

Resource Advisory Council
Lewistown District Office Conference Room
At Lewistown Montana
Meeting Notes
January 12, 2010

Kaylene Patten – Welcome, Pat Gunderson will not be in today and Nick Shultz will be in late

Ron Moody – Public comments (9 commenter's, 3 minutes each)

Public Comment: See attached

RAC Comment/Discussion period: (and introduction of two new RAC members)
(Clarification of Fact and Opinion)

Dan Teigen – This issue has come up before, the distinction between livestock and bison as wildlife is important, and is still not being clarified or understood between everyone. People are maybe mixing the two – we need to be sure to be clear that sometimes we are discussing bison as legality (commercial enterprise) and as livestock; this is completely different than bison as wildlife. APF is running bison as livestock, not running wildlife. I would have a whole another set of question if it were the other way around. Free wildlife - roaming bison, we are dealing with livestock, this confusion is breaking down the dialogue between people, when one person is talking about wildlife and the other is talking about bison livestock. It seems muddled and unclear – counterproductive for all sides.

Ron Poertner – To Dan: addressed the plans of the American Prairie foundation (APF) for every grazing allotment that they gain, this becomes more of an issue. Ranchers, as we have heard here, don't really care (between livestock and free roaming) it is more about taking that much land out of cattle grazing. I understand Dan's comment.

Clay Vincent – Is there a actual case that elk have transmitted brucellosis to bison, then to cows?

Ron Moody – save that question for later and ask Mr. Dood with FW&P

Dan Teigen – there is a higher number of brucellosis cases in the herds of elk by Yellowstone, and that number goes down the further the herds are from Yellowstone

Ron Moody – leave it for later discussion/ how the State of WY handle, mixture of wildlife and livestock

Mike Bryant-We have had this on the agenda for the last few meeting; the issue is sticky between roaming and livestock. What would you have the RAC do? – Have a moritorium on grazing leases? But how do we address this as a RAC? We need to work within the confines of what we are allowed to do - tell me what you think after public comment.

Barb Cole – I do not know of a livestock producer who does not sell their livestock. But I don't think that is the purpose for having bison as livestock. Do Bison get sold as livestock does?, are they a commodity?

Ron Moody – they are livestock, is APF selling?

Barb Cole – from what I understand, the goal is to eventually have a free roaming bison, but that is down the road, what is the plan now?

Tom Carrels -Does Glenn Monahan expect to use bison as a management tool in the monument?

Kirk Donsbach – Population control of Bison? Ask APF what they are doing?

Dan Tiegen – Who here feels comfortable recommending to the BLM which business models pass and what ones don't? - What is acceptable and what's not? I don't want to tell ranchers what's right and not. RAC may not be comfortable making decisions on a specific business model. APF has a different business model than a rancher, is their distinction cash flow? Do you want to get into who can run what kind of animal?

Vick Marquis - Matt Knox brought up a good point about the Monument RMP, could the RAC set time aside tomorrow to address this topic?

Motion: Vicki Marquis 2nd by Barb Cole – **Set time to talk about Monument RMP in light of the lawsuit. - 1:45 Wednesday to discuss RAC support of RMP and the process by which it was developed.**

Motion Failed – Motion Tabled

Ron Moody – (about above Motion) I think that we have plenty of new business, to not go back and hash out what we have already done.

Terry Selph – I think there is a large number of previous RAC Members don't support the RMP, but I think it should be known that this RAC does support the RMP

Vicki Marquis – at least that this RAC supports the process of the RMP

Back to discussion of Bison and public comments heard:

Brian Gasvoda –what about riparian areas, we haven't heard about what effect Bison may have on riparian areas – who will pay for the effects that the buffalo have on fences? – tax dollars – I think that more research on that needs to be done.

Ron Moody- I agree in spirit of the last comment of Tim Faber – it makes it very difficult to come together without knowing what others businesses are, Sean Gerrity gave opportunity and recommendations for a RAC subgroup – this should be used, this takes a lot of work, to gain trust and progress, I think this RAC could constructively go after this.

Tom Carrels - What has been done nationally?

Vicki Marquis - The bison initiative has not gone through a public comment period

Ron Poertner – Relationship between Monument/CMR for a bison reserve – where is the social acceptant for this? Brucellosis free herd?

Where is the public involvement in the bison issue, when will that happen?

Too much we don't understand as a RAC

We need a timeout, need a moratorium on what's happening, sit down and see what is going on.

It might take 10 or 15 years to get it done, but it's not slowing down

Mary Jones – I would like to sit down later and talk about it

Ron Moody – this issue needs more time than this RAC can give it right now, there would be many in holdings – this RAC is not going to be able to do that unless there is a subgroup.

Welcome/Chairperson synopsis/Meeting Notes/Introductions of BLM staff and RAC members:

Kaylene – Welcome again, overview of what’s to come (agenda)

Ron Moody – Quickly – where we have been

From September meeting – bison issue came to dominate the minds of everyone.

-We had presentations and discussions, we have representative from private industry come and discuss – that is not something we want to be a one time event, some stakeholders don’t show up as much as locals, we may have to reach out and pull them in.

I was not here for the 2nd day of the last meeting so missed those discussions.

Public access to public lands is going to be an issue.

January meeting in Malta – the subject of bison has come to dominate the limited time this RAC has from other business, keep in mind – the purpose of this RAC is to come up with ideas to present to the BLM, that is the purpose of why we are here.

(Go over past meeting notes)

Kaylene – introduction of BLM employees

Stan Benes –Talk about the business end of what we do and take a look at the charter

Overview of the Charter:

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council – (read from the charter) FLITMA and FACA, Recreation fees, DFO (Designated Federal Officer) – Benes and Albers are DFO for the RAC

I have worked with several RAC groups in 4 different states and Kaylene does one of the best jobs at organizing that I have ever seen. We are trying to accomplish a lot in a small amount of time.

Monument RMP, we will move onto the Lewistown RMP in the next year or year after.

Subgroups – this council has not done a whole lot of this but some, and has discussed doing more – I think that this is how things get moved forward in this group.

We only have about 30 hrs. a year to have productive team time.

We have two years until our charter is reviewed again.

Thank you for taking time away from your own personal time to participate in the RAC.

Bison issue does seem to be taking up much of our agenda.

Terry Selph – explain the voting process as it’s outlined in the charter

Kaylene – Clarified how the voting issue is addressed in the charter, explanation of voting between categories utilizing the fallback votes.

Break for Lunch

Consensus/Administrative Duties/Logistics Procedures/Agenda/Exchange of information (Kaylene):

Orientation:

Introductions (RAC members)

Do's (see poster board)

Meeting format/Consensus

Thumbs (up, sideways, down)

Administrative Duties

- Privacy Info.
- Travel
- Phone Cards
- Meeting notes
- Agendas
- Meeting Notices

Bison Discussion, possible RAC subgroup (Ron Poertner):

- Barron Crawford, CMR
- Arnie Dood, FW&P

Ron Moody – Recap of this morning then introduction to guest speaker Barron Crawford

Barron Crawford - (Project Leader for the Charles M. Russell Nation Wildlife Refuge)

(Timeline) started developing CRP in Jan. and Feb. of 2008 – during that scoping timeframe we got a lot of public comments, many of them to do with bison – for or opposing the reintroduction of bison. There were concerns of law and regulations of bison on public lands, difference between livestock and free roaming bison.

Currently the CMR has 1 permittee of 20 plus years that has a lease of livestock for bison on the CMR.

Read DOI plan on bison – CMR was identified as a possible bison habitat (CCP)

Bison conservation and management group has recently scheduled a meeting about bison.

Draft plan for the CCP should be out in the fall of 2010 (read direct statement from the draft CCP, FWS opinion and stance on bison on the refuge)

Tom Carrels- do you know of any problem or cases with disease from elk to bison or vice versa with the permittee on the refuge?

Barron Crawford and Bill Berg – not anything to our knowledge

Tom Carrels – How many head of bison are we talking about?

Barron Crawford – 200-400 head in Garfield County, they go to water and back to uplands

Tom Carrels - Could CMR monitor/study these bison as livestock and their movements and habits?

Barron Crawford – There are some studies trying to get this done

Tom Carrels - How are the bison treated for disease? - annually?

Barron Crawford – because they are treated as commercial bison livestock, we are assuming that they are tested normally

Barron Crawford - There are some conflicts (trespass) with the neighbors – The bison tend to move towards better food and grass. The bison will cross the Musselshell River but haven't seen them cross the Missouri River.

Dan Teigen – what do you know about the Bison Initiative?

Barron isn't in on the meeting with the bison initiative "Bison Conservation Working Group"

Barron Crawford - The nation park service and the FWS have worked for a while on bison issues and population. They are managing 7 fenced herds, dealing with several bison issues such as disease and genetics. From what I can tell this is where the DOI Bison Initiative came from.

Ron Poertner – will the FWS follow the state on their lead of bison?

Bison are not Federal Trust Wildlife species they are a native wildlife species

Barron Crawford - CMR is managed as a prairie preserve.

Vicki Marquis – asked about the research project they were potentially partnering with the APF on and Barron noted that there was a research proposal with the APF to compare domestic bison to cattle grazing with prescribed fire and they were trying to find funding for it.

Clay Vincent -If this works will you put wolves in the CMR also? What would be the largest problem with putting bison in on the refuge?

Barron Crawford -If wolves come in naturally, yes/I would say the biggest problem would be that of most grazing permittees right now – trespass issues

Barron Crawford - Primary purpose of the CMR is antelope and sage grouse with a balance of native animals

Fall 2010 Draft plan released

-send CMR RAC information to receive plans etc. from the CMR

Dan Teigen – What are trespass issues with such a large herd?

Bill Berg – trespass issues, adjustments have been made to permit over the years, now the herd is about 50-100

Ron Moody – introduction of Arnie Dood

Arnie Dood – (background-work for FWP for 30 years, been involved in grizzlies and wolves. I believe in honesty and building trust)

People are coming at this issue (of bison) with different emotions and reactions – some due to misunderstanding – all these different attitudes on the issue seem to not be working. We need to get together with the public and address the problems and issues at hand dealing with bison, we need to get everyone informed with the current issues.

Why am I here with FW&P? – I have been asked to evaluate the opportunity to restore a huntable population of bison somewhere in Montana.

What are the opportunities and what would they (the opportunities) look like? – This is something we need to look at

Hunting – when and where it is appropriate needs to be addressed

Wild Bison – what it means – if you are talking about bison behind the fence, then I can go home

What does it mean to manage bison as wildlife?

Where – Central Montana may not be the best place to start, maybe there are opportunities in other places in Montana – this is a major issue that needs to be looked at.

Why are we moving forward on this issue? – Montana FWP has been entrusted by the people of Montana to manage wildlife – bison classify as wildlife. This is a state game animal and we can manage them as a game species - if they are not diseased.

Why is it that bison were left off the table for so long? – We recovered elk, antelope and other species – what about bison?

We have managed and maintained and expanded the populations of grizzlies, once again...what about bison? – Knowing all we have done on other issues dealing with other species of animals like elk and wolves we want to look back at what all we have done in those cases to see where could we be in the future on the bison issue?

Documents associated with placement of bison from the quarantine program – we have been slow – a result of the slowness is confusion – mostly among the public.

There is a lot of interest in bison – private and reservation lands have moved forward on bison issues

Effects of other organizations have added to some of the confusion on the issues of bison that we are currently dealing with.

-Tribes have gone forward on these issues – are we willing to come together with them or are we talking about building a fence between the reservation (where their ‘wild’ bison are) and us.

We have the situation in Yellowstone – disease – that situation is not going away, if anything the issues around it will increase. Where should we go? The fundamental thing affecting opportunities in this area is disease control.

Change has been a part of eastern MT and will continue to be, do we want to be a part of that change or do we want it to be dictated to us.

What are we going to look at?

We need a map of historic distributions of bison in MT

We are going to summarize the genetics of bison – there are 4 herds of bison which are pure (don't show any sign/genes of cattle) – there are other bison that have signs/genes of cattle in them but we still cannot exclude them

Habitat conditions today –

Land ownership – state, private, CMR, BLM

What about private herds of bison, where are they and how big are they? – When we restored elk, there were not any privately owned elk that we had to deal with – that will not be the case with bison

Legal issues – what statutes apply – statutes with livestock and wild game (wildlife) that apply

Look at surrounding states – what are the issues or conflicts that other states or Canada have faced?

Treaty Rights – what are the issues with bison leaving Yellowstone and bison elsewhere, what tribes have rights and how would they apply

Look at the private efforts – APF has created a lot of interest and is moving forward

Availability of bison for restoration (State of UT, has indicated that they would ‘give’ us some of their disease free bison)

Disease Issue – risk management, there are already bison in central Montana, what is the risk of disease to them

Look at bison in other states and how they are doing, interacting with livestock operations (UT, Canada)

What works and what makes sense for Montana

What is the opportunity and what does it look like for Montana

We need to have discussion (with the public) to see what it looks like for Montana

We need to look at issues and concerns now and, hopefully within 3 years we will be able to make an informed decision

Ron Poertner – brucellosis – it's a huge impact if this happens to one buffalo and how it would spread – what is the economic impact of disease – it needs to be evaluated.

What is the time line of the completion of your evaluation?

Is US FWS bound to what the state says – need to work out a program with authority we have now

Arnie Dood – I think we need to be productive rather than just moving on to move on/yes the state and CMR is waiting for us to do our job/FWP has to come up with a decision/Any program has to work with their neighbors (that means give and take)

Ron Moody – Federal Trust Species are the only species that the federal government has control over, everything else is managed by the state

Mike Bryant – Glenda has a grazing permit on CMR, does she have some kind of corresponding permit on BLM Land

Barron Crawford – she did at one time, that would be out of the Miles City office, and we would have to double check with them

Vicki Marquis - I know you said you wanted a year to go around and talk about this before anything was put into action. How is this information going to be used?

Arnie Dood – everything will be gone through, concerns are documented and will be laid out with formal process – scoping - already know what some of the issues are, understand the give and take, keep track of what we hear at different meetings, we need to have the common bases laid out

Nick Schultz – as far as fences go, if a buffalo or elk come through a ranchers fence (which are used to save up grass for winter, for example) What effects will the bison have if they get into a ranchers hay/feed yard. – By the time the state gets to reimbursing the rancher their cows are already going hungry. The cattle here are specific for this area and that replacing them is expensive, you cannot just replace them with any old cattle. Sometimes hard to see the economic impacts to feed being eaten by wildlife and hard to put down on paper.

Arnie Dood – these are legitimate issues that need to be looked at and will be different for every area

Mary Jones – tell us a little more about brucellosis

Arnie Dood – serious disease in humans and it is not insignificant issue for private operator, it would be better to talk to a veterinarian than me.

Dan Teigen – would it require the state of MT, the legislature – they would have to make or change a law for livestock bison to change into wildlife or vice versa

Arnie Dood – if you have animals that are disease free and in public ownership, they are classified as wildlife

Ron Moody – the legislature can intervene whenever it wants

Ron Poertner – keep in mind that people may say wildlife are wildlife and they can go anywhere (if they are disease free, aren't they treated just like elk would be) you can't keep them off of your private land correct?

Arnie Dood – we need to look at how we would manage them as wildlife

Tom Carrels – is brucellosis being used as a deterrent

Arnie Dood - It is legitimate and is worth us looking into

RAC deliberation/discussion on Bison issue:

(1st Round)

Nick Shultz – the RAC makes a suggestion to BLM, BLM isn't a decision maker on wildlife

Study with government agency be facilitator

Mike Bryant – FW&P is lead on Bison issue, what's livestock and what's wildlife is a real can of worms.

Don't know what BLM can do no until FW&P has decision made.

Clay Vincent – Everything has to be managed

Terry Selph – I don't think that we should just sit back and wait for final decision, as a RAC I feel our hands are tied now.

Dan Teigen – it's is helpful and interesting to become clearer on what different agencies can and cannot do, what agency is lead on what issues – that way we know who to talk to and who will be able to help us better in each area. Continue to discuss outside of RAC, discussion on issues RAC can deal with

Vicki Marquis – I think we would be remiss if we didn't do something on Bison issue as a RAC and we owe it to the public who came and commented at the meetings. RAC Subgroup needs to look at facts, recommendation to the BLM, we owe it to the public who have made it out to the meetings

Ron Poertner – we need to see action from RAC, what concerns are and how should they be dealt with, need to come up with recommendations to the state and up through the BLM and the DOI

Brain Gasvoda – We need to get something decided

Ron Moody – I would feel better about the time and resources that go into the RAC if we came up with a productive outcome, suggest that we come up with a RAC Subgroup to start this desperately needed communication. I know that achieving any kind of consensus across the strongly divided cultural lines – people have to develop relationships and understand the ways of their lives – this cannot be done three times a year. We could make recommendations all day, but we need to get to a consensus – by talking about the issues at hand. It may be slow and difficult.

Mary Jones – I would like to wait for the formal public process

(2nd Round)

Nick Schultz – I heard that the Malta office did convert some cattle leases over to bison. We could halt all Cattle to Bison permit conversion until more information is collected

Ron Poertner – worked up a proposal (handed it out)

Tom Carrels – could understand recommending an EIS process (asking the Feds. (BLM) to initiate an EIS)

Vicki Marquis – this is the reason why we need a subgroup to dedicate some time to look at this and come up with recommendations

-concerns with public

-agency policy

Motion: Mike Bryant **Where BLM is concerned, need clarification of the timeline from DOI on the Bison Initiative and when and where it's going**

Resolution to secretary

- **What do you mean**

- When done
- What does it entail

Tabled for more discussion and no second.

Mary Jones – I think you have a Federal and a State group doing their research and I think that we need to let them

Motion: Vicki Marquis 2nd by Barb Cole – **Form a Subgroup to look at Bison issue to gather information and data with the States efforts and DOI’s efforts and then come back to RAC to make a recommendation to BLM on how they get involved and how to proceed.**

Motion Failed

Discussion:

Ron Poertner – I’m not saying it’s not a good idea, I just think that it will be very hard

Mike Bryant – Montana ranchers are coming to grips with what they want done about the bison, and I don’t think that the BLM is ready to declare what they want to do.

Vicki Marquis – What the APF is doing involves bison as livestock and is separate from the BCI which involves bison as wildlife. The issues are difficult to sort out, which indicates a big need for a subgroup to address it further.

Nick Shultz - Cumulative effects – If you convert cattle grazing lease to a bison, convert the AUM, accumulative effect – maybe that is something else for the subgroup to look at.

Ron Moody – I would think that this subgroup would not be for research but for interpersonal interaction

Larry Epstein – Urge the one person who voted no to look at what has been done in interpersonal interaction and how well it has worked

Terry Selph – We need to get a subgroup together to get things moving and accomplished.

Ron Moody – This is very much the long haul – there is no quick way to end it

Ron Poertner – we need to do something – can we do a fallback

Motion: Vicki Marquis 2nd by Barb Cole **Form a subgroup to look at the Bison issues**

Consensus

Subgroup members are:

Tom Carrels Barb Cole Dan Teigen Vicki Marquis

Ron Moody Troy Blunt Pat Gunderson

Ron Moody will help organize it.

Ron Moody – This will take commitment, probably getting together once a month and bringing your constituencies to the table

Dan Teigen – We can also use technology (e-mail) to communicate as a subgroup

Orientation (Stan Benes & Mark Albers):

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Guidelines for RAC members
- Expectation of Chair and Vice Chair

Mark Albers – Keep in mind: help us find those things that bring value to this process for you and for us. The power of this group, when we get together, this group can really bite in and help and give the BLM ideas.

Talk more about the philosophy of the RAC, you folks are giving up a lot of your own time to be here and we greatly appreciate it.

Help us to find those things that you think will add value to this order, what items do you think that this group can help the BLM with.

Let talk about how we can change things or make things better to help you.

Tom Carrels – What would you like to see the subgroup do and what would you do if you were part of the subgroup?

Mark Albers - We struggled a lot with the bison issue when it first popped up

The intent of Taylor Grazing Act, the socioeconomics issues

Terry Selph – I think our subgroups are great, when we get together on a one on one it's a lot better for us. When a group can get together, gather information and share that information that's when we can move forward. I know it is difficult to dedicate time to the subgroups but we get things accomplished with them.

Mary Jones – Socioeconomic issues – there isn't just one area or group that is interested in socioeconomics, there are many areas

Dan Teigen – Would past subgroups help us to decide on a way to focus our efforts in this subgroup most effectively keep diverse opinions on a particular topic.

Meeting after meeting, month after month, year after year – we can have similar meeting,

-maybe we could use a facilitator for this next subgroup

Stan Benes – the roles of this group are to “get something done” – we do need these subgroups. This is such a link from us to the public we serve. We need to do more than just meet here 30 hours a year. We need to meet outside the office (ie: the river trip). Sometime we just need to find a different way: subgroups and river trips.

Ron Poertner – With the last subgroup I was in, it seemed hard at first to get started, then the BLM came up with some money and hired someone and we really got headed in the right direction fast. It really makes a difference when you have someone leading your group who know what they are doing and where the group needs to start and be focused at along with where to find the information.

Vicki Marquis – does BLM have the funding for a facilitator for this new subgroup?

Ron Moody – I don't think that it should only be BLM putting their money forward; there are other agencies who are dealing with this bison issue that will benefit from the results.

RAC's expectations by Ron Moody (Chairperson)

Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Election
For
Chair
Ron Moody

Election
For
Vice Chair
Troy Blunt

District Manger's Updates:

Stan Benes –
RMPs/litigation
Cottonwood workshop
Ulhorn Trail –BLM, F.S., backcountry horsemen
Educational partnership with Kootenai Salish tribes
Presentation for the public – BLM Proud
13 Stimulus projects (ARRA projects)
 Judith Landing
 Limekiln
 -Road into salvage area
Stewardship agreement with RMEF
Mutual issues meeting with Fergus County Commissioners
 Weeds
 Fire Protection
 ARRA
Winifred Grocery – gateway community project
 -Sell map, brochures etc.
Trout Foundation, NASF
Partnership with DNRC
Land Exchange

Retirements:

Fred Roberts
Tim Sorenson
Loyd Bantz
Sandra Padilla

Mark Albers –

New Position

Outdoor recreation planning
Planning and environmental coordinator
Budget Tech.
Archeologist

HiLine RMP – draft

-South valley county – working on restoration of the Jim Dam

Clarification added by Jerry Majerus in regard to the HiLine RMP:

An alternative that would preclude grazing bison was considered but will not be analyzed in detail in the HiLine RMP/EIS. Privately owned bison may be authorized to graze under the regulations provided it is consistent with multiple use objectives.

