

**Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting
January 10-11, 2006
Lewistown, Montana**

The meeting of the Central Montana RAC convened at 9:00 a.m. on January 10 in the BLM Lewistown Field Office conference room. RAC members present were Charlie Floyd, Francis Jacobs, Terry Selph, Barb Cole, Jeff Shelden, Tony Bynum, Robert Schoonover, Mary Fay, Ron Moody, Pat Gunderson, Bill Cunningham, Glenn Terry, Dan Clark, and Lisa Cowan Huestis.

Attending for the BLM were Mike Stewart, Gary Slagel, Willy Frank, Clark Whitehead, Jerry Majerus, Craig Flentie, Mark Albers, Kaylene Patten and Kay Haight.

Public Comment Period

Eight members of the public offered comments, which are Attachment 1 to these minutes.

Welcome/Orientation for New Members/Meeting Notes

Welcome/Agenda

Kaylene welcomed RAC members. A clarification to the May meeting minutes was requested by Francis Jacobs, concerning a statement by Dale Slade on page 12 of the notes. Kaylene will call Dale to determine what he meant by “four wells” (per section?). The minutes were then approved.

The meeting agenda was reviewed.

Chair/Co-Chair Synopsis

A letter from Senator Conrad Burns to the RAC chair was distributed to all RAC members, along with informational materials for their notebooks.

Introductions

The RAC members introduced themselves.

Charlie Floyd, Havre	Category 3, Public at Large
Francis Jacobs, South Of Malta	Category 1, Federal Grazing
Terry Selph, Lewistown	Category 1, Commercial Outfitters
Barb Cole, South Of Shelby	Category 1, Federal Grazing
Jeff Shelden, Lewistown	Category 2, Architectural and Historic
Tony Bynum, East Glacier	Category 3, Native American Tribes
Bob Schoonover, Fort Benton	Category 2, Historic and Archaeological
Mary Fay, Great Falls	Category 2, Environmental
Ron Moody, Lewistown	Category 2, Environmental
Pat Gunderson, Glasgow	Category 3, State Natural Resources
Bill Cunningham, Choteau	Category 2, Dispersed Recreation
Glenn Terry, Big Sandy	Category 1, Commercial Recreation
Dan Clark, Choteau	Category 3, Public at Large
Lisa Huestis, Chinook	Category 1, Federal Grazing

Glenn Terry, Ron Moody and Tony Bynum represent the RAC at Monument ID team meetings.

BLM personnel then introduced themselves.

Orientation

Kaylene highlighted areas in the RAC member notebooks where specific information can be found. An update with corrected phone numbers/emails will be sent to all RAC members.

The consensus process was reviewed. Consensus is strived for, but not always reached. True consensus gets everyone's ideas on the table, each member has a direct influence on the decision, and everyone can live with and support a decision. During a call for consensus, thumbs up means "I totally support this, I can support this outside the room;" thumbs sideways means "I can live with it;" and thumbs down means "I cannot support this decision." Consensus means thumbs up or thumbs sideways.

A fallback vote may occur when consensus cannot be reached. For a fallback vote to pass there must be three thumbs up or sideways per category. The information is submitted with a minority viewpoint attached to the recommendation so the BLM can see both sides of the issue.

During RAC meetings, discussions and questions occur between RAC members only. Any interaction with members of the public must occur during breaks, not during the meetings.

Designated Federal Official

Randy Gray's Position on the RAC

Mike Stewart explained that according to the RAC Charter, Randy Gray's position on the RAC terminated when he was no longer an elected public official. It is unknown at this time when a replacement will be chosen, but a formal process will be followed.

Bill Cunningham and Ron Moody noted that Randy Gray's position should not be left vacant until the next term because this is a crucial time for the RAC and they need to maintain continuity and momentum.

Dan Clark stated he would be willing to switch within his category to serve as an elected public official, rather than the public at large, and have Randy serve as the public at large.

Mike Stewart stated that in that event, both positions would be thrown open for the nomination process. It is not possible to move from one position to another without going through the full nomination process.

Craig Flentie has made inquiries into the process of replacing a RAC member, and any results could be six to seven months away, which would be into the next term. He also noted there is precedent that when an elected official loses office, tenure on the RAC also ends and the position is left vacant until the next term. To replace a RAC member mid-term, the identical process would have to be followed under which the member was selected in the first place.

Bill Cunningham wondered if the lengthy process can be condensed, given the special circumstances involved.

Mike Stewart responded they will seek clarification and get back to the RAC.

Charter

Mike Stewart reviewed the RAC's role and the BLM's expectations of the RAC. The recommendations made by the RAC are valued and taken seriously by the BLM. Agenda items should be put forward as soon as possible so the BLM has time to prepare for discussions.

Miscellaneous

Kaylene has phone cards which can be used for RAC members to contact each other. Anyone needing one should contact her.

The meeting rules, or “Do’s,” and the Facilitator’s role were reviewed.

Overview of the Monument Draft RMP

Jerry Majerus gave an overview of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process:

- The Monument was designated in January 2001 by Proclamation.
- Five cooperating agencies are from State and local governments.
- The RAC has been involved in the RMP through recommendations and team participation. RAC representation on the interdisciplinary team has been helpful to the team.
- Twelve public meetings will be held in February-March 2006.
- The public comment period ends on April 26, 2006.
- A Final RMP/EIS and Record of Decision are tentatively scheduled for Fall 2006.

He then covered the RAC’s involvement in the RMP process:

- 1999 RAC Report to the Secretary
 - 25 recommendations were made with full consensus
 - 6 were addressed by the Proclamation
 - 3 were administrative or outside BLM’s authority
 - 16 were addressed in the RMP
 - 4 motions were made without full consensus
 - All have been addressed in the RMP
- May 2002 RAC Subgroup recommendations
 - May 2002 Subgroup made 14 recommendations
 - 3 were administrative, including the portable toilet regulation
 - 11 were addressed in the RMP, including Standards and Indicators
- RAC meetings in February, April, June, September and December 2004, and March 2005 included discussion of the RMP alternatives.
- The RAC could be involved through the final preparation of the RMP, including participation on the team. The next team meeting will not be held until May 2006.

The team has considered, but not always gone along with RAC recommendations. In December 2005, Jerry sent the RAC members a table which showed those team recommendations which differed from the RAC’s, and the reasons for the differences.

The public is being asked to provide feedback on the Draft plan to determine:

- What new alternative or mitigation should be considered that was not addressed?
- What component of the affected environment, either resource description or resource use, contains inaccuracies or discrepancies?
- What areas of the analysis could be improved?
- What new impacts or new information should be considered?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the management direction?

The schedule of public meetings is as follows:

Date	Community	Location
Tuesday, Feb. 21	Lewistown	Yogo Inn
Wednesday, Feb. 22	Winifred	Community Center
Thursday, Feb. 23	Fort Benton	Ag Museum
Monday, Feb. 27	Havre	Holiday Village Mall
Tuesday, Feb. 28	Chinook	Chinook Motor Inn
Wednesday, March 1	Big Sandy	Community Hall
Thursday, March 2	Hays	John Capture Center

Monday, March 6	Malta	First State Bank
Tuesday, March 7	Billings	MSU Billings
Wednesday, March 8	Great Falls	Townhouse Inn
Thursday, March 9	Kalispell	Outlaw Inn
Tuesday, March 14	Helena	Jorgensons

A facilitator will assist at the public meetings and a court reporter will record all oral comments. Both written and oral comments will be received at the public meetings.

The comments are not weighted any differently whether they are emailed, handwritten or oral, or whether they are submitted during a public meeting or sent separately to the BLM.

Every comment letter received is logged in and assigned a number, and every comment is coded. A summary of the coded comments will be prepared for the public. While every form letter is logged in, the text of the form letter is only coded once. Approximately 600 letters and emails have been received to date.

Glenn Terry stated that when he was the sole RAC representative on the ID team, he represented the RAC as a whole and wondered if that is still the case, or if each RAC person on the team represents one category rather than the entire RAC. The RAC concurred that all represent the RAC as a whole.

Monument Draft RMP Deliberations

See Attachment 2 to these minutes.

Bin Items for Discussion

The RAC prepared the following list of items for discussion, which was set for 12:30 the second day of the meeting.

- Fees and how they would be applied to tribes in Montana. Recommend no fees to federally recognized tribes in Montana within the Monument area.
- An operational definition of the word “diverse.” A stated objective of the Proclamation is to provide diverse recreational opportunities. What does this mean?
- A discussion of the six WSAs and how open roads can be compatible with the interim management policy for WSAs.
- A broad policy question of how the preferred alternative will enhance the objects for which the Monument was created.
- The relationship of the Monument RMP to the multiple use mandate under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).
- Private access roads to the Monument.

Field Managers Update

RAC members requested an updated Briefing Statement booklet. Current briefing statements can be viewed on the BLM web site at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ea/bps/index.html>. The updated versions should be available on that site in about two weeks. An updated booklet will be mailed to the RAC at the end of February.

Mark Albers – Malta Field Manager

Malta RMP

Data collection for the Malta RMP has begun. The notice of intent will be published next fall. The RMP will include all public lands north of the Missouri River within the areas of the Havre Field Station, Malta Field Office and Glasgow Field Station (except the public land in the Monument). Mark would like to have a discussion at the next RAC meeting as to the RAC's role in the Malta RMP process.

Wind Farm Proposal

The Environmental Assessment (EA) has just been received on the first phase of the wind farm development. The BLM hopes to complete a review of the EA, which is being prepared by a private contractor, in early spring. The EA will tier to the national Wind Energy Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Mark will send copies of the EA to RAC members.

At full development the wind farm would be the largest in the United States. The proposed site is located north of Glasgow. The first phase is 36 towers, roughly the size of the wind farm at Judith Gap. The other phases of development are speculative at this point in time, and environmental analysis determinations would occur after the applications are received.

Black-Footed Ferrets

The Malta Field Office did not ask for an allocation of black-footed ferrets this year. The program has not been successful, and they are going to look at the reasons why before proceeding further with reintroductions.

American Prairie Foundation – Bison Proposal

Nothing new has been heard from the American Prairie Foundation, which bought land in south Phillips County and requested permission to change grazing from cattle to bison. At present the only request in front of the BLM is one request to change one grazing permit. That decision is under protest.

Mike Stewart – Lewistown Associate Field Manager

Planning Efforts

The Fords Creek, Box Elder, Little Box Elder and Yellowwater Triangle watersheds will be combined into one watershed planning effort. The Draft Judith-Moccasin Landscape Analysis is being completed, and public meetings will be held after the Draft is released. The off-highway vehicle planning effort for that area will be handled separately.

Crystal Cave

The only work done at Crystal Cave in the Judith Mountains to date is mapping the cave last summer. The BLM does not have legal vehicular access. Also of concern are safety issues. From manpower and funding standpoints, it may take awhile for something to occur there.

Fort Benton

A new law enforcement ranger is stationed in Fort Benton. The focus of his duty is the Monument. He is being housed in the Chouteau County Sheriff's Department.

Construction is 35% complete on the Fort Benton Interpretive Center. The projected opening is the end of June.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 5:40 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on January 11. All RAC members were present. Attending for the BLM were Mike Stewart, Gary Slagel, Jerry Majerus, Craig Flentie, Wade Brown, Clark Whitehead, Kaylene Patten and Kay Haight.

Public Comment Period

Eight members of the public offered comments, which are Attachment 1 to these minutes.

Other Business

Resolution

A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Tony Bynum to expedite the process to reinstate Randy Gray to the RAC to finish out his term, through the following resolution:

Given that 2006 will be a crucial year for RAC deliberations relative to the UMRBNM RMP; and given that Randy Gray has served for 5 years on the RAC and is recognized and respected by all members for his knowledge of and commitment to the Monument issue; and given that he is no longer an elected official but RAC charter language suggests there is opportunity for discretion by the Secretary to allow an elected official no longer holding office to complete a term of service on the RAC; and given that this RAC believes continuity is absolutely in the public interest,

Resolved that this RAC hereby calls upon the Acting State BLM Director to ask the Secretary of Interior to consider this RAC's desire to have Randy Gray complete his second term of RAC service, and to expedite his reinstatement, if possible, as soon as possible.

Consensus was reached.

Additional Bin Item

Wildlife Steering Committee for the Monument.

Monument Draft RMP Deliberations (Continued)

See Attachment 2 to these minutes.

Other Business (Continued)

Wade distributed to RAC members an updated Upper Missouri River Visitor Use History and Visitor Use Summary 2002-2005.

Bin Item Discussion

No Fees for Recognized Tribal Members

Tony Bynum stated that in large part tribal members carry enrollment cards. It is a matter of trust, and there is usually no requirement to show the card. The BLM could issue a stack of permits to the Tribe that they could hand out to tribal members. There is precedence in the Forest Service for using the honor system. A preferred way to handle it would be in the least intrusive way possible for everyone. The Proclamation states no rights of Native Americans will be diminished.

Tony further stated that if a right is not discussed in a treaty, it is understood that right is reserved. Although amenities are the reason for fees being charged, it was not a choice of the Indian community that these sites be developed. People who have used this area prehistorically and historically should be able to use this area without a fee. The Blackfeet and Fort Belknap have a strong view that they should not be charged fees for camping. This is something the BLM needs to do regardless of what the RAC has to say. The fee issue should be addressed during tribal consultations, to make it part of the dialogue.

Jerry Majerus noted that the BLM has looked at this issue and would not blanket apply any action without application to a specific treaty.

Wade Brown stated that under the new Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, a resource advisory committee will help set up the fee system and there may be involvement by the RAC.

Definition of Diverse

Bill Cunningham asked if the word “diverse” is a legitimizer for activities that may or may not protect the objects of the Monument. What is the origin of this word?

The BLM responded as follows:

- Diverse means a variety, both motorized and non-motorized.
- BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services uses the word diverse frequently. It has no meaning beyond “variety.”
- The management goals were developed early on in the RMP process and are part of Appendix E on page 399. The word “diverse” is used in several of the management goals. The BLM received public comment on the vision and management goals.
- It is understood by the team members they are working under the guidelines of the Proclamation, which calls for the protection of the objects in the Monument.

WSAs and Roads

Clark Whitehead noted that the table in the Draft RMP can be confusing with the map and changes will be made in the Final RMP. In WSAs there are cherry stem roads, unauthorized roads and vehicle ways (open roads). The roads that will be open are existing vehicle ways, which comply with WSA management policy. When the WSAs were originally designated a road inventory was prepared. Additional roads that have appeared since the inventory are now closed and will be shown on the Alternative F map as closed.

Q: Has the BLM analyzed how many miles of roads are being closed because of the Monument designation and how many should have been closed anyway?

A: There are only 40 miles of unauthorized roads in the entire Monument, but a total of 216 miles of roads would be closed under the preferred alternative. The BLM would have completed transportation planning through the watershed planning process, even without the Monument designation.

How Does the Preferred Alternative Enhance the Objects of the Monument?

RAC discussion included the following points:

- That question is limited to access questions. What is the background on how the preferred alternative enhances the objects of the Monument?
- We need a clear narrative in the document that explains it. One could get towards that by having a list of the objects.
- The word “enhance” could be interpreted differently.
- We can agree on the word “protect.” We have a plan with an open road system with significant mileage proposed to be closed, 2 year-round airstrips and 4 seasonally closed airstrips, and motorized use on the

entire section of river for at least some parts of the year. The question becomes how the plan will safeguard the objects.

Jerry Majerus responded that the significant objects are listed in Appendix B on page 381. This list comes from the list that was available with the Proclamation. Not included in the Draft are those objects located exclusively on private land. On page 15, Decisions Common to All Alternatives, under Cultural Resources, the first paragraph ties the management plan to the Proclamation; on page 16, Fish and Wildlife, narrative ties it to the Proclamation; and so on. The information requested is scattered throughout the Draft. The Vision and Management Goals are first discussed on page 10 in Chapter 1.

Wildlife Steering Committee for the Monument

Ron Moody proposed this bin item as a means for enhancing wildlife in the Monument. The Proclamation charges the BLM with protecting wildlife, but gives control of wildlife to the State of Montana.

General Discussion/Recommendations

Glenn Terry stated that everything the team did reflected on the Vision and Management Goals, and Jerry Majerus noted that all six alternatives tie back to the Proclamation, and Vision and Management Goals.

Francis Jacobs noted the narrative under Ranchers and Livestock Permittees on page 184 was very well written.

Francis stated that the DY Trail should be designated as an historic trail. The trail went from the Canadian border to Yellowstone. DY stands for Dominion to Yellowstone. Kaylene made a note to try to find additional information/history on the trail to be incorporated into the RMP.

Mary Fay stated that the Antiquities Act is clear that fossils cannot be removed if they are over 100 years old and the Antiquities Act should trump the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which allows the removal of fossils. She noted that “antiquities” is defined in Appendix 7, page 2 of the RAC handbook. This topic was deferred to the next RAC meeting. Mike Stewart stated that in the meantime, the BLM will research if there is a conflict between the CFR and the Antiquities Act concerning the removal of invertebrate fossils.

Occurrence of People Using Unregulated Airplanes to Search for Game

Tony Bynum expressed concern about people using chute planes or paragliders to travel across landscapes to harass livestock. They are loud, nonregulated, and could buzz over the river and the Monument 10-50 feet above the water or ground.

Bill Cunningham noted it is referenced in the travel parameters that were developed by the RAC.

Charlie Floyd stated the intent of this discussion is to make the BLM aware of the potential problem.

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Dan Clark for the BLM to study the potential problem further, and the RAC will bring it up again after seeing if it was a concern at the public meetings. Consensus was reached.

Environmental Consequences – Chapter 4

Bill Cunningham stated a need for more information on road density and habitat fragmentation. He referred to the travel parameters the RAC adopted, which states there is concern about road density, and said it would be useful to hear from a wildlife biologist who is current on road densities and the effect of open roads on wildlife species in the type of environment found in the Monument.

Ron Moody stated that missing from the discussion is the relationship of a road to what humans can do on that road, and the effect of a road on wildlife is entirely dependent on what hunting regulations allow the public to do on that road.

Terry Selph noted that perhaps more roads are benefiting bighorn sheep, since the breaks population is doing so well.

RAC Representation at Monument Draft RMP Public Meetings

Feb. 21	Ron Moody	March 2	Lisa Huestis
Feb. 22	Ron Moody	March 6	Francis Jacobs
Feb. 23	Bob Schoonover	March 7	Jeff Sheldon
Feb. 27	Lisa Huestis	March 8	Mary Fay
Feb. 28	Lisa Huestis	March 9	Tony Bynum
March 1	Glenn Terry	March 14	Mary Fay

RAC Meeting Dates

Dates: April 5 (10:00- 6:00 with Public Comment from 10:00-11:00)
April 6 (8:00-3:00 with Public Comment from 8:00-9:00)
Location: Lewistown
Re: Monument Issues

Dates: July 12 (10:00-6:00 with Public Comment from 10:00-10:30)
July 13 (8:00-3:00 with Public Comment from 8:00-8:30)
Location: Great Falls
Re: Non-Monument Issues

Meeting Agendas

April Meeting

Continue bin items (reserved water rights presentation, etc.)
Red items on Table 2.38
Summary of public comments
Well spacing requirements
Authorization of airstrips in the Monument
Antiquities Act/collection of invertebrate fossils
Roundtable discussion of public meetings
Election of officers
Monument boundary

July Meeting

Watershed planning program – how does it work?
Valley County wind farm
Range specialist to talk about range improvements – successes/need improvement
Region 6 Prairie Dog Management Plan
Malta RMP and RAC Involvement
American Prairies Foundation presentation
Economic presentation and public lands management effects on local economies
GPRA and Strategic Planning – where is the LFO in the process? Where is BLM nationally? Planning
Schedule (big picture)? Where is this office going in the next 5-10 years?
Budget process and outlook (simplified version)

Travel vouchers were completed by the RAC members and the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Attachment 1

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Public Comments January 10, 2006

Mary Jones

My name is Mary Jones. I'm with Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument. We're a grass roots organization with an office here in Lewistown made up of business people, farmers, ranchers, schoolteachers, and the general public. We are an advocate for the Monument and the Proclamation. It's nice to see the RAC back, and welcome to the new members today. We enjoy seeing you join the group.

The Monument's Proclamation is the overriding document which guides the resource management plan preparation. As the BLM has said during their planning meetings, "The Monument plan is different than a regular BLM management plan." Read the Proclamation for your guidance as we continue. The vision will come from the Proclamation. Casual use in this monument has ended. It is withdrawn. I believe that the RAC should also keep that message in the forefront when making decisions here today and tomorrow. We are not trying to please all constituents. This is not a landscape designated to achieve everyone's wish list. The resource management plan has a format guide and that guide is the Monument Proclamation.

