

**Southwest Resource Advisory Council**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Friday, February 8, 2008**  
Mancos/Dolores Field Office  
29211 Hwy. 184  
Dolores, Colorado

**ATTENDEES**

**Resource Advisory Council Members**

Jevin Croteau, Category 1	Dan Morse, Category 2
Bill Ela, Category 3	Andrea Robinsong, Category 2
Andrew Gulliford, Category 2	Alan Staehle, Category 3
Al Heaton, Category 1	Kathy Welt, Category 1
Nik Kendziorski, Category 2	Kelly Wilson, Category 3
Gerald Koppenhafer, Category 3	Jim Young, Category 1

Not present: Kenneth Emory, Category 1; Betsy Marston, Category 2; Jim Cochran, Category 3

**BLM/FS Staff**

Steve Beverlin	Heather Musclow
LouAnn Jacobson	Barb Sharrow
Mel Lloyd	Bob Sprentall
Marnie Medina	Mark Tucker

<b>Visitors</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Town/City</b>
Leonard Maez	Questar	Dolores
Carl Knight	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Towaoc
Bob Clayton	Kinder Morgan	Durango
Peter Ortego	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Towaoc
Danny Flannery	Denison Mines	Blanding, UT
Christy Woodward	Denison Mines	Denver
Ann McCoy Harold	Senator Wayne Allard	Durango
Mark Pearson	San Juan Citizens Alliance	Durango
Liz Tozer	CANM Advisory Council	Cortez
Nancy Colbert	Self	Cortez
Ann Brown	Senator Ken Salazar	Durango
Chuck McAfee	Self	Lewis

**Opening Remarks/Designated Federal Officer and RAC Chair Time**

Chair Kathy Welt called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. There was a round of introductions. Today's attendance constitutes a quorum.

Barb Sharrow, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Southwest Resource Advisory Council (RAC), reported that the public hearings on the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for West-wide Energy Corridors have been well attended. Open house meetings on the Oil Shale PEIS are being held this month as well, with one in Rifle on Feb. 13. The Call for RAC Nominations is expected next week. Those whose terms expire in August are Ken Emory, Kelly Wilson, Gerald Koppenhafer, Betsy Marston and Kathy Welt.

## **Field Managers Update**

**San Juan Public Lands Center (SJPLC) and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM):** Bob Sprentall and LouAnn Jacobson reported for Mark Stiles. Public meetings are being held on the Forest Service (FS)/BLM management plans. The decision based on the Northern San Juan Basin oil and gas EIS is being litigated. Several areas are undergoing travel management planning, including the Rico-West Dolores Area. Range permit renewals are generally on schedule and due next year. A fuels reduction project, seeded prior to the snow's arrival, was conducted in the area of the Lowry Pueblo within CANM. Exhibits at the Anasazi Heritage Center are being refreshed.

**Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO):** Barb Sharrow reported that the UFO continues to work hard on their travel management plan, and she is pleased with all of the public input. Analyzing open travel areas within the entire field office will be accomplished through a separate Environmental Assessment (EA) in addition to the Dry Creek EA, which will propose open-to-designated travel prescriptions. The UFO is in the preliminary phase of revising its Resource Management Plan (RMP). Discussions continue regarding a proposed National Conservation Area for the Dominguez-Escalante area. The local U.S. congressional staff people are awaiting a letter of recommendations from the Boards of County Commissioners from Delta, Montrose and Mesa counties. BLM's role is solely that of providing resource information. Several agencies and companies are holding informational meetings to discuss oil and gas mineral development activities in the North Fork area. Interest in uranium exploration and mining on the west end continues.

**Gunnison Field Office (GFO):** Marnie Medina, acting for Kenny McDaniel, reported that the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) recently implemented restrictive regulations on antler-shed hunting activities in the Gunnison Basin. The GFO implemented widespread temporary closures of public lands last month to facilitate emergency feeding of wildlife in the Gunnison Basin. This was done in cooperation with DOW and Gunnison and Saguache counties. These closures will expire by May 15 or sooner, but likely overlap the temporary closures implemented every spring for protecting Gunnison sage grouse habitat and leks. No settlement has been reached yet on the gold mine proposal in Lake City. The joint BLM and FS travel management planning process continues and the Draft EA should be out this summer. The Fish & Wildlife Service has announced that the Gunnison prairie dog now has Candidate status. Grazing permit renewals are on schedule to be completed in FY 2009. A Range Conservation intern has been hired and will start in May. The GFO is exploring how to garner more interest in their forestry projects and make them more cost effective.

## **Briefing on the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument RMP**

LouAnn Jacobson, CANM Manager, received over 14,000 comments, many of them as form letters, during the comment period that recently closed on the Draft RMP/EIS for the 166,000-acre planning area. The comments, which were diverse and frequently conflicting, will be thoroughly analyzed and a detailed summary provided in the near future. The Monument Proclamation provides for the protection of what is thought to be the highest-known density of archaeological sites in the nation. Five alternatives were developed-Alternative V is the preferred alternative, which BLM feels best honors the Proclamation and ensures the protection of cultural and natural resources. Approximately 80 percent of the area is leased for fluid minerals

development, and there are 18,000 acres of private lands within the Monument. The Proclamation honors valid existing rights for grazing and energy development as long as the Monument's resources are protected. Jacobson provided a brief summary of the alternatives and public comments, and then fielded questions about the Draft RMP.

