

# BLM Resource Advisory Council

## Final Minutes

September 18-19, 2012

Idaho Falls, ID

In attendance: Aaron Swift, Chad Colter, Scott Johnson, David Pennock, Ross Goddard, Ken Koller, Lawrence Fox, David Farnsworth, Kevin Poor, Gary Vecellio, Todd Kuck, Joe Kraayenbrink, Jason Wright, Matt Woodard, Otto Higbee, Sarah Wheeler, Linda Price

### Round Robin Discussion

Dave Farnsworth welcomed everyone to the RAC meeting and thanked everyone for travelling to Idaho Falls, ID. Joe Kraayenbrink gave a brief staff and budget overview, Sage-Grouse update, and the wild horse roundup will be held at the end of October in the Challis field office. Travel planning continues in the Salmon and Pocatello field offices and three EIS proposals are ongoing in the phosphate patch. Joe K. also mentioned that five outgoing RAC members' terms would be ending which include Dave Farnsworth, Ken Koller, Otto Higbee, Lawrence Fox and Vic Phillips. The BLM would like to thank them for the time and effort. A motion was made by Scott Johnson to pass the April 2012 meeting minutes which was seconded by Ken Koller. The April 2012 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

### Field Office Updates

#### Jeremy Casterson, Idaho Falls

- Bighorn Sheep/Bernice Allotment – BLM has made a decision not to renew the MOU to allow domestic sheep grazing on the Bernice Allotment with the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, ID. The collaborative decision was made in order to keep domestic sheep and bighorn sheep from interacting.
- BLM was successful in a lawsuit that was filed against them by Black Dog Outfitters for not allowing Black Dog Outfitters a permit on the South Fork Snake River.
- Staff continues to work on Resource Management Plan.

#### Todd Kuck, Challis

- Grouse Creek Allotment update.
- New construction at Deadman recreation site includes a new boat ramp and toilets.
- Grazing monitoring is ongoing.

## [Linda Price, Salmon](#)

- Staff is working on South zone travel management plan and the draft is ongoing, BLM stresses as much public participation as possible.
- Staff finishing up NEPA work for a cabin on the Continental Divide trail.

## [Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello](#)

- Pocatello field office did not see much range fire this summer.
- Office had 16 seasonal employees.
- Gateway West Transmission Line project is now under Rocky Mountain Power exclusively.
- Curlew-Deep Creek travel management plan ongoing. End of August was the official public comment deadline but the office is still getting comments by a few counties.
- The Pocatello RMP has been officially published.

## [Fisher Bottoms Acquisition](#)

### [Jeremy Casterson – Idaho Falls Field Manager](#)

The Seigel property was purchased by the BLM for 4 million dollars in 2012 which includes 431 acres and 5 historic structures located on the South Fork Snake River. BLM will put the land into a conservation easement. Jeremy C. gave a historical timeline of Fisher Bottom. The BLM wanted the RAC's input on 3 items: 1) Building security/restoration, 2) Stabilization of buildings, 3) Education of property. These were discussed on our tour to Fisher Bottoms. Scott Johnson asked if hunting and other recreational opportunities would be provided. BLM stated all options are being considered at this time.

### [Fisher Bottoms Tour](#)

Monica Zimmerman – Recreation Planner BLM gave a brief description of conservation easements on the South Fork Snake River, approximately 25,000 acres are in conservation easements. BLM's major concern about the property is vandalism. BLM suggested that the property only be accessible by boat or walk in. Security options for the property include having recreation and LEO check in on the property weekly. Hiring summer help to watch over the property i.e. Summer campground host or obtaining persons from the writers and residents program through a university. Ken Koller asked about previous traffic count to the facility. Monica Zimmerman stated that because the property was previously private there as very little public traffic. Gary Vecellio recommended the option of staff do security check-ins be eliminated do to an already "taxed" staff. Ken Koller suggested posting signs at the walk-in area describing the area which may deter vandalism. Scott Johnson added that there are plenty of examples of such places in Colorado that the BLM could look at and see what had been done there. Lawrence Fox asked about handicap access, Dave Farnsworth asked about other forms of recreation. Jeremy Casterson responded that BLM will have to look at all these questions and scenarios. Gary Vecellio stated that the BLM should consider the site be preserved as a historic Idaho site. To end the discussion Dave Farnsworth asked the BLM for a formal recommendation so the RAC can make a decision.