You're going to hear people say that that the BLM is a multiple use agency mandated by FLPMA, and I'd like to go over the background of multiple use and FLPMA briefly.

The western states were wide open pre-World War I and the grazing continued over the entire west. The cattle drives came from Texas, moved on up to Montana, and grazed. By the time the depression came, the windstorms came. They blew the dust all the way to New York City and by noon it was twilight in New York City. The Senate found that this was just too much. Legislation brought in the Taylor Grazing Act. The Act ended free range grazing and created grazing districts. This was a strong step to help return health to America's western lands. But, the advisory committees were made up of stockmen and the range condition remained pretty much the same. This brought in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Because all 178 million acres of western land were considered under one environmental impact statement, they were asked to go back and redo it and take each individual area.

In 1974 the NRDC brought that suit to force the BLM to write individual impact statements for site-specific allotments. It became clear that that the BLM needed its own act to help it administer public lands, which were greater, their area was great than any other public agency's land.

In 1976 Congress passed FLPMA, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. This gave the BLM their multiple use mandate. Multiple use meant that the BLM was to manage for other values than just grazing and mining. It did not, however, say that the BLM was to allow everything and all other uses, only that it managed for more than just grazing and mining. FLPMA applies here, but remember that the Monument Proclamation is the legal document. It's the one which lays the foundation for the management of this monument. Valid existing uses will continue, but "... the national monument shall be the dominant reservation." I offer you a copy of the Proclamation and my comments.

Thank you.

Dyrck Van Hyning

My name is Dyrck Van Hyning. I'm from Great Falls. I'm going to speak to you both today and tomorrow. Today I'm going to speak about the transportation system and access. Tomorrow I'm going to talk about the interested parties, a concept strengthened by the 1995 Grazing Reform Act which also set up the resource advisory councils and the reasons that you're here. I'll also talk about the airstrips tomorrow.

The Proclamation directs a travel plan to be produced that protects the objects of the Monument by closing roads and restricting travel. No off-road travel will be permitted. Access on much of the Monument is through private property. I'm going to talk to you today about one of these properties, and I have given you a letter that the Robinson family asked me to hand out to the RAC. The Robinson property is here at the top of the Bullwhacker. This white right here is their property. It's basically three point eight miles of private road that is basically the only access into this bullwhacker area right here, which is listed as an object of the Monument. In my opinion, that's my favorite point of the Monument. A lot of people like the river. The river is the most used. But this area is one of the most unique, and every time that I go up there I go a different location and there's just so much to see up there.

The Robinsons have had problems with the outside public and destruction of their land. It is said that create a monument, and they will come. And this is what has happened up there. The Robinsons have had fences cut, gates left open, cows shot, their buildings ransacked, their cattle just plain missing, unauthorized camping and hunting on their property. They felt the security of their property was at stake and they had to do something. So for the first year, 2004, they created a sign-in situation to go through their land that everybody personally had to contact them. You will see on their statement there, there was 520 people came through this property. Now for the most part, this is not 520 cars, but it's also not 520 people because there could be two, three, and Ronnie told me seven in one vehicle. But for the most part we're all working with the same documentation.

This took a tremendous amount of time. I think I get a lot of phone calls as a food broker and candy broker. I don't get 520 calls during a three-month period. I don't know how anybody could do that. So what they did, they thought they would refine this program and the next year, which is basically this year, 2005, with the help of the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks they had a voluntary sign-in. What they did is they came up with a sign-in sheet on one side of the paper and on the other side kind of a map of their property and what was going on up there. They had this sheet located at a number of places through Havre, Malta, Chinook, so forth, at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks and other locations.

The Robinsons believe this was a great success. It was a success to them because all of this vandalism and destruction of their property just went away. You will see that I think it says 360 people voluntarily signed in. Of course, you're always going to have a number that aren't signed in. But it's still successful because the people that do come down their road know that somebody's watching them and they also had, the Fish, Wildlife & Parks had a number of game wardens up there pretty constantly going through the area. So I think that's pretty important.

I think this concept could be used throughout the Monument to get access at other places where there is no access. There's probably 14 of those locations in this part of the Monument. Now this is the map of just the eastern part of the Monument. You have an area right here on Ervin Ridge which has no access. You have an area right here that has no access. This is a favorite, I think, of Gary Slagel's. Four landowners in the last four years owned, I don't know, 50 or 80 feet or something like that of private property, and they do not allow the public down into this area. This has turned again. A new landowner now from Idaho has bought this and he has bought it just for the hunting rights and so he and nobody else can go down there.

Possibly by using what the Robinsons did as a voluntary system might be a very small first step. The next step could possibly be a short-term easement. An easement doesn't have to be for life. Easements can be for two years. They can be for five years. Take these little short steps and convince the landowners that this is in their best interest to do and all of the destruction that happened before will not happen.

The other thing though I think is important, I told you the Robinsons felt, and when you read their letter, they say in there that they feel very good about this. The other flip side of the story. I told you this road was 3.8 miles. There is like 500 miles of proposed roads in the Monument in the Draft RMP. This year was an extremely wet year and there was people going off the roads all over the place, tremendous ruts because this is gumbo, of course. You and I and all these other people, we try to get on the side of the road when the middle of the road's wet. We go around the mud holes and everything, and it just left a tremendous mess up there. I'm talking about 3.8 miles. How about the 500 miles in the Monument? I think the RMP does not address the destruction that comes from this sort of thing.

Now basically, the months that they have given you is during the hunting season. The bow season and the regular rifle season. And they do have this tracked for a couple of months before that, basically in the recreational period.

But I'm saying if this is happening in these 3.8 miles in the most remote area of the Monument, how about this area that comes up, a direct highway from a 110,000 population community into these areas. Think of the destruction that's happened down there. Five hundred people up here, think what's coming in down here.

Thank you very much.

Marv Hoffer

Good morning. I'm Marv Hoffer, Lewistown. I've been here, when I was transferred in as a federal employee to this agency in 1983, and I was the environmental coordinator at that time until I retired in '95, just prior to that. So I would like to address for the edification of the old-timers and the newcomers here as well a little bit about the BLM land management process that leads up to the Monument and a few other subjects. I hope to address two items in a short time this morning, including the Monument and a couple maybe tomorrow morning.

The BLM as an agency didn't have any land use plans when it came into business in '46 as a grazing service. It wasn't until the late-70s thereabouts, mid-70s, before some basic management plans were initiated. Other agencies were required to do that. BLM just sort of hoped that whatever came up they'd try to address the subjects and address the problems and resolutions thereof.

The Management Framework Plan, MFP is an acronym, was the first effort by BLM. We did a few here and I was the environmental coordinator in this district, which encompassed the Glasgow office, Malta, Havre, Great Falls and Lewistown. The Lewistown District had these subordinate offices out there. Nothing happened anywhere in the District unless it came through this shop.

We had a number of district managers and staff that the State Office had assisted, and the MFPs were the first generation. Then later we did a little refinement and called them RMPs, and you had various subjects thereafter. But there were many laws, the Endangered Species Act, NEPA, as you know, FLPMA, and a host of other laws that directed clearly this agency as well as Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife, Park Service, etc. to manage our public resources for us in a fashion that was cultured by clean water, clean air, a host of other laws that refined focus and maintained a threshold of public resource values.

I can tell you flat out that there was a very great struggle within the agency, BLM very specifically, at that time and still is today to stay focused on and work for the public at large, to make sure the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, etc. are incorporated at the very onset of the threshold level of these plans. But as you know, the MFP/RMP process is the parent document. Everything else that happens within the agency is subordinate to that.

As the environmental coordinator for a couple of decades, I know precisely every word that went into those documents. I came to handle them numerous times. We had a lot of consternations, a lot of big drag-out, knock-down meetings. But I think the products that came out of there were pretty good. But keep in mind that any time you see or hear staff today or in the past imply that they have a new idea or a plan or something as a substantiation of an idea or a concept that they want to invoke today, such as in the breaks Monument plan, make sure that you see that document. Make sure that it has gone through the NEPA process, the public forum. Many of the things that we've seen and I encountered in my tenure there were unsubstantiated.

A case in point. The airstrips issue here in the Monument. Never once, and I can tell you that personally, never once was an airstrip issue ever brought up, identified on any maps. I walked that whole country innumerable times, floated the river on inventories innumerable times, worked with state government staff, other agencies and so on down the line. But I defy as we have in the past, the current BLM staff, or the past staff, to bring forth documents, NEPA-process documents that clearly went to the public forum, that document any airstrips or anything similar to that. None of those were ever legitimate or identified in any legal process. They are bogus. We have a politically motivated process here that clearly points out you have an elitist effort to engender consumption or use by a privileged few at the expense of the general public. We don't need fixed wing airstrips. They never were issued and Dave Mari, the past District Manager, at a public interagency meeting made clear that there never has been any sanction by the federal agency to quote, improve or modify any of these airstrips. They're all bogus and illegal actions, pure and simple.

The reason I point that out is because it's very analogous to what Dyrck and others have pointed out and you know, the roads and trails that have been engendered by ATVs and four-wheelers geometrically, without constraint. We have a tremendous amount of abuse over the Monument, and that's true for most other BLM-managed lands in this region in this state.

The Monument is special. Airstrips don't belong there. We all can't get there. By virtue of age and circumstance we may not climb Denali. We may not get to the back corners of Yellowstone. But the hard fact is that that Monument is a designated area for a special purpose, to leave it as a wildland, which it is. The roads that up in the BLM administration viewpoint are going to be sanctioned simply acknowledge that they're legit, when all of them, with rare exception, were created adversely. If you want to see how to manage that type of proliferation, look at the CMR, that's Fish and Wildlife Service. Right downstream. Part of that area was in the same manner and uncontrolled activities of all types.

The key point here is that airstrips were never legal. If you have any question about it, ask the staff to bring forth documentation of the NEPA process which sanctioned any and all of those. About eight or ten or whatever airstrips there might be. If we have a need for search and rescue or fire suppression, whatever, we don't use fixed wing. We always have used rotary. There's plenty out of Malmstrom for search and rescue. Charlie here in Lewistown with rotary ship. And so the contention that we need to have fixed wing airstrips is baloney.

Why do we not have any ID on an airship today? Fixed wing aircraft that flies over, I defy any of you to write down which ship it is. I've been in enforcement in federal service in other states, California and so on, and that historically was the case. You could identify a trespasser. Low flights for outfitting were illegal. Bighorn sheep disappear in the breaks if they're half curl or better with high proficiency.

So there are many reasons that people tout as why we must have airstrips for fixed wing. My contention, they're not.

One quick item. I see on the yellow agenda that you folks are apparently going to consider at depth and issue some kind of recommendations on the draft RMP, which is really appalling and surprising because you're representing the public, and we haven't even gotten the RMP for the public, for us to look at. I represent the Central Montana Wildlands Association. We've been involved in this area, among others, since '95, and it's boggling to me that any group like this would consider something that BLM has in poor shape, or draft shape. I would hope that you folks defer that until after the public forum is complete and the public's had a chance to review that and make our recommendations to you.

Thank you.

Chuck Jarecki

My name is Chuck Jarecki. I live in Polson, and I'm here to represent the Montana Pilot's Association. I've spoken to you several times in the past. I'd first of all like to welcome the new RAC members. You've got a contentious job ahead of you with a lot of diverse viewpoints.

I will hand this out to you after I've finished reading my comments. The Montana Pilot's Association supports that portion of the Preferred Alternative F in the draft Resource Management Plan that pertains to keeping open for the public, non-commercial use the six named airstrips, all located within the Monument boundaries. These are Knox Ridge, Cow Creek, Left Coulee, Bullwhacker, Black Butte North and the Ervin Ridge. Furthermore, the MPA supports the proposed seasonal closures of four of these airstrips for wildlife management purposes.

Contrary to what the previous speaker had to say, the five airstrips of those six that are located north of the river have a long history of use. There are several reliable aerial mapping photographs available to document the minimum number of years that those airstrips have been in existence. The earliest photo of the Cow Creek airstrip was taken on September 20, 1950. A subsequent photo was taken on October 1, 1956. These are aerial mapping photos, they're not just snapshots. The photos depicting the other four airstrips were also taken in 1956. There are

notations on those photographic prints that say “airstrip” or “runway” marked on those strips. They are in the BLM Havre office. So the airstrips were created long before anybody ever thought of NEPA.

The airstrips, I’ll pass out photographs. I’ve got photographs of three of the six airstrips. They show first of all, visual impacts. The visual impact of the airstrips in the Monument is minimal. In October of last year I went and photographed each of the airstrips, with a representative photograph of standing off to one side looking towards the airstrip, and you would never even know it was there. The only way you’d know is that you’d have to be standing virtually on the airstrip to see that it was part of the landscape.

Of the six airstrips, the total footprint on the landscape is eight acres, while the roads that are proposed in Alternative F cover 550 acres. And yet each contributes to a balanced method of access into the Monument.

Vegetatively, after 50 years of use the airstrips exhibit a higher degree of herbaceous vegetative cover than the rest of the landscape in that area. I have photographs that depict that same thing. The only bare ground that you see in the area is where the soils are probably too saline to produce any type of vegetation, and you see the same site on the airstrip as well as off in the natural rangeland.

On the wildlife issues, there’s been a lot of discussion about that. The Monument Proclamation states the following, and I quote, “The Monument boasts the most viable elk herd in Montana and one of the premier big horn sheep herds in the continental United States.” The text goes on to describe a broad variety of wildlife species thriving in the Monument. It appears the continual use of the Monument airstrips over the past fifty years has had no identifiable negative effect on wildlife. The Montana Pilot’s Association has discussed the potential airstrips/wildlife conflicts with local Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks department game biologists, and the conclusion reached was that with the seasonal closures as noted in Alternative F, there would be no remarkable impacts to wildlife from the continued use of the airstrips.

In regards to bighorn sheep, there’s no question that bighorn sheep are a sensitive species, sensitive to disturbance. But the MPA believes that the real question is whether the disturbances constitute a threat to their wellbeing and if so, what disturbance constitutes a threat to their wellbeing. Is it stress from an aircraft, or is it somebody walking towards them on foot in a threatening manner.

The sheep in the Monument have done well despite public usage of the area at all times of the year by hikers, horseback riders, vehicles, ATVs, motorcycles, snowmobiles, private planes, military jets, in addition to seasonal hunting which is kind of tough on animals.

Currently there are plans for the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to relocate approximately sixty bighorn sheep to new locations. This would indicate that the population is thriving and doing quite well despite perceived unsubstantiated threats on the animals.

The Montana Heritage Program did a species of concern search in the area where the airstrips are located and there are no endangered species, no threatened species in that area. There are no known sage-grouse leks within five miles of any airstrip, nor are there any prairie dog towns. Additionally, there are no bald eagles nesting anywhere near the airstrips.

So in conclusion, the Montana Pilot’s Association believes that the continued use of the six airstrips listed above can be part of the Monument transportation plan while at the same time meeting the environmental goals of the Proclamation.

I have here for each of you, and there’s two copies for staff, of my presentation with the photographs. Thank you.

Larry Copenhaver

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the RAC, my name’s Larry Copenhaver. I’m feeling like I’m on death’s gate, so I hope you’ll forgive me if I don’t speak too clearly this morning.

I'm the Director of Conservation with the Montana Wildlife Federation. Our office is in Helena. Montana Wildlife Federation is the oldest and largest organization of hunters and anglers in this state. We are in existence for the protection of Montana's lands, waters, and fair chase hunting and fishing heritage. We're interested in the Missouri Breaks Monument, as has been set up in the Monument Proclamation. I would like to see whatever product comes out of this whole process to meet the vision that was in the Monument Proclamation.

Now I know that what you usually see standing in front of you is some people who may lecture and some people may criticize. I'm not going to promise I won't, but I will tell you this. The RMP in its draft form, people have looked at it and at first glimpse, you read through it and your first impression is well, this isn't so bad. So that's a good start. But your second time through you realize what's lacking is some detail. Some of the Monument parameters, some of the Monument's directions are . . . (tape change) . . . and there is some reduction of the vibrance of those animals. Also, it notes that some day they may need to be allocated, the use on the river, if the river use volume has increased to a point where it's impacting people's enjoyment of the Monument. However, what's missing in this picture? Details. At what point? At what trigger point do we make those changes?

Throughout the RMP is the implication that we will adjust the program to meet the needs of what's happening on the ground. But yet there's still no parameters set as trigger points. The MWF doesn't believe that if allocation is set up for the river use that any part of that river use should be set aside for commercial uses. This is the people's monument. It belongs to the public. It belongs to all of us, and the commercialization and privatization of that use is inappropriate, and I would ask that this RAC recommend to the BLM that they set those parameters, number one. Set the levels, uses where the trigger points begin and if allocation is deemed necessary for the use of the river in the Monument that that river use be allocated to the individual river user who can then hire a commercial provider to take him down the river if necessary.

A little bit of history. I was on the river recreation advisory council who looked at these types of allocation systems across the west. There's a couple, there's arrangements on the Beaverhead and Big Hole called a biannual rule that restricts use on certain parts of the river by outfitting so that locals can enjoy part of what they grew up with for certain periods of time. The Smith River, on the other hand, has specific permits set aside strictly for the commercial outfitter. It is proven that some people will wait for years to get a permit to float the Smith, while if you go with a commercial outfitter you just open your wallet, hand over some money, and you go down the next week. So we don't want to see that happen on the Missouri Breaks Monument. We don't want to see that happen on the Wild and Scenic Missouri. We think this is a very inappropriate use of our natural resources and our public trust.

Since I'm rambling I'm going to leave it there and I may speak in the morning, at the public comment meeting in the morning. Thank you for your time.

Ron Poertner

Good morning. I'm Ron Poertner. I'm with the Missouri River Stewards and I represent the farmers and ranchers in the Missouri breaks area, with our focus being to protect the property rights of landowners in the breaks.

I just wanted to make a little point this morning. This whole Monument process is really embedded in a little four-paragraph law, the law of our land, it's the Antiquities Act. It's kind of amazing to me that these four little paragraphs that gave the president authority to set aside some lands to protect specific objects that are outlined in here, we end up with stuff like this and you go, my gosh, where has the system gone. So I would just ask the RAC as you go through the plan and as you make decisions on your recommendations, refresh yourself on this Antiquities Act a little bit. Because that's really the law. I know the Proclamation, we all say this is God's law, but I think it has to at least be compatible with this Antiquities Act. There's a lot of things in this plan that I think just kind of takes a left turn at the pass there. So I just ask the RAC to kind of review this once in awhile and just make sure we're kind of on track with what the law says we ought to be doing here.

I'd like to talk just a few minutes about the proposed water reservation in the Judith River and Arrow Creek drainages. Specifically, the paragraph on page 272 of the RMP that's entitled Water. It kind of keys on what the Proclamation says to reserve a quantity of water in those two drainages. I can tell you that this whole paragraph, it's really got farmers and ranchers jumping up and down up there. It's not clear exactly what the meaning of that

paragraph is, but it really sounds like if this water reservation goes through as indicated, and of course we don't know what the quantification is – it hasn't been done, I guess it's being worked on – but we don't really have a clue what it's about. But it sort of implies that if this reservation takes place, there probably isn't going to be any water left over for future water reservations by farmers and ranchers or by agriculture. So that area's got a lot of people really excited. I'd kind of like to go through that to tell you just what some of our concerns are.

I guess the first thing that bothers us is the water rights was reserved five years ago by the Proclamation, and really nothing substantial that we can tell, other than I think there's some water flow measurements being done, but nothing's really been done that we can kind of look at to see, do we agree with it, do we disagree, and just what it's going to be. And yet we're being asked to comment on this plan but we don't really have a clue what this water reservation is really about.

So to me it's kind of hard for the public to meaningfully comment when the issue is not being really clearly laid out for us. Of course water, as we all know what the old saying is, whiskey's for drinking and water's for fighting. I think that still holds true today because it's a pretty important commodity up there in those two drainages.

From what we can tell by reading maybe somewhat between the lines in that RMP is that it looks like the BLM is going to delay the work and the quantification of this thing past the RMP process. We think it's important enough that we ought to make sure that's included in this thing so we can get the public debate. I know it can be debated later, but we've got the interest and the visibility here. I just think that water reservation thing should be formalized in this RMP.