Wild bison was an issue considered but will not be addressed. No proposals or recommendations were made by MFWP or any other agency to manage any BLM lands in the planning area as wildlife ranges for bison use. Any such future proposal or application would require extensive planning and analysis both at the state and federal levels and would likely require an RMP amendment.

GIS database that will capture all water futures on the HiLine that we have water rights to

Leasing on Blackfeet reservations – we have a fiduciary trust with them

Bowdin area – 6 request for exceptions, we were able to grand 5 of them

Adopt RAC Work Plan for 2010:

- RAC Subgroup as an Action Item
- C. Watershed planning – move to Information and take off plan
- D. include HiLine and Central Montana District office
 - Change high school students (in *Action*) to “others”
- E. Make sure the RAC members know when and where field trips are and other updates
 - Add in Limekiln ARRA road project (in *Action*)
- F. Public Access
 - Create projects to have better access to BLM
 - To develop specific projects within the RAC jurisdiction
 - RAC let BLM know of possible areas in Kendall
- Information item
 - Update on Judith boat ramp

HiLine RMP update (Jerry Majerus):

Brief Update: (Power point)

Schedule:

Preliminary MSO Review – winter 2010

Draft RMP/EIS – summer 2010

Proposed RMP/Final EIS – spring 2010

ROD – summer 2011

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Nominations:

Black-tailed Prairie Dog and Black-footed Ferret – 632,000 acres

Mountain Plover – 280,000 acres

Five Watersheds – 1.3 million acres

Sage-Grouse (north Grassland Bird – 342,000 acres) – 1.7 million acres

ACEC Evaluation Process:

To be considered as a potential ACEC and analyzed in RMP alternatives, an area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance.

Relevance Criteria

- Evaluate each nomination to determine if the area contains one or more relevance criteria
 - Significant historic, cultural, or scenic value

- Fish and wildlife resource
- Natural process or system
- Natural hazard

Importance Criteria

- Evaluated nomination to determine if the area contains one or more importance criteria
 - More than locally significant qualities
 - Qualities that make it fragile, sensitive, rare
 - Warrants protection to satisfy national priorities (FLPMA)
 - Warrants highlighting to satisfy concerns
 - Significant threat to human and safety

Potential ACEC?

- Does not meet relevance and importance – Drop from further consideration
- Does meet relevance and importance – Develop management prescriptions

(ACEC is managed to a higher standard than regular public land)

Going back to previous motion that was earlier tabled:

Motion: Vicki Marquis and 2nd by Barb Cole **Agenda item for Wednesday @ 1:45 to discuss RMP.**
Consensus to be added to agenda

Meeting adjourned for the day.

Resource Advisory Council
Lewistown District Office Conference Room
At Lewistown Montana
Meeting Notes
Tuesday, January 13, 2010

Ron Moody –Called meeting to order and limited public comments to (5 min. each)

Public Comment: See attached

Questions:

Ron Poertner – What really is the deal with controlling the 40 acres on the CMR?

Sean Garity – In general – when private property borders the CMR and the property does have grazing acreage, when that land is sold to someone else the CMR takes them out of grazing rotation (they no longer have that particular grazing lease – it belongs to the person who has the lease – not the land itself). So when we buy a property that had grazing rights the day before we got it, we do not inherit the grazing rights.

If our livestock were to get onto the CMR, it would be just like any other operator – we would need to get our animals off the CMR just like anyone else, they would not be considered wildlife.

Kickoff discussion on Monument amenity fees (Level I campsites and River Use):

Mark Schaefer-Fort Benton

Monument Amenity Fees:

When they did the RMP, they put a caveat in there for a proposal on amenity fee on the Monument. I think that we are the only National Monument that does not charge a fee. I have been working on the river for the last 9-10 years. When working with the public on the river, especially from out of state, they can't believe that they don't have to pay a fee. If we were to implement an amenity fee – the money would augment, not replace, money for the monument – it would go into upkeep of campground, work-months for seasonal employees, etc.

-Involve the RAC

-Get Public input and meeting

-Look at fees in the Monument – i.e.: level I Campground, Cabin rental

-How are we going to implement amenity fees?

- One option could be to do it like fishing licenses – one time use fee or even a seasonal pass.

There are so many things that need to be taken into consideration and that's why we need these public meetings.

One thing that would be hard is how we hold people accountable for paying the fee.

Stan Benes – I think a lot of the opposition will be “I already pay taxes, I don't want to pay another one”

I think that if the public sees right up front that the money is going right back to the monument and not just getting lost, people will be much more likely to be accepting.

Nick Shultz – is there a way to insure that the money goes back into the project?

Mark Schaefer - Yes! – It would have to be written into the business plan

Motion: Larry Epstein 2nd by Dan Teigen **Creation of a subgroup to study amenity fees for the Monument to hold scheduled public meeting and do public research on amenity fees and provide recommendations to the BLM.**

Consensus

Members of the subgroup:

Mike Bryant Larry Epstein-chair Clay Vincent
Terry Selph Ron Moody
-meeting to follow RAC meeting

How would fees be collected, by whom? Would we be paying someone to collect a small fee?
- Subgroup could look into this.

How would this effect the outfitter that are already on the river and what about the outfitters clients?

Mark Schaeffer - We would have to do something different than other monuments for many reasons. Because we don't have the staff roaming around our monument, how do we hold people accountable, how do we make sure that people who are floating the river have the pass? – We could do stickers for the boats/canoes or on their fishing license.

Ron Moody - Fees could detract from primitive experience
-assumption of more is better, may not always be for the best

Terry Selph – We need to figure out where the Baucus bill that is going through is standing at this point – it can be a big player in this
-Are we going to make anything off of this deal – are we going to pay someone to collect the fees
-3% of SRP goes to the area now
-Singling out water users (as opposed to people who just want to walk around the monument and hike)
– This is a concern, should it be ALL users (not just water users)

Dan Teigen- One thing that comes to mind – how tax payers will like to say “I already pay taxes and this is public land, I don't think I should have to pay to be on it” on the other hand, ranchers pay taxes and then have to pay another fee on top of that to use the land to graze.
-We need to keep in mind that public land isn't for profit, but enough to impact amenities.
-this would be a tangible opportunity for people to be a little more appreciative and careful if they are having to pay for it, rather than when something is free they may not be as respectful and appreciative (which leads to vandalizes)
Pride in what's there, maybe they keep it nice if they have to pay a fee

Vicki Marquis – Hold public meeting and tie fees to services
-How do you keep from charging a kid who want to throw their inner tube in at Fort Benton – or are you going to charge them too?

Ron Poertner – Closer you are to fees the more resistance you may find – Private folks need to be worked in
-if someone lives on the river, are you going to make them pay to throw their inner tubes in or put in a canoe?
-Announcements coming out soon (to the public). No shock factor
- The subgroup can come out and talk to people

Brian Gasvoda – what about hunters, outfitters? – How much are people willing to pay?

Who gets left out, what exactly needs to be paid for
A lot of fine tuning for fees – do you have to pay to put in a fence if you live on the river?

Ron Moody – Support subgroup to look at fees, but hasn't agreed to fees to use public land.

Do we have enough people using this land to justify the fee?

Does support fees for trash, toilets, etc.

- It may not take very much to price public (who are making minimum wage) out of public land

Stan Benes – The question will be asked “what is in it for me?”

- Let public know what benefits they will find

River update – Mark Schafer: (RAC asked Mark for an impromptu update)

-Number of users is up some (100) from last year – registered boaters

-60% MT residents

-Outfitter use is down

-more kayaks than previous

-August – September more trip than before (over age of 40)

- More school groups (boy/girl scouts)

May – September Coal Banks is staffed

I do think there is a problem at Kipp, there is no one checking them there

-Some people put in at Kipp and go upriver – there is not registration there either

We know that our numbers are skewed a bit, because we only use info. from people who have registered

Terry Selph– if possible, could we break out the number of one time permits, or guided permits?

How many people are using the onetime permits that are going down the River?

Mark Schaefer– I will break that out and get it back to him/the RAC

Pat Gunderson – FWP may be able to help in early months on collecting data at Kipp as we are there earlier starting in May

Ron Poertner – is anything moving towards improvement at Coal Banks Landing for a launch site?

Mark Schaefer – there isn't anything happening now – there was talk several years ago, but haven't heard of anything since then

Ron Poertner – would it be possible to improve/make at takeout point at Stafford Ferry, people are already taking out there, could we make it a better place to take out?

Stan Benes – Two projects on the ARRA projects roster are going to be information stations at Judith and Coal Banks Landing

Ron Moody – Last time I was at Stafford Ferry there were 3 hunting camps there with boats, years ago we decided not to increase the number of intakes and outtakes along the river, I think that maybe we need to revisit that decision if people are putting in and taking out already

Mark Schaefer – I think that a lot of the people who are putting in and taking out at these places, like Stafford Ferry are Sheep hunters.

Sage Grouse Update - John Carlson:
(Handout IM)

It has been a struggle pulling together the latest info. – seems like every day or week there is more information coming out about Sage Grouse.

Went over Instructional Memorandum (IM)

Priority Protection Area – an area where we know we have high sage grouse values.

These are large scale environments that need to be managed a little different. We left it up to the RMPs to decide what level of protection they wanted to use for each Priority Protection Area.

Each RMP also includes sample management actions by alternative.

We also recognized areas that are important to Sage Grouse, but BLM has already leased mineral right for those areas as priority restoration areas.

General Habitat areas – we mapped sage grouse habitats in the planning area. Some portions of the distribution didn't come out as important as some other core areas, but are still recognized and managed.

The planning area has been divided up into priority protection area (1 million BLM acres plus or minus total) and areas of habitat outside the protection area. This would only apply to BLM Land.

Wyoming BLM has come out with a very similar guidance, also 1 well per section in those Core Areas.

There are also other factors that could still have impacts to sage grouse.

1 disturbance per section – cows are not included

-Good nest success – implies that grass is and adequate height for sage grouse habitat

We are doing the analysis on ACECs tomorrow in Malta

Clarify difference in size and area between ACECs and sage grouse habitat

Is predation a concern if you have priority areas?

If the area was much smaller we would, but the areas are so big that they are not pushed into one smaller area – we have not seen the large effect of predation

Ron Moody – we used to have an interagency sage grouse study group and we no longer have that

- Are we doing enough to keep sage grouse off of the endangered species list

Pat Gunderson – Montana is doing everything we can to keep them off of the list, but we are not alone, other states like Wyoming are doing the same thing and having the same problems that we are

John Carlson – The area with the greatest anticipated new impact on wildlife resources from oil and gas activity is the South Bearpaw area. Recent research compilation on Greater Sage-Grouse is due to be published soon in Studies in Avian Biology. Electronic versions of all the chapters are already available online at: <http://sagemap.wr.usgs.gov/monograph.aspx>

Ron Moody – Listing the sage grouse as an endangered species will take a sledgehammer to many. I think that we need to do whatever we can to keep it off of the list.

Mark Albers – We are doing our best to keep sage grouse off of the endangered species list, so that we don't lose them

We will look at relevance and importance between ACECs and Sage Grouse Habitat

Ron Moody – A key point – BLM cannot keep sage grouse off the endangered species all by itself, neither can FWP or private land owners – they all need to work together.

John Carlson - This became very apparent to me when we started looking at the South Bearpaw area

Ron Poertner – Why is it that we don't shut the season on hunting sage grouse down?

Pat Gunderson – We have looked at other places that have shut their seasons down, and their populations have continued to plummet, so if we take away hunting – what do we blame the decrease in numbers?

Cottonwood workshop follow-up - Stan Benes:

Workshop was held in Great Falls in December of 2009

When I moved here I suggested that we get our “polarized” groups together at a round table.

We did just that and realized that we agreed on 4 things and those things we could move forward on.

- 1.) We need to inventory and treat noxious weeds
- 2.) Enclosures and riparian zones to
- 3.) We thought we could have an informative newsletter
- 4.) We could improve cottonwood regeneration by replicating historic flows which would decrease the loss of cottonwood seedlings – this would in turn increase the spawning of the endangered pallid sturgeon

We had many agencies come together and present at the Cottonwood workshop

- BLM, BOR, CMR, COE, DNRC, FWP

We wanted to make sure that:

- 1.) We had the science to confirm that it was possible for this idea of supplementing the flow of historic flows
- 2.) We needed to make sure that we were not just wasting time and that we could legally get this done.

We decided we would form a taskforce, which will be done next month, with everyone who should and wants to be involved. We need to look at effects and repercussions. We need to discuss once again the science and legality. We also need to inform people on how this will affect them and all benefit them.

The science tells us that this would be affective if the flows rose every 10 years. Also the flood level only needs to have a two day high.

Vicki Marquis- Who do you envision being on the taskforce?

Stan Benes – We will invite anyone to join, but still keep a “core” group within the agencies involved and also private citizens who are specialized in this area

Nick Shultz – Is there any spots along the river that are thriving with cottonwoods now?

Stan Benes – There are a few spots that we have seen, but there is also evidence that there could be great loss to all areas, it probably won’t stop decreasing where it is right now.

Briefing on expanding review of Forest Service Fee Proposals via Phone Call - Joni Packard:

Issue at hand: (doesn’t need a formal decision today – think it over and will ask for decision later)
Proposal of realignment of the number of forests which fall under the 5 different RACs (see handout)

Realign distribution of forests:

-Add Helena National Forest to Central Montana RAC

Our RAC – Lewis and Clark

-Helena (11+8) (approximately 20 sites)

	<u>Current # of forests under each RAC</u>	<u>Proposed # of forests under each RAC</u>
Western MT	7	4
Central MT	1	2
Coeur d’Alene	3	4
Eastern MT	1	2
Dakotas	1	1

Agenda Item for next meeting: Fee proposals coming in spring meeting and info on taking on Helena

Vicki Marquis – I am uncomfortable with making decisions for people who are so far out of our jurisdiction - Concern of not being with user group of Helena Forest

Have you looked at forming your own RAC instead of using a BLM RAC

Joni Packard – We have looked at making our own Recreation RAC – it does take about a year

- REA expires in 2014

Joni Packard – The only user groups that would come to this RAC would be from Helena.

Ron Poertner – Are you looking at trying to standardize as best you can the fees for every forest, at least the rates, which would make our lives a little easier?

Joni Packard – We are looking at standardizing the fee schedule, at least with campgrounds and cabins.

That way the RAC wouldn’t be looking at individual fee schedules, it would not only simplify work for you guys but would also simplify things for the public – this would also reduce the “fee shock syndrome” by making so it wouldn’t jump at large amount after a few years due to inflation
For new fee sights we would do a federal registry notice, this does not need to be done for old fee sights.

We would have all our homework and public presentation done when we brought the subjects up to you.

Vicki Marquis – Have you thought about splitting the Helena sites based on location of sites in District boundaries.

Jodi Packard – we haven't really thought about doing that, we could definitely look into it, we were trying to make it easy for the public also so they wouldn't have to go the more than one RAC.

Ron Moody – Call the RACs attention back to why the legislation calls for an advisory councils involvement.

Kaylene Patten – All you are trying to get out of this is comments and then you will come back to us correct?

Joni Packard – Yes

Jodi Packard – In 1952 there was a law passed that required ALL federal agencies to look cost recovery for providing all services that we supply to the public (campgrounds are mentioned in this) Agencies are required to look at pricing that is comparable to others pricing when there are private sectors offering the same service (this is a good example in private/public campgrounds)

Fee Demo – 1990's – fee retention with the idea that the fees stay local

(Fees are still retained locally, stay within the local unit)

I will present this to the Eastern and Western MT RACs at their next meetings, and then I will put together the input that was received and get it back to you, either in a proposal if it is well like, or at least just as informative

Barb Cole – You guys are actually doing all the leg work, and your just looking for our feedback – I think that is something that we can do for you

General Vote for Joni's discussion:

Number who want to take Helena = 7

Number who do not want to take Helena = 5

Undecided = 2

Next meeting: Joni Packard will get back to us at next meeting with info on taking on Helena and also on Fee Proposal

Advertise more of Forest Service fee proposal that RAC will take on

- Possibly something for Craig Flentie to send out

Monument newsletter update - Craig Flentie:

In 2008 the idea of a Monument newsletter was brought up – we have since ran with the idea:

Vinita Shea, Mary Jones and I were selected as the steering group to produce a bi-yearly newsletter – we decided to do a summer/winter schedule.

I think that we will keep the current format of the letter.

The stories we have for this next up and coming news letter:

-Cottonwood workshop

- Take it outside program –Ft. Benton
- The river community Weed Control
- River float
- Montana Conservation core – habitat improvement project
- Boating/floating/hunting in the Monument
- Kootenai/Salish
- Ecological projects headed up by Chad Krause

If we have time we may rough up a piece for this next letter

We have purchased an information dispenser that we would like to display and distribute to the local public

Last September our State Office sent out a memo that they had extra money in printing and graphics that we can use for our next printing or three

Mary Jones - Can you put in a column of BLM employee who work in the Monument who have retired and who has taken their places?

Craig Flentie – I am not familiar with any change of staff within the Monument

Ron Moody – I think that it may be worth it to do a little ‘who’s on first’

Craig Flentie – Maybe more of a roster would be worth putting in or at least getting out to the RAC and to the public.

Stan Benes – Within our public presentation we will sure mention the business of the RAC and just what it does.

Stewardship agreements – Partnerships with a Bright Future : Willy Frank

Willy Frank- gave handout

-What do you think of when the word partnership comes to mind?

Mike Bryant – Individual partnership benefit

Ron Poertner – give up half of what you have, and hope to get a little back from the other side

Willy Frank – “A cooperative relationship between people or groups who agree to share responsibility for achieving some specific goal(s).”

Willy Frank – What do you think when you hear the word Stewardship?

Received a number of responses....

Willy Frank – “The concept of responsible caretaking, based on the premise that we don’t own resources, but are managers of resources and are responsible to future generations for their condition.”

What are Stewardship Contracts/Agreements?
(see handout)

What are the Land Health Goals of Stewardship Contracts/Agreements?
(see handout)

Key Features of Stewardship Agreements

(see handout)

Stewardship agreements do not replace other programs, such as traditional timber sale contracts and service contracts, they are a tool in the tool box.

What is an example of what we have done locally?

Forest Health and Vegetation Management for the Judith and Moccasin Mountains EA aka JMLA
(approved in 2006)

10 year Stewardship Agreement with the RMEF-will allow us to implement JMLA

Land Help Objectives

(see handout)

Accomplished through a number of actions... (see handout)

Benefits:

(see handout)

-Carry-over funding (can be carried over for the whole 10 yrs) – if we do the projects for less money - we get to carry over the leftover money

Less government red-tape – the RMEF can do the leg work as they, talk to the private land owners and get things done – a lot less work for the BLM (e.g., RMEF has a professional forester on their staff to help with layout, contract administration, etc.)

Accomplish work that we would not otherwise get done – i.e. the JMLA– they can also help with the follow-up after the job is done (e.g., monitoring, weeds etc.)

Better leveraging of limited dollars and limited staffing to get the job done – not only from BLK, but also the RMEF. (As a private, non-profit conservation organization, they have other funding opportunities, such as if the habit is also going to help mule deer, they can ask the mule deer foundation for money, etc.)

Ron Moody – will check to see if the elk in the Judith's are over objected

This is relatively new to the BLM, Stewardship agreements have only been around since 2003

There is benefit not only for the BLM but also for RMEF

The agreement is not set in stone for the whole 10 years – if there were any reason that either the BLM or the RMEF to pull out either one could do so

Mike Bryant – Is this 10,000 acres only in the Judith or is it also in the Moccasins?

Willy Frank – I believe it is in both mountain ranges

Stan Benes – This access is a priority agreement with both us and RMEF and also the State and Private land owners.

Ron Moody – offering my best advice – you should sensitize yourselves to public access

Public access for hunting is a commodity and a trade anymore in Montana

Willy Frank – It is a sensitive issue and we are well aware of it and are continuing to work that way.

Willy Frank – We have the Judith Moccasin travel plan that we are trying to get finished up in the next couple months – one of the big things that we address is that we don't have a lot of public access in the Judith's and Moccasins.

Ron Moody/Tom Carrels – Can access be granted for biology and fire control?

Willy Frank - Every year there will be new dollar requests to be put into this 'agreement pot'
-the yearly funds will be put into this agreement and if the money is not used up we don't lose it at the end of the fiscal year

Other partnerships that we have worked with:

- Trout Unlimited
- Ducks Unlimited

Partnerships we are looking to establish:

- Wild Turkey Federation
- North American Sheep Foundation
- others....

Closing message: We are excited about the benefits of partnerships such as the Stewardship Agreement with RMEF and developing new ones and nurturing existing ones will continue to be a high priority within the Lewistown BLM.

Stan Benes – This is one of those efforts that is not on our “Have to” list – I would like to applaud my staff for putting in the extra work to get this up and going.

General RAC discussion:

RMP discussion

Mary Jones – The whole resource management process started 8 yrs. ago. – We (the group who filed the litigation) are making headway, we are talking settlements with the DOI/BLM.

Motion: Terry Selph **As a current RAC we support the RMP as it stands and all the work put into the RMP**
Withdrawn per motion submitted by Barb Cole

Motion: Barb Cole 2nd Terry Selph **The members for the Central Montana RAC would like to express support for both the method by which the BLM arrived at and the product produced by the BLM in their RMP for the Monument**

Failed

Comments around the room from each RAC member:

Brain Gasvoda – I strongly support

Ron Poertner – I would like to wordsmith it a little, take out the “would like to”

Vicki Marquis – I think this is a very important motion to support

Dan Teigen – From following this long process and now seeing an end in sight – with the settlement talks in sight – would this affect the settlement talks – I see this as undermining the settlement negotiations

Terry Selph – The red flag came out with our first presentation, I have not been involved with the RMP since the law suites came out. This morning I heard “I think things are coming to an end”. To me the

RMP was done well, the RAC supported it. All of a sudden I think that lawsuits and squeaky wheels are going to make a lot of people lose faith in the whole process and derail the whole thing.

Tom Carrels – This RAC helped to create this RMP, and lawsuits are part of this process. I think that this is kind of self serving. The legal/judicial system is part of the process and it makes the system better. I think we should support the making better of the RMP.

Pat Gunderson – I think that the BLM did a very good job at looking at everything and everyone’s side of the story and I do support the motion.

Larry Epstein – I see this as the last phase of the process. Based on my groups input I will most likely not support this.

Clay Vincent -Judgment and advice. I can see litigation only if the law says someone didn’t follow the law – I am for the motion.

Mike Bryant – Some litigation 10-15 years down the road are still not be resolved in other litigations. In my opinion the RAC says yeah we have done the best we can up to this point in time. I think it would be very frustrating to work on something for so many years knowing that someone is going to sue in the end – I support.