## [Day 2](#)

Attendance: Sarah Wheeler, Dave Pennock, Scott Johnson, Aaron Swift, Ross Goodard, Ken Koller, Todd Kuck, Dave Pacioretty, Linda Price, Dave Farnsworth, Kevin Poor, Gary Vecellio, Lawrence Fox, Otto Higbee, Joe Kraayenbrink, Jeremy Casterson, Jason Wright, Matt Woodard

### Sage-Grouse Update

#### Jason Wright – BLM Natural Resource Specialist

Jason briefed the RAC on the ongoing sage-grouse development. BLM is making good progress on the developing range of alternatives for the sub-regional Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The goal of the EIS is to evaluate threats needing to be reduced to keep sage-grouse on the landscape. Dave Pennock asked if there had been a decision on the listing of the bird by Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Joe K. responded that is why the EIS is being drafted and that FWS has to make a decision by 2015. The BLM draft EIS is anticipated to be out by Fall of 2012.

### Bighorn Sheep/ Bernice Allotment

#### Jeremy Casterson – Idaho Falls Field Manager

BLM has made a decision not to renew the MOU to allow domestic sheep grazing on the Bernice Allotment with the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, ID. The collaborative decision was made in order to keep domestic sheep and bighorn sheep from interacting.

### Western Watershed – Little Lost Riparian Conditions

#### Jeremy Casterson – Idaho Falls Field Manager

Jeremy briefed the RAC on happenings of Western Watershed Project (WWP) which included the group documenting range conditions in the Little Lost Valley. WWP is unhappy about grazing management in the Little Lost valley on public land. WWP had posted pictures on the web and emailed several key figures about the conditions they documented. Jeremy Casterson stated that his staff did a full analysis through Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) of the suspected places which were called out by WWP. Those particular streams as a whole were deemed to be 81% of their proper functioning condition. Ken Koller asked what is the solution to the problem with WWP? Jeremy C. stated that BLM is trying to be transparent as possible i.e. more public outreach. BLM also stated that they are going to do a better job documenting in the future. Ken Koller stated being proactive as possible is the best action for BLM.

### Curlew/Deep Creeks Travel Management Planning (TMP)

#### Kevin Poor – RAC member and sub-committee member

A sub-committee was formed and met to discuss the TMP for Curlew/Deep Creeks. 5 public meetings were held for the public to voice their opinions of designated routes. Several hours of effort were put in by BLM staff to make the correct designations. Lawrence Fox stated there will be a lot of discussion on designated routes before the draft is approved. BLM stated there is an issue with private roads with public land beyond the road. The issue is that BLM doesn't have legal access to those roads and they are

having a difficult time trying to designate those routes. Group had a discussion on the issue about private roads and public land. Dave Farnsworth made a point that BLM needs to start setting some standards on how BLM makes decisions on designating routes.

### Wildhorse Roundup

Todd Kuck – Challis Field Manager

Scoping for the wildhorse roundup started in February 2012. BLM received over 4,000 comments mostly in form letters opposing the roundup. Most of the opposing letters were against using helicopters during the roundup and moving the horses off public land. The preliminary EIS came out in August of 2012. BLM proposes to remove approximately 137 head from the Challis Herd Management Area (CHMA). The roundup is to be conducted at the end of October 2012.

### Project Healing Waters

Matt Woodard – Trout Unlimited and RAC member

Matt wanted to get the feel of how much interest BLM would have in TU's Project Healing Waters program. Project Healing Waters is a program that takes injured veterans fishing or on the water to help them bond with other veterans and nature. BLM stated they would be very interested in helping in any way possible and stated that they will put the program on their website. A member noted that Fisher Bottoms would be an excellent place to take a group.

### Next Meeting

January 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013 – Idaho Falls BLM

### Adjournment

Motion was made by Ken Koller to adjourn, motion seconded by Kevin Poor, motion passed.