I think foremost some of the problems we see with that language in that paragraph is that we've heard discussions that the water in these two drainages has already been fully allocated, if not over-allocated. So we go, how well did whoever in the federal government wrote this reservation thing in the Proclamation, how well did they really look at the Judith and Arrow Creek. There are people who'll tell you that Arrow Creek runs dry in the summer. So there may not be any water to reserve. I think that's what the BLM needs to look at, and I think the RAC too. Just what is left? Because from discussions we've had with folks this may already be over-allocated. So I think it needs to be looked at.

I think another really important issue is look at the map, and look at the area that these two rivers run through. We kind of drew the boundary lines of the Monument into these things, and they say this water reservation is to protect cottonwoods on these two tributaries. But look at the land that these cottonwoods are on. I haven't aced it out, but about ninety percent is either state or private land. So okay, we're going to reserve water to meet some needs of the Monument to promote and protect cottonwood trees, but it's all on private land. So we go, it's almost like we're managing a resource that's on private land or state land and not really in the Monument itself. So I think that needs to be looked at.

I guess what makes even less sense to us is, if you've ever been down the Judith or Arrow Creek drainages, you'll find that cottonwoods abound beyond reality. There is no comparison of the galleries in those two drainages compared to the main stem Missouri. They've been doing good for hundreds and hundreds of years, and now we think we need to get more water, for what I'm not sure, but the cottonwoods in those two drainages, in spite of probably the heaviest cattle grazing, lots of wildlife in there, beaver, that kind of thing, those trees are doing just fine up those two drainages.

I think we've all heard that, and I think the Proclamation alludes to it, that these drainages represent an important seed source for cottonwood regeneration on the main stem Missouri. I think that's somewhat faulty too because studies on the Missouri River show that cottonwoods most notably, these studies cite several factors contributing to lack of cottonwood success. I think the most notable reason is the Missouri is a relatively new river geologically speaking and it doesn't meander like the Judith and Arrow Creek. So even under the most ideal flood conditions or water conditions, the environment just isn't really conducive to cottonwoods that you see up those other two drainages.

I think the other reason is we can have all the seeds in the world that come out of the Judith and Arrow Creek and flow into the main stem, and they'll get planted and they'll grow, and next spring ice comes in and blades them out. Until you get those really high episodes of flooding to get those seeds way up on the river bank, you're just going to

have a tough time convincing anybody that these water reservations on the Judith and Arrow Creek really, really benefits the cottonwoods on the main stem.

The bottom line is I recommend the BLM give serious consideration to running this water reservation thing back up the tape to Washington and have the Secretary of Interior look at this thing and say hey, you know, have we really done this right and does this thing really make sense? Because that's the bottom line. Things have got to make sense to ranchers out there, and if they don't, this Monument is going to be a long time being accepted out there. So I think really we need to take a hard look, not only here but even in Washington, to say is this water reservation right really valid and is it something we can really do. I just ask that the RAC give that consideration.

Thank you.

Will Patric

Good morning. I'm Will Patric and I represent The Wilderness Society and other conservation organizations concerned about the breaks. First and foremost, I'd like to just say thanks to all of you for serving on this RAC. I think it's a great thing that you're doing and welcome to the members. It's good to see the other faces of the RAC members here. You haven't met for quite awhile, but again I just really applaud you for taking time and doing this in a volunteer capacity. I think it's a really important thing.

As we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument this month, the BLM and the RAC in its advisory capacity face the very important challenge of crafting a plan that will set a standard for management of the Monument. It will determine how we view this extraordinary landscape, even think about its very identity, for decades to come. It's a crucial time for the breaks.

Fortunately, there is some clear direction pointing the way to proceed with this challenge. I'd start first of all with the Proclamation. You'll find words and phrases like remote, nearly as undeveloped as it was in 1805, unchanged, some of the wildest country in all the great plains, and important wildlife habitat. The Proclamation notes outstanding wildlife to go with that habitat and makes references to Lewis and Clark and native people long before them, archaeological and historic sites and geologic wonders. The Monument was established, according to the Proclamation, for the purpose of protecting those objects or values. It specifically calls for road closures and travel restrictions toward this end and it also declares that there shall be no mechanized vehicle use off roads.

The second direction that I think we have is what the public has said. The vast majority of the public, not all of it, but the overwhelming majority, have made it clear that they want a monument that is essentially undeveloped and has a wild character and a remote feel and offers quiet and solitude. They are asking in essence that a vestige of our common western heritage be preserved for future generations to experience.

The third direction that we have is science with regards to wildlife habitat. It seems to me it's quite clear. Fewer roads and less motorized use equates to better wildlife habitat and more wildlife. That's not really something that we've got to debate endlessly and talk about. It's simply a fundamental reality. Likewise, fewer roads and less motorized use helps to protect historic and cultural sites. Again, that's just simply what experience dictates. It also means reduced spread of noxious weeds.

Finally, there's the direction of simple management common sense and basic economic realities. As we all know, BLM budgets right now are stretched extremely thin. Staffing is very limited for monitoring, enforcement, and maintenance. It's a good time, in other words, to manage on the cautious side and not a good time to introduce more challenges and liabilities.

So with those points in mind and with that direction, it's my hope that this RAC will consider taking a bolder and more visionary stand with regards to roads, airstrips and motors on the river. These are the biggest impacts, the most substantial things that you all have to grapple with, and simply put, we urge you to consider the merits of fewer roads, no airstrips, and a truly quiet river experience.

Regarding roads, the BLM has proposed some reductions and we applaud that step. But we'd like to see better. With the BLM's preferred alternative right now, fully 75 percent of the land within the Monument would still be

within a half mile of an open or seasonally open road. I urge you to ask if almost 400 miles of roads are appropriate for a fragile landscape that's very much about stepping back in time, remoteness, solitude, and outstanding wildlife habitat.

Regarding the subject of airstrips, we hope you will ask if they are appropriate within this or any other national monument. The fact is there are only a few national monuments that even have one backcountry airstrip. The BLM has proposed six for the breaks. In our view that's catering to a very small, select user group while ignoring the desire and expectations of the vast majority. It's also in conflict with the Proclamation's directive to keep the Monument remote, undeveloped and unchanged. It conflicts specifically with the Proclamation's directive that all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road shall be prohibited. And it's opening up the BLM and the public to liabilities and completely unnecessary regulatory challenges. It's also encouraging aircraft users to fly directly into the breaks, thereby eroding the Monument's intrinsic values in the process while discouraging aircraft use to places like Winifred or Big Sandy or Fort Benton, which could benefit economically from visitors coming to the area by plan rather than being bypassed and going directly into the Monument.

I guess just to respond to the Pilot Association's, Chuck's comments, I'd like to also say that just because something is present in the Monument doesn't mean it was authorized. There's lots of mining sites all over the west on federal lands that have been there, but that doesn't mean today we would authorize those things. We should talk about them. It should be a matter of public debate. Again, just because they're there doesn't mean they've been scrutinized by the public and talked about to decide if it's a good idea.

Also, I'd like to just point out too that we're not just talking about impacts today. We're talking about impacts in the future and what should we set a standard for now. We don't know what the future's going to hold. So again, I think we need to be looking in the future and not just talking about impacts right now.

I'd also like to add too that, and I think Mr. Hoffer said this quite well, that the BLM isn't closing airstrips under its preferred alternative. The backcountry airstrips that are now in the breaks again were never authorized in the first place. We're really talking about user-created, outlaw strips, whatever you want to call them, and again, I don't think they have any business, I think they're completely contrary to what the Monument's about.

We have to remember too that there's numerous airstrips on private property in and around the Monument, and I think it's important that the RAC and the BLM think about the cumulative effects of those airstrips as well and look at the whole big picture. There's simply no rationale for putting airstrips on the public land in the Monument, other than the fact that one specific interest has asked for them.

Finally, regarding river use we'd like to see you consider making the entire 149 miles of the Missouri River in the Monument essentially motor free. We believe that at least one portion of America's longest river, about 125 miles long, should be motor free and that this place that celebrates canoeing and quiet and remoteness and history seems like the place to do it. That's what the vast majority of river users want and expect, and for young and old alike, experienced and inexperienced folks it's an easy river to paddle. It's away from roads, which is extremely unusual, and that's what we should be emphasizing. However, I would like to also say that knowing that many outfitters make their living on the river, and I'm thinking of people like Terry, I would also suggest some creative thinking in this regard and look at the possibility of grandfathering in current motor use with some sort of long-term gradual sunseting. We don't want to see anybody put out of business and likewise, we don't want to see ranchers or irrigators or others within the Monument that need to occasionally use motors on the river in support of their livelihood to be put in a hardship. Likewise, the same with essential administrative use. But if we fail to take a bold step today that draws a line on motors on the river, we're going to miss a tremendous opportunity.

Finally, I guess I'd just like to say that again, this is the fifth anniversary this month of the establishment of the Monument, and with that in mind, we and the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument created this map and guide to the Monument. I'd like to share it with RAC folks and hope that you'll look at it and hope that it will bring up some ideas and inspire some questions.

Again, I want to wish you luck in your deliberations. Thank you very much.

Mark Good

My name is Mark Good. I work for the Montana Wilderness Association. I live in Great Falls. I had a couple of comments that maybe are more appropriate for the upcoming public meetings, but it's my understanding you're going to be talking about a range of topics today and I was hoping that you could spend at least a few minutes talking about the wilderness study areas.

Most of you know there's six wilderness study areas in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument: Dog Creek, Stafford, Ervin Ridge, Antelope Creek, Cow Creek and Woodhawk. I don't know if everybody knows the history of those. Congress back in the 70's had asked the BLM to inventory those areas and make some recommendations about which areas were suitable for wilderness. Not wilderness for the sake of wilderness, but the idea that some areas need to be protected and kept as they are. At least it's my belief, and it's a designation that's withstood the test of time. At any rate, they came out in 1991 with some recommendations on which areas of the six that I just mentioned.

There's some maps in here showing where the boundaries are, some include some roads, but it's my understanding that the maps here are not the real maps, or the accurate maps. I've been told by BLM staff that there's really another set of maps and inventory maps. I've gotten hold of those maps and tried to compare them both with these and with the preferred alternative. What I've found is that there seems to be some discrepancies. More roads in the map with the preferred alternative than the inventory maps, so it could be that I'm just not reading the maps right. There's also a table in the Draft Resource management Plan that doesn't seem to correspond to any of the maps.

So again, it could be just me. It could be that I'm not understanding something, but as you go through this list of topics today I'd appreciate it if you'd talk a little bit about this and see if we can get BLM staff to clarify it. I figure if I'm not understanding it, then probably some of you aren't understanding it either. So anyway, I just hope that that will be one of the topics on your agenda today.

Thanks, and I also appreciate all the time you folks put in and taking a day off work to come here. Thanks.

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council
Public Comments
January 11, 2006

Dyrck Van Hyning

My name is Dyrck Van Hyning. I hope that you enjoyed the Mint last night. I have somewhat fond memories of the Mint. That's where I met my waterloo in fifth grade. I thought I was going to make my fame and fortune as a newspaper delivery boy. My loyal customers of three days bought from another individual. His name was Ralph. While I was looking for fame and fortune, Ralph was looking for knowledge. When we graduated from high school, of course Ralph got the nod as the most probable person to succeed. He is a nuclear physicist, world renowned for nuclear half life presentations. He has spoke in every country and is in high demand, including Iraq and Iran, South Africa, anybody interested in nuclear fission.

I think Ralph learned early that knowledge was everything. That's what I want to talk about today, and I think that's where the RAC members are at is gaining knowledge. You've all did your fame and fortune and to get there, you have mastered gathering knowledge. I think that is everything, and that's what I'm going to talk about in my short seven minutes.

I passed around an interested public on grazing. Tony talked a little bit yesterday about the RAC has got other things to do besides the Monument and this is one of the big areas. I just real quick want to read what NEPA says. The interested public. NEPA requires the planning process insure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken. The information must be of high quality. Accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny are essential to implementing NEPA. Most important, NEPA documents must concentrate on issues that are truly significant to the action rather than amassing needless details.

So that is where we're at, and sometimes I think that in this document that we're in this second part. One of things that I would like to see is a listing of the objects of the monument. Another monument, the Cascade-Siskiyou, lists right up front in their manual the tangible objects of the monument and the intangible objects of the monument. That's why we're putting this RMP together. For those reasons. I'm not going to go through the other nine areas of interested public. I have asked the BLM of the 154 leases in the Monument to be in these nine areas up in the Bullwhacker area. Gary Slagel has immediately written back with a letter updating some of these 154 leases and I've also got a letter back from the BLM that was basically written by Mitch Forsyth on the north side, Vinita Shea sitting over here on the south side, of these situations that are going to be happening. I asked for all of these up in the Bullwhacker and just to be notified as piped water projects in like Vinita's area. We had a nice meeting yesterday and I think this is a tremendous grazing team to work with.

I wanted to, the rest of my presentation talk about another thing, and that's basically gaining knowledge. I am in love with the Monument. I think it's one of the greatest places in Montana. Of course, I am from the flatlands here and we lived in the Snowy Mountains ten miles south of town, the headwater of Casino Creek, but the flatlands are my favorite. To gain knowledge of the Monument I try to read a number of books. Any books that I could find besides going out, looking at the area, talking to the ranchers out there, talking to the people. Of course, one of those books is by James Schulz, which is really fun to read, really easy, he's got about nine of them, My Life As An Indian. You've got to read Floating the Missouri, one of the last things before they built the dams on it. Another one Lou Hagener in Havre introduced me to, probably my favorite book on the Monument, and this is by Robert Eigell, call him Ike, and about the end of 1920 and 1930 as a young kid come out from Minnesota and rode in the Bullwhacker area.

This book, and you can get this at the Havre library, I've looked on the internet, it's about \$350 now so I always go to the Havre library, Cows, Cowboys, Cannery, and Corned Beef and Cabbage. He describes riding over this area and all of the people that lived there. I think that we all look at this Ervin Ridge, and I think Ervin Ridge has got about five or six spellings that we know of, of Ervin, and Ike had another spelling in this book which I thought was probably correct because Ervin was there at the time. Another book that I have just come in contact with which I think you all may be interested in reading, and I'm going to read just two little parts out of this book. It's Secretary

Babbitt's, and it's Cities in the Wilderness. I consider this book to be like a congressional record. When a bill is made into a law the committees first talk about this bill and they go back and forth. If this bill is put into law, to enact this law you go back and look at what the people thought and said about this law. In the Antiquities Act and in the President's Proclamation you can't really do that. But we can look in this book and we can see what they thought. The first one is by putting the proposal on the table, and he's talking about by putting a monument on the table, and this is not our monument, but a monument type of deal, "I established a default position in the absence of consensus the land would be permanently protected thereby reversing the normal presumption that in the absence of consensus development goes forward." In the absence of consensus development goes forward.

In the second part I'm going to read, "I recommend that the new monument remain under BLM and not under the Park Service. The purpose of these new monuments was to assert unequivocally the primary reason for public values on these lands precluding the use that would impair the natural values of the land. But it would not automatically exclude the use of hunting and grazing so long as they would be managed consistently with the overriding purpose of preserving and restoring the natural system."

The airstrips are developments. They do not belong in this Monument. Thank you.

Marv Hoffer

Good morning. I'd like to address quickly about three different subjects that you had not addressed yesterday, and some of the new persons may be not even familiar with. I was the environmental coordinator for a number of years here in this agency. I am also a wildlife research biologist by profession, with about 50 years in the saddle. So I am cognizant of natural resources as they relate to Department of Interior lands and Forest Service lands. One of the areas that we touch on briefly, at least in the comments, about wilderness study areas. There are a number of them here in Montana, many of them that are administered by BLM. If you're not familiar with a wilderness study area, it came out of the products of court directions to all federal agencies to evaluate all public lands to determine if there is suitable land there for wilderness designation. RARE I, RARE II are some acronyms that some of you are familiar with.

RARE II resulted in BLM coming up with a number of wilderness study areas. One of them is Bitter Creek north of Glasgow, between the Canadian border and Glasgow. It's the finest land of its type left in eastern Montana. The Canadians recognize it immediately across the border as having established a Canadian national park, grasslands park. That quickly tells you the Canadians recognize its value. Certainly we should as well. It's astounding that out of the blue a Texan for private enterprise purposes finds land adjacent to Bitter Creek to set up a wind farm. If you haven't looked at that area, you should go up and look at it as a group or as individuals and check it out.

Our organization, Central Montana Wildlands Association, wrote a Freedom of Information Act request to BLM for any and all documentation, conversations, contracts, commitments, information and so on that they may have on this subject. Well, after about two or three months of diddling around we finally got a bill for \$40 and a few hundred pages of innocuous pabulum. However, the FOIA also stated that for reasons of "privileged information" the BLM was withholding from the public about 85 pages plus another 16 that were generated by our employees in Glasgow, BLM employees, on this very subject. They have been pretty much disenfranchised up there at BLM Glasgow office. They contracted or hired, by a consortium of four or five federal/state agencies, including BLM, and a BLM person from Washington, DC was sent out to Billings to shepherd this whole issue. So essentially you have an isolated NEPA document of some sort being generated and the Glasgow staff, who knows best the circumstances for many years, decades that is, are not involved. So our concern is an underlying issue there of an attitudinal problem within the agency. It sorely implies that there's a them and us. Them is you and I, and us is the agency. Almost an adversarial posture.

The second item is down here in the Flat Willow Creek, which is part of the Little Snowies. Tom Seibel, who I in error bought some of his stock in his company a few years ago, and anybody who bought some of that stock you recognize it took a nosedive for a few bucks. But aside from that, Tom bought the N Bar Ranch from Tom Elliott. Ted Roosevelt IV is a friend of his and they are going to raise short-legged livestock from Australia. No joke. These livestock critters can't accommodate conventional wildlands on our national forest and public lands that we have. The area up there is about 2000 acres involved, of your land in the national forest area immediately to the

north or to the south and a lot of state land, and the essence of it is that the Seibel/Roosevelt crew hired a contract logger out of Idaho and enlisted the aid of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and a few other groups to imply that we have to clear a lot of this land, clearcut or essentially make a stump farm out of it, so they can run grass seeders over the top because these cattle can't handle conventional vegetation. So they did that on private land and the contention was that Roosevelt and company weren't interested in profit. However, our land, our public land, which was an entirely viable ecosystem that was functional, we had bear, mountain lion, elk, deer, you name it, wolverine, on down the line, and that has been essentially, large chunks of it, clearcut or stump farmed. Even to the point of trees that were marked leave trees documented that they were piled up to be sold, illegally cut leave trees, but the more astounding thing is that our public resources were given to the logging company, the consultant, quote, for services rendered. So the taxpayer, you and I, are paying to make a stump farm out of considerable public land. In perpetuity we'll never get a dime out of it and there's also, after some discussion with BLM staff here, agreement that yeah, Roosevelt and Seibel and BLM have talked about an exchange or disposition of our public land that has been essentially clearcut. The astounding thing is the tremendous amount of land that was clearcut and piled. We photographed a quarter mile long slashpile twenty feet high, viable logs, I've checked with the company, Pyramid Logging Company at Livingston, were saleable, 2x4 stock that's burned. Massive amounts of vegetation burned as well as broadcast burning.

The essence of it is we were not given the opportunity to review this in public. Our organization appealed it to BLM and also to IBLA, Interior Board of Land Appeals, and they all rejected our appeal, which we expected, even before we submitted all our data. So it's pretty much a politically motivated action without question.

I wanted to bring that to your attention because it underwrites the type of an attitude that we have here. That it's politically motivated in many respects, intent to be outside the public forum. We had to struggle pretty hard to even get some basic information.

The other little item is the Little Rockies and the Moccasins and the Zortman/Landusky Mine. You're quite familiar with that. The Native American community have lived in what I call the American holocaust where you have a tremendous amount of folks living in deep poverty in an environment that they weren't willing to live into, a reservation that is. If all of us were herded up and hauled up to the north side of the Little Rockies to live in that environment, I think we'd all rightfully object strenuously. The water contamination is monstrous there. We still are paying BLM employees today in this agency who advocated strongly with the Canadians that that was the right thing to do. We're going to pay millions and millions in perpetuity to try to resolve some of the water problems up there. It's a cosmetic thing that the Canadians are up there laughing. This Jack Abramhoff is not the only criminal running loose in the bushes, that's for sure. The mining activities up there were severe and brutal and I was the environmental coordinator at the onset of this whole thing, the Moccasins and the Little Rockies, and let's get rid of the feds so we exchanged the public lands to get rid of the federal regulation in large part, but not all of it, and today you and I are going to pay, your kids are going to pay, and your grandkids are going to pay to clean up the mess, or try to clean up the mess it can't.

One question I would like to ask you as a group, in light of these and many issues, do you as individuals and as a group believe that you will make a positive difference as a member of this organization.

