

BLM Resource Advisory Council

Final Minutes – Approved September 18, 2012

April 24-25, 2012

Salmon, ID

In attendance: Aaron Swift, Kevin Poor, Ken Koller, Lawrence Fox, Chad Colter, Gary Vecellio, Shane Rosenkrance, Ross Goddard, Otto Higbee, Ken Estep, Jason Wright, Dave Pacioretty, Todd Kuck, Joe Kraayenbrink, Dave Farnsworth, Scott Feldhausen, Linda Price, Liz Townley, Dave Pennock, Scott Johnson, Matt Woodard

Round Robin Discussion

Dave Farnsworth welcomed everyone to the RAC meeting and thanked everyone for travelling to Salmon, ID and thanked the Salmon BLM office for hosting the meeting/tour. Dave Farnsworth stated that the next meeting will be held September 18th and 19th and the meeting agenda will be up to the Idaho Falls field office which is still in the process of being put together. A motion was made by Ken Estep to pass the January meeting minutes which were seconded by Ross Goddard. The January meeting minutes were unanimously approved. A motion was made to pass the RAC's comment letter to the BLM's Socioeconomics Program. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Field Office Updates

Todd Kuck, Challis Field Office

- Wildhorse roundup is proposed to be held in October 2012.
- Final EIS comments back from Thompson Creek mining project this Spring.
- BLM had to obtain a restraining order for Herd Creek road in order for it to NOT get opened on April 15th, 2012. Judge Winmill will be hearing the case May 15th, 2012.

Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello Field Office

- Final EA proposed to be signed for the Soda Hills travel management plan this Spring.
- Curlew-Deep Creek travel management plan getting ready to kickoff.
- Pacioretty asked the RAC to form a sub-committee to help with the Curlew-Deep Creek travel management plan. Ken Estep volunteered to chair the sub-committee; Kevin Poor, Lawrence Fox and Scott Johnson volunteered to help.

Linda Price, Salmon Field Office

- Staff working on travel management plans.
- Sage grouse Lek counting on going.
- 16 proposed grazing permits out.
- Salmon River corridor EA ongoing.
- Prepping for field season.
- Company doing mineral exploration in Flume Creek area.

Travel Management Plans

Liz Townley – BLM Recreation Planner

- Completed BLM travel and outreach program with Salmon High School students.
- Completed travel map for both FS and BLM; will be available for \$10 this summer.
- North Zone travel management plan completed.
- South Zone travel management plan started.
 - Identified over 1000 routes.
 - Motto that staff used was that they had to be able to give the public a defined reason for closing the route.
 - Proposed action of 860 miles of open routes.
 - After public comments are incorporated BLM will make revisions and then go back to PC.
 - Ken Estep asked why 140 miles of routes were closed. Liz replied likely due to significant resource damage or redundant routes or health and safety issues. Scott Johnson asked Liz to define health and safety, Liz replied mostly steep and rocky which Scott mentioned some people enjoyed those types of rides. Liz stated that BLM is working with a local riding group to help determine such routes. Linda Price commented that BLM is spending considerable time and resources to announce the travel management plan to the public. Gary Vecellio asked who participated in the ID team. Liz replied they worked with the county and sent letters to various other stakeholders and that some of those stakeholders got involved. Gary Vecellio also asked how this travel management plan compared to other BLM plans. Liz replied the overall route designation is approximately 1.8 routes per square mile. Ken Estep asked what happens if a company wants to come in and perform an activity, i.e. mining or logging. Liz replied that the company would have to apply and field manager would have to make that decision, also new road construction would require further NEPA action.

Sharkey Hot Springs Site Visit

Liz Townley – BLM Recreation Planner

RAC visited Sharkey Hot Springs for a fee proposal of \$3 per visit per person or \$20 per vehicle season pass. BLM estimates it costs between 18-20 k per year to administer the site and yearly revenue is roughly \$1500. With the proposed fee costs BLM estimates they will be able to recoup the maintenance costs of approximately 20k per year to keep the site operational. Dave Farnsworth asked how BLM has

addressed the “No Fee Coalition” questions and concerns. Joe Kraayenbrink stated BLM has sent the organization a letter addressing all their concerns. Linda Price stated that the tribes had been consulted and interpretive language will be added to the site about the heritage importance of hot springs to the tribes. Enforcement was brought up by the group and BLM stated that they only have one Ranger for the field office so it will be hard to patrol and enforce on violator’s, but “word of mouth” travels fast in small communities. A motion was made by Matt Woodard to pass the \$3 per person per visit or \$20 per vehicle season pass. Motion was seconded by Ken Estep. The motion passed unanimously.

Field Verification of Travel Management Routes

RAC visited Peterson Creek of a “real” example of what the BLM ID team has to go through when trying to open or close routes. Group discussed issues of why 2 track should be closed or stay open to public. Ken Koller stated it was his belief that once a road is open it’s hard to close it. Linda Price replied that is why BLM wants good hard facts and reasons for closing routes, i.e. spread of noxious weeds. Matt Woodard asked how long before these plans are revisited. BLM stated about 20 years, but can be open at any time. Ken Koller stated that if BLM did close a route it would be a good idea to state why it is closed on the sign. Chad Colter was asked to give the tribes position on TMP’s; Chad stated that it is the tribes belief that they are exempt from TMP’s due to treaty rights, but Chad has asked the tribal members to be respectful of the TMP’s and signage due to the reason they may be closed, i.e. resource damage. Dave Farnsworth posed the question what would be done at this particular site. A very informative and enlightening conversation was had by the group with several different opinions. The consensus was that the BLM and ID team had some very tough decisions to make will addressing over 800 miles of routes. The conversation ended with BLM stressing again that they are working diligently to try and inform the public about the South half TMP.

Adjourned for the day and returned to Salmon.

Day 2

Greater Sage-Grouse Lek tour

Group left the Salmon public lands center at 5:15 am where they then travelled to the Leadore area to view Sage-Grouse Lek’s. A group of about 22 birds was observed interacting in mating rituals. Everyone in the group seemed to be impressed by these actions. Later after the group moved from the mating area a group discussion was held. Vince ???? Wildlife Biologist from the Salmon field office gave a great overview of Sage-Grouse numbers, issues, LEK’s etc. This will obviously not be the last we hear of the birds due to their possible Endangered Species listing.

Ragtown Stabilization

After a quick stop at the Gilmore historical site where the group got a good overview of the history we moved to the Ragtown stabilization site. Bill Baer Forester with Salmon field office briefed the group of the Gilmore hazardous fuels reduction project. In 2001 Lemhi County Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) began to compile information Lemhi County Assessment and Mitigation plan. Through WUI the Gilmore

townsite was identified as one of the priority areas for hazardous fuels reduction treatment in Lemhi County. Structures and private property and historic mining structures were determined to be at risk from crown fire. Small diameter trees approximately 9" or less diameter were removed thus less likely crown fires would occur. Approximately 232 acres within 5 units have been treated since 2005. Treatment methods have included mastication and hand crews with chainsaws. All cut material was spread around the unit by machinery, or cut and piled then burned. The public could then come in for firewood removal prior to pile burning.

Next Meeting

September 18-19th – Idaho Falls, ID – Location – TBD by field office

Adjournment

Motion was made by Lawrence Fox to adjourn, motion seconded by Matt Woodard, motion passed.