Nick Schultz – Give and take, there is compromise to every good product. I do support the RAC supporting this.

Mary Jones – I have sat in through the whole process, I know it is political. All we (Friends of the Upper Missouri) are asking it that the BLM do what they say they will do.

Barb Cole – I think that because some groups did not get exactly what they wanted they decided to sue and I don’t think that is right – that is why I support.

Ron Moody – Any single person has the right to sue at anytime if they believe that there is a failure to comply with law. If the RMP meets that test then the plaintiff will fail and vice versa. Holding the RMP to that test is an important process. This is very much a situation in which the division is built into the RAC. There are people on both sides of the lawsuit at this table – knowing that I think that we will not come to a consensus. Knowing that I think that we will go home a more divided group than when we came here and before we even brought this subject up.

Barb Cole – By not discussing it I think we are tipping the schedule the other way. Not that I think that we will come to a consensus but we could come to a fallback.

Tom Carrels - Haven’t we already said we support it by putting the RMP though the process?

Larry Epstein – Ron (Moody) hit it on the head. It bothers me to go away a divided group. I vote we table it until next meeting, when the litigation may or may not be settled – I may have a different opinion then (after the litigation is settled) coming back later.

Ron Poertner – I would like to see us go up or down on this and let it fall where it may. I don’t think that we are going to have any influence over the ongoing litigations. This whole thing has already when through protest and I don’t think any laws have been broken.

Vicki Marquis – The people who expressed that would not support, would they support if it said the “methodology” was agreed with?

Larry Epstein – It’s about public and publicity and I think we should stay out of it – it’s not our role.

Vicki Marquis – The people who expressed that they would not support the motion as proposed, would they support it if it just said the “method by which...” And omitted “the product produced.

Clay Vincent – Maybe everyone is upset that the prior RAC made statements that they didn’t get what they wanted...I think maybe that was the most inappropriate thing.

Mike Bryant – It implied that that person said they were speaking for the RAC.

Dan Teigen – I have to assume that the people suing aren’t doing so because they didn’t get exactly what they wanted but because there wasn’t enough give and take. If we have done all this work through all this time within the RAC and to be so close to being done, then within these last final lawsuits, then for us to say that – this would potentially flare things back up, I would assume that the nature of telling

the lawyers to go step back and try to resolve this, it's like trying to shut the gate before all the cattle are through the gate. It's bad form and could possibly cause a lot more work than needs to be done.

Terry Selph – I don't know that - if once this litigation is settled, then do I have 90 days to file a lawsuit after that. Category 1 and 3 did not file any lawsuits. If we could come out on a fallback I would be more than happy.

Tom Carrels – In my opinion the motion is redundant and self-serving.

Pat Gunderson – If someone could help me on exactly what the settlement talks are about?

Larry Epstein – They think the reasons are legal and methodological.

Ron Poertner – Road strip and grazing

They want to set aside the whole RMP and have it redone.

Dan Teigen - Western Watersheds may want to do that.

Ron Poertner – I don't think that the settlement outside of court is as far as we think it is, I think that the settlement is a long way from being settled.

Vicki Marquis – The RAC needs to step up and say the process was good.

Ron Moody – There are members of the RAC that do not think the process was good, I base my opinion on what effects this will have on the people sitting at this table.

Mike Bryant – I haven't heard exactly what all the fuss is about.

Kaylene Patten – As a RAC we need to make a decision and go forward.

Terry Selph – Call for a fallback vote?

Fallback for motion on the table:

Category I – Barb Cole – Y

Nick Shultz –Y

Mike Bryant – Y

Terry Selph – Y

Brian Gasvoda-Y

Category II – Mary Jones – N

Larry Epstein – N

Tom Carrels – N

Dan Teigen – N

Ron Moody - N

Category III – Clay Vincent – Y

Pat Gunderson – Y

Vicki Marquis – Y

Ron Poertner - Y

Absent Troy Blunt

Larry Epstein – There is no way we don't support the people of the BLM and their effort.

Pat Gunderson – What Ron M. brought up about leaving the meeting divided – I do not feel like that in any way.

General RAC discussion:

Ron Moody - Two meeting ago – RAC recommend that the BLM create a video of pre-European/Native American life in the Missouri Breaks

Stan Benes – We have discussed it and would like to do something similar to the Pride and Perseverance video. It just costs a lot of money – we do hope to get one sometime next year.

Subgroups formed at this RAC meeting and their schedules:

Need staff assigned to each subgroup

Bison issue

Meeting date: February 9, 2010
Time: 1:00 pm
Place: BLM Office Great Falls
Members: chair – Ron Moody
Barb Cole
Tom Carrels
Pat Gunderson
Troy Blunt
Vicki Marquis
Dan Teigen

Amenity Fees

Meeting date: January 27, 2010
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Fort Benton
Members: chair – Larry Epstein
Mike Bryant
Terry Selph
Ron Moody
Clay Vincent

Stan Benes – next RAC meeting I hope to have a short field trip
I got some positive feedback on bi-monthly updates
We'll have several river trips planned end of May/June
We'll have some short field trips

Next Meeting Agenda:

Where: Lewistown District Office, Lewistown Montana
When: April 13-14, 2010
Times: 10-5, 8-3
Public Comment: 10-10:30 ½ hr RAC, 8-8:30
Social: Mexican
Hotel: Own reservations

Agenda items:

Undaunted Stewardships
Fee proposal and realignment of Forest Service proposal

Fracing presentations – Dan Teigen and Mike Bryant to coordinate
Subgroup reports
Field Trip
Public access project
ARRA Project Update

Ron Moody – The Fracing presentation will be a 1 hour informational presentation on the agenda – not necessarily at the next meeting

Travel Vouchers were completed and the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

**Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Public Comments
January 12-13, 2010**

January 12, 2010

Hugo Tureck

I am handing around an editorial that appeared in the Billings Gazette. It probably appeared in the Lewistown paper and it will appear in a great number of other papers. It was written by three conservation groups: the Friends of the Missouri Breaks National Monument, the Montana Wildlife Federation, and the Montana Wilderness Association. It simply reaffirms what we have done all the time out here, and that is we support the grazing. We support the idea from day one. I want to say this, and I am speaking out today because I was the original chairman of the RAC that held the meetings, and I can assure you that every conservation group that testified before the RAC during that period of time testified in favor of grazing.

They came to me, some did, and asked why should we support grazing. I took them over to a map and showed them a map, and I showed them all those white spots of private property, and I says, what happens to those if we remove grazing? What value do they have? And then I talked a little bit about communities that are dependent upon agriculture. So they went and were committed to grazing from day one. It's something that we've held and still are today.

Now, when we talk about grazing this doesn't mean it doesn't recognize there are problems and issues that need to be dealt with. Of course. Riparian areas, and so on and so forth. This we hope we can work together on.

Just the last thing, very quickly, when I floated the river I was asked to float with Secretary Babbitt before the Monument was created, and before we had the hearings. He asked me personally what I thought of grazing. and I smiled and told him, look, I said, if buffalo ran there, it's my personal opinion it's probably a pretty damn good place for cows. And he even got a bigger grin and said, you know something Tureck? I said, what's that? He says, there's not one documented buffalo kill site in all of Arizona. At that point I walked on and thought, whenever this thing's done, they'll probably have grazing. And it was. It's built in. The only way you'll eliminate grazing is by an act of Congress. That's the only way it can be changed because it's built into the Monument.

Now, I think the ranchers knew this from day one. They just chose to lump all the conservation groups together and we laid this out to say here we are, and let's try working together. It's your choice, we've laid our side out. This is not a wink, wink, we support grazing and look the other way. Read the editorial. Thank you.

Glenn Monahan

I'm Glenn Monahan from Bozeman. I also own property in Fort Benton when I spend part of the year as well. I'm here this morning, I would like to comment on the bison issue which is on the agenda today. As we all know, bison at some point in the 1800s were hunted almost to extinction, but thanks to some visionary American conservationists we are blessed today with some still genetically pure bison. At the present time there is a federal and state program that is taking genetically pure bison from Yellowstone National Park, quarantining them for up to five years, testing them for brucellosis, and that quarantine facility as we speak has genetically pure, brucellosis-free bison that are ready to be removed from the quarantine area.

One of the stated purposes of that program is bison reintroduction on both public and tribal lands. I believe that I am speaking for millions of Americans today who support bison reintroduction on public lands, who would love to have the opportunity to view a functioning prairie ecosystem with thousands of buffalo present in that ecosystem, and myself included, there's got to be lots of people out there, too, who would appreciate the opportunity to hunt wild buffalo.

I do believe that specifically central Montana is an ideal place to be looking at bison reintroduction on public lands. We have a large swath of public lands here in central Montana. This is the original habitat for the buffalo, and we

well know that when Lewis and Clark came up and down the Missouri River that they reported seeing herds of bison stretching to the horizon in some cases.

I would like to stress that I do not think this is a local issue. This is a national issue. There are millions of Americans who I feel will be passionate about reintroducing buffalo to this part of the country. I noticed that one of the things on today's agenda is the suggestion to possibly create a RAC subgroup with bison, and I think that's a good idea. However, I am concerned that the actual intent of this could be an anti-bison subgroup. I appeal to all of the RAC members to go into this with an open mind and to not form a subgroup whose express purpose or agenda is to fight bison reintroduction.

I'm done on that. The only other thing I wanted to mention is I noticed tomorrow there's something about user fees on the Missouri River for camping and recreation. I have no problem with user fees for recreationists. I think it should be a revenue neutral program. And I also feel that all of the uses of federal lands and BLM lands should also be revenue neutral. Thank you.

Nancy Schultz

I also am speaking on behalf of the bison and wish to comment. I am speaking as a citizen who's been concerned with wildlife and habitat issues for a long time. In a recent letter that I got from the Governor about bison, one of the points Governor Schweitzer made was, quote, Montana will also continue to work with federal partners to be able to continue to carry on with the bison quarantine project that will allow disease-free bison to be sent to conservation herds elsewhere, thereby helping to preserve the important genetics of Yellowstone bison. End quote. Right up front, brucellosis is not the issue. The bison Fish, Wildlife and Parks has in quarantine and now needs to relocate are disease free. They've been in quarantine for years. Each has been tested over 20 times. In addition, the program design says that they will stay together in a secure area for another five years to continue the studies. Taxpayers have spent millions of dollars to insure that the bison to be relocated are disease free. The public wants these bison to be in place on public and tribal lands, which was the intent from the very beginning of the bison quarantine program.

The initial permit from the Park Service states the intent to be the establishment of bison herds for tribal and public lands. There are three disease-free herds designated for public lands and tribal lands: group one, 88 bison available now; group two, 50 bison available in 12/10; and group three, available 12/11. Speaking with Mr. Arnie Dood, who is the Fish, Wildlife and Parks bison person, he said that there are more disease-free groups that are available.

So it's my hope that bison will return to their native grounds. There is public land and tribal land available. To me, it is a very hopeful sign to see Mr. Crawford and CMR, and Mr. Dood, the appointed member of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to deal with the long-term placement of bison. I hope to be involved in this issue for a long time.

Johnnie Schultz

Good morning members of the committee, Mr. Chairman. My name is Johnnie Schultz. I am a rancher and current vice president of Montana Public Lands Council. My statement is against converting BLM grazing permits from domestic livestock to bison.

Some interesting and informative testimony was put forth at the Montana Cattlemen's Association meeting in Lewistown sometime back by a practicing veterinarian employed by Yellowstone Park about brucellosis, or ungulate fever in humans. It has either been forgotten or completely ignored by media and society for the reasons for mounting a defense of immunization of cattle for brucellosis. It was to protect humans from the disease. This timeframe was in the 1940s or before in dairy cattle.

Something has gotten totally out of control when the media keeps projecting the idea that bison could be on public lands and the removal of domestic livestock is a solution. Please weigh your decision carefully about converting permits until these issues have been addressed, as they will have an impact on local businesses and the people who reside in the area. And please don't give in to any disconnected groups who will change the landscape and culture of Montana forever. I respectfully submit this. Thank you.

Steve Forrest

I'm with World Wildlife Fund's Northern Great Plains Ecoregion program. I know that you folks have been battling this around a couple of times, so I am not going to go into any detail about our position. I think it's fairly well stated that we support bison on public lands. We support the restoration of bison on and private and public lands where possible.

To that end I just want to make the RAC aware of a document that has been in production for about three years now. There's about 50 contributors from academia, state and federal and provincial wildlife management agencies, NGOs such as myself. It's called the North American Strategy for Bison Recover. It's a document produced by the IUCN, which is an international body that is looking at species worldwide and their plight. We should be in the production phase on that in about three weeks. I think that will be a very useful document full of information about bison, bison recovery, bison conservation, bison health issues, and so forth. It will probably be the most comprehensive statement on bison that's available today. That will be available, as I said, within three or four weeks. So we will certainly make that available to the RAC if that would assist you in your deliberations.

I will be available for this discussion period that is following if you have any questions. Thanks.

Jeff Hagener

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Jeff Hagener. I am the managing director with the American Prairie Foundation. With me today also is Sean Garrity, who is the president of the American Prairie Foundation, and Bryce Christianson, who you've heard from before, who is our chief of field operations actually out on the ground. I think you've heard quite a little from us in the past. Bryce has given a presentation, there's been a lot of discussion in the past, so I won't go into a lot of detail on that again. We are here to answer questions if you have any during the discussion period. We would be very happy to try and respond to whatever we can. We do look forward to hearing Mr. Dood's and Mr. Crawford's presentation because they are effectively things that would be influencing or having something to do with us in the future if, in fact, those things come about.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity, and do look forward if there's some questions that we can answer those to your liking. Thank you.

Kirk Donsbach

Hello. My name is Kirk Donsbach. I am a local rancher and a board member to the Fergus County Livestock Association. I am representing the Fergus County Livestock Association today. We would like to submit our comments on the issuance of grazing permits for buffalo.

We acknowledge the right of an individual or organization to manage bison as a form of livestock and wish not to infer a prejudice towards cattle over bison, specifically on private lands, such that the infrastructure is in place to insure minimal risk of exposure towards the neighboring cattle. However, we do not believe that this insurance can be provided in the case of BLM grazing permits. The strongest arguments against issuing grazing permits for buffalo are as follows:

The BLM's Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument RMP states that fences will be designed to allow easy passage of wildlife (RMP, page 50). Personal experience implies, at most, a three or four-wire fence with the bottom wire high enough for antelope passage. The least aggressive fence recommended for bison is a five to six-stranded barbed wire fence with posts twelve feet apart as long as they have plenty to eat (Randy Sell, Department of Ag Econ, North Dakota State University). The predominant recommendation was for fences featuring six to eight high-tensile wires with two to four electrified strands (Lance Gregor, Ag Specialist under the Department of Ag). A height requirement of at least six feet was universal. Any fence that doesn't meet these requirements will result in trespass issues and an inability to conserve graze per the RMP's guidelines. A fence that meets these requirements would deny wildlife passage, putting the grazing plan in violation of the RMP and multiple use principles.

Currently, the Montana Department of Livestock considers brucellosis and the loss of Montana's Class 3 status a very serious threat to the livestock industry. An introduction to brucellosis would mandate the slaughter of an entire herd and many traceback herds. The economic cost would be extensive as the whole county and neighboring counties would be considered high risk areas, imposing extensive brucellosis testing, travel restraints, and in general, a loss of markets. When domestic sheep threaten bighorn sheep with the transmission of pneumonia in much the same way, the BLM moved proactively to manage transmission diseases. A change in class of livestock from cows to domestic sheep will not be allowed within 15 miles of areas occupied with bighorn sheep (Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument RMP, page 52). Keep it in mind that these were introduced bighorn sheep and not a native herd.

The Fergus County Livestock Association requests the RAC committee to afford the livestock industry the same proactive measures. Thank you.

Joe DeMars

Good morning, RAC members. My name is Joe DeMars, and I am a rancher in the Winifred area. I am also a member of the Fergus County Livestock Association, past president of that organization. I am here to back everything that Kirk says, and then I have a couple other issues here that I would like to question.

Mr. Monahan, your pure bison, I have a concern about that. When you get those bison to this area, what is to stop the spread from elk or something like that, as far brucellosis, back into this genetically pure herd. Another question I have is the management of these bison. As a rancher, I know what the expenses are as running cattle, and what it takes to pull these herds out of the breaks every year. Anything that we keep for replacements, we have to vaccinate towards these bangs—that's what we call bangs, it's for brucellosis—annually. We vaccinate our heifer calves, anything that we keep, every single year to insure that this disease is not spread. It's not overly costly, but the management prospect is there. You have to get them out of the breaks. You have to corral them somewhere. You have to put them down a chute and vaccinate them. You can't do it from a helicopter, or shoot them with a gun, or anything like that. So this is a concern.

Another concern of mine is the river as a boundary. It's not a fence. It's considered a natural barrier. Buffalo like to swim. We've all seen the Charlie Russell paintings, seen them crossing rivers and everything. There is an issue there as far as boundaries. Lewis and Clark, did they happen to document the condition of the range when they saw all these herds of bison?

As far as user fees on the river, I think that something should be established in accordance to the level of profit that's being made by floaters coming down the river. If they are pulling a profit, they need to be covering some kind of an expense, because there are people down there taking care of these outhouses and putting out fires when they burn their toilet paper and stuff like that, and all this has to come back on someone.

One more note, I had a fireman tell me about four years ago that had our range not been grazed, the fire that they put out there by the floaters would not have been contained. That's it. Thank you.

Matt Knox

I would like to address the APF's attempts at conversion of leases from traditional cattle operations to bison. I am also concerned, as Joe and Kirk mentioned, about the brucellosis issue. I feel strongly that even if they start with brucellosis-free buffalo, they will end up with brucellosis after a period of years. I think the fencing issue as outlined by Kirk is a very important issue to raise. They, having covered those issues probably better than I would have, I am going to go on. But first, I am going to say this is the fourth time this has been on the RAC's agenda that I know of, starting last January, and groups of us have continuously asked for a resolution from this RAC advising the BLM to place a moratorium on the conversion of those leases, and I would ask for that today. I think we all have enough information at this point, especially after the presentations that you're going to hear this afternoon.

Something that's not on your agenda today, but I'm going to throw it out anyway, as I am sure you are all aware there are several lawsuits against the resource management plan for the Monument. A lot of out-of-state money is

coming in to try to tear down the RMP and make them start over. I am here today to say that that wouldn't be good for any of us. This was a long, torturous process as everybody who was involved with it knows.

Speaking for our side, we certainly didn't get everything that we wanted. In fact, we are very unhappy with certain issues. We filed protests on some of those issues. Our protest was rejected. We had long conversations amongst ourselves, should we take this to court, can we afford it, on and on. We finally decided that no, we can basically live with the RMP. We're not completely happy, but we can live with it so let's move on. Well apparently, the other side doesn't feel that way and they are going to tie this thing up in litigation for awhile. Nobody's going to be the winner.

So I guess what I would ask for related to that issue, I think it's appropriate that this RAC pass a resolution supporting the resource management plan for the Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument. Thank you.

Linda Newman (statement read by Matt Knox)

Linda Newman from Winifred, she is president of WIFE, that's Women Involved in Farm Economics, says:

Dear RAC Committee,

I am unable to attend the RAC meeting today but have previously testified in two other RAC meetings concerning the American Prairie Foundation. I am again representing all of our Montana WIFE members in speaking against the project that APF is pursuing in Phillips County. As I have testified before, I believe it is, in fact, a takings of private property. The argument will be made that people can sell to anyone and the buyers can do whatever on their private property and that may be true. However, the APF makes no bones about what their intentions are and not everyone is going to want to sell to them, so for those ranchers I consider that a taking.

By introducing wildlife that cannot cohabitate with domestic livestock on APF's acquired properties, it will be just a matter of time before the other ranchers are going to be affected by these actions. I believe that the RAC committee has had sufficient time to review this project and should be able to make an informed decision. I would hope that you consider all of the testimony you have received so far from concerned ranchers in and around the area, and not let the deep pockets of easterners weigh your decision in letting this project go forward by changing BLM grazing rules to accommodate their actions.

Sincerely,
Linda Newman, Montana WIFE President

Tim Faber

I am Tim Faber. Mr. Chairman, I am not here to be in favor of bison reintroduction. I am more concerned about the dialog of this discussion as it started. During the Reagan administration William Bennett was labeled a czar. I just shook my head at the time. Many years passed before scholars realized the definition of the word czar, so now everybody in the present administration, all the cabinet officials and department heads, are now czars because it has a diabolical meaning now. And so it is with the misleading word play and rhetoric here on the local level and anyone who witnessed the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument resource management plan and environmental impact statement process, such examples of dehumanization such as Clinton is a pervert, wacko environmentalists or obstructionists, when, in fact, the real obstructionists detracted from the important issues at hand and they displaced their antagonism, resentments and provocation and therefore did not participate in a constructive dialog.

And so it is that the fearmongering mindset seeks to incite the masses and that basic fear of base mode of change, or should I say stubborn repugnance to change, is to be expected and it should come as no surprise that these detractors who now serve on the RAC continue this manipulation. This dialog on bison ranching got blown out of proportion right from the start. There was this resistance to alternative livestock production and it brought forth such comments as the violation of the Taylor Grazing Act, and there was a comparison of reintroducing bison to reintroducing wolves. People hate wolves, so there's your fearmongering. If ostriches were classified as livestock and a private enterprise chose to raise them, that's called capitalism and there's nothing we can do about it but grumble.

In looking at one of these comments here by a RAC member, it says that didn't see any difference between the fenced bison in the private reserve and the free roaming animals that can be introduced under the public conservation initiative. I've read through whatever public conservation initiative that's talked about here but the one presented during the Bush administration didn't say anything about free roaming animals. So it's this comparison here with fenced bison and free roaming animals. You know these bison aren't going to be free roaming as long as there's fences. It goes on to say it's still setting up a huge prairie reserve in this part of the country. Well, whatever we do on BLM land is one thing, but a prairie reserve in a national wildlife refuge is a reserve and a refuge. It's kind of the same thing.

So basically, my point is I think there's been a dereliction of responsibilities of RAC members offering personal convictions to the press. This came from the Great Falls Tribune to the press, before weighing input and weighing the values and comments from both sides. I would like to participate in these proceedings, but I know this discussion on the bison will ramble on and on and drone on and on into non-issues, so I think I'll just go home and read the adventures of Don Quixote and figure out why this guy keeps chasing windmills.