Thank you.

Tim Faber

Good morning Council members. I forgot to take my hat off here. I wear this hat a lot here. I kind of like it, although I'm not a member of the Montana Wilderness Association and not really a dues-paying member of any organization or party, although it's been suggested that I'm a sympathizer.

Last fall I was watching the Bobcat-Grizzly game at a local pub up there in Big Sandy and a young guy came up to and saw me wearing this hat and said, "Oh, you're for that damn monument, aren't you." And I said, "Well no, actually I'm for the Grizzlies." Anyway, it's some of the comments I have to come up with.

Sunday I went cross-country skiing up Cottonwood Creek and there were tracks. Skiers and snowshoers had been there recently but on that particular day I had the area all to myself. Snowshoeing is really growing in popularity and there seems to be a little less skiers and a lot more snowshoers now. But on that day it was just me there. I would have liked to have skied in the Monument if there was enough snow. It can be the ultimate experience in solitude, away from the noise of saws and hammers and machines, and bitching and moaning about monuments and closed roads like Cottonwood Creek.

Years ago I cross-county skied with friends from Havre at the Bear Paw ski area. The last time I was up there about 15 snowmobiles came roaring right down the ski hill right past me. In that area and Beaver Creek State Park snowmobilers cross the highway, run down the highway. It's an example of multiple use uncontrolled and what I call multiple misuse. You can't just throw recreationists together without conflicts. You've got to have separate areas. In Cottonwood Creek the trail is closed to snowmobilers after December 1 to allow skiers and snowshoers to enjoy the experience I had Sunday.

I have led MWA hikes in the Monument. People from Havre, Billings, Great Falls and the like were astounded that such a unique place existed so close to an area like Havre where there is limited recreation. I used to snowmobile there and put in a few road miles there on a motorcycle, then along came the 500 cc dirt bikes tearing up the hills, and there needed to be some management.

In 1975 when I attended college at the University of Montana a petition was circulated to ban snowmobiling in Glacier Park. Of course, my buddies from Cut Bank and Choteau were strongly opposed, but there wasn't this animosity and this senseless name calling that I encounter around here. In Missoula the hippies co-existed with us rednecks. It is my hope that people in this area can come together and reach an agreement, reach a compromise on this management plan.

So now if you'll excuse me, I have to get back to work before I get called a slacker along with an environmental greenie and all that.

Ron Poertner

Good morning. Ron Poertner from Winifred. I would like to revisit the issue Ron Moody brought up yesterday about management recommendations that the 1999 RAC report approved with full consensus and then sent that to the Secretary of Interior. I think Ron felt that the BLM had not honored the RAC recommendations regarding something about aircrafts in the Monument, and landing or whatever, or overflights. If I recall I think the BLM said that part of that RAC recommendation was really not feasible to implement. Maybe that's right. I won't guess that. But there is another issue just like that. That's where the 1999 RAC report, there's an issue that deals with boating restrictions on the river. On page 7 of that RAC report under the heading of Motions Approved with Full Consensus, we find that the RAC recommended that the current boating restrictions remain unchanged and left in place. That was the recommendation done by the 1999 RAC report that went to the Secretary of Interior reflecting all the same kinds of public comment we're having today but it was just done a few years ago.

Now this is the action the Secretary of Interior took on that RAC report. He directed a memo that I have right here, it's dated 19 January 2001 that was sent to the BLM director in Washington and it states, and I quote part of the paragraph, "You are directed to review the December 30, 1999 recommendations of the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council and implement all feasible recommendations." They didn't say look at the RAC recommendations and if you don't like them, change them any way you want. He didn't say revalidate them by another public process in 2005. He told the BLM you are hereby directed to implement all feasible recommendations. I think that's pretty clear. I would submit that leaving boating restrictions, which is a hard debated, much debated issue in that 1999 RAC, just the same as we're doing today, that was a full consensus. It wasn't, well, we're just going to leave it. It was recommendation number seven in that report.

So I think that if the integrity of this RMP process is really to be upheld, I think the RAC needs to go back and relook that 1999 RAC report. Go through those issues and decide for yourself, hey, have we really done the work that we're being asked to do here. Because otherwise I think it leaves this debate open for public criticism and I just don't think we even want to go there.

So what I would like to do is ask the RAC chairman if he would include this memo so everybody could read it as part of the official minutes of this meeting, and I think it's a document that I think everybody on this RAC just needs to read. So I would ask that you would include this in closing. Thank you.

Mary Jones

I'm Mary Jones. I'm with Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument and I spoke to you yesterday also. I've spent about three or four years going through BLM comments that have come from the public, the scoping comments and then the alternative comments that came in. Many of these come from places outside of Montana as well as many from Montana. But I'd like to read just one little section from a book that the BLM put out, and I think it gives an idea what some of the people from other areas, what they want to feel and what they want to get out of the Monument. So very briefly, this was put out right before the winter Olympics in Utah. It was done by many, many writers and poets. There's a whole selection in here of what they feel about public land. But there's one little part I want to read just a little bit from.

"The Monument can be appreciated in snippets. You can go by it, car window, hundred yard stroll to a scenic outlook, but they can't be understood at that rate." And the writer is saying, "My life has been spent, with few exceptions, in large urban places like Boston, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. Nature when encountered was something to be appreciated. Skiing, driving cross country at 70 miles per hour. The activity, not the out of doors, was the draw. But gradually I learned better. I spent a weekend with an environmental group called Great Old Broads for Wilderness whose members sometimes _____ so that hikers can be more self-reliant. I'm no naturalist. I don't know the names of most plants or trees or rocks I stumble across in the wild, but I do know this. To gain anything meaningful from an encounter with nature I must linger. I must immerse myself in my surroundings and to do this I must slow down. I spend a day outdoors in the wild and the past and the future inevitably yield to the present. I must remember to call so-and-so gives way to look, look at the colors here of these rocks. I forgot to pay the electric bill becomes feel that breeze on my skin. I become alive to the moment. I'm both calmed and I'm energized. I felt this way in the monument and on Forest Service land in many places in Utah. I've never felt this way in a city park. To lose myself in nature I need time and space." And as Proust wrote, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

I think for many people who come to the Monument they don't want to speed through it. They want to really experience it. We don't need vast amounts of automobiles or ATVs or airplanes or roads. We need just time to experience this and place to experience.

Thank you.

Chuck Jarecki

Good morning again. Once again my name is Chuck Jarecki. I'm from Polson and I'm an unpaid volunteer for the Montana Pilot's Association. I come to these meetings at my own expense. First I wanted to talk a little bit about the history of these airstrips and what they date back to. As I said yesterday, they were constructed mainly between 1950 and 1956, which predates any NEPA legislation so they are quote, not outlaw airstrips. If you go back through your RAC minutes you'll see where comments have been made by the BLM staff that these were BLM-constructed airstrips.

The current NEPA standards cannot be applied to pre-NEPA projects. However, the Monument EIS when it's finally approved will fulfill NEPA requirements for these airstrips because they will be evaluated for their compliance. What about all other pre-NEPA projects that have occurred over the years in what is now the Monument? The water holes, the water savers, the fences, the roads. Were they all run through the NEPA process? Obviously not. But they're still there. Are they illegal? I wouldn't think so.

If the airstrips were acceptable at the time of the Monument Proclamation, then they should probably be acceptable today. The comment has been made about the BLM's going to be hung out to dry on liability issues if we have

these airstrips. What's the difference between a liability issue on an airstrip versus a liability issue with an automobile, a pickup truck, or an ATV or anything else? Montana has what is known as a recreational use statute and it's a strong law compared to other states. It's not weak. There's federal and case laws on the books right now that protects the landowner, whether it's private, state, or federal from liability lawsuits unless the landowner creates a willful negligence. For instance, in the case of the airstrips, if the BLM decided they didn't want an airstrip to be used they dug a ditch across the middle of it. That would be willful negligence and they would be liable. They would have to go through the formal markings that are done to close airstrips, not destroy them in that way.

Yes, there are surrounding airstrips on private land. But they are private. They are not open to the public. I've landed at some of those, and unless you know that airstrip is there, you have a real difficult time finding it because the airstrip is out in some field of crested wheatgrass or something, and they are used so infrequently that there's no major track through the grassland. The airstrips in the Monument are quite visible from the air.

The Montana Pilot's Association supports establishing an ecological baseline data set with subsequent monitoring program. This would record any long-term change with continued use of the airstrips, and management practices could be adjusted to reflect what that change may be.

The airstrips serve as internal trailheads and leave a very small footprint on the landscape. You don't have to drive your pickup or your car down miles of roads to get back to where you want to be. And once the airplane is on the ground it doesn't move. Those of us who go in by air, once we land we're afoot just like backpackers and day hikers. The footprint of the airplane, as I said, is quite small compared to the footprint of a road system.

I've heard comments, well the airstrips are not on the charts. No, they're not. They are in the Montana Aeronautics Division database. You can go in there and find out what the coordinates of them are and their length and elevation and their runway orientation. Furthermore, until the planning process was completed we did not want to put any airstrips on charts because we didn't know which ones would be approved and we didn't want airstrips put on charts that may in the near future not be available. The Montana Aeronautics Chart only changes when the governorship changes. So if we put these airstrips on the chart that just comes out right now, it could be eight years before there would be a new chart issued. So you would have airstrips charted that would no longer be available.

There are numerous airstrips in other areas of the country that are public airstrips. They are part of the management transportation plan on the federal lands and they are not charted. For instance, in the Frank Church Wilderness in Idaho there are four airstrips that I know of that are public use airstrips, they are part of the transportation plan, they are not on an aeronautical chart. The same exists in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area on the Idaho-Oregon border. But these airstrips co-exist with other users in the area.

During the scoping process that was held about two and a half years ago, over 80 percent of the comments that came in regarding the airstrips were in favor of the airstrips being retained for public use. You can look that up yourself in the scoping summary. Pilots and our passengers are just as passionate about the backcountry as you people are here today when it comes to the basic qualities of the backcountry, and specifically, the Monument. We hike. We fish. We camp. We look for rocks. We look at wildlife. We do photography. All those things. We just have a different mode of transportation and we pride ourselves on being good stewards of the land. You won't find any trash. You won't find any beer cans. You won't find any paper or anything at places where pilots have stopped and spent some time and maybe camped overnight.

We fly every fall on the first full moon in September or October to a place in Utah called Mexican Mountain. It would take you two days and a four hour walk to get there, and we get down there in about four hours. It's in a wilderness study area. It's recognized by the BLM as a trailhead. We meet friends there and we camp for a long weekend and then we're home again. When we get there in the fall, you would not think there'd been another person there all summer. There's backpackers that go by, there's day hikers that go by, and almost without exception they are more curious to the fact that there's an airplane or two sitting there than they are complaining about the fact their wilderness experience has been infringed upon. So the various users can co-exist.

Thank you.

Larry Copenhaver

Good morning again. I'm Larry Copenhaver from Helena. I work for the Montana Wildlife Federation as their conservation director. A couple things that come to mind looking at this RMP and listening to the discussions in the last day. One part of this Monument that you can see is the most in flux, you've got the wildlife and the ecology of this Monument. This Monument is a very distinctive place. This Monument has the second best sheep herd, and I say second largest sheep herd in Montana, which sounds like that's pretty nice, isn't it? Well, Montana is probably one of the highest destinations and most coveted among sheep hunters around the world. So to be the second largest sheep herd in Montana is to say a pretty significant mouthful.

Now that's just one example of the strong part of the ecological integrity of this Monument. You add to that the strong elk herd, some of the best mule deer habitat, as well as the solitude and everything else everybody's mentioned up at the top of this, sitting in front of this group. The wildlife don't recognize a line on a map. We've got the CMR to the east of it, we've got plains north and south of this Monument. The Montana Wildlife Federation believes this RAC could take a leadership role in suggesting to the BLM that within the RMP, to help give the RMP an ecological vision. It's not a bad document. I don't want to minimize the effort that the BLM has put into this process. But the one missing piece that I alluded to yesterday, and I hope I can make it a little more clear this morning, is the cumulative effects. All that's going to happen on this Monument. What kind of future influences are going to change. Mr. Jarecki talks about going up there since the 50s and the sheep herd is one of the best in the country, and that is true. There is no question about that. Should the parameters on those airstrips change, if they are indeed part of the final draft of this RMP, should that change, should they all of a sudden become used ten times as much or fifteen times as much, or twenty times as much, what kind of an effect is that going to have on this premier sheep herd? You've got to ask the question.

Number one is how do you know. Number two, what do you do about it? What we would like to suggest and ask that maybe the RAC suggest to the BLM that it goes into the RMP, and if not, at least follow up that we develop a steering committee, a wildlife management steering committee that would include Fish, Wildlife & Parks who would set seasons and manages wildlife populations; the BLM, of course, because they're managing the landscape on which this wildlife lives; and then the Fish and Wildlife Service because like I said, the wildlife do not recognize a line drawn on a map. The CMR is as much a part of the landscape as the full breaks, as Mr. Moody alluded to yesterday. The CMR, The Missouri Breaks Monument, and then the continuous area around our Monument. DNRC should be part of the process. They also own some property and manage some livestock on that property that can indeed then lead into wildlife management considerations. We would like to see this defined in the RMP if possible, and it will give us an opportunity to use these adaptive management techniques that are being bantered around in the RMP and in common conversation.

In order to use adaptive management, number one you have to know what you have on the ground, an inventory; number two, you have to have an opportunity to communicate what is happening on the ground. A formal steering committee could meet quarterly and they would have an opportunity to share information, figure out where their status quo is, what they are doing at the time, and if any management changes need to be implemented. As you can tell in this world, the management is a large boat that does not turn quickly. But at least they can get the process under way and going towards mitigating of bad situations.

Back about two years ago I passed out a Department letter that came from biologist Christie Dubois to her supervisor in Region 4, Great Falls, Fish Wildlife & Parks, in regards to the Ming Bar airstrip which was on a wildlife management area on the upper end of Holter Lake. The implication in this letter was that indeed aircraft have a very high probability of having a more profound impact on bighorn sheep stability. Anyone that knows anything about bighorn sheep is that they're a pretty stable animal. They can harbor diseases in the various vectors that could kill them. But they don't manifest themselves. They just graze like nothing's happening. An outside force comes in, all of a sudden pasturelosis becomes virile. It comes alive. And pretty soon you have a die-off. They had a die-off on the Rocky Mountain Front back about, I think it's fifteen years ago now, but don't quote me on the amount of time.

These can happen at any time in any of our sheep herds. If, indeed, we do have an increase, let's just say a scenario of the six airstrips proposed end up in the final RMP and at some point in time the use of those strips does increase

to the point where there is an impact on the bighorn sheep herd, we want to see that there are mechanisms in place in order to respond to that negative impact to that sheep herd. That's just one example.

I know I'm kind of stumbling around here trying to make my point. My point is that we need adaptive management in order to keep this Monument preserved and restored in the natural system, and I think this is one technique that's doable, it's implementable, and it doesn't take a particularly large amount of resources in order to do it.

I'll leave that thought with you and ask that maybe you'll suggest to the BLM that this be part of the RMP to pursue this kind of a steering committee.

Thank you.

Mark Good

I just want to emphasize that you've been struggling with a lot of issues here in your deliberations and I want to emphasize the need, I think, to go back to the values for which this Monument was created. Because I think when you do that it helps in terms of how you make those decisions and they ought to flow from those values whether you're talking about roads, when you're talking about airstrips, or use of the river, powerboats, or oil and gas development. Go back and remind yourselves that the purpose of this Monument, first and foremost, is to create opportunities for people to experience remote settings, to protect the historic and prehistoric sites, protect geologic features, protect wildlife, protect the scenic values, and the river itself also has, in the management plan outlines, similar values. These values range from scenic vistas, diverse wildlife species, breathtaking geologic formations, prehistoric and historic remains, and the opportunity to experience solitude, all on the last freeflowing stretch of the Missouri River.

So I just want to emphasize that and I think that that would help in terms of how these decisions are made. I often hear the word multiple use talked about. It is multiple use, but wilderness is also multiple use. Multiple use has never meant all uses in all places, and it certainly doesn't mean it here. It's a monument. It's supposed to be managed differently than other BLM land. That's why it was created a monument. So I just encourage you to go back to the values for which this was created.

End of Public Comments

Attachment 2

RAC Deliberations on the Monument Draft RMP

RAC members were referred to Table 2.38 from the Draft RMP which was sent to the RAC in December with color highlights added. Those topics with blue highlighting previously reached RAC consensus. The green highlighted items reached RAC consensus that was similar to, but not the same as the preferred alternative. The red highlights indicate no consensus was reached. Those topics with no highlights (black font only) were not discussed by the RAC. The smaller table also sent to RAC members shows the topics in which the RAC recommendation differed from the team recommendation.

For the following RAC discussions, the **topics are shown in bold**, followed by the preferred alternative language from Table 2.38. Under the bulleted discussion items, *BLM comments are italicized*.

Green Highlights (RAC consensus similar to the Preferred Alternative)

Forest Products (page 40 of the Draft RMP) - Minimal harvest techniques where forest health is in jeopardy. Designate areas for personal use. With a permit, individuals can utilize material from wildland fires.

- *The difference is the intent, where the team felt if timber needed to be thinned for forest health, a sale option would be available.*
- *There is no commercial timber available in the Monument.*
- An example would be if there were a beetle infestation, an option would be available to utilize the timber.
- Would like to know that current science is being used to determine forest health.
- It may be easier to say, "Operate under the existing BMP program the BLM has in place."

A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Terry Selph to endorse the preferred alternative, making sure that we need to utilize current science, in accordance with current BMPs that the BLM has to encourage forest health, to assess the techniques to be used. Consensus was reached.

Research, Collection, and Special Event Activities (page 54 of the Draft RMP) – Personal collection of plant material allowed.

- *The intent is basically the same. Personal collection would be allowed, but wildcrafting (commercial purposes) would not be allowed. The team looked at personal collection of seeds, berries, etc. from small plants, not digging up plants.*
- A definition of personal collection is needed (clipping, seeds/berries, not digging).
- We should address digging up roots as well.
- If any digging is done, there should be some kind of permit required.
- It says that personal collection of plant material is allowed. This means personal use. It doesn't mean commercial use.
- Are there pre-existing uses for plants? Could see a rule that plant digging would be allowed by permit only. The problem would be if tribal members are digging plants that we do not know about.
- We could say we're not talking about subsistence and traditional uses by people who have a right to do so. Does the language in the table capture it?
- Would not go along with collection by digging.
- What about digging a plant for a 4H youth project? How do you balance that use with collecting a truckload of plants?
- What authority does the BLM have to take administrative action if a use is found for some plant in the Monument (e.g. a cancer treatment from plants found only in the Monument).
- *The BLM has authority to deal with such matters under closure and restriction orders. The definition the team looked at is on page 371 of the Draft RMP under "Wildcraft." The intent is that it would be okay to pick berries or leaves. We need to address digging up plants to take them home; and include a definition.*

- You should not take a right away if you know it is there. At a minimum, say it is not okay for this segment, but it is okay for this segment. Leave it alone or else you invite those types of questions. There could be an exception for indigenous people.
- State that excepting preexisting tribal or legal rights, or noxious weeds, the removal of plant material by digging would be by permit only.
- Does this topic fall under the Antiquities Act language in the Proclamation?

A motion was made by Mary Fay and seconded by Jeff Shelden that BLM come up with a definition of plant material and language about the digging of plants, and to restrict that in some way. Consensus was reached.

Recreation Activities in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat - Personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) allowed. A seasonal restriction may apply (Dec. 1 to March 31).

- *This topic received a lot of editing. Some of the RAC's language was incorporated into the preferred alternative. The RAC discussed whether a seasonal restriction should be implemented. The team decided that a seasonal restriction could apply if wildlife harassment becomes a problem.*
- This is a forward-looking issue that is a problem in many places in the west.
- *Other monument RMPs do allow antler hunting.*
- The dates might not be appropriate for the protection of wildlife. Suggest removing the dates since March and April are traditionally the toughest months on wildlife.
- *The consensus of wildlife biologists is that the herds are different in the breaks than on the front, and these dates are protective of the breaks wildlife.*
- Suggest taking the dates out and allow the BLM flexibility to set dates as needed.
- Who would set the dates?
- *The BLM biologists would know when there would be a need to set dates. We might be better off to show the extreme dates. That would give people an idea what they could see if the winter is severe enough.*

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Barb Cole to accept the preferred alternative as written. The motion was revised to accept the preferred alternative but take the dates out. The motion was again revised to accept the preferred alternative, but change the dates to December 1-May 1. Consensus was reached.

