided by the artists and will be included in the EIS decision. Unfortunately, not enough information was provided for BLM to continue with the EIS process to date. BLM has sent a letter to the artists explaining the application process and the need for additional specific information. Roy explained the application process to the RAC and detailed the additional workload requirements this

project places on the BLM. Roy made clear that BLM cannot move forward until the remaining information is provided by the artists.

Arkansas River Travel Management Plan

Roy reported on the status of the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan decision making process, specifically, the change to designated roads, which is currently under the Governor's office review. The public protest period ended 1/28/08 and the BLM has not received any protests. He explained the decision process for closing shooting areas and the designation of routes, etc. BLM hopes to have this completed within the next couple of months.

South Park Land Tenure Environmental Assessment

Next, Roy discussed the South Park Land Tenure amendment. He reminded the RAC of previous meetings where Alternative D was discussed. Alternative D has now been adopted; this alternative identifies less land for disposal than was identified in the Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan. Roy was hopeful that the working group that includes Chuck R. and Lucy B. from the RAC would be able to attend the meeting in South Park. Roy also stated the Sheriff is still dealing with some problems of public trespassing on private land in this area.

Colorado House Bill-1069

Aaron Clark reported on the discussion of an additional LEO for the BLM. He has been working with Colorado House Members on Colorado House Bill-1069. He emphasized to the drafters of this bill that the number of officers per acre should be increased, as the USFS has 18 officers per 14 million acres and the BLM has only eight. In order to enforce regulations on Federal lands, there is a need for additional officers. Aaron stated that unfortunately a rider was added to the bill that reversed the intentions of the original plan. As a result, representatives are working on an amendment to reinstate the bill's original intention. Gene asked if this bill would include proper training for LEOs regarding resource management and, more specifically, travel management. Aaron stated that mainly DOW officers were affected and they would be trained.

ROYAL GORGE FUELS PROGRAM

RGFO Fuels Program

John Smeins, Glenda Torres and Mike Gaylord, Fuels Team and Ed Skerjanec, Fire Management Officer, gave a presentation on the BLM Fuels program (Document included in RAC packet). The need for a Fuels program was emphasized by highlighting the benefits derived, such as fuels reduction, habitat management, forest health, prescribed fires, etc. An overview was presented on previous projects and the RAC was educated regarding types of projects. The team also explained how project areas are identified for fuel reduction. Costs were discussed in reference to private and government subsidization, as well as feasibility for costs relative to distance, etc. Marketing options were also discussed for energy sources.

Fire Management Planning

Community involvement in fire planning was discussed. Mike Gaylord gave a brief history of how Congress allocates funds for fire management. He explained how fire has affected communities in the past and how this type of fuel reduction program assists communities as well as forest health. Mike pointed out how our community has grown with subdivisions expanding into forest areas. He explained the Healthy Forest Provision Act and explained how interagency plans are developed for fire management and protection. The planning starts with a risk assessment designed to identify

existing housing areas, future housing areas, roads ingress and egress, fire station locations, etc. in order to assess the wildfire risk in each area. Once risks are identified, based on agreed-to criteria, presentations are given and fire wise information is provided to individuals. He stated that we are supposed to be working in areas where fire plans are in existence and that funding is based on these plans. Public education is necessary and also included in funding identification. Mike stated that Pueblo County has not been involved to date, however, other neighboring counties are. Roy explained how private landowners can be held financially liable if they are deemed responsible for wildland fires. Chuck R. asked several questions about how private landowners are/are not financially liable for fire funding. Roy explained individual/BLM firefighter safety as well as our firefighting responsibilities. He also explained how some subdivisions will not allow BLM access to BLM land for fire prevention and/or suppression management.

ANDERSON DITCH EXCHANGE

Diana explained the Anderson Ditch Exchange and how this is the first time the BLM has exchanged lands for water. The water acquired through this exchange will provide the Blanca Wetlands with the necessary water rights to maintain the wetland area. The Forest Supervisor, Dan Dallas has stated that the umbrella water right is needed in order to obtain the necessary amount of water to satisfy the wetland needs. If the Anderson Ditch exchange does not go through, other options have been considered, such as a 99-year lease with DOW. Diana explained that the public is in the beginning stages of education, how the wetlands could dry up and be shut down if water is not provided, and how water issues are of serious and emotional concern in the San Luis Valley. Diana also stated that in the long term, the Anderson Exchange would be the best solution; other options would only be temporary solutions.

THE WILD HORSE REDEMPTION (Movie on the Wild Horse and Burro program)

The RAC watched a Canadian film showcasing the BLM Wild Horse and Burro program at the Colorado State Penitentiary. The movie depicts the round-up of wild horses and the training process at the prison located in Canon City, Colorado that uses inmates to prepare horses for adoption. As a result of this great work taking place in Canon City, the US Border Patrol has recently adopted horses for patrolling along the Canadian Border. (This RAC toured the facility during the August 2007 meeting.)

ADJOURN:

The next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2008. Details regarding location will be provided.

/s/ Roy Masinton
Roy L. Masinton
Royal Gorge Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management

/s/ Michael Bush
Michael Bush
Vice-Chairman
Front Range Resource Advisory Council