Sean Garrity

I am Sean Garrity. I work with the American Prairie Foundation. I wanted to offer to get together. One of things I think we can do for the RAC is just speaking didactically like this can give the RAC some information, but I think it might help a lot if some of the public, we could get together and have some dialog off line and then be able to come back to future RAC meetings and say I've spoken with these people and here's kind of what we came to. So I would like to just offer, I'm here today, I would be glad to get together, say at lunch, with Matt, with Joe, with Kirk, anybody else to talk about these justifiable concerns. How are you going to contain these bison? That's a justifiable concern. What about disease, can you help me understand that? We can talk about disease, maybe even bring a vet to lunch there in the back there, Don Woerner. We can talk about that. So I just want to offer to get together and rather than just talking at each other didactically with no dialog back and forth, why don't we go off line. You can ask me all the questions you want and we can explain where we're coming from. Not that you're going to buy it, but I can better understand your concerns as well. So I just want to offer that. Thanks very much.

January 13, 2010

Janelle Holden

Good morning, everybody. I am Janelle Holden. I am with The Wilderness Society. I am based out of based out of Bozeman. I am the northern prairie campaign coordinator. Most of you know me. This might be my fourth or fifth RAC meeting. I usually sit in the back. You can always come over and bug me during breaks if you want. Not too much to report today, but I wanted to let you guys know that we are in settlement discussions with the BLM concerning the lawsuit that we filed on the Monument RMP. That would be us and the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Oil and Gas Accountability Project. Those are going well, and hopefully we will have something to report to you at your next meeting, I think in May. I can't say much. We had concerns about motorized access in the Monument and we are trying to work out some of those concerns with the BLM.

And I wanted to share with you that all of the monuments that were designated in the late 90s, early 2000s, they are having similar issues with their RMPs. I am just reading about the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument where I used to live in Colorado, and I read this quote that I thought was good from the BLM. This is from the San Juan public lands associate manager: when people think of multiple use, they need to remember that doesn't mean every use on every acre, especially in a national monument which has a special management directive and a proclamation from the President that protects certain values and elevates them over others. So I just thought I'd share that with everybody.

And then in terms of today's agenda, I just want to give a thumbs up to a subgroup on recreation fees. I think that's a really good idea that you're considering that. And also a thumbs up to the BLM for taking such a great lead on cottonwood regeneration and impulse flows. We really appreciate the BLM's lead on that project and Stan will give you an update later on that. We've been involved in that project as well and hope to work with all of you and the BLM to move that forward. That's all I had this morning. Thanks, and I'll be in the back if you have questions.

Don Woerner

Good morning, everybody. I am Don Woerner. I am a veterinarian from Laurel, an ex-RAC member, Eastern Montana RAC a few years ago, and I didn't get a chance to talk yesterday. I wanted to talk a little bit about brucellosis, but I wanted to tell you who I am also. I've been in practice about 42 years in Laurel, mostly range beef cattle, small animals, horses. I've become a little disillusioned with what I call industrialized agriculture – feedlots where we crowd animals in, feed them grain, and then use non-therapeutic antibiotics to mask liver diseases that occur. High production dairies, I realize we've got to feed the world, but I hate to see us doing it this way. When the U.S. and Canada talk about obesity, I think we need to do something with our food system. That's kind of where I come from. I love history and I love the bison, and I'm kind of a closet environmentalist. Maybe not so much closet, I am an environmentalist. I appreciate Montana but I don't like, I was reading Western Watershed's web site and the comment on the front of that web site, I don't feel we accomplish things when we do that. So I don't claim to be an environmentalist like that group. I'm fourth generation family ranch, but I didn't get to be on the ranch because there simply wasn't enough. You know why. I had to get out and get another occupation.

I love buffalo. And why? They don't take any crap off of you. Excuse the word. But they really, they are a lot like cows. I like cows, and cows and buffalo act a lot alike. We can learn an awful lot about cows. What we know about buffalo can help us with cattle production, especially the type of production, a lot of you know _____, this lower size of calving in sync with nature, all this kind of stuff really interests me as a veterinarian. I like grass cattle and local markets. I'd like to see more of this. I don't like to get into the feedlot situation.

Anyway, I want to talk real quick about brucellosis. It's a bacteria. It's intercellular. It's in the cell. Very hard to immunize for. It has what's called latency because it hides in the cell. Sometimes it doesn't come out, and that's what we worry about with the buffalo, with this quarantine program that we're currently going through. It's a select agent, although not a very good one. It can be used in warfare. It is possible, although there's a lot of better products. It's a program disease. By that I mean things like TB, brucellosis, trichomoniasis. We have agencies that control this disease. Oftentimes it's hard to mix biology and politics and commerce. That's one reason we're having so much trouble with brucellosis. It's not because of the disease, but because of how we have developed over several years managing this disease. Research is mostly on cattle and not on bison. We need more research on bison.

One last thing I want to say is that yesterday Mary Jones came to me and asked me for some information on brucellosis and I said I would like to do that. I would love to offer to come to your special group and make a report. I could prepare it ahead of time and talk it over with Dr. Zaluski at the Department of Livestock and some biologists, get a different view of it. Also, I just Googled brucellosis last night. There is a wealth of information there. Some of it's right, some of it's wrong. But I want to leave you with one fact. Brucellosis in bison is no more serious than brucellosis in cattle. Bison, if anything, appear to be less susceptible to the effects of brucellosis than cattle do. It's the situation in Yellowstone and the greater Yellowstone area. Always we hear on the news, bison/brucellosis, brucellosis/bison. Just change your thinking this way, or try to. And if you want to know the animal that we're having the biggest problem with, with brucellosis in the United States, it's feral swine and we're not doing a thing about that.

It would be nice to know a lot more about elk. Elk has been proven to transmit brucellosis to cattle. Bison has never been proven in free-ranging conditions. However, I have no doubt it could happen. It has happened in laboratory conditions. You put them in a pen next to cattle. They abort. Cattle pick up the disease. Bison can pick up the disease from elk. That's been proven in Grand Teton National Park. We had a brucellosis-free group of bison at Moran Junction that was tested and vaccinated for many years and finally they were turned loose onto the Grand Teton National Park. They found the feed grounds down there at the National and they got brucellosis from elk. There's no doubt about it.

Tim Faber

I'm Tim Faber. Mr. Chairman, I could read these notes off in three minutes or less, but I keep shaking so bad that I'd like to have a podium or desk here that I could put my notes on too. I'd also like to have a podium for security too, because I have these recurring nightmares that I'm in a crowd of people and all of a sudden I look down and I don't have my pants on. But like other fears, mine will come to pass and we'll move on.

Yesterday, some of the very divisive responses I talked about surfaced, and Mr. Chairman, I think that veering from the traditional format and allowing questions to be directed to the public only enabled a certain amount of entitlement in which the discourse was disruptive.

A Fergus County Commissioner commented at a recent RAC meeting that reserve grazing allotments, those allotments that are set aside for a season to let the grass regenerate, should be automatically granted to the nearest leaseholder instead of being idle for a season. That's another example of entitlement and another thinking there that's akin to power and control, self-centeredness.

At a recent RAC meeting a fellow displayed 29 hats and just assumed that if you raised buffalo you won't own a John Deere hat, you won't buy a John Deere tractor, and that every implement dealer in seven counties will go belly up. These are just some of the assumptions that just seem to go on and on. We heard yesterday that a herd of bison, though 100 percent brucellosis free, might contract brucellosis, assuming that a herd of cattle might not.

These assumptions and conjectures just seem to waste time. We're not focusing on the real issues. I thought that this grazing issue could be put on hold for awhile but it was no surprise to me to hear the WWP lawsuit in light of all the resistance.

I am here to testify that while there are good cases of grazing management in the Monument with BLM land, there is a small cottonwood grove a mile downstream from McClelland Ferry in the Woodhawk allotment that gets perennially hammered. It's just a few mature trees that aren't going to be there in a hundred years. So we got to look at these situations and we got to draw attention to these issues. I would like to see ranchers here like Mr. Gasvoda continue his good grazing practices and allow grazing on certain areas of the river where those cottonwoods are unaffected and pass that on to his kids. But he's not afraid to rub elbows with the enviros, and I think with this resistance that we see we're just not getting much accomplished on that. Thank you.

Bryce Christiansen

Good morning. I am Bryce Christiansen, the lands manager for the American Prairie Foundation based in Malta. I would just like to clarify a few things that keep popping up meeting after meeting. I think it was discussed somewhat yesterday. In regards to our fences that we use for bison, we did an incredible amount of research with lots of different agencies and other bison producers, including the BLM, and we ended up with a fence that had to meet BLM standards on our allotments and on our private land. It's 45 inches tall, which is, I believe, three inches taller than the normal BLM standard but still allows wildlife access readily for all animals that are in the breaks and in our neighborhood. It's smooth wire on the bottom, 18 inches, for antelope migration underneath. The second wire from the top is electric. We train all of the animals when we first get them to electric fences and it works very, very well. They definitely respect that. We've had no trespass issues at all with our animals leaving the ranch since we installed that fence, and it has worked very, very well.

In regards to disease testing, from the beginning, and this was before I worked for American Prairie Foundation, our staff met with many, many people including Don Woerner, vets, and the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance based in southern Phillips County, and came up with a Memorandum of Understanding on how we would proceed to their satisfaction with the disease testing. We have met all of the requirements and then some. They've definitely softened their stance in regards to that. We brucellosis test all of the animals at the source and on the new batch that we'll be getting, we actually test at the source and then again 60 days later once we get them at the ranch for brucellosis and TB and many other non-reportable diseases. Everything is going very, very well in regards to that. That's no different than any other livestock operator that's doing the appropriate disease monitoring and testing.

One last thing. I've offered this before, but now with the new subgroup that's formed that might be more possible, but individually or as a full RAC group or as your subgroup I would offer to give you guys a tour if anybody wants to come up. Or for your subgroup, possibly, we've got some facilities to hold a meeting. If you had different people you wanted to come speak we could offer to help host that. Thank you.

Sean Garrity

I'm Sean Garrity with American Prairie. I just had three things I wanted to cover. One is about the BLM. It was interesting listening yesterday about, I went out with some folks from Winifred and other areas talking about questioning about how we operate, and do we get special treatment from agencies – FWP or BLM – so I was surprised that people were surprised that we don't. That we have to operate exactly within the same rules as any other operator with regards to rest-rotation, with regards to fencing, where you are in the wintertime, the animal unit fees we have to pay, this kind of thing. So I realized we've got some work to do there in terms of our communication. I'll talk about that in a second.

I also noticed people, I think none of us like to feel like we're being railroaded, that a moving train is happening and things are going too quickly. I heard some comments about that. I want to let people know, just from us for what it's worth, the way we're working with the BLM right now is working exactly right. The rules that are laid out that we have to work within work well for us and our business model. I'll talk about the business model more later because I think people are not quite understanding of that, which is understandable. But the way we're working with BLM could go on for decades. We don't need any big, huge changes. It works just right, hopefully how it does for other operators. They are completely fair with us from Mark, Rich Adams, BJ Rhodes, our allotment guy. And as far as the moving train idea, people were talking about a moratorium. I just wanted to let you know we don't have any requests in right now for a change of use from one livestock class to another. There are none right now. We don't need any in the immediate future. So we're not placing a moratorium on ourselves, but just so that you know, we don't have any immediate requests and things are going very slowly. We've only got a hundred animals. By this time next year we'll have 200. It's growing real slowly and we have way more land fenced already than we really need for those animals. We filled the rest of the land with cattle. So we're not up against the wall and saying, Mr. Albers, let's get going with the next change of use. We're okay. We could go on for a number of years, actually. So it's going fairly slowly. I just want to let you know that.

I would encourage you too, on Bryce's suggestion. I also noticed when I talked with some of the guys yesterday that people justifiably, I think, are taking great offense at some of the comments that come from environmental groups. I'm just going to vilify Western Watersheds, I guess, because I saw the front of their website. I think it's atrocious how they come across, and I think there's probably to degrees other people who come across as ranchers are villains. And I can see why that would be offensive. You look at any one of you say come take a look at my place, it's not like whosever trampling the cottonwoods down by the river, whatever, I do a good job. Well, I ask the same thing of you all. Don't lump us in with other bison operators who don't take care of their fences, and bison run around, etc. and get shot and that kind of thing. Come take a look at what Bryce does. He manages a very large landscape and this guy runs an extraordinarily tight ship. We are fence fanatics. We are obsessed with animal health. Come take a look at what we do and realize that just like with your property wherever it might be, come take a look at where our values are, how we operate, and I think you'll be surprised and impressed with what this guy does.

Lastly, I feel like you guys are set up a bit. Not anything wrong with the structure or anything, but to take comments from all of us, the public, and try to get comments of real value that you can bundle together and then give advice to the BLM. This is my first RAC meeting, by the way, so I learned a lot yesterday, particularly talking off line with the folks, one of the things I hope we can do, and I'm talking about APF to help a bit so that we don't waste so much of your precious meeting time, is do some off line work. I talked with some guys yesterday. We need to go to Winifred and some other places and spend some hours answering questions and coming to understand their concerns. I learned a lot listening to these guys yesterday about how we are unknowingly and unintentionally getting them upset with actually some erroneous information. It's not their fault it's erroneous. It's just out there. They can only work with the information they've got.

So what I think we can commit to do, myself, Jeff, and others from APF, is get on the road a bit more with specific targets of people to talk with and let them ask lots of questions about the business model and whatever it might be,

long-term, short-term goals, those kind of things, and us to come to understand exactly what's bugging them. A lot of what I learned yesterday, a lot of it ain't about us at all. But there's more to discuss. What I hope the product of that is that when we come back, sitting here like we're doing now and make public comments, that we can somehow have an effect on the quality of those comments and the value of those comments so they don't cancel each other out because you're just hearing opposite views being hurled at you. So I'll just commit from APF's standpoint a bunch more road time with specific people, trying to answer questions. It doesn't mean everybody's going to love us and turn into donors or anything, although that would be nice.

Question from RAC: Yesterday you talked a little bit about on the web site, what lands that APF either owns privately or, I think you used the word control, and it seems like it includes the 40,000 acres that are grazing allotments that used to be associated with that on the CMR. What really is the deal there as far as controlling the 40,000 acres on the CMR?

I'll take a look at the web site and see what's going on there. We may have made some errors and given the wrong impressions. I'll take care of that. I'll take a look at it and we'll fix whatever is not giving you the right impression. Reality is when the property that borders the CMR and a property actually has some grazing privileges, when that sells the CMR's general practice is to then, at this point how long it's going to go, retired is not the right word, but they take them out of grazing rotation. So when we buy a property it actually previously, the day before we bought it, had some grazing on the CMR, those don't come with it. We don't have anything on the CMR. Zero. That's just the way it is. And that happens with any landowner. If you were to buy something ... it's not going to transfer to you because they are on a cap of working certain areas of the CMR, including everything all of the acreages we're involved in, not transferring them.

If bison showed up on the CMR, they would consider them wildlife and that would be okay, right?

Not our bison. If our bison showed up on the CMR they would call us just like any other producer and say, your livestock are on the CMR. We'd prefer you get them off.

I think your website does say we control like up to 40,000 acres on the CMR.

I'll take a look at that. If that's the case, my apologies. There's a chance there's a wrong impression. We'll get it fixed.

The WWF's purchase of grazing leases in the CMR, does that have anything to do with APF?

No, the National Wildlife Federation and World Wildlife Fund put that thing together. They put the money together and they offered it to the entire rim of the Charles M. Russell wildlife preserve, with a very small chunk of that in Phillips County, a little bit in Blaine. It was not a buyout. It's called an auction. They have a pot of money and said if you're thinking of getting out of the CMR anyway, rather than just having it retired and not getting any benefit, how much money would you take to go early. It was an auction that people had a choice to participate in or not. I can't tell you how that went, how much money was spent or who took advantage of the auction.

It had nothing to do with APF operations?

No.

Resource Advisory Council
Lewistown District Office Conference Room
At Lewistown Montana
Meeting Notes
April 13, 2010

Kaylene – Welcome, Pat is not able to attend due to the weather, Barb is not able to come due to weather, and Tom from Ft. Benton is not able to come due to weather. Ron Poertner is waiting for the snow plow so he should be here by about 11:00 and I have not heard from Brian or Nick. Let's get started and move onto public comment.

Ron Moody – This is a golden opportunity for a small group of people to take charge and change the world.

Any motions to put on the table?

This is the opening of the public comment period for the Central Montana RAC, are there are persons in the room who would like to speak to the RAC? I will table the comment period and we will move onto the agenda, if people do show up and want to visit with us then we can adapt to that at that time.

Kaylene – Before we do that, it would be nice Craig, if you will introduce David.

Craig Flentie – Introduction of David Abrum, External Affairs work in Butte, he is also involved with their Resource Advisory Council. He now has the opportunity to watch a couple other councils in action.

Kaylene – The agenda is behind you, you also have on the yellow paper in front of you. (Went over agenda, recapped the tabling of the public comment period and on cancelations of speakers)

- Tomorrows field trip has been cancelled due to the weather

Looking at the agenda, we will see how the day goes, but you may just be out of here after today.

Any questions, changes or additions?

Ron Moody – I would like to go ahead and discuss and make the decision on if we should compress this meeting into a one day meeting.

There is a motion on the table to compress our meeting to a one day meeting

Motion (Larry, seconded by Clay) – Compress agenda to one day meeting and end today. Complete 4/14 agenda items today.

Consensus

(Nick showed up, making the quorum)

Kaylene – Is there any items that anyone thought of that they may want to add or discuss during our general discussion meeting?

Terry Selph – We had a guide meeting and I would like to kind of give a little update on the guide meeting that we had in Ft. Benton. I don't care win, at the end of the day?

Kaylene – Ok I will add it in at 1:00 then if that is ok with the group?

Ron would you like to do a synopsis and then we will go over last meeting notes.

Ron Moody – This is going to be very brief and I want to this point in time because we are about to review the meeting notes.

One of our discussions in our last meeting in January was our 2010 work plan and how we want to conduct our business as a council of the people. I just want to refresh your memory on a couple of key points there so that they don't get lost in the fog of non-institutional memory. We as a group of people want to produce results for what this RAC is for, pretty common sense idea but we need to keep that at the front of our minds. We are here on business, for purpose to give advice to the field districts of the BLM in our area, the Hi-Line and Lewistown. In doing that we want to bring the values of the constituencies in which we represent to the table and try to formulate, if we can, a common – I'm trying to avoid the use of the work consensus because it has become such a flag word, - but a common agreement on a piece of advice to the BLM on how to conduct some aspect policy and operations. If we can't do that and more often than not we can't, then they should at least have the benefit of our perspective from the constituency which we represent, to give them good access to those thoughts. We actually have two things that we do here, we can produce a product which would be a consensus item of advice to the BLM or we can simply conduct the process or trying to come to a consensus. Both of those are methods by which we do our work, and both of them are legitimate. We have a work plan, we should continue to plan our work and work our plan - sometimes even when it's cold. Remember that however idealistic it seems to have turned out to be that consensus is our objective and it means working through to an outcome that all will accept. That we all represent stakeholders, people who have some interest in the BLM; the landscape that they manage for us, we own it, they are the hired help – they manage it for the people of the United States. Even though the interest in our area have become strongly divergent, we all are going to end up living here anyway, no one is going away, so at sometime, someplace, some way we have to figure out how to get along with each other and be neighbors. That was what I hoped to do, is to refresh those thoughts so that they don't evaporate.

Vicki Marquis – Ron, I would like to mention in the work plan, I noticed that the Hi-Line RMP was one of our action items and noxious weeds. I wondered if we have some time today if maybe we could plug those into the agenda. If there is some time so that we can start taking some steps towards action on those two items.

Ron Moody - Would it be satisfactory Vicki to simply note it at this time, and as the day plays out? Particularly on noxious weeds, the State of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has just finished a statewide noxious weed management plan. I got my copy and haven't read it, but at some point we would probably be well served to invite somebody from the FWP over to discuss that plan for us, because I', sure that they already have that BLM stamp.
Any other RAC discussion at this point in time?

Mike Bryant – I don't know if we should add this to the agenda, but as Oil & Gas Stakeholder, I thought I would ask Stan and Mark if with the suspension of oil and gas leases, if there is something that Oil & Gas interest could do to help you out if you required to come up with some study on global warming or leases that are reissued again. Maybe this isn't the time, or we can bring it up on the agenda later on.

Ron Moody – Since it's a new event, I think it would be good to discuss what we know about it at this time.

Anybody else?

Let's move onto approval of the amendments of the meeting notes from the January 13th/14th meeting.

Kaylene – Vicki provided some input and so did Pat Gunderson. If it is ok I can let Vicki look at this and everyone can grab a quick cup of coffee. That is the only changes I had. Is everyone comfortable with that? Let's be back here at 10:30.

~BREAK~

Kaylene – Let's reconvene. Meeting Notes, did anyone else have any changes to meeting notes that they did not send me or get to me? Vicki could you summarize what changes you had in the meeting notes.

Vicki Marquis - I had said: on pg. 2 at the top, my comment, I just wanted that clarified a little bit. A couple typographical changes on the motion. On pg. 5, it didn't get changed, comment by Barron Crawford that the CMR is managed as a Prairie Preserve – I didn't remember him saying that, I would have asked for clarification on that.

Terry Selph – I would have been under the impression it's a Wildlife Preserve, I don't know that it's necessarily a Prairie Preserve.

Ron Moody – The charter of a National Wildlife Refuge is not ambiguous, it is what it is and it's described in law. Whatever terminology he used, or how it was interpreted, regardless of that it is what it is, it has statutory limitations.

Vicki Marquis – The next change I had was on pg. 7, Nick Schultz's comments – I had written that he made a good point on how the cows were specific to that area and it's not just as simple as replacing the feed. I think those changes were captured. And then on pg. 8, I just had some clarification to my comment about owing it to the public who came out and commented at the meeting. Pg. 8, I think that were a couple typos. And my first comments on pg. 9, I had asked that it be changed. On Pg. 11, I remember Mark giving a comment about the Hi-Line RMP – you might have to read what wording you put in there.

Kaylene – What we went back to was having Jerry Majerus, giving us some clarification on what is happening in the Hi-Line RMP. Pats changes were to strike to comment following by John Carlson about the web link, he thought that web link was wrong. And delete the work 'for' at the end of his statement. And a couple words that were transposed.

Ron Moody – Do I hear a motion in regards to approval of the meeting minutes for the January 13th/14th meeting?

Vicki Marquis – (seconded by Larry) – **Motion** to approve the minutes as amended from last meeting
Consensus

Kaylene – Those will be posted to the website, you can pull them off of there and they won't say 'draft' anymore.