### **Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Subgroup Report to the RAC**

Subgroup Chair Kelly Wilson explained that the CANM Advisory Council could not be re-chartered in a timely manner, so a RAC subgroup was formed to act on behalf of the Council as well as to advise the full RAC on the Draft RMP. A diverse group of people, most involved in the process since 2000, participated on the subgroup. It was a complex project that took several meetings and the time of many individuals. Wilson commended the BLM and its contractors for their work with the subgroup. There were several questions about the subgroup report distributed to the RAC today. Andrea Robinsong moved that the RAC take the report home, read it as soon as possible and in two weeks, the chair initiate a point-by-point discussion via e-mail on the recommendations. Jim Young seconded. After discussion, Robinsong withdrew her motion. Because the BLM would like an advisement from the full RAC today, the RAC worked through lunch to review the subgroup report and will revisit the topic after hearing public comment.

### **Vegetation PEIS-New Tools for Fighting Invasive Species**

Mark Tucker (SJPLC) talked about the new Vegetation PEIS, signed in September 2007, and how it helps Federal agencies fight invasive species on public lands. Extensive time and analysis went into the document in order to explore and approve new methods of treatment. Seven major issues were addressed with some herbicides eliminated and new ones added. Other treatment methods were developed as well. Local field offices will now evaluate their management guidance and make amendments to allow implementation of the PEIS. Site-specific EAs will be necessary prior to using the new methods, and contractors must revise their operations to meet compliance with the PEIS. Plateau is a new herbicide, currently available to Federal agencies only, to combat cheatgrass. Fall application is found to be most effective, and a Pesticide Use Proposal must be approved by BLM Colorado prior to its use.

### **Discussion of CANM Subgroup Report continued**

To assist with evaluation, various RAC members offered what they thought to be clarifying points. To ensure that Tribal rights are protected, open and continued communication between the Tribes and BLM must occur beyond the finalization of the RMP. Robinsong suggested for consideration as a motion that the BLM accept the recommendations under "rangeland resources" as the recommendations of the RAC, accept the recommendations under "transportation" as the recommendations of the RAC, and for all other subgroup recommendations, the BLM give them strong consideration. This motion is based on Robinsong's concerns that conservationists were not represented on the original Advisory Council and subsequently formed subgroup.

### **Public Comment Period**

Bob Clayton, with Kinder Morgan, participated on the subgroup. His company's concerns are based on legal matters and that's why he felt it important to provide RAC members with significant materials to review prior to the meeting. Their leases are valid and existing rights not

held to No Surface Occupancy stipulations, denials of Applications for Permit to Drill (APD), or any other protections. He feels the language in the Draft RMP violates their legal rights.

Leonard Maez has concerns with the broad “community” landscape terminology. Block survey requirements of archaeological sites would be unreasonable.

Mark Pierson with the San Juan Citizens Alliance has been tracking activities related to the Monument since its proclamation. The terminology used by archaeologists of community and landscape is troublesome. Not all agree that the Geographic Area Development Plan (GADP) is the better tool to use.

Chuck McAfee was on the original Advisory Council and subgroup. The subgroup operated under a holistic process in the context of the very big picture. He expressed concerns with the RAC altering subgroup recommendations and reversing what was a very comprehensive and collaborative process. He supports that the GADP process provides for a block survey as well as a site-specific survey. His view is that the majority of the Draft RMP captures the spirit of the subgroup’s intent.

Carl Knight with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe explained that the Utes were here long before everyone else in the room. Their lands were eventually reduced to a small corner of Colorado. The area included in the Bruneau Treaty has four corners; south of Dolores, east to Pagosa Springs, north past Lake City, and then west through the Main Street of Ridgway to Naturita. He believes the Bruneau Treaty overrides the Monument’s Proclamation.

Nancy Colbert expressed concerns about noise and water pollution within the Monument. Connecting roads connect communities and BLM should keep that in mind when designating uses on the land.

### **Discussion of CANM Subgroup Report continued**

The subgroup recommendations were condensed into a separate 3-point document over lunch to facilitate discussions, but the RAC returned to the subgroup’s full report. Al Heaton motioned to include bullets 1 through 8 with careful consideration of all other recommendations as put forth in the subgroup report presented by Wilson. Young seconded. Welt asked for a friendly amendment of: Comments provided by those who participated on the Advisory Council and others not included in the subgroup report also be carefully considered. The friendly amendment was accepted. The BLM will provide the final bulleted list to RAC members in the near future. A vote was taken on the motion by member category. Category 1 passed, category 2 failed, and category 3 passed with three votes. As all four Category 2 members voted against the motion, it failed.

Dan Morse motioned that the RAC recommend to the BLM that it accept the subgroup comments contained in bullets 1, 2, and 4 through 8, and it consider the concept of GADP in its revision of the Draft RMP language. Bill Ela seconded. Comment 3 and comments provided by those who participated on the Advisory Council, by Tribes, and others not included in the subgroup report should be carefully considered as well. A vote was taken on this motion, and all categories passed with none opposed.

### **Update on Healthy Lands Initiative (HLI)**

The initiative remains a priority for the bureau in FY 2009, but final funding was announced last week. While funding was less than what the bureau asked for, the amount was more than what was appropriated in 2007. Twelve projects were planned in the UFO, but that was cut to three after receiving news on the funding. The GFO received about half of the funding it requested for a project. Two projects have been funded for the SJPLC.

### **2008 Chair/Vice-Chair Elections**

Robinson nominated Andy Gulliford as Chair. Nik Kendzierski seconded. Wilson nominated Welt. Gerald Koppenhafer seconded. Alan Staehle nominated Koppenhafer and Welt seconded. Koppenhafer withdrew. Welt won the position of chair with seven votes and Gulliford vice chair with five votes.

### **Potential Topics for May 30 meeting in Montrose:**

Community fire plans  
Introduction to Geocommunicator website  
Dry Creek Travel Management Plan  
Gunnison Travel Management Plan (maybe)  
River float trip on Thursday

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.