Interpretive Sites (Cultural and Geological) (page 54 of the Draft RMP) - Small, low-key interpretive signs that blend in with the surroundings. Simple markers at some sites. Portable interpretation available.

- *The RAC did not discuss geologic interpretation, which was added by the team. Some potential geologic interpretive sites are identified in the RMP. The idea is self-discovery.*

A motion was made by Francis Jacobs and seconded by Glenn Terry to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Upper Missouri River SRMA - Camping (pages 62-63 of the Draft RMP) – Additional Level 1 sites only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to Level 1 and 2 sites to address visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 sites between Fort Benton and Judith Landing as necessary. Additional Level 3 sites as needed.

- *This was one of the first items which reached consensus by the RAC, and a lot of text was added since then, although the intent is still the same. The team carried through the subgroup recommendations for the river, and also carried it through to the uplands. This provides flexibility for managers to relieve pressure on existing sites if use greatly increases.*
- Did the team feel it necessary to have additional sites?
- *The team looked at the addition of Level 1 sites only in the recreation segments of the wild and scenic river, as needed.*
- Do we have data on how often the Level 1 campgrounds are filled up and people turned away?
- *Don't recall ever turning someone away.*

- Have you identified potential sites for additional development?
- *Don't see us building Level 1 sites because of the expense of putting in vault toilets, and providing vehicle access to pump the toilets. We would probably build Level 3 sites instead.*

A motion was made by Jeff Shelden and seconded by Terry Selph to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Upper Missouri River SRMA - Camp Stoves, Fire Pans, or Fire Mats at Level 4 Opportunities – Camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats required.

- *This was revised since the RAC reached consensus. The revision was to conform to policy/guidance language. Also want to be sure that the RAC understands the requirement would be at all Level 4 opportunities.*
- Will you be taking out the fire rings in Level 4 sites?
- *They are taken out every summer by seasonal workers.*
- Do camp stoves include white gas and wood burning stoves?
- *Yes.*

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Francis Jacobs to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Uplands SRMA - Camp Stoves, Fire Pans, or Fire Mats at Level 4 Opportunities – Camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats required.

- This will be difficult to enforce outside the roadside camping areas.
- *The counties had a real interest in this issue because of the potential for wildfires and asked the BLM to address it.*
- Is there a defined fire season that is published for the public?
- *A broad group consisting of federal, state and county agencies determines restrictions.*
- Make sure the public knows that if they burn it, they buy it.

A motion was made by Glenn Terry and seconded by Terry Selph to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Natural Gas Operations – Spacing Requirements (page 86 of the Draft RMP) – One well per half section in the Leroy Gas Field and 1 well per section in the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field. Increased well densities up to 1 well site per quarter section, subject to siting criteria.

- *This topic was discussed by the RAC in February 2004. Consensus was reached to limit well spacing to no more than 4 sites per section. The team didn't feel it was well defined and refined the language subsequent to the RAC consensus. Within conditions of approval, timeframes for drilling are specified. Normally, conditions of approval are not applied until an application for drilling is received, but in the Monument, we are saying these are the conditions you can expect if you submit an application to drill. We can always add conditions of approval on a case-by-case basis.*
- Who defines the spacing requirements?
- *The Montana Oil and Gas Commission sets the requirements. The BLM provides input into that process. If the Board were to increase the spacing requirement, we would supersede the State and keep the spacing defined in the RMP.*
- I don't know if I should support this because I don't know the subject at all.
- What was the rationale for different spacing in different fields?
- *Those are the current State spacing requirements that apply to the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain gas fields. Most people would not think about directionally drilling in this area due to the shallow gas fields, but with new technologies that could change. Thus the language on directionally drilling.*
- Are there sensitive areas within these fields that could be impacted if they went with ¼-acre spacing?

- *Some of the leases, with the conditions of approval that are being considered, would have few drilling sites that could be looked at.*
- *Has there been any work by the BLM for lease buyouts? Are there certain areas that we want to try to retire these leases? Is this outside the purview of the RAC?*
- *We have not looked at doing that in the Monument area.*
- *This is not an item the RAC is well qualified to make a recommendation on. Expect the spacing of wells would be done in conformity to law and regulation and the expertise of people in the industry to make sure that what is done will not harm the objects of the Monument. The RMP is riddled through with specifications for distance from leks, lambing grounds, etc. The only thing I am qualified to say is we need to protect the objects of the Monument.*
- *What is meant by “subject to siting criteria”?*
- *Wildlife concerns, visual resources, slope and topography are all included. If an application comes in under the preferred alternative, we would still look at conditions of approval.*
- *Are the wells out there now producing?*
- *There are producing wells, but not high-production wells relative to other areas.*
- *Is it the position of BLM that the 42,800 acres of leases within the Monument are valid, existing leases? Or is it undergoing a Department of Interior review?*
- *We have not been told by the judge that the leases are not valid. As far as the BLM is concerned the leases are valid. The judge has not issued a final ruling, so he could make a different determination.*

A motion was made by Francis Jacobs and seconded by Glenn Terry to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus failed. A motion was then made by Ron Moody and seconded by Mary Fay to table the topic until another meeting, with the notation the RAC has questions about the spacing of wells. Consensus was reached.

Public Access (page 91 of the Draft RMP) – Public access easements where no legal access exists or where additional access is needed.

- *The RAC discussed most of the issues dealing with access and transportation in April 2005. A lot of this section was rewritten based on the team taking another look at the issue, and also for reformatting.*

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Francis Jacobs to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Public Access on New Resource Roads Used for Natural Gas Operations – Closed for public travel unless to meet management objectives.

- *The team added that road closure determinations would be made on a site-specific basis.*

A motion was made by Mary Fay and seconded by Ron Moody to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

BLM Roads to State and Private Land (page 100 of the Draft RMP) – BLM roads to state and private land open for administrative and private land access. These roads also open for public travel if shown to meet Monument objectives.

- *The RAC recommendation was to use the language “if shown to meet Monument objectives.” That language was incorporated by the team. The actual description provides motorized access to the boundary of state or private land and it would remain open for private or administrative travel. The team tried to clarify that language. The intent is the same as the RAC language, but could be interpreted differently.*
- *State law differentiates between state land which is legally accessible and that which is not. What would the circumstance be that would cause you to close a road to the public while still allowing access by a private landowner?*
- *Sensitive soils, steepness of the road, erosion, sensitive wildlife.*
- *The perception is there would be exclusive access.*

- The 79 Trail to the river is signed closed, which closes the only access to the Judith River.
- *It is not a designated county road. We cannot declare a road across private land as open. There could be a section of state land that is not designated as open. All roads crossing state lands are closed unless authorized as open. The issue should be taken up with State Lands.*
- If the state would open that road up, could the BLM consider reopening their portion?
- *Yes.*
- The BLM has authority to close a resource road for any reason. Why do we have to specifically state that a road accessing a state section could be closed? It is language accessing state land that is the problem.
- *There is access to private land here. It may stand up to use by a private landowner, versus opening it up to the general public.*
- What if you have an open BLM road to a state section, which is closed, but the BLM road is open beyond the state section? Would the BLM road automatically be closed if the state section is closed?
- *The intent is to notify the state that they need to look at opening that section.*
- Of concern is access across state land by a permittee, but nobody else.
- The second sentence is not needed.
- If the option were there to close roads, we could increase the distance of no more than ½ mile from a road at any point in the Monument.
- *This came up by people who wanted a guarantee that their private land would be accessible. On the flip side, we had comments from private landowners that they did not want the public to have access to their roads and would like a balance.*
- I want access to state land.
- How do you determine if the access is for administrative use or otherwise?
- *Using the access for other than administrative purposes would violate the permit.*
- The only reason this is in there is if you intend to apply arbitrary political considerations to the access of state lands.

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Jeff Sheldon to accept the preferred alternative as written. The motion failed. A motion was then made by Mary Fay and seconded by Ron Moody to table this topic. Consensus was reached.

Type of Motorized and Mechanized Use on Roads (page 100 of the Draft RMP, 1st column, 3rd paragraph) – Open roads available to motorized and mechanized use consistent with management objectives. Some closed roads could be designated as a mechanized (e.g., mountain bike) trail.

- *There was a one-word change. The RAC originally suggested the word “appropriate” rather than “all.” The team felt if we said “appropriate,” we would have to define that term. The team discussed all types of vehicles that someone would think about taking into the Monument, and felt if management objectives were met, all types should be allowed. Second, we would go through some type of environmental review before some closed roads could be designated for specific allowable uses (e.g. mechanized use). The team looked at this as future recreational opportunities for mountain bikes on closed roads.*
- Could there be open roads open only for mountain bikes? What if there is an inherent conflict in use between motorized and mechanized?
- *It is a possibility. That type of designation would be a “limited designation.” The limitation would be mountain bikes only.*
- The only roads I remember the RAC talking about closing were short trails off main roads.

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Barb Cole to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Game Retrieval – Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts allowed off road, except in the WSAs.

- How can a game cart be non-mechanized?
- *Mechanized refers to chain-driven. For example, a wheelbarrow would be non-mechanized.*

A motion was made by Francis Jacobs and seconded by Pat Gunderson to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Camping Along Roads – Motorized or mechanized vehicles are allowed to pull off designated routes no more than 300 feet for camping. In WSAs, motorized or mechanized vehicles are not allowed to pull [300 feet] off designated routes for camping.

- *The RAC recommended 150 feet, and the ID team and state looked at 300 feet. The discussion is included in the table sent to RAC members in December. In Wilderness Study Areas, motorized or mechanized vehicles are not allowed to pull off designated routes for camping. In WSAs you can parallel park, but you cannot pull off road. There are no designated camping areas in the WSAs.*

A motion was made by Ron Moody and seconded by Terry Selph to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Blue Highlights (Previous RAC consensus)

Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat – Guidance and direction from the Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final. Mechanical treatment the primary method and prescribed fire a secondary method to remove conifers that encroach on sage-grouse habitat. Placement of salt or mineral supplements avoided (or not allowed) near leks during the breeding season (March 1-June 15).

- For all topics dealing with Greater Sage-Grouse, are all recommendations consistent with the Sage Grouse Management Plan?
- *There is one inconsistency, the discussion of salt and mineral supplements dealing with supplemental winter feeding. On public land we would not allow supplemental winter feeding. This is a departure from the management plan, which says it will be avoided where practical.*

Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat – Sage planting promoted, where appropriate. Areas disturbed by treatments reclaimed and/or reseeded when necessary.

- No comments.

Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat - Concentration of livestock near leks or key sage-grouse habitat discouraged to avoid potential disturbance or displacement of sage-grouse.

- How do you discourage cows from concentrating around a lek?
- By management – not putting water or salt there.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog Towns – Guidance and direction from the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana. Regional plans utilized when completed. Towns allowed to expand only to the point they adversely impact other resources or affect Standards for Rangeland Health.

- The final plan should be out by the end of the month and Pat will send copies to everyone on the RAC.
- No comments.

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Greater Sage Grouse - Lek - No surface disturbance within ¼ mile.

- Is the ¼ mile based on research in the field?
- *It is based on research and the Sage-Grouse work group. One-quarter mile is standard for the agency, both within and outside the Monument.*

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Greater Sage Grouse- Nesting Area - No surface disturbance within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15.

- Does this mean no road maintenance, or are we talking about new surface disturbance?
- *New surface disturbance such as construction activities; oil and gas activities such as road placement, pipelines, reservoir construction, etc.*

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Greater Sage Grouse – Crucial Winter Habitat - No new surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.

- Is there a distance for that?
- *It is the identified crucial winter habitat, a polygon which is identified on a map in the Draft RMP.*

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Black-tailed Prairie Dog Towns - No new surface disturbance within ¼ mile, if an activity adversely impacts prairie dogs and/or associated species.

- How does the BLM determine if an activity adversely impacts?
- *Any proposal would need an environmental review to make a determination prior to the activity occurring.*

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Bald Eagle – No new surface disturbance within ½ mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.

- Do we have actual observation data so we know how long every nest has been occupied?
- *We have data and check nests every season.*

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Big Game Winter Range (Elk, Mule Deer, and Antelope) – No new surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31 (timeframe shortened if conditions warrant).

- No comments.

Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities – Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas – No new surface disturbance from April 1 to June 15, if activities adversely impact lamb survival.

- No comments.

Vegetation – Activity plan updates emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. If the opportunity is available, establish resource reserve allotments.

- What is a resource reserve allotment?
- *If we have a vacant allotment, we may keep it for use in emergency situations.*
- Don't the new grazing regulations do away with resource reserve allotments?
- *As of now, there is no change in the resource reserve allotments in the proposed revisions to the grazing regulations.*

Vegetation - Restore priority non-native vegetation sites to a native species community (control highly invasive non-native species).

- Is the Monument mapped for noxious weeds? Are you controlling them aggressively?
- *Yes. Most weeds are on the river. Species include knapweed, Russian olive, salt cedar, spurge.*

Vegetation - To achieve vegetation goals in an activity plan (watershed plan), livestock grazing strategies used to manage vegetation communities.

- No comments.

Vegetation - Rehabilitate surface-disturbed areas with native grasses, forbs and shrubs. Non-native plants used under special circumstances.

- When would a non-native plant be used?
- *In a highly erosive area where we want to get vegetation established quickly. Native plants would come in later.*

Reclamation – Reclamation standards to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. In some areas disturbed surfaces allowed to reclaim naturally.

- No comments.

Reclamation – Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments in WSAs, or where there is viewshed infringement, removed and rehabilitated, if feasible.

- Have those been mapped?
- *Not yet.*
- How do you determine if it is feasible to reclaim?
- *Sometimes it is better to reclaim existing developments naturally. Future sites would be reclaimed.*

Reclamation – For previously disturbed sites a reclamation plan completed as needed.

- No comments.

Range Improvements - Barbed Wire and Electric Fences - Standard specifications with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock. Four-wire fences authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitates the need.

- When was this addressed by the RAC?
- *February 2004.*
- What are the wildlife implications with 4-wire fences?
- *Most boundary fences are 4-wire. Pasture fences are 3-wire. The bottom wire is smooth, top wire no higher than 42". Specific fence heights/wire would be looked at in environmental assessments.*
- Is fence maintenance part of rangeland standards?
- *It's typically assigned to the permittee or shared between the BLM and the permittee.*

Range Improvements - Barbed Wire and Electric Fences - Modify existing fences, if creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.

- No comments.

Range Improvements – Water Developments - Water developments considered on a site-specific basis, based on the benefits/detriment to all resources to improve the health of the land. Water developments based on the grazing practices within a specific area and other resources.

- No comments.

Rights-of-Way – Corridors – Three corridors across the Missouri River: Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle. Five corridors with defined boundaries (BLM land within ½ mile of the centerline): U.S. 191, State #236, Lloyd/Stafford Ferry road, DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry road, and Klabzuba pipeline.

- Are the corridors shown on a map?
- *No, but they can be identified easily on the transportation map. The pipeline follows quite a bit of the Stafford Ferry road.*

Rights-of-Way - Avoidance Areas – Scenic sections of the UMNWSR. Bodmer Landscapes, Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, and areas containing unique geologic formations. Areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope.

- No comments.

Rights-of-Way - Exclusion Areas - Wild sections of the UMNWSR and Woodhawk, Dog Creek, and Antelope Creek WSAs. Cow Creek, Stafford, and Ervin Ridge WSAs. WSAs not designated as wilderness and released by Congress are avoidance areas.

- Are there specific criteria used to determine avoidance? What decisionmaking process would be used?
- *We would use an environmental assessment to analyze impacts and make a determination. It has not occurred to date in the Monument.*

Fire – Responsiveness with a wide range of available fire management tools and flexibility.

- Is the overriding goal to achieve a natural role for fire?
- *Yes.*
- Will there be environmental review on fires?
- *Yes.*

Recreation Management Areas (RMAs) – The RAC did not address (administrative).

- *This is an administrative boundary change the BLM is making and the RAC felt it did not need to be addressed. We are looking at combining 4 management areas into 2 areas.*
- Is there a specific boundary for the two areas?
- *There is a map in the Draft RMP (Map C) which identifies the areas.*

Fees – Fee for overnight camping in developed recreation sites (Level 1). Fees collected for camping used for site maintenance and visitor services improvements.

- No comments. Discussion deferred to bin items.
- *Fees will be determined in the future through a public process.*
- *Recreation user fees is referred to in the 3-page table sent to the RAC in December.*

Coordination with Gateway Communities – Partner with gateway communities or provide a staffed site for visitor information.

- No comments.

Research, Collection and Special Event Activities - Archaeological and historical investigations and paleontological research allowed. Personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood allowed in identified areas. Use of metal detectors by permit only. May limit the size of a group or specific activities. Large group events authorized on a case-by-case basis.

- Where did the BLM come up with collection of common invertebrate? This does not jive with the intent of the Proclamation.
- This specifies in identified areas.
- What is the rule outside the Monument?
- *You can collect up to 50 pounds of fossils and petrified wood.*
- *The rationale was to keep it in specific places so it isn't widespread collection. No areas have been identified as of yet and none may be identified.*

Recreation Activities in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – Camping on islands not allowed from April 1 to July 31.

- No comments.

Upper Missouri River SRMA – Special Recreation Use Permits (SRPs) - SRPs limited to 23.

- *We currently have 19 of 23 permits operating.*
- *Do they continue in a no-use status indefinitely?*
- *We will develop a process for filling those permits.*
- *When an SRP is issued to a commercial vendor, does it specify net-client days can be used, or does it allow unlimited growth?*
- *Right now it allows unlimited growth. We have talked about thresholds that would trigger a limit, but none are in place yet.*
- *Is it public information how much income is generated to the BLM from the SRP fees?*
- *The information is not available on an individual basis. For the river as a whole, roughly \$25,000 less was brought in this year than last. River outfitters have to pay 3% of their gross income, as do uplands outfitters.*

Upper Missouri River SRMA – Opportunities for Boaters - Standards and indicators used to manage visitor use: when reached or exceeded, actions taken to reduce impacts without limiting the number of boaters.

- *What actions would be taken to reduce impacts without limiting voters?*
- *On page 429 of the Draft RMP, several actions are listed.*

Upper Missouri River SRMA – Opportunities for Boaters - See RAC Recommendations Table.

- *When you say groups of 20, does that mean 20 people camping, or 20 people period?*
- *Any group on the river. A non-commercial party larger than 30 pay would pay a baseline fee of \$90.*
- *The management philosophy is that as boater numbers increase, campsites would be increased as a first effort. The second effort would be to employ techniques on page 429. But is there still the possibility of limiting boaters through a formal allocation system?*
- *Not under the preferred alternative. If we did need to go to an allocation system, a plan amendment would first be developed through a public process. The big picture is we would try to do everything possible to avoid an allocation system.*

Upper Missouri River SRMA – Camping Facilities – Camping - Seek to purchase short-term easements or leases from willing private landowners for alternative or additional campsites.

- *When an easement is obtained from a willing private landowner, are we talking Level 4 sites primarily?*
- *Probably Level 3 or 4. It would be worked out with the landowner.*

Upper Missouri River SRMA – Camping Facilities – Length of Stay at One Campsite - From June 15 to Aug. 1, a 2-night limit at Level 2 sites. 14-night limit at other sites.

- *No comments.*

Upper Missouri River SRMA – Camping Facilities – Signing - Signs in Level 1 sites as needed to safely direct traffic and provide information. Signs to identify Level 1, 2 and 3 sites.

- *No comments.*

Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Missouri River - Fort Benton - Pilot Rock (River Mile 0 to 52 – Recreation Segment) – Open, except personal watercraft and floatplanes only allowed on river miles 0 to 3.

- *The 1999 report advocated no personal watercraft at all.*
- *Fort Benton is the most significant site a person can drive to and get a feeling for the history of the river. It seems incongruous to allow personal watercraft that would disrupt the ambiance.*
- *It is not only incongruent, it is probably not wise to have floatplanes and personal watercraft in the same narrow section of water.*

Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Missouri River - Deadman's Rapids to Holmes Council Island (River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 – Recreation Segment) – Open, except no personal watercraft or floatplanes yearlong.

- No comments.

Administrative Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Missouri River - Designate days when agencies use upstream travel (avoid peak use days). Administrative use agreements outline guidelines for motorized use. Livestock grazing permittees allowed upstream travel to administer a grazing permit with prior notification (verbal or letter).

- The cooperative agreement is very important to avoid administrative use that does not consider the public on the river at the same time.

Uplands SRMA - Special Recreation Use Permits - Commercial Hunting – Limit the number of SRPs to the current level (14).

- No comments.