Bison Subgroup Update

Ron Moody – This subgroup gathered for a meeting at the Great Falls Office back in February. We probably meet for a couple of hours, we had an extensive discussion on what we thought this effort should be, what the goals should be, what the product at the end of the process will be. Just in general the trend of thought in the group started off headed towards creating some kind of public forum to bring in discussion of the stakeholders issues and concerns and provide the opportunity to air those out. About 30-45 minutes later we had talked ourselves out of that and came back to an end point eventually that whatever else we did downstream, the first thing we should do is engage in some sort of well reasoned information gathering process. We were hoping to meet tonight to decide what to do next, but obviously that is not going to happen so I am going to be pulling the group after this meeting to get a resolution to that question. But what we did do in that meeting was agree that everybody would ask their questions, exhaustively, whatever matter of concern or unanswered information that you could conceivably think of, write it down, send it to me and I will compile them. That is exactly what we did; all but a couple members participated. The next step then is, I took that raw list, exactly how the members sent it to me and I organized by categories those questions and sent them back out to the members. I have not received any disapproval of how I organized those questions, and that is the paper that I passed out to you just now. I sent a letter back to the subgroup, explaining what I had done with their raw list of questions, and created a template for organizing those questions. Obviously I tried to combine a lot of like questions and insert them into the template. The subgroup members have that in their hands and we have to decide what next. Probably that is going to be some kind of decision on how do we get answers to these questions. Subgroup members who are here, do you have anything to fill in? This would be the other member's opportunity to tell us what you think this subgroup should do next in this information gathering process. Particularly I enjoy hearing comments from other constituencies about what extent and what role, would a BLM subgroup reach out and engage and extract information from non BLM entities. As you look at those questions it becomes clear, very quickly, that most of the subject resides in other people's houses besides BLM. So in order to get any kind of meaningful answer we are going to have to engage the MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, American Prairie Foundation and on down the line.

Vicki Marquis – When we talked about this, I remember some discussion, we did know for sure on if we wanted to involve the public or how much we wanted to involve the public, but there was a feeling that a lot of the answers to these questions would be things that not just the subgroup, but the public would be interested in knowing too. We had talked about maybe sponsoring a panel discussion, some sort of bison summit, that would bring the experts to a public forum where these questions could be answered. I don't know if we are at that point yet, but I don't think that we should lose that, at some point down the road we will want to do that, just to get the correct information out to the public and provide a panel of experts so that the public can ask questions and we can ask questions and get clarification. But I don't know exactly the correct timeline or how we are going to do that. If you or anyone else has input that would be great to hear.

Ron Moody- Vicki does a good job of eliminating the thought that was shared at the beginning of the subgroup meeting. The people of this region have a lot of interest and concern about this subject. And it is these people that can be the great beneficiaries. We started off brainstorming of how to get right to it, to bring the people and the experts together, then we started considering what the logistics and the hazards of that might be and deferred it downstream but we didn't take it off the table. We came to a group agreement that we needed to do some information gathering of our own first and then, decide

what we need to do next. Whatever we do here, to have any real value, it can't be just an inside job between us and BLM management.

Clay Vincent – It was on the news the other night, I can't remember who they were interviewing, it was either on the Great Falls news or the Radio. They were really investigating many areas in Montana on where to place the wild herd. It was mentioned in the Hi-Line area, but there were other areas mentioned too so I think that this is a good time to get the information and some accurate stuff out; because people are starting to hear about it.

Ron Moody – Recall at our last meeting we had Arnie Dude from FWP, Arnie is a technician type person who is one of our best people for working with the public. He has been assigned the task of exploring the possibilities of establishing a population of wild – free roaming bison in Montana. And what he is doing is going out and meeting with people and asking that question. Some of you may not know or may have forgotten that I am also on the FWP commission and I've been bird dogging this subject over there and it is really the state departments reaction to the same news that we received that there was this DOI bison conservation planning process going on, if they're doing that what do we need to do? And the state has no plans for introducing bison at all. But if it is a popular idea well go out and ask the questions. That is what you are hearing about in that press release, state FWP is going out, meeting with people and asking the questions. Arnie was really specific that that is all he is doing. Inside the department headquarters I have heard some conversations of this is something we can do, where can we do it? Possible location on the western side of the state, but even those are very difficult.

Mary Jones – Could we have a minute to read this handout again?

Larry Epstein – We aren't making an action on it today though right?

Ron Moody – I'm just making a report to the RAC on what's going on. I don't think that we need to bind ourselves to strictly here, if you want to read it during the day, this afternoon when we have RAC discussion we can talk about it some more. This is not heading towards an action here, this is just a report.

Dan Teigen – Vicki had mentioned public involvement, it seems like it's important that we try to seek the right balance between as much involvement but I think initially the more we prepare to get a coherent idea of what we are actually working on. So that when we do, whether it's a public forum or a variation of that, that it's solid enough that it doesn't just turn into a bowl of jello, it's too intangible to mess with. If we kind of corral ourselves to actual question, actual answers and actual issues. In order to just to obey theoretical of intangible, that you could go on for a lifetime of vagueness and I'm sure not of us care to spend much time, so coming out of that subgroup, you know maybe just a little more solidifying it. But we still have public members there, and anybody that appears at that meeting can certainly be involved. The more we make it tangible the more successful it will be when we go publically, people actually talking to them about things.

Ron Moody – I think the subgroup members were saying that at our February meeting that if we initiate a public discussion poorly prepared, that probably what we would get is simply more of outpouring of emotional reactions and anger and hostility building type interaction among the people. And that if we are going to do that at all we need to be prepared and as best we can create an informational starting point that's commonly shared. To paraphrase Daniel Patrick Lorna hand,

“everybody is entitled their own opinion but you not entitled to your own set of facts” If we can establish, and you can never do this comprehensively, building a common starting point of information.

Nick Schultz – Well can’t we get rolling on the panel? Let’s just assume all the bases were covered in here, can’t we start calling some folks that we think are experts and at least talking to them and getting sort of the ball rolling on this panel?

Vicki Marquis – I think we could, I’ve talked to MACD, they are interested in helping be a sponsor of a panel or a bison summit. I talked to Mike Galespy in the Governor’s Office, he thought it was a good idea. And maybe we could get some participation from the governor’s office. We probably also want to make sure that we include the American Prairie Foundation, the Rancher Stewardship Alliance and I guess there is a tribal commission on bison, I don’t know anything about that, but they should be a key player in this. I think that the sooner the information gets out the better.

Mark Albers – I think the question for me is whose office should this be done under; it seems like so many of them are outside. Should this be the sub RAC, or should it be put through the governor’s office?

Vicki/Larry – Probably through the governor’s office.

Vicki Marquis – But I think it would be appropriate for the BLM and the subgroup to be a key player in it. We have heard a lot from the public.

Ron Moody – Nick, you’ll have to forgive me for being a stickler with the process on this kind of thing, but I would like to take your question to the subgroup and get the people together again. Because that is really, ok we have our questions down, what do we do with them, and I would like to work that through the subgroup acting as a subgroup and come back. I think that it is a valid point that this is a concern of people now and not someday in the future and perhaps this subgroup should accelerate it’s efforts and move onto some product.

Nick Schultz – And to wait for the governor, I guess the way I see it, the governor’s already taken steps on how, the governor’s office has already taken steps if they are sending Arnie out, right? I feel like it’s the perfect situation for the RAC, we are a group of people with different interests or perspectives, why can’t we take the bull by the horns, get these people organized and get after it.

Ron Moody – That’s the question, I think that this RAC, this subgroup could take the lead as the unified point in a divergent reason or people. Several other people could also, but we could do that. There is a question there of whether this agency wants its RAC to do that.

Dan Teigen – I think the most important thing we have to offer would be whether a diverse set of interest groups with diverse backgrounds, we are well suited to find as well as anybody, answers that have come up. To take your pick on a category of question, if someone can peel back the layers and layers and find the actual issues, question and answer type of process. Then maybe after another round we would be that much closer to knowing exactly what we could offer, what would be beneficial in a public forum or meeting of some sort. And maybe something like the governor’s office might be more beneficial to convene an event better than a BLM RAC. But as far as finding answers and wading through, I think that’s our specialty. It doesn’t haft to be the governor, that’s just an example. That’s kind of how I see it, a way for us to make progress.

Troy Blunt - I don't oppose going down this road, but you're going to open a can of worms and this is a very complex subject and the BLM RAC only has authority to deal with bison as domestic livestock. So if we take on this discussion we are going outside our RAC authority and we're going to be discussing things that the RAC has no authority to comment on. So we can go there but just remember we are stepping out of the ring and we are getting into a bigger ballpark to do that so how much RAC time really should be spent going outside the ballpark and discussing the really big picture. Not that it isn't a really good thing to discuss, but as a RAC or a RAC subgroup we've got to be careful that we are not off. But are we wasting our time because we cannot recommend outside of our authorities. We just have to be careful we are not just burning RAC time.

Ron Moody – I share Troy's concerns on this and I think it would be good for us to hear some expression from management at some point on what you want. A question I wanted to pose to the subgroup was capturing a concept that Vicki expressed at the last meeting which would be supporting the creation of a non-agency aligned regional working group on the model of Devil's Kitchen. And hand over the product of our work to them to pick the ball up. But we haven't had that subgroup meeting yet so that's the way I would like to handle the subject is to get back into the subgroup meeting and talk about this and come back to the RAC again. But I'm hearing what Nick said and we need to do something pretty quick.

Stan Benes – I'm just going to comment, we do not manage wildlife, we only manage habitat. We don't have anything to say nor do we want to about what happens on private land. We have got that conservation initiative that keeps coming back up and we've been told that's something from the last administration. We have Discussed Bison just because of the interest of the group; I had to wrestle it off the agenda, that's a big part of why we have the subgroup here. We brought it on as an informational topic certainly not as a decisional topic.

Kaylene – We allotted 30 minutes for subgroup update, do we want to proceed?

Terry Selph – The Prairie Foundation has the National Geographic show coming on here pretty quick, you can go onto their website to see when it airs.

Ron Moody - April 22nd at 8:00pm Middrivers , channel 62

Mike Bryant – I may sound like broken record because there seems to be some legal recourse associated with the whole bison thing. I just have a question and it's outside the RAC, the FWP, said they are two years in the study, I was just wondering if there are commission studies at the FWP meetings here lately.

Ron Moody – FWP is not on the same wavelength. The intensity and immediacy of the concerns expressed of the people looming in this area that came to our public comment. They are initiating a methodical question asking process that is not sensitive to that intensity. The question of how privately owned domestic bison are handled on grazing leases, is to the extent of my understanding, the entire universe of concerns to the BLM. The question of bison as a wild animal is entirely in the charter of Montana FWP, you heard Barron Crawford say that last January.

Dan Teigen – I have tried to make this observation before, we are a RAC within BLM. And the topic of APF bison livestock makes sense. When we have half the town of Winifred coming to talk about wild bison, that is why we ended up with a bison subgroup, to say hold on a minute – let's get clear on what we are talking about . We can say BLM Livestock Bison over and over, but people are still coming to us with the subject of wild bison, do we just cut them off.

Ron Moody – You're simply reiterating what we have already discussed. I think that we need to pass that onto the subgroup. Can we getting a time and date on the agenda later.

Fee Amenity Subgroup

Larry Epstein – We met 3 times since the last meeting. We have broken it down: Public input on 3 issues: 1.) Length of the season (how long we will charge this fee each year) 2.) Geography (where to start Kipp or Coal Banks) and 3.) How much will the amount be.

Side issues, a good guidance comes from how the state deals with the Snake River:

How do you deal with private land owners?

Things we need to talk with the public about:

For the fee – do we charge it per trip, per person, per season, family?

How do we make it useful for the public?

We went out talked to users to get feedback, discussed and the main question was what do you do with the money? – This means that there needs to be public information.

Mike went out and talked to the paddlers and also to one of the stores, and I went to the store in Great Falls and we also talked to people we know who use the river.

We will meet June 8th at Fort Benton, and from there we will take it on the road.

Get ducks in a row and take it to the road

We have identified locations to go out and speak to users:

Winifred (August)

Havre (Malta, Chester and the Hi-Line)

Fort Benton

Lewistown

Great Falls

Helena

Gary said that a lot of his users are from Bozeman, and Terry said that a lot of the people he guides are from Missoula.

I will contact the people who administer the Smith River and talk to them about how they handle Private Use.

Mary Jones – Are you only covering the river?

Larry Epstein – Yes, we have talked about that and for now our geography is the river – decision was made by subgroup at our meeting.

There are so many private users from Ft. Benton to Coal banks, using the River for day use - question I got often was “how do you charge of inner tubes?”

Contacting private users

The only place I know of where there is a rule of what private land owners can and cannot do is the Smith River. We have identified websites that show what fees are charged in the west.

The only Rivers that we can find that don't charge any fee right now are any of the Flathead drainages and the Missouri and the Deerborn for day use.

Ron Moody - It would be important to me, to be able to see whatever you recommendation is, compared to Fees charged on other National Wild and Scenic Rivers outside of Montana in USA. These are national resources, not State resources.

Where this topic becomes controversial is the point and time in which we reach the Wild and Scenic.

It would be good to provide some sort of anticipation as to how you visualize to reach that point.

Terry Selph – We came up with a conclusion this morning, if you remember back when I did the travel plan in this area, Ron and I was the only RAC member on the subgroup, all the other people in the subgroup. At this particular time we feel like we will keep our subgroup to the four people who are currently on it and the BLM advisory employees, if the public wants to come to the meetings and give comment that is fine, but right now, it is too hard to gather stakeholder from some a large area to come to the meetings.

Larry Epstein – When the subgroups hold public meeting do we have to be put that in the federal registry?

Craig will check into if it have to be published federal register for a subgroup to meet

Ron Poertner – How do we then get this information out when you have subgroup meetings?

Larry Epstein – newspaper, radio, stores

List of folks to get releases out to, etc. – can we get a release out now.

We wanted to have two or three meeting before we sent out notices to gather ourselves and decide what exactly we wanted to do, get organized.

We do need to get public input in order for this to work.

We need to educate public to the extent that they don't use other rivers, that there really is a fee out there for almost all other rivers.

Can the BLM seek input by e-mail or writing from public from other states?

Mary Jones – The BLM had made comments before that they do not charge fees unless there are amenities. What are the amenities when charging fees for?

Weeds, camp sites, shelters, garbage removal, personnel

Larry Epstein – We also talked about BLM providing to local Search and Rescue, maybe radio equipment.

DanTeigen – Did you avoid getting bogged down in the concept of “it's not paying for itself. This is a whole different ball game, how the money is used.

Larry Epstein – The other component of this is a discussion with the BLM on how to collect the fees. And at what point you actually collect the funds, and how you monitor the payment. How a very limited staff assesses the fee.

Terry Selph – We thought about making the fee time to coexist with the motorized boat rules.

Ron Poertner – What about the Golden Age pass? Will this exist with that pass?

Guide Meeting Update

Terry Selph – Couple days ago we had our meeting.

The April Men's Journal has a general Missouri River article.

Mark did a really great job, last meeting I asked him to get information on one time permits, someone other than Special Recreation Permits, he gathered that information for us.

This is a tough issue, there is concern from the guides that there is illegal outfitting on the river and one time permits.

Concern: There are some groups making money off of float trip, for example, it's a boy scouts group that maybe advertises to float the river. They are getting these guys from New York and all these guys to come out there and they're are making a little bit of money off of this. The float trip is actually all part of going to the camp and doing things at the camp but part of their program is to go and float the river. So we are a little concerned about that, I'm just kind of going through the things that we talked about in the meeting.

One thing that we brought up is the number of people who are floating the river seem to have been going down for some time, we did have a little bit of a jump this year. We have asked the BLM if we could get involved with them a little bit more in the advertising of the river. If we could try to start bringing more people out here. There are so many people who don't know that the Upper Missouri River Breaks exists. We are trying to get that information out to the public; we will try to do a few things a little differently to try to get our numbers up a little bit.

Big concern about Judith Landing Boat Ramp – They are going to redo the boat ramp which is great (read letter) – concern of not being able to use the ramp when it is being improved.

There is a gentleman from our group who is interested becoming a RAC member, so we will still have a guide from our group on the RAC when I am done.

Public Access Project

Janné Joy – Introduction of herself

Last fall, when I met with you I was in the process of doing the grand tour, going around to those field offices and visiting with the Field and District Managers to get an understanding of what their access needs truly are and developing a list of needs.

I think the reason as to why you invited me back today was maybe to give you a brief update on the first six months or so and then to ask what's on your minds. It's an opportunity for me for me to listen to the RAC members and hear what's of concern to you. When I spoke with you before I had three main topics and I think that all of my visits reinforced those three topics so I will briefly go over them.

3 things:

1st Point: Taking care of what we already have – access that we already have, maintain it, keep it, post it, sign it. Make it known, keep it open – if we see it closed, make phone calls and see if we can't protect the access that we already have. Signing and replacing signs are huge. Driving the roads of MT you see big fishing access signs that the FWP has posted and you know if you follow those signs you can get to the fishing access you want. Or I see "Entering National Forest" or "Leaving National Forest", they have boundaries that are quite definable. BLM land, that's a little trickier, land ownership patterns don't always lie well in making it conducive to post signs. That is something that I am encouraging the field offices on, especially in areas where we can disperse recreation. Get people into areas that they might not be aware of, then what we are finding in some of the National polls that have been done: if they can disperse recreation there is more of a quality experience – whether it is hunting, fishing, camping or picnicking.

So signing is a big thing. When we have signing, we have sign problems of course. You have probably seen some of these signs [poster illustrations], they are all shot up and you can't read them anymore. The BLM is participating with the Sportsmen's Round Table in some of their initiatives; you may have heard of "Tread Lightly" and the new one "Respected Access is Open Access". Here are some flyers to pass around to let you know if you have opportunity to use these, they are available on a website. Tread Lightly brochures are also available, for any kind of public info. or displays. People have really been responding quite well to them.

When I was in Miles City I was asked, "Can we provide the GPS coordinates for trailheads so that people can download them into their own GPS units?"; we are just not there yet. It's an idea that we are batting around, I have been talking to FWP and our lead State Surveyor. We contribute information to the MT Cadastral Mapping Project. The next step could be to see if we could get the GPS coordinates to the state sponsored website so you could download them. We are exploring to see if we could partner with the State to provide that information to users.

FWP has a great website – they have a hunter/landowner stewardship project – with a respected access kind of idea. They are helping to educate land owners and users so that there is less conflict between them. A lot of user groups are more than happy to help get information out to their memberships to help us to minimize user conflicts. One bad experience kind of does us in.

2nd Point: Cooperating with the appropriate entity in keeping and acquiring access. A lot of times the appropriate entity to secure access is the County or the State, such as with a county road that has been in use for decades. Our supporting role is to help the county in litigation; we provide the public records that the county may need in order to go forth with their arguments.

Block management is another example of where we are cooperators; the FWP takes the lead on that. We are working with the DNRC to get a state wide cooperative agreement that will help us facilitate the exchange of reciprocal rights. Our two agencies are putting the framework in place to go statewide with small pilot projects. Another cooperative effort is keeping the interagency access council, right now it is just the State FWP, F.S., and BLM, and we would like to get FWS and Bureau of Reclamation involved. The Federal Lands Hunting and Shooting Sports Round Table MOU; we are still discussing it and looking at how we can provide access to those who love to hunt and fish. We are trying to identify specific access concerns to work on securing.

3rd Point: Acquisitions – going out and getting something new , whether that is an easement over existing roads and trails or looking at reciprocal rights where we would grant the land owner a right-of-way and they would grant us a road easement – they need to secure their access just as much as we need to secure our access. We can also be looking at acquiring larger parcels. We can use exchanges to achieve access, that particular approach is the all consuming approach – it takes so much staff time, not only for a realty person to process it but also for other members of the field offices staffs. The alternative to exchange is direct purchase of a larger parcel; my position will start incorporating what we call our Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisitions. We will be looking at using the appropriated money to purchase property – the big priority is whether that purchase will get us access. There are different ways of securing access, a whole spectrum of alternative methods. The starting place is always that main contact with the field offices, talking directly with the field managers. The field office will then address it, then they may elevate it up to me and I might be able to plug it into other opportunities. Then I can help with strategies and looking for funding. Unfortunately I am not each field office’s realty specialist. I will coordinate with other agencies and partners and help develop ways to secure funding. We expect some mutual projects with the State FWP, some out of Region 6 – their Glasgow office. I would be glad to open it up to hear your concerns.

Mike Bryant – Do you have a prioritized list of specialized projects for the Central MT area?

Janné Joy – We have a draft that included all three states (MT/Dakotas), the Central MT area does have a couple areas in there identified.

Mike Bryant– Something that stakeholders may be interested in would be a specific list to look over.

Janné Joy – The list is just not quite ready yet. It will be a flexible list, it will give us some of the framework to focus on, but it will be flexible.

Troy Blunt – When you are talking about large land acquisitions, do you consider net gain?

Janné Joy – Yes, we are always looking at net gain. What is that piece of land going to do to the tax base? Mark Albers mentioned that No Net Gain is part of the RMP.

Mary Jones – When the appraisal does not meet up, what happens?

Janné Joy – Under federal law, we can only offer the approved appraised value. If we are looking at an existing road easement for a couple of miles, our appraised values are just based on acreage and the landowners find that it's just not sufficient. So we then have the opportunity to partner with an entity and say the land owner would be willing to sell that road easement for a couple thousand more, and that entity is willing to donate that extra money above approved appraisal value, we will put all that money together at the end. It is very similar but on a much larger scale when we go for a larger piece of property. A larger property gets a little tricky, we do not want to be setting a market above what the true market is. We will be very cautious in bringing those partners to pay the landowner above that market value. It is very selective and on a case by case basis. Sometimes another entity other than the federal government will have to purchase that piece of land and absorb those extra costs. We do not negotiate value, this is designed to be fair – everybody is treated the same way across the nation– a level playing field.

If we do have a partner that is willing to donate the extra to the USA, we show that we paid the appraised market value and also show that there was an accepted donation – we are careful not to make a new market value.

Dan Teigen - No matter whom the extra money comes from; this could have an impact to the market?

Janné Joy – It could potentially affect it in the private appraisals done in the future. That is why we are so very cautious about doing that. It is different if it is just a road easement.

Clay Vincent – Do you guys look to the county attorneys or do you have BLM staff? Who goes through certain issues like road issues?

Janné Joy – Yes to both, in some instances it is the county that needs to take it on because it is a county road.

Ron Moody – Prior to being on the FWP commission, I was on the board of Public Lands and Water Access Association and have been for many years. The key reason for being on that organization is public access to public lands and defensible public rights – pretty narrow. Even narrower, that Association stops at the public land boundary, we don't engage in travel management. With that disclaimer at the front, I was listening to what you were saying about your three priorities, but there are two big elephants in the access room.

1st - Defending existing public rights access on historical access areas. During the time that we defend one situation, 1500 others are created. BLM had a notorious history of not defending that.

2nd - Knowing a BLM boundary when you see one – Signage, in other places other than BLM land there have found a solution to this problem. What happens when FWP game warden is called from a private land owner and is told that there is someone hunting on their land? – They are guilty until proven innocent.

Talked about two books – a 1992 GAO “Reasons for and Affects of Inadequate Public Access”

Janné Joy – The point of the GAO Audit was to acquire access where the line officer identified the need for access existed. We do not need access to every single chunk of federal or public land, that audit showed where we as managers deemed it important to gain access and where we are not able to get the access; that is the access needs that made those lists.

Ron Moody – While all is good in terms of improving public access, but until you effectively address those two issues there will be dissatisfaction.

Janné Joy – The BLM does not have a boundary management protection program. At the end of the month we are having a meeting for BLM realty people, to present a risk analysis that with GPS we can use new tools to determine survey points. With this we will be able to know if we need to schedule in full survey crews, use state licensed surveyors or cooperators, determine what level is necessary for the project.

We are working towards getting some boundary guidance for BLM to do risk assessments to start this summer with cadastral survey information and GPS.

Ron Moody – You mentioned taking pilot projects and expanding them to statewide projects. Maybe you could come back again and talk about Haydraw and Johnson Coulee project. That one has some conflicting issues with public access.

Janné Joy – Haydraw (DNRC, BLM, FWP) pilot project with state school sections, enabled us to balance and trade out amongst each other. FWP came in and did a lot of boundary marking to open it up. We are not quite there with the MOU to expand beyond the two pilot areas.

Ron Poertner – If The Nature Conservancy, for example, said they had a million dollars to donate to the BLM for an access project, can you just take the money and sign it over to a land owner? – is it that easy?

Janné Joy – No, if the feds are going to be involved we need to go through the appropriate process, we may eventually get there, but there is a process that needs to be followed. There are ways to streamline the process through TNC – we would certainly love for that to happen but we do need to follow the correct steps.

Ron Poertner – What percent do you get from groups coming to you to say here is a deal that we would like you to work.

Janné Joy – A very small percent. They are typically not looking to donate as much as to be reimbursed for the fair market value that the appraisal shows. They are willing to help us, but they are looking for margins to cover their staff costs.

Ron Poertner – Do you see down the road that there could be a mandate that would be kind of an unfunding mandate if this thing really succeeds?

JannéJoy – We always evaluate the piece of land to see if we can actually fund and afford the acquisition: hazardous waste, weeds, operations, campgrounds. We already do not have the capacity to be responsive to every purchase opportunity.

Troy Blunt – How would you replace the tax base?

Janné Joy – The Payment in Lieu of Taxes provisions we have discussed before. In addition, some of the big constituency based groups have created trust funds for the benefit of the county affected by the acquisition.

Terry Selph – It could be used, but there is not guarantee?

Janné Joy – Correct. That is why we are so conservative and attuned to the no net gain and what an acquisition is going to do to the tax base. I invite everyone to look at purchases case by case.

Ron Moody – I like to see the actual numbers.

Troy Blunt – Population factor plays in there

Ron Moody – We want access in use of our public lands

Nick Schultz– Following through with land acquisitions:

With the purchased Two Crow, I haven't seen any change.

Is there any thought along with this, what do we do about follow through.

[I don't think this was his question and point. Wasn't he asking if the BLM does any follow-up on land acquisitions to see if the public is really using the land or access? His point was that a family with school children was relocated, the consequences of the land acquisitions affected the county in several ways.]

Janné Joy – The effects in acquiring a whole property needs to be looked at when the decision is made up front. People's livelihoods are being centered on not providing public access. We find a big resistance to convey road easements. A whole property purchase may be the way we will provide access.

Nick Schultz – My family does Block management, we are not locking anything up
People are always looking for land access, but they don't want to walk to get there, they are on four wheelers and such, making ruts

ARRA Updates

Darren Knuteson – ARRA stands for American Recovery Reinvestment Act is the law the Obama passed to stimulate the economy and get some stuff done on the ground.

We have 9 projects in this area; collectively they are about \$3 million worth of work:

-Ruby/Limekiln Salvage Road – This is a road that will be put in up in the Judith Mountains to access some marketable timber and salvage some blow down timber. There will be a logging contract started hopefully this summer, this logging will be let for 3 years to get the timber out and salvage the blow down. The project is about 4.5 miles of road that they are working on right now. The contract was awarded on December 10th of last year; we had a pre-work meeting on January 4th. We just extended the contract due to weather conditions, they are about 60 percent done with that and should be done by the end of May. Also the state would like to use that road as well to access timber in that area. Cost is just around \$200,000

-Little Rockies fire Station – The station has had poor water that does not meet drinking standards. We are going to hook into the community of Zortman's water supply. Because our facility is so big we will put in a cistern to make sure that we don't compromise the community water system. The existing well would be used for fire suppression and irrigation or grass around the facility. That contract was awarded on December 18th. There will be a pre-work meeting this coming Tuesday. The contractor will move into play hopefully next week. The cistern is under ground. Cost is around \$80,000

-Lewistown Paving Project – We have a SEAT (Single Engine Air Tanker) base at the airport. We are going to make it easy for the SEAT planes to cycle through, they currently have to come in to fill up and then back out. Also we will pave the parking lot up at dispatch. As part of this project we will also be working to preserve the image of the airport. I think this one is about \$600,000

-Transportation plan in Monument - We will be putting in Road signs so that the roads that are open will be marked with a sign and number. We tried to target local youth (18 – 26 yrs. Old) - hired 4 people (college students), so there will not be a contract for that. Just over \$100,000

-Duck Creek Dam – This is a reservoir out in Petroleum County that is in need of repair to bring it back up to standards. It will bring the Dam in proper functioning condition. It currently does not meet safety dams criteria – the outlets need some work, the filters inside the dam need to be replaced. The dam is considered a High Hazard Dam. Will start in June and be done by September. It's about \$700,000

-Confined Space Project – We have several wells within the district that have what we consider to be a confined space. They are a vault and we are trying to remediate that so that the people who operate that don't have to crawl down into the vault and be exposed to potentially hazardous gases that can accumulate in those confined spaces. Should be done between June and July. About \$50,000

-Kipp and Coal Banks Contact Stations – Small log cabin like structures - at Coal Banks there will be a sprinkler system put in to enhance the grassy area for camping and will move two of the campground

host sites back. Kipp will be just the cabin (no irrigation system). With all the influx of ARRA money, the procurement staff at BLM is a little overwhelmed. The FWS can get the contracts going a little bit faster than we can so the Log stations will go through the FWS, Multi Agency Task Order Contract; we had a site tour last week with two potential bidders.

This will around \$500,000

-Bullwacker Culvert – This is up on Cow Island Trail Rd. Right now it is an 11 ½ ft. culvert that is rusting out. That will be with a new box culvert. It is 10 ft. by 10 ft and 130 ft. long. Will also go under the FWS procurement process for this project as well.

\$260,000

-Judith Landing Boat Ramp – The contract was awarded on April 5th, we could start them right now but due to scheduling with use of the river we opted to push that back. The boat ramp is going to be two precast concrete sections that need to be pre-built off site and then there is some concrete work that will be done on site. The contractor needs 45-50 days to get the precast concrete done. They will probably start out there in August and finish in September.

\$107,000

There are a few other small fencing projects that are not in my division.

Stan Benes– This is Darrens extra work, he has a regular program to run besides this.

Dan Teigen - On Duck Creek, has that been awarded out?

Darren Knuteson – Yes, the contractor is out of Two Dot

Mary Jones – What is a high hazard dam?

Larry Epstein – If it broke it would cause a lot of damage

Mary Jones – So it really does need replaced

Larry Epstein– And it is strictly for wildlife, not used for stock water?

Darren Knuteson– I cannot accurately answer that.

Ron Moody – Where is it?

Darren Knuteson – North of Winnett

Ron Poertner – What is the Judith Landing ramp going to look like?

Darren Knuteson– It will have the same footprint that is there and it will be concrete.

District Manager update

Stan Benes – I will be quick on the updates, I have a presentation here that will cover some of it. Certainly for us the litigation has taken some time and concentrated effort, the admin record itself has taken two people a couple of months. You just heard about our ARRA project. I am feeling good about our partnership efforts – I will mention some more on that in the presentation. We got a recognition just last week on our RMEF 10 year stewardship project. We got a fire season coming up, we know better than to predict but it is unlikely that we will get 3 easy years in a row so we do have responsibility for 4 million acres across 16 counties so that will be a big part of what we go coming up. We do have some tremendous cooperation between DNRC, CMR and rural fire district and we do have 7 members (including myself) that belong to an Incident Management Team.

Personnel issues: We will have a new State Director soon, Gene is retiring on May 1st

The Associate State Director, Howard Lemm, will be moving up to the Acting State Director

And the Deputy State Director, Dianne Friez, will be Acting Associate

Closer to home: We have a Wildlife Biologist Position that is open, we are looking for a real go-getter with partnership, I think there are a lot of possibilities for this position.

Second Monument newsletter was completed

We will have the National Riparian Team on the river in July, this is a big project that Gary has going, that project is explained in the Newsletter.

We will be planning again May and June river trips to look at the issues first hand – Let us know if you are interested

RAC nominations open, if you have candidates in mind let us know.

I have a presentation coming up; it's called BLM Proud if you know of any other groups that you think should here this presentation let me know.

Mark Albers – There was a question about the RMP and weeds, who's was that?

Vicki Marquis – We had the HiLine RMP on our work plan as an action item but we haven't talked about it for a while. And noxious weeds were also on the work plan. Is there something else that we need to be doing on the RMP?

Mark Albers - There really isn't anything that the RAC needs to be doing as far as the RMP right now. What we are trying to do it to meet the deadline, get it to the State Office for their review so they can get it out for public review for this summer. If there is some different role that the RAC thinks they want, let us know – I think at this point in the process it would be good to get it out into your hands and let you look at it

Oil and Gas – it came out as a settlement from MAIC – the settlement was that we would pull those leases off the street and pursue them. We are working right now, trying to tease out anything on green house gases. They are working to see what that means in the larger picture.

I would think that they are going to hit everybody.

Mike Bryant – If there is anything that you feel we as Oil & Gas Cooperators, let us know

Mark Albers – The amount of acres that were up for lease, I think this one was 60,000

Dan Teigen – What about existing leases that already exist?

Mark Albers – They are legal documents in place, it is too late to turn around and go back to them. This is a whole new world for all of us.

We are in the middle of Sage Grouse/Lek counts. Numbers in Havre are up or at levels ever found before. Also in Glasgow they are up, we have a grad student tagging, we are learning that they are migrating much further than we knew before.

We have a high dollar reservoir, same situation that Darren was talking about half a million dollars, 250,000 of water. This has been on the list for about 10 yrs. We wanted to raise it to improve silts, instead of taking it out; we will rebuild it just not at that higher level.

To work at that one and put in another one would be highly unlikely – too expensive.

We are digitizing all water right across the districts public land so we will have all that information in one place it will help us to keep track of things easier.

Ron Moody – I am not confident that our water rights are secure.

Mark Albers – We are just putting the water rights in one place, I think that we have the majority of the water rights, we just need to get them in the same place. The jubilation we are going through (Beaver Creek).

Nick Schultz – When the BLM was formed they took water rights away from people, keep in perspective that some of these water rights were in place

Mark Albers – Travel plan – we identified travel plans but left it for after the RMP is done, we did hire a new rec. planner. The RMP will be finished and then we will tear the travel plan to the RMP (it is a stand alone document)

Ron Moody – One issue on the table about sage grouse would be keeping it off the endangered species list. Salazar elected to make it worthy of listing, but precluded – this being sued to list it immediately. We need to do what can be done to keep it off the list. It is a subject work passing on the other. Places like the Yellow water, some of the best remaining sage grouse habitat is that spot south of Winnett.

Mark Albers – It is a big section of the Hi-Line RMP is the Sage Grouse

Dan Teigen- Is it not possible to breed sage grouse?

Ron Moody - The best thing that we could do is to increase the habitat which brings them back.

Ron Poertner – Do we think that we are comfortable with sage grouse habitat?

Gary Slagel – We are comfortable with what we did with sage grouse in our RMP, but that doesn't mean that the Judge will be.

Stan Benes – Gave “BLM Proud” Presentation

Larry Epstein – What kinds of questions do you get?

Stan Benes – Questions from the public concerning interests to themselves and their families
A lot of people don't know that this is what we contribute.

Mike Bryant – Don't forget all the youth that are hired
Also a suggestion is to overlay maps of the areas that BLM manages

Ron Moody – Most people know what a National Forest is, but many people do not know what BLM is and have never heard of it and don't have a concept of BLM or allotments

Ron Poertner – The slide on RX burns, expand on why RX's are good, how they are controlled
Larry – bigger towns around here are very influential and you could really influence them with this.

Ron Moody – Revisited public comment, no takers

Kaylene – went over agenda

Craig Flentie – We do not need to put RAC meeting on Federal Registry

Weeds

Vicki Marquis– We have weeds on the work plan, I just don't think that we have ever touched on it

Mark Albers – Bring RAC up to speed on Weed program

Mary Jones – Maybe we could go out and collect bugs
Look at progress from years past

Ron Moody– Bison Subgroup meeting date: In Fort Benton at Interpretive Center – (check room with Connie)

May 4th, 2010 at 1:00 pm

Gary Slagel – July 6-16th National Riparian Team, Range Specialist, Soil Specialist

Will get with landowners and schedule times to look at their lands and Riparian areas along with river

Vicki Marquis – Are there dates set for pre-assessments in June?

Gary Slagel – Not yet

We have broken down the river into areas that we will visit each day, it is key to us from permittees to be present

After we will have a meeting to go over results

Stan Benes – A lot of people heard about the River trips we took last year, I think a lot of people want to go we will send out a date for that

Next Meeting

Date: August 10-11, 2010

Location: Winifred, Community Hall

Times: 9:00 am

Activity: 2nd day - Float Trip, Judith Landing to Stafford Ferry, PN house tour, ferry crossing – look at signage

Stay at Hotel in Winifred and Wickens Lodge

Agenda

Half Hour Public Comment

RMP Update

Weeds

Riparian Service Team Report - update

Undaunted Stewardship Presentation and tour of project

Janee Joy – Collaborative action with access

Sage Grouse presentation with Rebecca

Sheep Numbers and Stats

Terry Selph – I would like the group to go out to Winifred and do a one day RAC meeting and then float the River the next day. We could have the meeting at the Winifred Community Center and there is a motel across the street, Matt Wickens has a lodge that we could rent out. If we end up doing that, the fee subgroup would have our first on the road meeting.

Motion to Adjourn – Troy seconded by Vicki – **Motion passed**

**Resource Advisory Council
Minutes from Meetings
December 7-8, 2010
Lewistown, Montana**

Tuesday, December 7th – Calvert Hotel, Lewistown, MT

Attendees

RAC Members: Troy Blunt (Chairman), Tom Carrels, Hugo Turcek, Nick Schultz, Kris Moser, Larry Epstein, Wayne Fairchild, Mary Jones, Mike Bryant, Aart Dolman, Ron Poertner, Barb Cole, Jim McCollum, Pat Gunderson

BLM Representatives: Willie Frank, Craig Flentie, Stan Benes, Mark Albers, Gary Slagel, Jamie Connell, Kaylene Patten (Facilitator), and Victoria Kerns

Guest Speaker: David Wood

Kaylene opened the meeting with Public Comments (½ hour)

Public Comment Period (Paraphrased)

Speaker 1:

Tim Faber: Wanted to recognize and commend BLM personnel, Zane Fulbright in particular, for the restoration of two of the Historical Sites in the UMRBNM. First, the Urban Homestead Renovation and second the Gilmore Cabin. These involved extensive renovation and restoration efforts. Tim is finally seeing some good coming out of the preservation efforts, however; he would like to see something done with the pack rats. We don't want the public to make extermination measures and shoot up the place. (BLM) Can pat themselves on the back because those in resistance aren't going to offer credit much less loosen their thoughts to preservation efforts. He wanted to bring this up at the Rehberg Rally at the Civic Center in August. The event was promoted as listening session, as it turns out it was nothing more than a stage for grandstanding. The moderator allowed the crowd to disrupt the session. After the meeting a fellow stated to him that he had his hand raised the entire meeting and was not called on. Tim did not know the reason for this, his question was simple for Mr. Rehberg, "What have you done to protect objects of historical value on public lands?" Tim posed the same question to the RAC. He is surprised that this idea of protecting historical sites as well as the scientific, cultural, paleontological, and geological value those things, for which the monument is proclaimed, are not prioritized on the agenda. "Why are we even here," he asked. We are supposed to objectively gather input from all sides and present it to the BLM. How can you reach a consensus and have a trusting, and civil disclosure when I see a continual bashing of the process, promoting histrionics and fueling anti federal angst and taking cheap shots at other Resource Advisory Council members. This is counterproductive and petty. I will go on tomorrow.

Question from RAC: What more could the BLM do down on the river in relation to preservation?

If there are items of value they need to be recognized. Over a period of time (for instance) the cabin has been vandalized. In my view it is better to open the land to the public, they are going to come anyway. Educating the public that these places are protected by law, (and the off-road vehicles as well) if they know people are out there patrolling this might defer them (from getting away with vandalism). You have interest there and if you have people know what they can and can't, do and it's better.

Speaker 2:

Laurie Riley, Coordinator for the Missouri River Conservation Council: Laurie wanted to point out that the council has been part of establishing a new stakeholder's group for the CMR and they are about to hold their fifth meeting. They are a diverse group of about 30 members. They have agreed on a name for themselves, CMR NWR Community Working Group serving the CMR Refuge and the six counties surrounding the CMR. They have established a purpose statement, "A partnership of diverse interests working to ensure vitality of both CMR NWR and surrounding communities." She wanted this group to know about their group, they are meeting monthly, and would like the RAC to spread the word about them.

Question from RAC: Are you going to view the CMR CCP Plan?

The group has decided that because of their diversity and the fact that they have only been working together a short time that they probably would not reach a consensus on that CCP. A lot of people on the group are representing other entities already commenting on it and did not want to be torn between the entity they are representing and the group. So, no we, they are not commenting. Bill Berg will be presenting at their next meeting on the history of grazing and they are going to be bringing in speakers from other groups to educate the group on other issues as well.

Speaker 3:

Janelle Holden, Wilderness Society: She wanted to welcome new RAC members and introduce herself. She works primarily on issues related with the UMRB, CMR and those BLM lands in the HiLine. She will address the group again in tomorrow's meeting.

Welcome/Chairperson Synopsis/Meeting Notes

With no more public comments from those in attendance, the meeting proceeded. Kaylene continued by stating that we would go over the agenda and proceed with introductions (she interjected that public comments would continue if anyone were to walk in, while there was still time on the clock for comments and before beginning with introductions as she didn't want to interrupt those). After going over the day's agenda, Kaylene asked if there were any questions, and clarified the location for dinner. She then continued on with the agenda for Wednesday, December 8th, and asked if there were any questions, suggestions, or changes to that agenda. The public comment period was then closed with the (acting) Chairman's (Troy Blunt) approval. Kaylene continued with BLM introductions. New to BLM/RAC Meetings were the new (BLM) State Director, Jamie Connell and Victoria Kerns HiLine RMP Secretary, taking minutes for the meeting, she also introduced Willie Frank, Craig Flentie, Gary Slagel, Mark Albers, Stan Benes and herself. The RAC Members then introduced themselves sharing some background information and sharing their areas of interests. There are five new members to join the RAC; Jim McCollum (Category 3), Wayne Fairchild (Category 1), Kris Moser (Category 3), Aart Dolman (Category 2), and Hugo Tureck (Category 2) returning. Tom Carrels arrived late and Brian Gasvoda was missing from the meeting.

Kaylene moved on to the notes from the previous meeting, asking if there were any questions, changes or corrections. She mentioned that Larry Epstein pointed out a comment and if there was nothing else she would make those changes so the minutes could be signed for handing out.

Troy Blunt is the Vice Chair acting until a Chairman is elected at the first meeting of the new year.

RAC Comments, "What have you heard?"

Stan Benes welcomed new members, those returning, and welcomed the BLM State Director, Jamie Connell. Stan then read from the charter. "The council provides representative citizen council and advice to the Secretary of Interior through the Bureau of Land Management's Designated Federal Officer". Jamie is the Designated Officer. The role Stan plays is designee and shares this with Mark Albers. Stan wanted to focus on the words "Advice", and "Representative Citizen Council" and mentioned that what RAC members offer is a reflection of what they have heard from the community as this is important. With that, the RAC was invited to participate in a "Round-Robin" discussion to share comments they have heard from their communities.

Pat Gunderson: Speaking from his agency, he had heard nothing but good things regarding the cooperation between BLM and others, and that things are good with the BLM.

Jim McCollum: Passed

Barb Cole: The thing that she had been hearing is concern about the omnibus farm bill and hearing general distrust from the public toward the federal government.

Ron Poertner: Thanked BLM for the boat ramp on the river, great job. Based on the hunting season – things get busy and there are folks from outside of the Monument that come into the area. Questions have been raised about the markings on the roads, closures, and the 50' (off road) designation for camping (it's not very far). As we implement the (Resource Management) plan those are things that are concerns. There is a lot of information out

there on the internet and it's overwhelming. Looking at the issues in the state of Montana alone there is a huge amount of information out there, however, the focus seems to be more on (land) users than landowners.

Aart Dolman: As a frequent floater, Aart takes guests out on the river and feels the Monument is a jewel. What concerns him is not that the BLM is not doing its job but; the traffic, toilet facilities, and noise... (he and others were harassed by a helicopter a couple of years ago, it was a lot of noise, and the motorized traffic). The affects of vehicles on the Monument is of interest to him and he feels we should concentrate on the future and the technological changes that will affect the area.

Mike Bryant: Concerned with technological change and, outside of the Monument, Oil/Gas drilling (source beds). Mike stated that drilling is an economic issue, and as managers and users of land we are going to wrestle with will be on completion techniques, and fracking. He feels this will be an issue on every side of the fence, and everyone needs to know how this works.

Mary Jones: Was impressed with the (background of the) new board members. She brought in a photo of campers (engaged in shooting activities) on Bullwacker Road, and shared concern for the 50' off road camping rule, type of rigs, and numbers of people camping. She also brought in an article and read an excerpt of it about the effects on people and animals of fracking. She expressed concern for the people and animals above the fracking area and what is happening to them. She also expressed a desire to keep the "black night sky" and not have lit areas at campsites or anywhere as the night sky is an asset and needs to be preserved. She also had an article with her relating to Bison. She has had questions from farmers/ranchers regarding the description of livestock and their curiosity of what changes we are going to see in regard to that issue. She also mentioned the hill slide going down to Judith Landing, and was wondering if that road is going to be stable or not as people are interested in the future of that road as well.