Uplands SRMA - Special Recreation Use Permits - Commercial Motorized Tours – Tours limited to 2 vehicles per operator per day on local, collector and some resource roads.

- No comments.

Uplands SRMA – Camping Facilities - Camping – Level 1 sites at the beginning of public access roads. Level 2 sites (park and explore) where people walk from parking areas.

- No comments.

Uplands SRMA – Camping Facilities - Signs – Signs in Level 1 sites commensurate with surroundings and development. Signs as necessary at Level 2 sites. No other signs except for transportation.

- No comments.

Natural Gas Operations – Seismic – Vehicle activity restricted to designated roads. Exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Surface blasting on a case-by-case basis. Sensitive areas require helicopter support.

- Does vehicle activity mean the company doing the seismic?
- *Yes.*

Natural Gas Operations - Drilling Operations – Minimal amount of surface disturbance permitted with the use of BMPs. Confine the operation to an acceptable (safe) area/space. Use low impact drilling technology, develop multiple wells from one location, or stay away from problem areas. This includes access to a drilling site.

- *The team discussed that they are starting to see more self-leveling rigs which eliminate the need to clear a pad.*
- How would the best technology be determined?
- *Through best management practices.*

Natural Gas Operations - General Production Facilities and Equipment - See RAC Recommendations Table.

- The preferred alternative is weaker than the RAC recommendations.

Natural Gas Operations - Administrative Access on Existing and New Resource Roads – Travel restricted to the minimal vehicle needed for the job. Timing restrictions may apply.

- No comments.

Natural Gas Operations - Pipelines – Restricted to existing or least intrusive disturbance.

- No comments.

Natural Gas Operations - Water Disposal – Pits sized according to water production with berms (wildlife escape ramps and/or netting where necessary). Two trips per month allowed to transport water off site; exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Option to dispose of the water via pipeline, disposal pits including tanks, or in a water disposal well.

- No comments.

BLM Roads - See RAC Recommendations Table.

- We had concerns about the definition of a road. Have the new RAC members looked at the definition on page 91 of the Draft RMP?
- The wilderness study process definition of a road is preferable.

Road Classification and Maintenance - Cattleguards installed as needed or where appropriate. Closed roads allowed to reclaim naturally and on selected sections reclamation may include ripping, scarifying, and seeding.

- A road closed in the CMR five years ago is almost gone now, with no reclamation work done.

Administrative Use Off Road and on Closed Roads - Administrative use off road and on closed roads by BLM and other agencies. Administrative use off road and on closed roads by lessees and permittees limited to activities necessary to administer a lease or permit.

- No comments.

Game Retrieval – Big game retrieval allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on specific designated closed roads.

- No comments.

Camping Along Roads – (Alternative C) Motorized or mechanized vehicles are allowed to pull off designated routes no more than 150 feet for camping. See RAC Recommendations Table.

- Does the full text specify a person should find a campsite by the quickest means possible?
- *The text says to find it on foot and drive to it on the most direct route.*
- Would like to reconcile our differences between the 150 foot and 300 foot limit. Has there been some kind of inventory on the ground that shows the 300 feet is needed?
- *The main reason for using 300 feet was to be consistent with the CMR Refuge. Also, the off-highway vehicle plan amendment sets a 300-foot limit.*

Signs – Existing signs maintained. New signs to enhance safety or prevent resource damage. Open roads signed, closed roads only signed if necessary.

- No comments.

No Highlights (No previous RAC discussion)

Fish and Wildlife – Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities - Designated Sensitive Species - Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded within ¼ mile of the activity or the activity delayed 90 days

within identified crucial habitat or active nests. Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded from March 1 to Aug. 1 within ½ mile of ferruginous hawk nests.

- *Page 487 of Draft RMP lists the BLM designated sensitive species. The USFWS threatened and endangered species are listed on page 486.*
- Through the environmental review process, a proposed activity may be moved ¼ mile from a proposed site to protect a designated sensitive species.
- Would you survey ¼ around that point?
- *Yes. An on-site review would be part of the environmental review process.*
- What was the rationale for singling out the ferruginous hawk?
- *To look at ½ mile, rather than ¼ mile, and to look at a timing restriction.*
- This is a particular area where the absence of specific action triggers is glaring. This would have been a place where specific standards could have been inserted.
- Where is the input of the wildlife management? Question the scientific validity of a BLM list.
- *The designated species lists are developed on a statewide basis through the Natural Heritage Foundation. We will research the details on how the lists are formulated.*

A motion was made by Francis Jacobs and seconded by Barb Cole to accept the preferred alternative as written (both paragraphs). Consensus was reached.

Fish and Wildlife – Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities - Bighorn Sheep Distribution - No new surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.

- This is consistent with big game winter range.
- Is this limited to bighorn sheep winter range?
- *It is the area identified for bighorn sheep distribution on Map H in the Draft RMP.*
- For clarification on moving the shed antler dates and not being concerned about this – the concern was harassment of animals through the month of April. That is not an issue for bighorn sheep distribution dates.

A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Charlie Floyd to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Visual Resource Management.- Surface-disturbing activities may be prohibited in VRM Class I areas. Reduce visual contrast by site selection, reduced disturbance, color, and reclamation in VRM Class II, III or IV areas.

- *The RAC never discussed mitigation, final acres, or the four areas in VRM classes. They are located on Map A in the Draft RMP, following page 138.*
- Under VRM Class 1, what type of activities would you allow?
- *A table assigns numerical values to a proposed project (e.g. specific color, move off site, blend with the terrain, etc.).*
- This is an area where we need more input as to the values of the people.
- This is a technical analysis based on an analytical method. It's been a tool for at least 30 years and has been fairly applied here. It is not an intuitive thing that can be judged by the numbers here.
- We need to recognize there are some things we cannot give good advice on.

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Jeff Shelden to accept the preferred alternative as written. The motion failed.

Land Ownership Adjustment – Eighty acres of BLM land identified for disposal (exchange for 70 acres of private land).

- Is there a willing seller?
- *This was initiated by a private landowner in 2002. Any exchange other than this one would require a plan amendment. The RMP must be completed before the exchange can be completed.*

- *The land we would acquire would be on the river itself. The BLM would dispose of land within 3 miles of the river that is basically sagebrush and greasewood.*

A motion was made by Lisa Huestis and seconded by Francis Jacobs to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Wild & Scenic Rivers (Cow Creek, Eagle Creek and Dog Creek) – Three eligible streams are non-suitable.

- *All the streams in the Monument were evaluated for wild and scenic eligibility. Three of the streams met the eligibility criteria. The team recommendation for those three was that they go forward as not suitable. More detail on the process is found on page 413 of the Draft RMP.*
- *Are the suitability requirements listed here?*
- *The suitability report starts on page 422 of the Draft RMP.*
- *If that is the process, how can there be an alternative that they are suitable?*
- *The Bureau guidance today is if you go through the process and have an eligible stream, at least one of the alternatives must recommend suitability.*
- *Current management is these three streams are not designated as wild and scenic?*
- *Correct.*
- *What about Arrow Creek and the Judith River?*
- *They were analyzed previously.*

A motion was made by Francis Jacobs and seconded by Terry Selph to accept the preferred alternative as written. Consensus was reached.

Any discussion of the topics with red highlights was postponed until after the public meetings on the Draft RMP.

**Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Lewistown, Montana
April 5 and 6, 2006**

The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. in the BLM Lewistown Field Office conference room. RAC members present were Charlie Floyd, Ron Moody, Robert Schoonover, Mary Fay, Glenn Terry, Barb Cole, Daniel Clark, Bill Cunningham, Terry Selph, Tony Bynum, Jeff Sheldon, Lisa Huestis. Francis Jacobs joined the group after lunch and Pat Gunderson was absent.

BLM staff in attendance were June Bailey, Gary Slagel, Rich Adams, Jerry Majerus, Clark Whitehead, Craig Flentie, Wade Brown, Claire Trent, Kaylene Patten and Kay Haight.

Public Comments

Two members of the public offered comments, which are attached to these minutes.

Welcome/Election of Officers/Meeting Notes

Charlie Floyd, Chairperson, welcomed everyone. Kaylene reviewed the meeting agenda. The meeting notes from the previous RAC meeting were approved and signed.

Nomination and election of officers was held. Bill Cunningham nominated Lisa Huestis as chair, and Ron Moody as vice-chair. Barb Cole seconded the nomination.

Mary Fay nominated Tony Bynum as chair, and Bill Cunningham as vice-chair. Ron Moody seconded the nomination.

Terry Selph nominated Charlie Floyd as chair, and Lisa Huestis as vice-chair. Glenn Terry seconded the nomination.

A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Ron Moody to close the nominations.

**Tony Bynum was elected to serve as chair.
Lisa Huestis was elected to serve as vice-chair.**

Bin Items

- Glasgow Field Station 10-year grazing leases which are up for renewal
- Public access roads to the Monument
- Relationship of Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP) to the multiple use mandate under FLPMA

Roundtable Discussion of Monument RMP Public Meetings

Ron Moody

Attended the Lewistown, Malta, Winifred, Helena, Big Sandy, and Billings meetings. The overarching conversation at the meetings was the relationship of the people who live in the immediate region with everyone else and how the designation of the Monument would affect them, and that they do not want the Monument. The RAC should have heard that discussion prior to the public meetings.

A suggestion for the next RMP is to have a list of speakers where people from that local community have the first chance to speak.

If the Record of Decision is anything other than Alternative A, will the local landowners feel shut out of the process? If we have done nothing prior to that in the form of collaborative or engaged leadership, we will have a serious problem in the future on any issue concerning management of natural resources. It is easy to have a perception that the conversations which took place at the public meetings represent everyone throughout the country.

Bob Schoonover

The Fort Benton meeting was well attended. A number of local people were concerned about how their livelihood and way of life would be affected by the changes. The majority of speakers on the motorized watercraft issue were in favor of leaving the regulations the way they are now. Overall, the majority of the speakers had good comments.

Mary Fay

Attended the Great Falls and Helena meetings. Having the locals go first is important. Was surprised at the denial from anti-Monument groups. Instead of constructive suggestions for the RMP, they criticized having the Monument, and that it is an illegal takings. Disappointed there weren't more constructive ideas.

The RAC was created to establish effective communication among themselves as representatives of the public. The RAC should have known about the anti-Monument feelings prior to now.

Glenn Terry

Attended the Big Sandy meeting. Local landowners were concerned that the Monument will harm their grazing and access. Sportsmen were concerned about access and using a motorized boat on the lower section of the river. The meeting was two-sided, and no one wanted to meet in the middle.

Barb Cole

Attended the Great Falls meeting. While it is important for the locals to be heard, it is also important that they hear the concerns of the people directly affected by the Monument designation. Heard concern about the use of motorized vehicles. Nothing can be done to fix the anti-Monument feelings by the public.

Dan Clark

Attended the Great Falls meeting. The positions were clearly defined. Comments relating to management of the cottonwood forest were new to him. It was a huge mistake to say at the beginning of this process that nothing would change. Another concern is the process. The BLM should evaluate this process to see where the weaknesses lie, and add to the process. The coffee shop talk is based on innuendos and inaccuracies, and BLM needs to educate the public somehow on addressing the communication gaps.

Terry Selph

Attended four meetings. The locals (Winifred area) came out in force at every meeting. Was discouraged there were no new ideas. Denial, fighting boundaries, fighting the Monument. For the most part, the locals are in favor of Alternative A. Years were spent getting us to where we are, and why does it need to change just because it's a Monument? A lady at the Winifred meeting gave one of the best summaries. She noted that a trust relationship has developed with the BLM, but every alternative provides changes to the current status. With every change, the trust issue will go out the door.

Tony Bynum

Attended the Kalispell meeting. The public asked lots of questions of BLM staff during the breakout session. The first seven speakers were legislators who consistently addressed the underlying issue of the Monument designation and their resentment of the designation. It was basically a gripe session. With the limited time for speaking the public did not have time to make suggestions for changes to the RMP.

The elected officials were there to incite the public to disagree with the Monument designation, rather than encouraging the public to read the plan and offer suggestions. The RAC may have been more effective in the past if they had heard more of that discussion in the past. The majority of comments were in favor of Alternative A.

Have the representatives who spoke at the Kalispell meeting met with the BLM staff prior to the meeting? Craig Flentie responded the BLM had not heard from them prior to the meeting. Some had heard from their constituents. Gary Slagel added that the BLM has briefed the congressional staff. June Bailey stated she was also surprised that the BLM had not been contacted by the state legislators prior to the meeting.

Jeff Sheldon

Attended the Lewistown meeting. The stations were nicely done. Overall impressions are the same as the other RAC members. A lot of denial took place and the public didn't engage the issues.

The RAC is not part of the decisionmaking process. If the BLM wants to avoid this kind of situation in the future, the RAC should be given a place in the decisionmaking hierarchy. One way to deal with the problem would be to request the public have specific examples of claims; for example, the designation is a taking of private property.

Lisa Huestis

Attended the Havre and Chinook meetings. There were no new ideas. A lot of frustrated landowners were present who are not accepting of the designation.

Summary of Public Comments

Jerry Majerus summarized the public meetings on the Monument Draft RMP/EIS and the comments which have been received to date.

About 1300 people attended the 12 public meetings, and 450 speakers provided public comments. The transcripts of public comments are still coming in. They will be available for review in the public room of the Lewistown Field Office. Many of the concerns dealt with the designation of the monument, boundaries, economic assessment of oil and gas, road system (including access and road density), motorized watercraft, use of backcountry airstrips. Other concerns included that BLM is not looking at management based on the proclamation, rather than as other BLM lands.

To date the BLM has received approximately 5,000 letters and e-mails commenting on the Draft RMP/EIS. Normally, 50 percent of the comments are received during the last two weeks of a public comment period. Organizations and businesses will usually submit comments at the end of the comment period.

Ten form-type comment letters have been identified to date, which make up the bulk of the comments received. They deal with backcountry airstrips, motorized watercraft, and the BLM road system. All comments that have been logged in, photocopied and entered in a database are available for review in the public room. The transcripts are each treated as one comment, rather than each speaker being assigned a comment letter number.

When the comments are analyzed, they will be organized into categories (e.g. fish and wildlife, roads). First, the comments in each letter are coded and the comments are entered into a database. All comments which say the same thing will be summarized into one comment. For example, the team may see 700 total comments dealing with motorized watercraft, but after the comments are summarized there may only be 8-10 comments.

No weight is given to the numbers. The BLM doesn't count votes. A form-type letter will only be coded once. The team will look at the comment and the rationale provided for the comment, not just the number of identical comments submitted.

The team will review all the comments and as a team, summarize the comments. The team will discuss whether an alternative should be changed, stay the same, or additional information added. This office makes a recommendation to the State Director, who makes the final decision.

Factors the team will consider include the Proclamation, existing laws and regulations, the vision and management goals, and the environmental consequences of implementing an alternative.

How does the BLM weigh what the state has to say? The State will provide comments on the Draft, which will be treated as any other public comment. Often, different agencies will note conflicts, (jurisdiction, for example), and the team will look at that further.

Visual Aids

Tony Bynum noted the photos on posters presented to the public need to show a truck, people on the landscape, etc. that show the type of use that is being proposed. A poster with only the white cliffs photo conveys a totally different message.

Terry Selph commented that the new boaters guide which the BLM is putting together will include cows along the river. It will be an accurate portrayal of what visitors will actually see along the river.

The BLM web site for the Monument has been updated. RAC members were encouraged to view the site at mt.blm.gov/ldo/um.

Bill Cunningham noted the BLM needs to visually convey to the public that private land is not being taken.

Reserved Water Rights

Fran Rieman, BLM water rights specialist in the State Office, gave an overview of federal reserved water rights, which are water rights created by Congress or the President when they withdraw land and which can only be revoked by Congress or the President. A reserved water right is for the minimum amount of water necessary to accomplish the purpose of the reservation. The amount is usually not determined when the right is established. In Montana, those amounts are generally negotiated between the State, and the Tribes or BLM through the reserved water rights commission. A negotiated compact is taken to the legislature, then to the governor for approval. On the BLM side, a compact must be approved by the Secretary of Interior.

The Compact Commission process is similar to the RMP process. Public scoping meetings are held in the affected area and background work is done. The process can take several years.

Chad Krause, hydrologist in the Lewistown Field Office, spoke about the federal reserved water right for Arrow Creek and the Judith River. The quantity of water associated with that right is now being determined along with BLM's National Science and Technology Center in Denver. The priority date for the water right is January 17, 2001. It is junior to all water rights prior to that date. Ninety-five percent of the cottonwoods on Arrow Creek and the Judith River are on private land. Flows that maintain those trees will have a tremendous seed source for the main stem of the Missouri River. They are looking at the flow necessary to maintain the cottonwoods.

Arrow Creek and the Judith River are already over-appropriated, which means there is not enough water for all current users. However, there is enough water in the spring to maintain the cottonwood galleries. The Judith River is one of the best cottonwood galleries in Montana, partly due to the meandering flow of the Judith, and partly due to good stewardship.

How do they determine the quantity to appropriate? Gauges are in place on the Judith. Between the gauges, point bars, cross-sections, photogrammetry and hydrologic modeling, they will be able to determine, for example, what flows create channel movement and the vegetative response to flows. This will also track flows through groundwater monitoring wells. This will be a multi-year process. Once that information is determined, the BLM will enter into negotiations with the Compact Commission, which is scheduled to sunset in 2009.

Domestic and stock water developments are generally less than 15 acre-feet. One can complete those developments and then file the notice with the Department of Natural Resources. The BLM would be no more concerned about those developments than would a neighbor. The BLM would look at what would affect peak flows. Would the BLM be automatic objectors to applications for water rights in Arrow Creek or the Judith Basin? No, but we could object to specific applications on a case-by-case basis.

Part of the adjudication process is to get an accurate record of the quantity of water being used. A reasonable period of time to study is difficult to determine, but it would be wise to begin negotiations before 2009 in case the Compact Commission is not renewed. We would use the best available data.

All tributaries are critical to the health of the mainstem, but only Arrow Creek and the Judith were specified in the proclamation, so those are the two being studied.

Is it safe to say there are trees under 5 years old? Yes. Peak flows are still maintaining the health of the stream.

There is an existing water right dating back to 1976 when the wild and scenic river was established. The State established what they thought they would need for future development, and the rest remains in the river.

Flood releases will come from Tiber Reservoir this year. The driving factor for this is pallid sturgeon.

Well Spacing Requirements

Dale Manchester, Great Falls Field Station, made a presentation on well spacing requirements.

Well spacing is a systematic approach for wells to be drilled in a given area. The Montana DNRC-Board of Oil and Gas Conservation regulates well spacing. Eight public meetings are held in Billings each year to review proposed well spacing exceptions or modifications to existing board orders or state spacing regulations. The Board's web site is a very good reference for the BLM and the public (<http://bogc.dnrc.state.mt.us>). If the federal government owns subsurface rights, when it comes time to decide well spacing the State has primacy. BLM has the final say in the approval stage of the application for permit to drill.

Well spacing requirements conserve oil and gas by encouraging maximum efficient recovery of the resource. Requirements also protect correlative rights of the mineral owners. State spacing for natural gas wells is one well per 640 acres. State spacing for oil wells is one well per 40 acres.

Spacing in the Monument is set as follows:

Leroy Field is 1 well per 320 acres (with multiple exceptions)

Sawtooth Field is 1 well per 640 acres (with multiple exceptions)

Sherard Area is 1 well per 640 acres (with multiple exceptions)

There are currently 11 active wells on a total of 42,805 acres, or 21 wells per 3,891 acres. Using the numbers from Preferred Alternative F, another 34 wells are foreseen to be drilled in the Monument. Assuming a success rate of 34%, 12 wells could be productive for a total of 23 wells.

Dale referred everyone to page 86 of the Draft RMP for a discussion of well spacing under the Preferred Alternative and to Appendix K.2, page 467, for Oil and Gas Board orders.

RAC members asked the following questions:

Q: Is 34% production pretty common in the industry?

A: The operators have a 90-95% efficiency rate now due to three-dimensional modeling but it does depend on the operator and how much information is available to do geologic interpretation.

Q: If there are four wells per section but they could directionally drill, how long would it take to drill three holes from one spot?

A: These are all very shallow wells, less than 1800 feet, and it takes a day and a half to drill a well. The completion operation can take as long or more time than the drilling. Total time on the ground is normally five-seven days on a well site.

Q: If seismics have a line they are going to follow, where are the rules for that?

A: The rules covering seismic and geophysical exploration are covered under 43 CFR 3150 and 3151. Three-dimensional seismic is relatively new to area. No 3-D seismic has been run in the Monument. They can spend \$30,000 per square mile to run three-dimensional seismic.