Wayne Fairchild: Has not heard much on the streets of Missoula, but coming from the last annual outfitters meeting their interest was in the construction and timing of the boat ramp, which they are now happy with.

Larry Epstein: Mentioned mineral management and that new oil/gas development affects his community and he will report back if he hears anything. He had the opportunity to see the documentary "The Fires of 1910" and would like the RAC have the opportunity to view it. He felt that the BLM was well represented in it.

Kris Moser: Didn't have anything at this time.

Nick Schultz: Felt the presence of BLM staff at various public community meetings is a good thing, but expressed concern that there is a disconnection between BLM employees not understanding each other's duties and areas of expertise and this comes across to the public. He was wondering about "our place in block management" and a way to work on "permitting" due to the effects on roads and wildlife...not only in the Monument but other places as well that get a lot of use in the hunting season.

Hugo Turcek: Has a friend that is a rancher who has expressed concerns of fracking. He shared that he appreciated Mike's comments and the value of making contact with the community regarding that issue. As far as the conservation community goes, he felt that for the first time, in a long time, people are talking/acting on behalf of the conservation of the prairies. People are expressing more interest in conservation and less in fracking and development. He stated that that there are critical differences between conservation groups (and grazers) and they can't be lumped together into one dynamic. He also expressed interest in what Block Management is doing and wondered if we can manage hunting in a way so as to keep numbers down, so people aren't "in each-other's hair". He has heard concerns from hunters about accessibility of BLM land and there is a lot of anger associated with that issue. Hugo's wife is involved in birding and he has the opportunity to hear what they are saying, and they have a huge interest in the prairies. He mentioned that Glasgow has a birding festival that brings in a lot of money. It is a model we should look at. He felt that it might be good to visit with groups who have interests in prairies as ranchers, conservationists, birders and BLM as we have a lot in common.

Tom Carrels: Has visitors in his shop interested in history and natural history – he had spoken with an individual from the Committee of National Parks from Grasslands (north of Malta) where Bison are being developed – who went with a concerned group to visit the Bad Lands National Parks and this seemed like a good approach to learning about Bison management.

Troy Blunt: In regards to hunting, the numbers are a concern. Troy felt water rights are going to be issues with BLM. In the CMR the CCP is a huge concern for people. Troy felt that the BLM RMP is going to “hit the fan” and that there are going to be impacts of that. The Monument issue is a “hot button” topic.

Stan thanked the members for their comments and expressed that he felt this very interesting and helpful (with Willie Frank’s agreement).

Because the meeting was running late, Kaylene explained that she hadn’t offered a break – she asked if we should we break for lunch and be back at 12:30. This was agreed to.

Lunch

Before proceeding, Kaylene asked the RAC if they would like to meet at the office on Wednesday because of building limits (spatial constraints) at the Calvert Hotel. This was agreed on, and the meeting will be held in the Conference Room at the Lewistown Field Office, Kaylene will make arrangements taking into account public comments and making special concessions there.

Because of being behind schedule, the decision was also made to change the agenda order around so as not to keep guest speakers any longer than necessary. With that, Kaylene welcomed State Director, Jamie Connell.

State Director Welcome (Jamie Connell)

Jamie started by giving some background information to the RAC about her education, early employment and outdoor experience. She stated that she feels she has a lot in common with the BLM and that this year she even became a “certified hunter”. Jamie and her husband raise dogs and she loves the outdoors. Jamie has considered herself a Montanan even though she’s been away, and she says she’s, “glad to be back”. Jamie also shared her credentials and many of the positive RAC experiences she’s had, and the value she feels RAC is to the BLM. She explained how the decisions that the RAC makes saves time as RACs viewpoints are representative of the views of the general public. Jamie says she looks closely at the recommendations that come from RAC as they are very helpful, even if it is not always something that we want to look at. Jamie then invited the RAC to ask her questions. Some of the questions Jamie elaborated on were in regards to BLM budget, goals, administrating in a more rural area, and her RAC experience. Jamie feels that she gets more “bang for the BLM buck” by having people out in the field. She has heard some of the frustrations of field managers and she would like to open discussions with them. When it comes to the budget, she would rather, than to cut-back funds, maybe try redirecting funds as maybe this is what’s needed at this time. She stated that she also feels BLM has to make their voice heard, that we bring in more money than we spend, and legislators should not want to stop an organization that is “funding”. We also do what we do efficiently. She said she will be looking at a workforce analysis to look at budgetary imbalances, taking a look at this in a relatively quick manner, but over the long term. Even though she comes from a more urban state (Colorado), Jamie says there are similarities, but where she saw the biggest difference was in grazing allotments where people were not renewing their rights, and ranchers were selling their land for large sums of money. Many saw this as having a negative effect on the environment and she too began to see that there is a benefit to continue to encourage grazing. As for RAC resolutions, Jamie explained that most resolutions came as a result of the RAC being presented with a question to respond to or some advice that would be sought out. Other resolutions had been brought up by RAC members. “Your resolutions can go all the way to the Secretary, but everyone has to agree and it’s a lot of work,” said Jamie. In Colorado they had to come up with creative ways to work out resolutions because of time constraints. RAC is a representation of what you might hear in the community. Resolutions are the way business is conducted within a RAC. Subgroups need to be made of members outside of RACs membership because of the limits to what 15 people can accomplish with their time. The subgroups can be used to draft resolutions to be voted on by the RAC (as only the RAC can advise BLM). More can

be accomplished this way, and it allows members of the public more opportunity to comment. Several members of the RAC had additional questions on easements, which Jamie also touched on.

Kaylene thanked Jamie and expressed appreciation for her coming.

Plains & Prairie Potholes Landscape Conservation Cooperative (David Wood)

David began his presentation with an introduction of himself as a Conservation Biologist with the BLM in Billings. The main focus of his job is sage-grouse management working with RMPs across other states and across the BLM to establish continuity in sage-grouse management. Working in this capacity has led to other issues involving; preservation, conservation, and restoration on a mid level scale between the field office and the national level. Looking at conditions and where there are restoration opportunities for bigger scale restoration dollars. The reason for this outreach is to explain what's going on out there and how that affects the RAC and where RAC comes in. David explained that he feels that there is a change of approach coming in the planning and implementation level with an increase in interdisciplinary projects. No longer will there be individual "stovepipe" projects, but we'll be looking at a bigger picture where there is a range issue involving wildlife, recreation issues and others, and we will be looking at larger scale restoration projects. David's hope was that his presentation would provide background information for the RAC so when approached and asked for advice the RAC will be informed.

Why operate on larger scales? We have found over the past 20-30 years that many of the issues we are looking at are regional in scope. Individual projects have larger scale impact. The approach involves methods to combat larger scale issues, to minimize threat, locate sites, and prepare systems/critters to resist changes and adapt. Some of the issues that are being looked at on a larger scale are climate change, fire, sage-grouse management, invasive species, and oil and gas development. The bureaus were all going in this direction starting last year, looking at coordinating efforts with other councils and consortiums and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) where stakeholders and other agencies develop landscape level strategies to manage. Landscape Level Strategy is an approach, on a higher level, to look at what we can do and how we can do it cooperatively. LCCs are not ground level work, but are about bringing together state, federal, and local partners, NGOs (non-government organizations), and interest groups to pull together information to conserve habitats and species in the face of large landscape pressures. They are about finding commonalities so that we can pull together to work more efficiently. David pointed out a variety of different LCCs in his presentation and what they are doing. The PPP (Plains and Prairie Potholes) LCC appoints committees to make recommendations for projects. As a result of their recommendations about nine projects have begun. LCCs provide partnership funding, sharing of information and cooperative planning.

David addressed RAC questions about the planning process, funding and accountability which is achieved by creating measures of assessing what's being accomplished and how it is being done more efficiently.

David passed out a handout on the Five-Step BLM Landscape Approach which is our approach to this process. We conduct rapid eco-regional assessments, look at ongoing information, highlight and map areas of ecological value and look at existing risk factors. This is where we can use LCCs to coordinate together eco-regional assessments so we have information at broad scales to help inform our planning process. From there, we work together with our partners to see what the best management approach is. Then we go into field implementation. This requires implementing strategies, plans, monitoring, budget planning and managing resources cooperatively. Then we need to make sure we are using up to date science to carry out the process. We can't effectively manage our lands without understanding what is going on with the lands outside of BLM. We need to understand the trends, values, and possibilities. We are essentially looking for information so that we can plan and manage more effectively, how we can meet our responsibilities more effectively, how we can target our dollars more effectively, and how we can address administration priorities.

The scale we (BLM) work on is smaller than LCCs we are a sub-level, we look at values and threats, we focus on partnerships. Montana has five eco-regions that cover it. So this is where we put into effect our five-step process of assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and informing. We try to pull together two kinds of information

– across field office boundaries and the risks to those. By looking at risk and opportunity we look at where we want to put our money for resilience/restoration. We pull together partners – we look at our values, data, models, and how are we going to do this work. Basically: Where are our priority areas of conservation? What are our pressures? We then identify our restoration areas, and site specific projects. These become our target areas and can manage our money more effectively. We then work with our partners to identify commonalities and evaluating our objectives to discover whether we have what we need to accomplish our plan. Although we want to work collectively, ultimately we make the decision about how we manage our lands.

LCCs are not about “on the ground” work, but about bringing together different groups to discuss concerns, to achieve goals, and increase efficiency. LCCs are a partnership approach with many components. LCCs are still trying to figure out who their partners are, and would like to see ground level entities involved. This would require outreach. David then posed the question to the RAC, “**What is the most effective way to do that?**”

RAC Member Comments:

- Need to spend more time getting out to groups. Increase public awareness – because you don’t see people on the ground level involved with partnerships. The sooner people get involved in a project the better or the project is locked in stone and we just validate decisions that have already been made.
- Keep spreading the word and get all the players to the table from day one and keep moving forward.
- Get lists of folks who can come to the table and provide input and collaboration to the LCC program.
- Stakeholders come from all entities bottom up & top down and work together before a crisis. Also involve local governments (the question came up of where to find stakeholders and Nick offered to give a list to Stan).
- Social and economic parts of whole plan – create a letter to get input from all stakeholders Now!
- Set standards.
- We are somewhat competitive – and we need to be more cooperative.
- Outside of conservation we are looking at parts – there are internet resources – I would send out a letter and ask for a reply otherwise if you wait – people will start calling their congressmen.
- Concern was expressed about the funding sources and conflicting interests between groups/entities.

Break

District Manager’s Updates (Albers & Benes)

Stan Benes opened with a discussion of personnel changes; we have a new State Director and our (Central Montana District/Lewistown Field Office) Associate District Manager will be new in a couple of months (Scott Haight left for the Butte office), Gary Kirpach (Fire Management Officer) is retiring the first of January, Supervisory Engineer Darren Knudson is leaving next month, Gary Warfield (Support Services/IT) is retiring the end of this month, Range Management Specialist Vinita Shea has gone to Dillon, we are getting a new front office person – Gail Plovanic has been filling in. Stan mentioned that what we do is “all about people” – we’re looking for good people to come on board. He then went on to update the RAC on the following points:

- Monument RMP Litigation – We’re getting information together for that process and we are still implementing the RMP.
- Riparian Assessment – Team did assessment in July – will have a presentation in March with a formal report.
- Completed AARA projects – (Limekiln Road, Judith Boat Ramp, Contact Station and Irrigation System at Coal Banks) We completed much wanted projects.
- Cottonwood Restoration - still working with Bureau of Reclamation on that.
- BLM presentations to increase public awareness.
- Student Conservation Association – Continue to support youth programs – we received assistance with signage this year.
- Continue to maintain and strengthen partnerships; fire, conservation, government agencies.

Stan mentioned that working for the BLM is a privilege as much as a job. He thinks highly of RAC and Kaylene as a facilitator. He then invited questions from the RAC. There was a question if Limekiln was open (not as yet as we need to get the down and dead timber out), and the boat ramp at Coal Banks (some discussion involving moving it upstream – nothing definitive).

Mark Albers continued with an update on the HiLine RMP. We thought it would be in Washington by now but we've had to make changes. First in the area of oil & gas, we had to change information due to the time frame. Leases have expired and original numbers that were used to make determinations had to be recalculated. Although this changes all the alternatives numbers, it doesn't change recommendations, but it is time consuming. This should be wrapped up by next week and this does affect the reasonable foreseeable development (RFD). Other changes to take into account with the RMP are wind/renewal energy. Guidance came out of DC asking us to look at areas that are more agreeable for wind energy with less impact. We're going back to look at those areas again. Greatest area for that is the front. When we finish with these things then the RMP draft will go to Washington for review, then out to the public in summer for comment. Public meetings will probably be set up for summer. About the Monument, the well that was open for public comment, that period has closed, the comments have been received and we should have a content analysis in January. The RAC was then invited to ask questions. The question came up if BLM is still planning on building a wind tower at Landusky/Zortman (yes, this will be an AARA project), and if we have cooperators working with us on the RMP (yes, we have a long list including grazing districts).

New RAC member orientation (Albers, Benes, Patten)

Stan quickly went over the following:

Charter – Central Montana Resource Advisory Council (CMRAC) charter expires every two years, a charter is required to meet. The one we are going by is the 2009 signed by Secretary Salazar.

Authority - Statutory Advisory Committee established under the federal land policy and management act and established under the federal advisory commitment act in addition authorized under the federal lands recreation enhancement act to make recommendations on BLM and Forest Service recreation fee proposals. We do have a subcommittee working on that. The council provides representative citizen advice and counsel to the Secretary of Interior through BLM Designated Federal Officer.

Duration – Charter expires every two years unless Secretary extends it. Council reports to the Secretary through the Designated Federal Officer whose duties are to call meetings, approve agenda and notes and to adjourn meetings when warranted and in the public interest.

Administrative Support – funded by BLM

Objectives/Scope – Serve in an advisory capacity within the geographic area within the Central Montana and HiLine District Offices – this is not a decision making body

Duties/responsibilities – Council and make recommendations on RMPs, identify geographic areas to make guidelines, advise on ecosystem concepts, advise BLM on working collaboration with local groups, make recommendations on future projects (but not budget and personnel),

Membership – 15 Members on a Council – Selected in a “balanced fashion” from three Interest groups (1. Commercial ventures and permittees 2. Environmental groups 3. Those holding local, state, or county office...)

Subcommittees/subgroups – Formed by motion to council to provide necessary input for the function of the council. Need a majority of members of each category to make a consortium to make decision.

Meetings - We meet three times a year about 30 hours of team time a year. Subgroups may be a productive consideration

Operating costs – To be held no more than 1/3 of a staff year and \$50,000. The charter will expire in two years and must be chartered by the Secretary and we cannot meet without a valid charter.

Records keeping – Records are required and must be made public as per freedom of information act.

Stan then offered a thank you – good feedback about the “What have you heard?” Mark reiterated the value of the “What you have heard”.

Before continuing with Kaylene's presentation on RAC orientation, Tom expressed a comment that he felt that the RAC do a lot of sharing of information and felt that we need more of that. He was interested in allowing each category have a speaker come for about 1 hour each meeting to address an area or interest/concern and provide them with a travel allowance. This was not a request for a resolution, just an idea. Mary questioned the process of replacing someone if they dropped out of the RAC (because of the time involved with the process it is not practical to initiate replacing them, the vacancy, all vacancies would be recruited for in the spring).

Kaylene presented on the following:

DOs – Are a set of guidelines established back in 1995 – these are what keep us working cooperatively and reaching consensus:

DO –

Focus on the agenda and deal with the task at hand

Commit to mutual respect of all council members

Be attentive, a good listener, look for the worth of an idea

Participate actively, be open, take risks, avoid defensiveness, seek balance

Monitor yourself, avoid dominating or disrupting discussions, if you're quiet speak up if you can.

Trust among council members

Ask and seek clarification when you don't understand

Time limits may be considered for council member input

Reach a specific conclusion, finish an issue

These are the unwritten DOs for the RAC – others still apply. The RAC was asked if there were any additions, changes, corrections. The DOs are included in the binder under Resource Advisory Council. The council operates under **Simplified Robert's rules** – We have a lot of discussions. If you agree with a motion on the floor – thumbs up, if you can live with it, they're ok or there are a couple of things that are worded funny, but the concept is there, but you will support it – thumbs sideways, thumbs down you can't live with this, it needs clarification, you have questions and need more information. The RAC practiced by voting on accepting the DOs, "How does the RAC feel?". If there is a thumbs down, there is not consensus – if we have full consensus of the RAC (100% consensus) the motion can go to all the way to the Secretary of the Interior. If we do get a thumbs-down, we will ask what you need to see if we can come to consensus. The group was asked if they had any questions and Kaylene continued.

Public Comments – We have two comment periods per meeting. We have ½ hour day one, and ½ hr day two – We look at how many people are present to comment, if there are 10 people they have 3 minutes each to speak, we keep track of the time. If time allows we can have questions, we avoid debate – public is there making comments, they are making a presentation to you – The meeting is an open meeting. Interaction is with RAC and BLM staff. Discussion is between RAC members.

Consensus – We strive for consensus – we do stipulations in the carter for a "fall back" vote, where we go back to each category and vote, this is recorded and documented in the notes. Recommendations or advice can be forwarded that way as long as there is a majority in each category. It is a vote, not a consensus. Consensus is not compromise and you are not pressured into consensus. It should be a win-win solution. To get to a win-win solution you need to have input into the discussion, the decision, and be able to live with the decision made. If for some reason something is forward to the Designated Federal Official and it is passed with the majority vote with the three categories, but there is a group that has thumbs down they are welcome to put in the letter we send their descending opinion so that it is recorded.

Travel – There is a page located in the RAC Member's binders on this - Lodging rates went up – per diem stayed the same – mileage stayed the same (for those traveling).

Agenda - The agenda is sent out in a draft form and does not get finalized until the RAC meets and accepts it. A large change to the agenda may not be allowed as the agenda appears in the federal register and posted 30 days prior to meeting – these are sent out to the public, making changes is not possible because of this. The public is well informed in advance of RAC's meetings. Announcements go out to the local papers and radios. Kaylene sends out the agenda two weeks before to local officials and other

interested parties who have requested it. The public can also get copies of the (approved) notes and agenda. The charter, agenda, and notes are posted on the website— instructions to look at website are in the RAC member binders.

Notes - Notes will be e-mailed to the RAC for changes – if changes need to be made they can be made at that time. At the next meeting they will be voted for acceptance.

RAC – What’s success? Where is it working?

(Benes & Schultz)

Implement a RAC subgroup

(RAC discussion/decision)

At this point in the meeting discussion ensued regarding the productivity of the RAC. Stan began by mentioning that Nick had heard about a RAC group in Colorado that is very productive in making resolutions. Stan suggested representatives from our RAC visit with another RAC to get ideas of how meetings are run to get ideas on how to be most productive. Nick interjected that he joined the RAC to be more involved, and would like to do more advising than listening (to presentations) so the RAC could move forward on issues. There was some discussion that other organizations have done this, and input that it would be helpful as it might offer some insight into making resolutions.

The discussion continued with the value of sharing “What have you heard” and building trust between RAC members. Stan asked if this should be an agenda item for the next meeting, and Mary asked if we needed to make a resolution to do this?

MOTION: Larry moved to make a resolution to add to the agenda every meeting the “What have you heard?”, limiting each member up to 4 minutes on the first day of the meeting to share. Hugo seconded. The Chairman asked for discussion, Mike asked for clarification, Troy asked if there was any more discussion then called for a vote, asking the group how they felt. Motion was approved.

The discussion continued with ideas about attending other RAC meetings to get ideas of the kinds of resolutions they are making and their process of coming to consensus. Stan pointed out that we have been struggling to make progress, and asked if we are contributing to the management of public lands with our recommendations? The question was posed if BLM could make recommendations on what resolutions should be made. Mark recommended making a list of resolutions to take to that meeting (mentioned above) to get an idea of what kinds of things we might work toward making resolutions on; adding that, we have briefings to inform the (RAC) group so that you can decide what is important. Discussion came up about taking field trips to explore site specific issues to inform the RAC. Nick mentioned that he would like to be more involved with the HiLine RMP and the Monument Plan implementation. After being briefed by Gary on the Monument, we might find action items. Stan also pointed out that there are some historical items in the river corridor that go back to the “trail of tears”, and some of the homesteads and such, he thinks resolutions could be made to gain more support. He doesn’t know where this all fits when it come to grants and agreements and such, when we have resolutions of support.

2010 RAC Workplan Accomplishments

(RAC Members)

Kaylene passed out a handout on the 2010 Workplan – she felt that this fit together with the previous discussion. She wanted to talk about our accomplishments and what we want to do in 2011.

Stan mentioned on the first page that he wasn’t going to go over “the scope of the council” but, the third paragraph talks about encouraging good stewardship, emphasizing coordination and cooperation and needing full public participation. He felt these should generate some ideas for action items. For 2011 perhaps we need to add more measures of success, and dates of completions.

The following were issues the group had been focusing on in 2010:

- Recreation Fees – Subgroup has been put together, they have made some progress, no decisions made yet, need to restructure and meet.
- HiLine RMP – ongoing – Jerry has briefed the RAC on this we’re making progress on it.

- Noxious Weed Management – We are making progress on this – working with ranchers, student groups, and county cooperative efforts – ongoing – we had our “beetle rodeo” out of Grass Range. We are good on the budget.
- Judith Moccasin Landscape Projects – this is not definitive we have a sale going on in the blow down area, we’ll hear from Bruce Reid tomorrow, we have ongoing good stewardship with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, but these things aren’t listed definitively. We need to be more definitive, put some dates on this.
- Field trips – We talked about field trips, we made a canoe trip but Mark and Stan missed it.
- Youth Program Initiative – Stan is always in favor of anything to do with the youth. We went to the Montana Conservation Corp, going to go to Student Conservation Association, we had an educational partnership with Kootenai Salish and were trying to expand that
- AARA project – We put signs in the Monument – we need to follow up on that, again we were not definitive about that, no dates, nothing stating where we are at, what we completed.
- Informational Items
 - District Manager Updates
 - Travel Management Plan
 - Limekiln Blow-down
 - Grazing Renewal

We want to take a look at the Work plan for 2010, adjust it, and come up with a draft for 2011 – we want to be more definitive, include measurable objectives, and dates.