Q: What is the relation in the Monument between seismic and actual well drilling?

A: There has been no three-dimensional seismic to date in the Monument. It has all been two-dimensional.

Q: How much activity will there be in the future?

A: In the Bowdoin Field, they have done over 100 miles of seismic line in an area better defined geologically than the Monument. We would anticipate that additional seismic activity would need to take place in the Monument before any drilling would take place.

Q: What effect would the Monument designation have on well spacing?

A: Spacing would depend on the visual, resource management, and wildlife restrictions on a site-by-site basis. Spacing requirements will be determined in the Record of Decision. Alternative F is a balanced approach to allowing the operators to develop their existing leases and protecting the objects of the Monument.

Q: Does the BLM receive a benefit through royalties?

A: If BLM owns all of the mineral interest, the full royalty of 12.5% of the revenue derived from each well goes into the General Treasury, of which 50% goes back to the state. The BLM also receives rental fees from the leases.

Q: With the 43 leases with valid existing rights, I don't want to see the Board of Oil and Gas make a decision that will harm the objects of the Monument.

A: The only time that could happen would be if the Board determined that a section could support 20 wells. The BLM would have to look at that and ask if that was met by conditions of approval for a particular area. This area would not deserve that type of development.

Q: Knowing that private landowners can do anything they want on their land, how is this a takings?

A: It is unlikely that a private mineral owner would be able to lease to a company because companies, are reluctant to pick up leases in and amongst the unleaseable Federal lands. The private land/private mineral owners feel when that land is taken out of production they are directly. It is an effect on the private land owners.

Q: The companies currently leasing private land south of the river will not go within two miles of the Monument boundary.

A: It could be a function of geology. History has told us it is not an area conducive to production. It could also be the unknown quantity of the Monument and how the Monument will be managed.

Q: Would like to see a map that shows how much of the 81,000 acres of private inholdings are split estate (BLM owns the subsurface rights).

A: We might be able to come up with some maps and acreage figures.

Q: In the next 6 months, what will physically occur within the Monument?

A: There are two APDs approved prior to the designation of the Monument. The operator has not drilled those wells to date. Two pending APDs are on hold until the RMP is complete. Seismic permits can be processed and have been processed on the west edge of the Monument. Those might go over a couple of sections into the Monument. That could happen in the next couple of months as long as they conform to wildlife stipulations and meet the Monument objectives. For the 11 wells, three are producing and eight are shut in. They are using radio equipment to obtain production data, which cuts down on the number of visits to the wells.

Field Managers Updates

June Bailey - Lewistown Field Office

The Fort Benton Interpretive Center dedication will be held on June 25.

On March 31 BLM issued an addendum to the BLM grazing EIS. The EIS is on BLM's web site. The final regulations should be out in the near future. June proposed that the RAC view a PowerPoint presentation of the changes at the next meeting.

Secretary of the Interior Norton resigned effective March 31, and the President has nominated Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne to replace her. Lynn Scarlett is acting Secretary.

The Secretary released a memorandum on March 22 identifying actions and guidelines regarding RS 2477. It was just received in the Lewistown Field Office and a presentation can be given at the next RAC meeting.

Concerning recent newspaper articles about the potential sale of BLM parcels of land, the BLM has been silent on the issue to date and we have no information. However, in our planning process we identify parcels to dispose of, usually because they are isolated and difficult to manage. If, in the future, we are asked to identify parcels of public land to sell, those parcels already identified through the planning process would be the parcels we would put forth. This field office currently has no parcels identified for sale.

The Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP grazing permits are being renewed through the watershed planning process. The Fords Creek, Little Box Elder and Yellowwater plans have been incorporated into one planning effort. A public meeting has been held with permittees.

The Judith-Moccasin Landscape Analysis Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) is now completed. The EA is out for a 30-day comment period and a public meeting was held on April 4.

Monument Resource Management Plan comments will be analyzed and addressed by Gary and his staff.

Mary Fay asked how the RAC recommendations will be included in the RMP process. Jerry responded that most of the RAC recommendations are part of the Preferred Alternative.

Ron Moody requested that for activities at the EA or EIS level, a summary of ongoing business be sent out periodically to RAC members to keep them up to date. For a list of NEPA documents, RAC members were referred to Planning/Nepa Status Reports on the BLM web site at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/nepalogs/index.html>.

Tony Bynum requested plans for the 2008 budget cycle so the RAC can think about those subjects ahead of time.

June noted that budgets are flat. As we lose people, we are not able to fill behind them. Seven positions have not been filled this year alone in the Lewistown Field Office.

Tony Bynum asked about the benefit to having proponents of a project do ground work for the BLM and June replied it is being done now in different areas.

Rich Adams - Malta Field Office

The church in Zortman is on public land, and the BLM is working on selling the property to the Great Falls Diocese. If a tract was identified for sale prior to passage of the BACA bill, funds from a sale could go toward the purchase of other lands. If a tract was not identified prior to passage of the BACA bill, proceeds from a sale go into the general fund.

The Valley County Wind Energy Project draft EA should be sent to the public at the end of the month for review and comment. This EA tiers from a national programmatic renewable energy environmental impact statement.

The Malta Field Office opted to do the majority of the Malta RMP work internally. The Preparation Plan is being reviewed by the Washington Office. Once that is complete, a Notice of Intent will be published and the process will begin. The HiLine RMP is now officially referred to as the Malta RMP. Tribal issues will be included in the RMP.

Glasgow Field Station grazing permits will be reviewed to determine if permittees are meeting Standards and Guidelines. The grazing permits will be updated to reflect that work. The permit dates will be staggered so they don't all expire at one time. Areas that are not meeting standards have soils-related issues or riparian issues not necessarily related to livestock guidelines.

Tony Bynum requested a map of the BLM areas covered by the RAC be available at each meeting.

The Bowdoin EA is in the scoping stage. A scoping letter went to the public on March 27. The public comment period is open until May 1.

Antiquities Act

Zane Fulbright, Lewistown Field Office archaeologist, made a presentation on the collection of invertebrate fossils. He distributed a copy of the Antiquities Act; 43 CFR; and RL 30528 and Paleontological Resources Preservation Act: Proposal for the Management and Protection of Fossil Resources Located on Federal Lands.

There is no definition of antiquity. A 1974 Supreme Court case said that the definition is unconstitutionally vague. For those reasons, the BLM does not cite the Antiquities Act for violations.

The Antiquities Act was set up to manage archaeological resources. Archaeological resources are tied to human activity.

Q: A fossil would not be included as a geological resource? It is difficult to segregate fossils within a geologic formation from the term geologic object of interest.

A: Paleontological resources were not mentioned in the Proclamation. BLM policy is that the public can collect common invertebrate fossils for personal use only. Collection of vertebrate fossils (a dinosaur skull) is not allowed, except by permit.

Q: What is stopping the BLM from taking the next step to protect the resource (fossils)?

A: Federal regulations allow that activity to occur. The RMP says we may identify sites where the collection of fossils can be allowed. However, we have not identified any significant fossil beds that would lead us to identify such a site.

Q: We are taking too narrow an interpretation of what the proclamation says. We could easily cover invertebrate fossils as an object of scientific interest.

A: Scientists have stated that vertebrate fossils are objects of scientific interest. Plant fossils and invertebrate fossils are not.

Monument Boundary and Authorization of Airstrips

Monument Boundary

Jerry Majerus reviewed why there is no boundary on the RMP maps. In September 2004 an agreement was reached between the Department of the Interior and Congressman Rehberg's office to have a map not showing a boundary. This was done to address concerns of private landowners. In the Draft RMP there are three types of maps. A map in Chapter 1 shows the boundary. The large maps in the back of the Draft RMP do not. A map in the Appendices showing a boundary is the map which was published with the Proclamation.

Overall, this was not an issue at the public meetings, although it did come up in several conversations. Landowners were more curious about whether their property may or may not be within the Monument.

Authorization of Airstrips

Clark Whitehead reviewed the history of airstrips in the Monument.

Cow Creek landing strip. In existence prior to 1978, possibly longer. It has access from the Spencer Cow Camp road. It is the largest of the 10 strips. The recommendation under Alternative F is that it remain open year round. It has been maintained in recent times using hand tools. In the past it was maintained with BLM equipment. Normally, if a road was maintained, the public airstrip was also maintained.

The only airstrip discussed in the Missouri Breaks EIS was the Ervin Ridge airstrip. Although the others were all present, they weren't being used much and were not noticeable.

Left Coulee landing strip. In existence prior to 1978. It provides access for the Cow Creek ACEC and Cow Creek WSA. We have recommended it be open April 1 to November 30. It has been maintained with hand tools.

Roadside landing strip. In existence prior to 1978. Sits parallel to the Bullwhacker road. We have recommended it for closure. It has not been maintained.

Log Cabin landing strip. In existence prior to 1978. Sits parallel to Sitting Bull reservoir. We have recommended it for closure. It has not been maintained.

Bullwhacker landing strip. In existence prior to 1978. We have recommended a seasonal opening from April 1 to November 30. It was probably maintained by the BLM until the early 1990s because the road system was maintained.

Black Butte North landing strip. In existence prior to 1978. It provides access to the Pendell Ridge area. We have recommended a seasonal opening from April 1 to November 30. It was maintained with hand tools in 2003.

Black Butte South landing strip. Appeared after 1978. Closure is recommended. It has not been maintained.

Ervin Ridge landing strip. In existence prior to 1978. It sits inside the WSA and was identified as one of the developments in the WSA. We have recommended a seasonal opening from June 16 to November 30. The strip was maintained with hand tools in 1973.

Knox Ridge landing strip. The BLM built it as a remote fire station prior to 1978. We have recommended it be open year long.

Middleton/Woodhawk landing strip. The BLM built that airstrip when they put in a water saver and used it to access the water saver. We have recommended closure, but the team may reconsider that. It was maintained by the BLM until 1993.

Several others could have been built by BLM in the 1950s or 1960s.

- Q: When did use begin to occur on a significant level?
A: There never has been any significant use, to this day.
- Q: Is there any decision document that has specifically authorized the landing strips?
A: No, it was considered like a road, and no decision document was needed for roads either.
- Q: Some were built after NEPA came into law.
A: The only one that fits that bill is Woodhawk. The others all existed prior to 1978.
- Q: What is your sense of maintenance, management and enforcement of the airstrips?
A: As far as maintenance, we have talked about volunteer agreements using hand tools. We could use RAC input on that. Do we want to restrict the type of aircraft using the airstrips?
- Q: What about enforcement of closures?
A: The standard FAA symbol is placed on the site (and on aeronautical charts), but a physical barricade cannot be put up in case an aircraft must land in an emergency.
- Q: What about liability?
A: There is no liability to the BLM because they are identified as primitive landing strips.
- Q: Are the airstrips displayed on an aeronautical chart?
A: They are not currently identified on any charts, but they will be once a decision is made.
- Q: If one of the airstrips is open yearlong, would it be open to anything that lands there, without limitation?
A: That would be determined in the implementation stage, and we would like the RAC's input on that. Any commercial activity would take a special permit.
- Q: If an outfitter flies a client in, that would be a commercial activity?
A: Yes.
- Q: Have you done a cumulative impacts analysis of airstrips on adjacent private or public land?
A: There are private strips in the area, but permission is required before the public can land on them. The team has discussed whether it is better to reduce the strips to a minimum number and concentrate the use, or disperse the use.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 5:35 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on April 6. All RAC members were present.

Attending for the BLM were June Bailey, Gary Slagel, Craig Flentie, Jerry Majerus, Clark Whitehead, Wade Brown, Kaylene Patten and Kay Haight.

Public Comments

Six members of the public offered comments which are attached to these minutes.

Grazing Permits and Private Property Rights

Bill Cunningham noted that the RAC strongly supports private property rights and strongly supports grazing as a legitimate use of the Monument.

A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Jeff Sheldon to offer the following proposed resolution:

The RAC feels strongly that the Monument designation should not and does not adversely affect grazing permits or private land within the Monument. The RAC urges BLM to clearly convey this positive message at every opportunity.

Discussion included the following points:

- Grazing privileges and private property rights are two separate issues.
- The intention is to affirm strong support for both grazing permits and private property rights within the Monument.
- Could support continuance of scientifically managed grazing program. Grazing is a complementary and constructive activity when done in a scientifically managed program.
- If we start talking about how grazing has to be done you will put doubts in people's mind. I like a plain statement that we support grazing and private property rights. Once other words are added it can be looked at in different ways.
- Keep it simple and straightforward.
- I would like to state it more positively: That we support the present grazing leases and that we respect the private property rights within the Monument. I would like the public at large and those who own private property and ranchers and farmers to have a positive message.
- We are trying to say that the monument designation should not and does not affect private property rights.
- As a permittee, the word "adversely" means something.
- This is a big mistake. You're opening up the whole subject of grazing programs in the context of the Monument RMP. It is not a simple statement. The Proclamation is eminently clear on this subject. Laws that apply to grazing are on the books. There is a public relations problem you are trying to get at, and I have concurrence with the spirit of the statement. However, the substance of the statement, "adversely affect grazing" will be taken in the context of "we'll never have to reduce AUMs" or "the RAC is never saying we will never have to do this or that because it will adversely affect my grazing."

- The BLM already has the ability to cut grazing for drought, disaster, or if you are one of these people with overgrazing.
- Here we are simply trying to isolate the effect of the Monument designation and that it should not in itself adversely affect grazing and private land.
- There is a lot of value in symbols, and this resolution is a symbol. The only way to deal with objections is to make a strong, unambiguous statement. I hope the public here will take this back to their constituencies.

The motion failed. Fallback vote:

Category 1 5 up
Category 2 4 up, 1 down
Category 3 4 up, 1 vacant

The motion passed by fallback vote. The dissenting vote will prepare a statement for the record.

Discussion continued:

- I question what we just did. Is the message positive? Since it only passed with a fallback vote, the doubt is right back there.
- This is a big subject we have been dancing around for years, and now all of a sudden we have passed this resolution. I could have supported a different type of statement.
- Open to the idea of drafting something for consideration, and include within that the cancellation of that resolution and the substitution of another consensus resolution.

Deliberations on Non-Consensus Items in Draft RMP

General discussion included the following items:

Mary Fay: It seems the RAC has spent an incredible amount of time and energy going through the alternatives. I question how important it is to have a RAC consensus on any of this. If our consensus hit with what BLM wanted, it was incorporated, but it seems consensus meant nothing more than anyone off the street. Has the ship sailed? If it has, this will not be of value.

Charlie Floyd: When you give advice, you give it with no assurance it will be utilized. We are not a decisionmaking body. We have to recognize that the agency has a prerogative to not accept our advisory opinion.

Dan Clark: The value of the RAC was in helping develop the alternatives. Our influence is front-loaded in this process. What other things can we be at the front end on, such as the wind farm, that we can present sound advice? Our influence in this process at this time is very narrow, and our time could be better spent on other things.

June Bailey: Your input is very important to us. We have incorporated the RAC's recommendations throughout the alternatives. There are some issues that you may never reach consensus on. I would recommend that we start looking at new projects. The RAC has done a tremendous job of providing advice and comments on the plan. It is based on recommendations, public input and comments, data we are getting.

Gary Slagel: Not only are the decisions important to us, it is very valuable for us to listen to the discussion, whether or not you reach consensus. The team reviews that discussion.

Dan Clark: It seems like there is a lot of inertia already. But if it is still valuable, we should continue the discussion.

Ron Moody: In 1994 the best argument for creating a RAC was that it created a forum for discussions. Is it more important for this RAC to continue discussion on the non-consensus items or to move on? Would we be better invested and more productive by talking about those things.

Glenn Terry: I would like to see us finish. We could still have a lot of input to see it finalized. I know from going to the ID Team meetings, the BLM has looked at all of our recommendations. Some had to be changed because what we said didn't fit in with the regulations.

Bill Cunningham: It is a natural tendency to save the toughest stuff for last. The important thing for all of us is to think we are making a difference. We probably won't reach consensus, but we are talking about it and listening to each other.

June Bailey: The purpose of the RAC is to bring representatives from all interests to the table. Everyone should have an opportunity to speak for the interests they represent.

Charlie Floyd: We will review the items generally with the idea of not trying to change everyone's minds.

The RAC agreed to set a limit of 10 minutes to discuss each item, but reserved the right to continue discussion if necessary beyond the time limit.

Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Missouri River – Pilot Rock to Deadman's Rapids

Wade reviewed the rationale for the preferred alternatives, including the restrictions for the wild, scenic, and recreation segments of the river. The June 5 date incorporated Memorial Weekend, which is an important weekend for motorized use in the Kipp area. The September 15 date splits the bow season for both motorized and non-motorized use.

We are trying to find a diverse range of opportunities for the public. The social setting of the river was a big part of it. The upper section of the river, Miles 0-52, is primarily private land,

and motorized use year round fits into that setting. For the White Cliffs section, downstream travel at no-wake speed lines up well with the setting on that portion of the river where there are developed campgrounds. For the lower section of the river, about 20% of overall use occurs there. The only development in that section is at Woodhawk Bottom. No motorized use fits in with that section of the river.

Q: What is the average in a week of motorized craft going through there?

A: Eighteen motorized boats that registered went all the way through that section during the summer restriction period.

Q: People who are canoeing but have a small motor to use in an emergency, how would that be classified?

A: It is a motorized craft.

Q: Is there any time of the year when there are no motors on the river?

A: No.

Q: Is there any reason there can't be a section that during the hunting season there aren't motors? Passive drifting during the hunting season.

Discussion by RAC members on the above question:

- Outside of doing a formal survey during the time period, I don't know how to get that information. I had been told that lack of land access made the river the only public access available. Also, adjacent landowners said they would close off access because the river could be used for access.
- From a MFWP standpoint, it is important to maintain opportunities for motorized access after September 15.
- You never know when the river will freeze up. If I was going downriver, I would want a motor on my boat.

Q: If you have any boat with a motor on it, it's considered a motorized craft?

A: Yes.

Q: If there a section on the river that says no motorized us and I have a canoe with a motor on it, that is okay as long as it isn't on?

A: Correct.

A motion was made by Pat Gunderson and seconded by Barb Cole to accept the BLM's Alternative F for Pilot Rock to Deadman's Rapids. Consensus was reached.

Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge

A motion was made by Terry Selph and seconded by Lisa Huestis that Alternative F be changed to read downstream travel only at no-wake speed with motorized watercraft only on Monday through Wednesday *as an example (try and split it up to 3 days or 4 days as a

block of time to be determined by the BLM at a later date)*, and the rest of the week there would be no motors at all on the lower end of the river.

*(Between the * was corrected at the July 2006 meeting and confirmed with the recording to read as changed above.)

Discussion included the following:

- Representing the group, Upper Missouri River Guides and Outfitters, it is a compromise that accommodates everyone.
- It would provide an opportunity for those seeking a non-motorized experience to plan their trip around those days.
- Taking away one section of the river that is not a wilderness or national park, you are taking away something from the citizens that the BLM's vision statement (on the back of Updates) says you won't do. The motion solves this.
- In a previous discussion we agreed that the Monument can't be all things to all people. While some people might feel restricted because they can't use motors, we feel restricted because we have lost our opportunity for a non-motorized experience.
- One point at the public meetings was that folks who draw a sheep tag wouldn't have the opportunity under the Preferred Alternative to use a motorized boat previous to the season to scout.
- This land has a 100-year human footprint on it. It has been a major transportation corridor. The use of the word "pristine" is misleading here. We need to figure out how to improve, strengthen and preserve for the future the wild aspects of the landscape while continuing to do the things people have been doing forever. We are trying to construct a new idea for a working landscape. The motion is a workable compromise.
- There is a big difference between the sound of a motor going downstream at no-wake speed as opposed to full-bore upstream.
- The concept has some merit, but the concern extends into the hunting season. It is manageable now, but use is growing. Would Terry consider an extension of the time period from June 5 to December 1?
- Will stick with the dates in the motion.

The motion failed consensus. Terry Selph called for a fallback vote:

Category 1 5 Up
Category 2 2 Up, 2 Down, 1 Sideways
Category 3 3 Up, 1 Sideways

The fallback vote passed.

Mary Fay commended Terry for bringing up the motion. Her vote down was that she would have liked an extension of the dates into the hunting season.

Camping

Jerry explained that previously there was no time for the RAC to discuss camping in the uplands. The RAC did discuss Level 1 and 2 sites. The BLM is looking at using closed spur roads as pullouts for camping. Under Alternatives B-D we would look at pullouts adjacent to the road. Under Alternative E no pullouts would be allowed. Under the Preferred Alternative, we would look at using closed roads, or local and collector roads.