2011 RAC Workplan Input/Decisions

(Albers, Benes)

Weeds/Beetles

Mark pointed out that weeds are important issue and questioned, “What are RACs roles, and is this an action item, where do we want to go?” It was suggested that maybe we could go out to the “beetle round-up”, as the weed issue is an important issue, and we could benefit from updates and information but the group is not likely to make this an action item. Kaylene mentioned that we had a presentation on weeds at our office meeting, concern was expressed that weeds could be a sleeping giant and we might look back and think we might have done a better job of managing them. Stan pointed out that the beetles are also a big issue as well, but doesn’t know what kind of resolutions the RAC could have on the things where this applies to community protection, or resource values (and this applies to weeds as well as they could take over the landscape). Discussion continued about possible resolutions and Mark pointed out that the group should be aware of what is already being done so the RAC is not replicating existing efforts.

Stan offered that what we will probably do is draft the 2011 work plan for the next meeting and we’ll send out a reminder so members could give this some thought of action items, constituents, what’s important then we’ll add them in as action items.

Land Access

The question was raised about inaccessible lands, and if we have old maps showing those. We have maps of isolated blocks that are available for land exchange. Kaylene asked if this is an action item? Access would be a good thing to bring up. Where do we need more access, we can take the group out and come up with a resolution? The following were suggested: Ervin Ridge, Lion’s Coulee, the other half of Judith Landing, Murphy, South Moccasin Creek. Then the questions were raised what about off-road abuse and hanging on to isolated land? How much time and money is used to manage those, if you can’t access those areas, why keep them? Stan says we have 105 such allotments and this requires the same management as blocks of land.

The discussion brought up the fact that making decisions is not easy, it is challenging. Trying to get something definitive so that by the end of the year we can say we made something happen. We have

probably not used the resolution process to its advantage. Maybe we need to get these issues on someone else's agenda so they can move forward on them.

The question was raised about the RACs assignment which was to have everyone contribute action items for the 2011 workplan, stating what RACs role is, this is what RAC will accomplish by this date, what is going to happen, when, who's involved, and how. Then we will have a true objective. Let's get these actions more definitive. Kaylene will send a note reminding the team to do this.

Recreation Fees Update

- Larry is soliciting new RAC members to join the subgroup on Recreation Fees. Group needs to reconvene and look at alternatives to propose to the RAC and take this out to the community and bring that input back to the RAC, and to work with Public Affairs Officer from the BLM. The group has collected river fee information from all over. There is the expectation that fees collected will be put back into the river. The group is going to take a look at high usage times, perhaps Memorial Day to Labor Day. Aart and Wayne volunteered to help on this subgroup, with Terry (Still missing a category 3 on the subgroup?). How fees are collected and enforced was mentioned and Larry stated that is still under discussion – were thinking about maybe permits. This fee site area being discussed is between Coal Banks and Judith Landing – during peak season no fees for those 16 and younger. Larry didn't feel this will defer floaters as other places charge fees.

Kaylene – **one thing more about orientation** – Craig put together a handout for the new members on some general BLM information. That's all Kaylene had for today. She asked if there was anything else, handed out/e-mail on OHV from the Eastern Montana RAC to review for the meeting tomorrow. Kaylene reviewed the agenda for Wednesday. She reminded the RAC to meet at BLM office.

Meeting Adjourned

4:44p.m.

Dinner/Social

Harry's Place: 631 NE Main St. Lewistown, MT 6:30 p.m.

**Resource Advisory Council
Minutes from Meetings
December 7-8, 2010
Lewistown, Montana**

Wednesday, December 8th - Lewistown Field Office, Lewistown, MT

Attendees

RAC Memembers: Troy Blunt, Barb Cole, Hugo Turcek, Jim McCollum, Wayne Fairchild, Kris Moser, Larry Epstein, Mary Jones, Nick Schultz, Pat Dunderson, Aart Dolman, Ron Poertner, Tom Carrels, Mike Bryant
BLM Representatives: Stan Benes, Gary Slagel, Craig Flentie, Mark Albers, Rich Adams, Kaylene Patten, and Victoria Kerns

Chairman Blunt asked everyone to be seated. Kaylene called the meeting open by inviting public comment – stating that because we ‘d moved the meeting site we would start a few minutes after the hour to give the public opportunity to get out here (a note had been put up at the Calvert to let the public know we’d move the meeting site). Kaylene then went over the day’s agenda. She asked if there were any go-backs or anything we needed to talk about from yesterday. She then stated that we had two members of the public that would like to speak.

Public Comment (Paraphrased)

Chairman Blunt stated that we would open public comments giving people 5 minutes each to share.

Speaker 1:

Janelle Holden – Congratulated the RAC on yesterday’s meeting, felt it went well. Concerning OHV fines, she is not against OHV use – but illegal use as it can be disruptive to wildlife, and erosion and causes concern. She feels that RAC should be able to come to consensus on this issue and that it shouldn’t be just a slap on the wrist. She also feels the BLM can broaden its partnership base.

Speaker 2:

Clint Loomis – Thanked the RAC and agreed that yesterday’s meeting went well. Clint is a Friend of the Missouri Breaks and he agrees that BLM needs to put on more of a public face as it will build bridges between opposing views, and the balance between use and the valuable qualities of the Breaks – and bringing this to the public will inform the public of the value of BLM’s role in the Monument. He feels that the community doesn’t know the role BLM plays. He was interested in an explanation of how the management of the Breaks differs from general land management. He also likes the concepts of setting up “Little RACs” particularly to look at the Monument – as a tourist area with growth potential. Clint feels the Monument could be part of the support system in helping to build a more sustained economy along with ranching/farming – we could have a strong economy and take a step forward.

Question from RAC: Aart questioned how Clint thought economic growth should be accomplished. Clint felt that positive reporting in papers and getting businesses on-board would cause the Chamber to follow suite and represent the Monument on their web sites...Other suggestions were made by the RAC regarding Lewis & Clark Days, reenactments, and being involved with the department of tourism. However, “promotional” activities is not an objective of RAC/BLM. Stan pointed out that a couple of groups have requested to do some filming in the Breaks that might increase the profile of the Breaks. We don’t want to over-do it and encourage something that could become harmful to the Breaks.

Troy asked if there were any other comments. Kaylene said that she didn’t see anyone else and that we could move on, unless someone comes in. Troy ended the comment period so as to move on with the agenda.

OHV enforcement/Fines discussion/Decision (RAC Members)
(E-mail from Eastern Montana RAC)

Kaylene passed around the E-mail from the Eastern Montana RAC (regarding OHV fines/licensing) to those that needed it and invited the RAC to look it over and see if they wanted to make a resolution. A discussion ensued including the following points:

- \$500 fine seems high but courts decide who pays what for which offenses
- Clarification of current fine (\$200) and enforcement practices (we have a ranger and he will take information from the public and other employees and fine from that information).
- Until we have a travel plan – it’s difficult to determine what a road is and give tickets. Travel plan won’t be made until the HiLine RMP is done. On BLM land we have multiple users on some roads – we want to stop hunters and recreationists from using access roads (not designated for OHV use). Defining what a road is would be the first step.
- This is a huge issue – there must be a model or a successful approach out there instead of reinventing the wheel that we can find
- There must be a way to bring in more enforcers, maybe a detail. If you put signs up and had a detail for a few years it might end your problem
- We need to clarify data, we need specifics that indicate that a problem exists, we need evidence. A monitoring system
- Stan had experience in a couple of states and he knows this is a problem. We have a record of tickets issued and of verbal accounts
- We need enforcement and public involvement like “Tip” Montana
- Support what eastern RAC is trying to do, and think RAC may be able to weigh in on what they had.
- Licensing - MN has licensing procedures. MT does not – perhaps OHVs need licensing. Would like to see RAC have a buy in through a possible letter to the legislature.
- Enforcement needs to be keeping record of who is being talked to... Trend shows more offences.
- Boats/planes have numbers on them. Perhaps OHVs need a number put on them to identify vehicles so a citizen could also identify them (how big should the numbers be?). This requires legislature
- If you take OHVs on the road you need a license and tail light.
- When I go off road I take my license off. Identifying number on the vehicle makes more sense than licensing
- When you buy a boat you are given numbers and you have to go out and buy them and put them on.
- Enforcers know local users –
- We could get permittees involved. It seems like there would be partners out there to help with enforcement
- You have to have a well thought out plan for enforcement and rules – I don’t know if BLM has such – If you can’t identify people, how can you enforce this?
- People will not be happy about putting money out for an OHV sticker – if you minimize cost – that might work
- High profile identification can be implemented. We have to come to a decision to advise the BLM – as to how to implement it. Going to legislature is a good idea – but you have to go to partnerships to get their support – and you need (road) signage. Everything that should be signed, should be signed.
- Everyone using on BLM land is required to have a registration sticker, this is a state law on county roads as well.
- Identification protects us all
- \$200 seems like enough to open people’s eyes. CMR identified roads and raised the fines and this seemed to work for them. \$500 seems like a bit much
- Law enforcement strategy – we look during high profile times – and we find we have two periods late in the season (hunting) and antler hunters in the spring. Otherwise we don’t see that much damage, but this is not limited to OHV use (discussion also indicated that having Law Enforcement present at a future RAC Meeting would be a good idea)

MOTION: Nick made a motion to create a subcommittee to look at OHV identification, 50' off road camp sites, and law enforcement. Seconded by Barb. Troy asked for discussion which included thoughts on submitting a letter to the legislature but that the subcommittee would not meet together soon enough to get something drafted by this legislative session. It was suggested that the subcommittee be a 3 RAC committee. A motion was made (by Mike) to amend the motion to include the other 2 RACs and ask Enforcement how they think enforcement could be improved. The motion to amend died. Kaylene asked if there was something we could do with this motion, Troy asked how the committee felt. Motion passed.

Discussion continued with member's ideas, questions and concerns.

MOTION: Larry called for a new motion that the group adopt a resolution to accept legislation for readable, identifiable numbers on OHVs. Aart seconded the motion. Kaylene explained that we could write to the legislation as a RAC stating that we as a group support this measure. Discussion on the motion included concern that we don't know the specifics of the issue that is being presented to the legislature. Kaylene pointed out what we are acting on was whether we support other RACs regarding this issue for this legislative session. Troy called for a vote. The motion failed.

Kaylene stated that she will let the other RACs know that we decided to start a subgroup to discuss this issue (signing, monitoring, funding, weeds...). The subgroup will be made of Nick, chair (Category 1), Hugo (Category 2), and Jim (Category 3). Mark volunteered to be BLM contact as well as Kaylene.

Break

Partnerships with Stakeholders (Pat Gunderson & Rich Adams)

Rich began by saying that this topic is near and dear to him, we look at healthy areas/economies, but we don't always look at healthy communities. He and Pat have been kicking around this concept that landscape is always changing, but the social component is too, and it's never easy. What social changes have happened over time? Historically, we've seen change from the time of the Indians, to trappers, explorers, ranchers, sheep operators, homestead acts, mechanized farming, CRP and NGOs (non-government organizations). These things have brought about changes. We are at a crossroads – we can either simply allow change or guide change in our communities. BLM is part of the community; we should be engaged with partners out there on some level. This was said to lay a foundation to springboard to a discussion about changes in partnerships.

Pat began by stating the he was standing before the RAC as Fish, Wildlife, and Parks employee rather than as a RAC member. He felt that Rich did a good job of illustrating change in the area over time. Pat deals with area north of the river, and that he has had a lot of experience with partnerships. He has had a lot of special species habitat areas that have attracted partners. He explained that grazing contributes to the preservation of habitat as it is land that has not been farmed. Right now he is working with several partners and has projects in the future where he will be working with partners (he illustrated this in his Powerpoint presentation and handout). The outcome of working in partnerships has been permitteed rangeland improvements; grazing systems, fencing projects, water developments, access, signs, education, interest development, research and more cooperating management opportunities. With cooperation there is a lot we have learned that we wouldn't have known. In working with partners we ask, "What do we have in common and (how) can we work together?" As agencies we don't have a choice, we will work with who we can, to get **good** work done. How can we work together without polarization? The best thing we can do is pull together and work together.

A year ago Pat and Rich pulled together a meeting with BLM, FWP, CMR, Conservation Districts, NRCS, TNC, APF, WWF... facilitated by Phil Milton who tried to open a door that could be opened together on managing for biodiversity for the benefit of all stakeholders. They talked about attributes that point to success, and the different needs of the groups. We worked on communication, acceptance and creating/maintaining a fully functioning eco system and maintaining the economic viability of it, and we looked at where this can go. MFWP recognized that the playing field has changed, and asked, "Where can we find commonality?" This concept (of partnership) brings energy, thoughts, new direction, options, and change. With some groups we haven't had the best relationships,

but this is a new time. Communities have survived over time – what’s next? Maybe this is something a RAC subgroup would like to participate in?

The question came up from the RAC , “Is there a plan as to where this is going or is there a reactive force behind it?”. Other comments/questions included partnerships on the state and national level, and a comment that it takes courage to work with opposing partners, and that success breeds success, and respect breeds respect.

Rich and Pat feel that they don’t have a specific direction/goal at this point, just thoughts, and ideas. This is a beginning of a new tomorrow to include new organization communities in social communities. The vision is, if we don’t come together there will be polarization (even law suits) – we can get more done if we can pull together. Historically we’ve had winners and losers – let’s change that model today – if communities don’t want a change – that’s a decision. What we are doing is on the local level. Discussion continued among the RAC in regard to partnerships on the local, agency and national levels.

Kaylene asked if this was something the RAC was interested in? Discussion continued to generate questions within the RAC that maybe this could be used as a model for something else, or perhaps this is a vision of things to come in public land management. Kaylene asked if there was a resolution to be made. It was suggested possibly taking this information back to the community to generate communication with people to make them aware of, and generate interest in partnerships. The point was made that there are trust issues at play, but it’s good to bring up these points. Pat felt that this (partnerships) would help us manage the resources we have, to work together to change the atmosphere of polarization. Rich thanked the RAC for their time.

Troy stated the RAC had received a written public comment and that Kaylene would make copies and distribute after lunch.

Lunch

Kaylene called everyone to sit down so the meeting could start, then passed around the letter that was submitted as public comment from Tim Faber. The sub-group had met at lunch and they have two action items to present. Next (on the agenda) is the Monument Newsletter and Implementation of Monument Plan.

Monument Newsletter

(Stan Benes)

Implementation of Monument Plan

(Gary Slagel)

Stan began by mentioning that a suggestion had been made to get a newsletter together as people have stated that they don’t know what we are doing. “One thing that we are doing is implementing the Monument RMP”, and with that Stan passed out a draft of the latest Newsletter. What we tried to do here was to dwell on the Monument, the Proclamation, and implementing the plan. The newsletter talks about what went on in 2009 and 10 in regards to roads, the Breaks Interpretive Center, and law enforcement (Stan suggested bringing in Rangers and the Supervisor to the next meeting). Stan asked the RAC to get back to us with any questions so we can make changes in the Newsletter and get it mailed out. There were four things we agreed we’d work together on; Monument Newsletter, ex-closures, weed management, and Cottonwood restoration. This (Newsletter) is an informational resource.

Gary added detail to what Stan had to say. The National Riparian Assessment came to see if our river and streams are working properly – they will provide data feedback in their report, which is being put together. We should get that in March and will schedule at least two meetings.

NLCS Workshop - About 350 people (2/3 BLM 1/3 Partners) attended the Workshop. They basically looked at where NLCS units are going the next year and developing partnerships to help in developing plans, and then the meeting broke up into subgroups. Gary attended a subgroup on building trust with local communities. We talked about what we’ve done, and things that have worked and haven’t. Craig and Gary had gone out to the high school talking to political science class that had ‘heard things’ (BLM is doing), and we explained where we are going and we felt this was helpful. We also went to a local coffee shop and met with some folks to introduce ourselves and

get some feedback. What Gary believed was going to happen is that the group (from the workshop) is going to put out something on trust building for the next ten years. When you are out in the public, you make yourself available to answer questions. In house, we have at least one public lands day, and we may try to work with partners on coordinating projects.

Stan interjected the importance of relationships, and stated that we're always trying to build relationships. We have a breakfast once a month with partners to build better working relationships, this has been productive. We try to go door- to-door to other organizations to let them know about what we are doing and that we care.

Gary spoke on film permits and explained that films become a commercial permit when the producers want to sell them. The Travel Channel came out to film something on Lewis and Clark – we had to make sure they had their tags/permits. This should be aired in January. There is a type of survivor show that is going to be out north of Winifred filming soon. We request credits and a copy of the film for these types of requests. If we get that we'll show that to the RAC.

The RMP team (and others) have put together an Implementation Plan (for the Monument). This covers a variety of areas – it is complicated even for staff to use – there are strategic outcomes, planned outcomes, strategies, projects, priorities and fiscal year. These were broken down into workloads. We wanted to provide the RAC with a copy that you could understand so we broke it down into a simplified version (it is a draft document). This is a fluid document based on staffing and funding. This is what we want to accomplish. We want to continue the open and transparent process with community involvement. If you have questions let me know. There could be errors. Stan took questions from the RAC. The Implementation Plan is taken into consideration when it comes to budget planning for projects and staff. We are not implementing anything that wasn't in the approved plan or in the existing watershed plan.

Limekiln Project & Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Stewardship Program (Bruce Reid)

Bruce introduced himself to the new RAC members, and began by saying that he was going to talk about two projects, proposed actions, opportunities, events, and schedules. He said that the JMLA was completed in June 06 and it focused on forested landscape issues and priority project areas. The Lime/Ruby Salvage project popped up as a result of an event that occurred with rains, high winds, and unhealthy forest conditions. This resulted in a lot of downed trees. Fire crew normally goes in the area to clear paths, and after looking around they decided this was more than a few trees and the situation was beyond what a hand crew could tend to. It was then necessary to determine what should be done. There were state lands also hit by the same conditions. What was decided to do was a joint project with DNRC on 837 acres. We needed to look at easements/right-of-ways with Duval Inn and trails. Treatment areas were mapped out. Challenges were particular because this was a crisis management situation. Getting timber out of the forest is time sensitive (the timber has to be out within 4 years or it is not millable). Another management issue was that this situation changed the focus of priorities, staff and budgets. Other challenge were the location, access, treatment plans, and this being a multi-agency project with different agencies all with different priorities and policies. The opportunities this presented were that the salvage operation provided local jobs, it provided the opportunity to address forest health treatments, fuel reduction, the opportunity to reduce stocking levels, and assess insect infestation. We also had the opportunity to look at access and developing trail systems. The road established is a temporary road. We are intending to look at this as an opportunity to use this road for possibly for horseback riding, cross country skiing...and educational opportunities. A project like this provides opportunities for local short term economic opportunities. We created road construction contract and a timber contract and it sold to RY Timber in Livingston, who will start salvage operations in the spring. We have after sale opportunities like burn/slash piles. We want to work with the Inn and develop wood permits. In 2013/2014 we will look at where we go with this project. Bruce addressed RAC questions and comments regarding; an article on the loop trail, the use of the lumber (Douglas Fir and Lodge Pole Pine – good for 2 by 4s), jobs created by the salvage operation (the amount varies), forest management/beetle presence (there is evidence, but our concern was the crisis area)

The next project is the Stewardship Agreement with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Stewardship authority was granted to the BLM through laws, congress granted us 10 years to try this out to see how it works. Stewardship allows us to take the value of some product and use it as offset in getting other treatments done. Stewardship allows us to go in and accomplish two objectives at the same time where previously we had to complete one contract before starting another. For example, monies that would be collected from timber sales can be used for thinning and both the thinning and the timber removal can happen simultaneously. This makes a lot of sense on the ground. We experimented with some Stewardship contracts in certain areas and we accomplished some things, then some nonprofit groups approached us to enter into some agreements with us – with the Elk Foundation we signed an agreement to enter an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to work as cooperators. We then looked at areas that we wanted to work on projects together. The Judith's were looked at through the implementation of the JMLA (Judith-Moccasin Landscape Analysis). The JMLA was a signed document ready to go, the Elk foundation is interested in maintaining habitat, and the JMLA talked a lot about maintaining habitat, which was a good fit for the cooperating agency. This was a challenge as it was new and scary but, after a lot of conversations we decided to go forward. The RMEF provides additional funds and manpower to accomplish goals. This is a partnership agreement not a contract. It was a cooperation that took a lot of trust. The Foundation and the BLM sat down and established an operating plan to decide what they wanted to do and didn't want to do, and then developed a set of task orders, and then we looked at contracts/contractors to carry out the plans. We started in July and ended in November, contractors completed 77 acres of work. One thing we did was "patch clear cuts" – to create openings to break up the continuity of the canopy – to create better Elk opportunities. We performed Aspen restoration, we removed product (logs), the value was used to offset operational cost. Treatments help elk, when we go do treatments there has to be a benefit of the public. We have identified other areas we want to work on – and if we follow through we will effect treatments on 1/3 to 1/2 of the JMLA area. The analysis went from a traditional ES, to a Stewardship, to contracting out timber. This was a collaborative effort where we worked together, shared Ideas, met challenges, and came to consensus. The benefits of collaboration: exchanging good ideas, coming to understandings...this also took internal collaboration which involved answering questions and explaining decisions. Bruce then responded to a variety of RAC questions regarding forest/cooperator concerns.

Kaylene asked the RAC if there was anything we needed to go back to before moving on to our next meeting, vouchers and wrap-up.

Next Meeting agenda/travel vouchers

Kaylene went over instructions for filling out vouchers. Larry will send Kaylene the two action items the subgroup came up with this week. A discussion took place on when and where the next meeting will be and how many times a year the RAC would meet. The RAC voted to meet three times a year. It was decided that the next meeting would be May 3-4, 2011 (the following meeting would have to take place by the end of August or the first part of September). The meeting will be in Shelby at the same time, with the same public comment period. Barb will coordinate the social aspect of the meeting and the following were discussed as agenda items:

- OHV & Fee Subcommittee Report

- Election of officers

- Law Enforcement Presentation

- 1910 Video

- Monument Video made by the Travel Channel

- RAC 2011 Workplan

- Round Table- What We've Heard

- Presentations –Weeds/Riparian/NRST (National Riparian Service Team Update) Presentations are on hold until next meeting – Make a list to bring to next meeting Presentors or e-mail that to Kayleen

- Tour Wind farm/RMP Wind development

The RAC's Homework: Action Items, Create a list of what RAC is going to accomplish this year (by when, what are the RACs roles) make a list of possible presenters for upcoming meetings, write up the resolutions of what we passed this meeting.

Parting Comments included a thank you from Troy, and Stan expressed that there seemed to be a lot of energy this meeting and it is a good sign for things to come.

Travel vouchers and paperwork were completed by the RAC members and submitted to Kaylene for processing.

Meeting Adjourned

2:45 p.m.