RAC Discussion Points:

- Would like to see a team look at habitat security for wildlife and the distance for camping. Limiting camping to 300 feet from a road could create more resource damage than opening up a ¼-mile stretch of road for camping.
- 300 feet is going to be a problem. The same campsites get used year after year. For the Monument we would be justified saying 100 feet instead of 300 feet. Concentrate campers, rather than spreading them over the landscape. It is a good round number to keep people adjacent to but not parked on the road.
- The 100 feet seems reasonable because most people can imagine that.
- Get rid of 100 foot or 300 foot roads and open up the closed roads for ¼ mile to allow access to camping spots. People will be less apt to drive on a closed road if campers are on the road.
- The county commissioners are trying to make some roads county roads. The whole road issue should be readdressed and get the interested parties at the table. There was big confusion among the county commissioners between what they thought happened and what did happen. The groups need to get together and reevaluate the road program.
- Permittees should be included in the discussions.
- When we are in doubt we can always go back to the Proclamation, which says no off-road travel.
- Everyone is saying they will wait until the RMP is out and then go to court.
- (BLM) The State of Montana, including MFWP and DNRC, and the counties are cooperating agencies. They will all look at the comments with the team.
- There are complaints that MFWP was not included in the process.
- Would it be helpful for MFWP to come with a travel plan?
- (BLM) It would be helpful to bring a plan with reasons for the closures.

This issue was tabled.

Spacing Requirements

Previously there was not enough information available to make a decision on this issue.

RAC Discussion Points:

- Things change so fast that it won't make any difference what we decide.
- This is a subject that is out of our hands.

A motion was made by Ron Moody and seconded by Dan Clark that the issue be tabled. The motion was tabled.

- Would it help to get limits or thresholds? Do we know what a good threshold is?
- (BLM) The team considered the Preferred Alternative as the threshold.
- To protect the objects for which the Monument was created is a threshold.

A motion was made by Glenn Terry and seconded by Barb Cole to accept the Preferred Alternative as written. The motion passed consensus.

Access for Individuals with Disabilities

BLM is drafting a statewide policy on equitable access for folks with disabilities. The policy is a clarification of the process. One requirement would be something on the vehicle that would identify a person as disabled. BLM may identify an area with closed roads that would be accessible. Under the other alternatives, it would be strictly on a case-by-case basis. Right now we do not have any areas in mind.

A motion was made by Terry Selph and seconded by Bob Schoonover to accept Alternative F as written.

RAC Discussion Points:

- Does case-by-case constitute more paperwork and more time spent? (Yes)
- (BLM) The question is whether or not we want to identify the areas up front.
- (BLM) The team looked at identifying roads up front, rather than doing it on a case-by-case basis. The Preferred Alternative says in the future, we may identify closed roads for access for individuals with disabilities.

Consensus was reached.

BLM Roads to State and Private Land

The language was a change the RAC suggested and the team incorporated into the alternative. There are roads that are closed or seasonally closed that lead to private land. The general public may or may not have access.

RAC Discussion Points:

- Under State law, for land to be accessible to the public it has to be touched by public land. We could be closing roads that access State sections.
- What does it mean by having roads open if shown to meet Monument objectives?
- I would be concerned if I could not visit a property owner because a road is closed.
- Would that be included as part of the property owner's rights to invite someone to visit their property?

- (BLM) The way it is written now, it would impede anybody but the private landowner from using that closed road. We will take a hard look at that and make some changes. If the road is open for a landowner, it will probably be open to the public. We haven't closed access to any State land. The bigger issue is access across State land. We have only identified a few parcels of State land that have access across them. We may have to deal with that issue with DNRC. None of those roads are signed.
- Does the last sentence of the Preferred Alternative help?
- (BLM) No. It clouds it.
- There are not a lot of places where this would apply. How many roads are we talking about? This is not a huge issue out there.
- (BLM) Not very many.

A motion was made by Barb Cole and seconded by Ron Moody to accept all but the last sentence of the Preferred Alternative. Consensus was reached.

Backcountry Airstrips

RAC Discussion:

- The airstrips won't hurt any of the objects of the Monument. The strips are already there. If down the road people start abusing the privilege, we should do something at that time.
- We should recommend the BLM look at keeping Woodhawk open.
- Is there a way in which we could restrict landing to certain days? For example, you can only land during the same three days in which motorboats are allowed on the river.
- There is no restriction to stop overflights. To put restrictions on landings would not make any difference because the planes would be flying in the area anyway.
- How much is the noise pollution from planes?
- Several people have been buzzed by helicopters. It just takes one to negate the experience. I am not convinced there are four airstrips in the Craters of the Moon Monument. All we know is the airstrips were done sometime before 1978. They are unauthorized and illegal. There will be poaching and illegal things that will happen. Let's try to get them as close as we can to the Monument.
- This has been discussed a lot and we will not come to consensus.

A motion was made by Pat Gunderson and seconded by Terry Selph to accept the Preferred Alternative as is.

- Most of the landing strips are concentrated in the Bullwhacker. The wildness and primitive character of the Bullwhacker is a specific object mentioned in the Proclamation. It seems irresponsible to have airstrips in this area. I am also concerned about the precedent of allowing unauthorized airstrips in the Monument.
- I would keep Alternative F with the addition of a limit on the days which landings could take place.
- Craters of the Moon Monument has expanded in stages. It is jointly operated by the Park Service and the BLM. Two airstrips are not discussed because they are managed by the State of Idaho for emergency use. There is a precedent for having airstrips in a

Monument, but the comparison is apples and oranges between Craters of the Moon and this monument. I can live with the presence of airstrips, but the problem is being told I have to have six of them. I could see keeping open Middleton, Whiskey Ridge and Cow Camp.

The motion failed.

A motion was made by Jeff Shelden and seconded by Terry Selph to accept Alternative F but to restrict landings to certain days of the week which coincide with the no motors on the river. The motion failed.

Further discussion on this issue was postponed until after lunch.

Nomination Process

Craig Flentie reviewed the recruitment and nomination process for RAC members. The deadline for nominations this year was March 26, 2006. Nominations are sent to the BLM State Office, from there to the Governor's Office, then back to the State Office and on to the BLM Washington Office. Recommendations are made by the Washington office to the Secretary of the Interior.

Deliberations on Non-Consensus Items in Draft (Continued)

Backcountry Airstrips

A motion was made by Ron Moody and seconded by Jeff Shelden that the Preferred Alternative read the Knox Ridge and Cow Creek airstrips remain open year round.

RAC Discussion:

- The Knox Ridge airstrip would have much less of an impact than Woodhawk.
- I will not go for less than four airstrips.
- Could the other two be seasonally open?
- As far as the solitude and quiet, there are military flights going over. The private landowners want the airstrips kept open.
- Do any of the private ranchers use these airstrips for their grazing permits?
- The principle of leaving certain roads and trails open to manage livestock should apply here. Airstrips could be open to permittees but not the public.
- If we allow two airstrips that is a major precedent. This is a working landscape national monument and we should look at innovative ideas and allow a couple of airstrips.
- I cannot vote for the motion. If someone abuses the privilege it should be dealt with then.
- There is concern that by closing all of the airstrips we are excluding a class of people. Ron's motion is a sincere effort to address that specific concern.
- Your best chance of getting any airstrips is to pass something like this because there will be lawsuits over the airstrips.

The motion failed consensus. The issue was tabled.

Commercial Scenic Flight Landings

A motion was made by Mary Fay and seconded by Ron Moody that Alternative E be the preferred alternative: Commercial scenic aircraft landings not allowed.

RAC Discussion Points:

- (BLM) The team looked at allowing commercial activity on some of the backcountry airstrips on a permit basis.
- The whole concept of commercial vs. non-commercial needs to be defined.
- The 1999 RAC's definition of commercial use was someone with a recurring business of flying someone into the Monument (an air outfitter).
- With the BLM's language in Alternative F, if someone put in for a permit they could tell them no.
- (BLM) SRPs are discretionary. The way Alternative F is written is relative to anyone hiring a pilot.
- Alternative F could come into play if a movie company wanted to land with cameras and equipment. BLM would authorize that activity. There is a big move in the State of Montana to support the film industry. I would just as soon leave the authority up to the BLM to make the decision. I will go with Alternative F.
- What is the purpose of the Monument? To bring as much money as we can into the area? If there are non-monetary purposes, we need to recognize that as well.
- Are we limiting the ability of the BLM to be flexible with the resources and decide what is appropriate?

The motion failed consensus.

A motion was made by Barb Cole and seconded by Glenn Terry to accept Alternative F as written. The motion failed consensus.

A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Barb Cole to have the Preferred Alternative read: Commercial scenic aircraft landings only on specific authorized backcountry airstrips if shown to meet Monument objectives. Seasonal restrictions may apply.

The motion failed consensus. The issue was tabled.

Bin Items

The RAC agreed discussions would be premature on the Valley County wind farm project and the RS2477 issue.

Private Access Roads to the Monument

- In looking at the map for Alternative F, it is an issue of balancing fairness and equality. Looking at the Bullwhacker Road, if the landowner denies public access across the private land, the whole area would only be accessible to the private landowner.
- (BLM) We have shown roads open behind private land because we would eventually like to have access to those areas. It will require easements. If we were to close all the roads with what we call permissive access, if a relative wanted to look at a homestead, for example, it would not be allowed.
- What would be the incentive for a landowner to work with the BLM and allow access across their land? Do we want to deal with this? What kind of guidance would the BLM want from the RAC?
- It seems reasonable that if no access is gained from private landowners after 10 years, those BLM roads beyond the private property would be closed to the public.
- At least three of the roads will be litigated if it becomes necessary. When the BLM designates a road open behind a private land barrier, they have given the private landowner an incentive to never allow access.
- How many roads are at issue?
- (BLM) Two roads are the Bullwhacker road and the Kinney road right off Cow Island Trail. A landowner to the west of CMR is in block management. We have been told that if we close some of those roads on public land that block management may cease.
- We don't want to cause problems if any dialogue is taking place with private landowners. In reference to the Bullwhacker, can we tie the BLM roads being open to access?
- MFWP has talked internally and they suggested a five-year timeframe to work out agreements to access public lands from private lands.
- Can BLM access the roads for maintenance?
- (BLM) We have an ability to get to those roads to monitor grazing conditions. That does not mean it is vehicle access. It is up to the landowner.
- When out-of-staters buy a ranch and have no intention of grazing an allotment, how does BLM handle it?
- (BLM) A surcharge is added to the grazing lease. Leases normally go with the base property. We can take non-use for two years and then it may need to be grazed. A surcharge is then added because they are not the permittee's cows.

The discussion was tabled.

Relationship of the Monument RMP to the Multiple Use Mandate and FLPMA

RAC Discussion:

- This is the only Monument that uses the term "multiple use." Is there a definition?
- (BLM) The BLM has always based the definition of "multiple use" on FLPMA. BLM has never used the term as every use everywhere. We have looked at it based on the Proclamation, where it states that the BLM would be the managing agency. Our overriding guidance is FLPMA. Ever since 1976 and the designation of the Wild and Scenic River we have managed the river under a concept of multiple use.

- People tend to equate multiple use with development and something like a monument as single use.
- We need to draw a distinction that multiple use in the Monument may mean something different than multiple use outside the Monument. If you lead into the document saying this is for multiple use, people automatically think it will be managed like all other public land. The document should start off different.
- The Proclamation has made this process difficult for everyone. In order to do everything that the Proclamation says, we have to employ the multiple use aspect as stated in FLPMA.
- No two monuments are alike. This discussion is more of a philosophical approach.
- The Proclamation is self-explanatory. Grazing is to be honored, mineral leases there are to be honored.

The discussion was tabled.

Grazing Permits and Private Property Rights (continued)

Ron Moody offered the following resolution:

The RAC recognizes and respects the vital role played by the people living in or near the Monument to properly preserve the natural values of the Monument.

The RAC advocates continuance of the ongoing public land grazing program in the Monument as the economic base of the traditional Central Montana community; and private property rights must be maintained.

RAC Discussion:

- The effort is good, but this changes things.
- The other resolution was to assure people the Monument designation wasn't going to hurt their grazing rights or private property rights. This conveys a slightly different message that is also important.
- Why do the words "adversely affect" bother you?
- If a grazing permit has been adversely affected, we have to find out the reasons.
- This is the RAC's position. We don't control their grazing permits. The BLM does.
- We are being redundant. I have seen no indications that property rights or grazing leases are being threatened. How do we deal with the perception? Will this resolution make a difference?
- As a permittee, this would make me feel better.
- We are just responding to what we heard at the public meetings.
- People still have a bad taste from the CMR. By doing this people will get the sense that we support this.
- We can go back and say it is something the RAC wanted known. Our hope is that those who have constituents can go back and pass it on.
- Are there other things we could do that would be more substantial than a resolution? Could we go out between the meetings and deal with these misperceptions?

- The American Prairie Foundation includes the CMR and the Monument in their plan to raise buffalo. This puts a lot of doubt in the minds of the people who live here.
- The CMR did start out under BLM management, and people have seen what happened there, going from a multiple use management to strictly wildlife management.
- The Proclamation protects those interests.

The discussion was tabled.

Other Issues

Q: Will we still have RAC representation at the ID team meetings? When is the next planning team meeting?

A: The next meeting is tentatively set for May 9 and 10. It may be a one-day meeting to address the schedule for the next six to nine months. No comments will be discussed.

Q: What role do RAC members play in the team meetings? I would specifically request that when they speak, they speak as a RAC. I have been told that some of the things being said are not a RAC consensus feeling, but are personal feelings.

A: The RAC members were elected to represent the RAC as a whole on the ID team. Tony, Glenn and Ron are the three representatives on the ID team.

Next Meeting Agenda/Travel Vouchers

June Bailey proposed the next meeting be held in Malta and the RAC members tour the Valley County wind farm site. Kaylene will check on the availability of a school bus.

Date: July 12 and 13, 2006 (arrive the night of the 11th)

Location: Malta/Glasgow

Public Comment: ½ hour at the beginning of the second day

Proposed Agenda: First Day: Field trip to wind farm site
Second Day: FY 08 projects and budget

RS 2477

Bowdoin Gas Field

Wind Farm

Bison Ranch

Grazing Regulations

Malta RMP

Transportation Planning

Barthelmess National Stewardship Award

Noxious Weeds

Other Agenda Items:

Local Economics – Economic Impacts and How Handled in RMPs

Split Estate

Orientation

Watershed Planning

RAC members completed travel vouchers.

The RAC will be receiving an evaluation questionnaire from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution. Kaylene requested that RAC members complete the questionnaire and return it to that entity.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting
April 5, 2006
Public Comments

Will Patric

I just wanted to comment that I think at one of the previous meetings somebody mentioned it would be good to have a chance to talk about the Valley County wind project. I noticed that wasn't on the agenda this time around, and I'm just hoping that – it's a huge project and I think there's lots of interesting things to talk about there and it just hasn't come up in the RAC meetings for a long time. So I just wanted to suggest, and echoing again what another RAC member already asked for, I hope that it will show up on the agenda soon, because I think it's an important issue. That's it. Thank you.

Oscar Cantu

My name is Oscar Cantu. I'm from Winifred, Montana. I'm the ag teacher at Winifred and have looked at and studied our range in that area. In the Winifred area, not the whole State of Montana area. I guess one of my concerns and always has been a concern is the idea of access. I'm really concerned at the number of roads that are being cut back or closed. Limited access. I guess because I love to hunt in our area and access is getting so difficult. The federal land should definitely not be one of those that are going to start limiting how much we can get. If the goal of the national monument was for us to use it, cutting back the roads is not going to improve the use of it.

As I get older I don't like to walk as much, but I still love to hunt, and I think that that's one of the things that concerns me. I don't want you to forget that hunting is supposed to be a sport for the common man, not for the rich man. I'm a teacher, so I'm as common as you can get. I guess that's what begins to concern me. I saw you guys looking at cutting, closing or controlling access to 2/3 of the roads that we now have. It doesn't make sense to me, and I guess my only thing I'm telling you is don't forget us.

The other thing is the people that own private property within the Monument. That concerns me. I would like to believe that we're going to protect them, but I don't feel that that's what's happening. I guess those are the only comments I want you to be concerned about.

Someone asked, well is there anyway we can keep it the way it was and I said, well, no, that's not going to happen. I looked at all the other regulations and they were all more restrictive. If this is supposed to be federal land for public use, then why are we restricting it more. The way it is now is because farmers and ranchers in our community have protected it that way. I don't think the farmers and ranchers in our community abuse it. It really concerns me. I know that all of you guys are telling me, I'm holding you to task, don't worry, we're not going to do that to you. But you are. So I'm concerned.

If I'd known that I needed to get more people here to testify, I'd been doing that. Because I think you've been getting a lot of comments from the people from our communities. Those are the ones that are going to get the impact.

Thank you very much for your time and effort. I know that you do this free gratis and I am sure that I appreciate that. But I want you guys to not forget that the ordinary man, we want to make sure it's available for the ordinary man. When I become a millionaire, then you can go ahead and start limiting it. If teacher salaries get that high, let me know. Thank you.

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting
April 6, 2006
Public Comments

Vicki Marquis

My name is Vicki Marquis. I represent the Missouri River Conservation District Council. We are a group of all the conservations districts along the Missouri River in Montana, so we extend from Gallatin County over to Richland County and the North Dakota border.

We favor Alternative A. Yesterday I noticed that you talked about some of the misconceptions that are out there. Mary, you had mentioned that people view this as a takings, or you had heard that, and that was kind of confusing. Our council members have heard the same thing, especially in this area and downstream. What they see is, right or wrong, they see a comparison of the Monument to the CMR National Wildlife Refuge. That may seem wrong to a lot of folks, but it kind of depends on your perspective. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a federal agency and the BLM is a federal agency. At one time the CMR boundaries did include private property that has now become public land. The Monument, as you know, in those boundaries there is some private land.

There has been a lot of effort put into protecting the significant objects of the Monument, as there should be, and I think that you guys in the BLM have done a good job of that. Our council is asking you also to protect the existing rights. Like the Proclamation says, the Monument is subject to valid existing rights which includes private property rights.

Another thing that was brought up yesterday is how this whole process is really testing the people's trust of the BLM and the entire process. That is true. We urge you and the BLM to become very active in activities that would strengthen that trust. As we see it, the only way the Monument is really going to be a success is if it has the local support that's needed. People don't really want to come on vacation in an area where everybody's grumpy and cranky and the local economy isn't any good. So we encourage you to do what you can to strengthen that trust.

For example, the oil and gas companies were mentioned yesterday. Find out why they won't come within two miles of the Monument. Maybe there's something that the BLM or the RAC could do to encourage that development if it's productive and if it is done in the right manner.

Also, do what you can, if a private landowner within the Monument wants to develop their valid mineral rights, find a way to make that happen. With today's technology there is a way to do that without adversely impacting the significant objects of the Monument.

On the access roads, we think it's critical to have a local perspective. When you close a road, what does that do to the traffic flow and the traffic pattern. Does it push people onto county roads or private property, and is that going to create problems further down the road?

Finally, our council members hear a lot of concerns about grazing leases. We know that those are addressed in the watershed plans and not so much in the RMP. But one of the reasons people might be concerned about their grazing leases is that there are five big game animals listed as significant objects in the Monument. Again, right or wrong, people are looking downstream at the CMR where big game is a big deal down there, and where there used to be grazing leases now there aren't any. Cattle grazing in some respects has replaced buffalo grazing in this area. It's an historic use and it should be protected and continued in the right manner and in a prudent way. If you need to add some verbiage to the RMP that makes people feel more secure about their grazing leases, maybe you should look at doing that.

Also, when you get into the watershed plans and the grazing leases, we encourage you to be creative and think outside the box. You know, there is an area down in southwest Montana, the Wall Creek Wildlife Management Area, where Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has had a lot of success using cattle grazing to enhance the big game habitat. Maybe something like that would work in the Monument. It's worth looking at.

Again, things like that are going to build the trust and credibility at the local level, and that's really what's important to make the Monument a success for everybody. I appreciate your time and if you have any questions of me or my group, I'd be happy to answer them with whatever time I have left.

Tony Bynum: You point out that local support is going to be necessary in order for the Monument to be successful. Is that possible at this point? If it is, what do we need to do in order to make that happen?

I think you need to make an attempt to get the local support. I think by assuring people that their grazing leases are going to continue, by doing what you can to make it economical for the private landowners to develop their mineral rights. I think that's important. Also, if the private landowners have access issues, do what you can to support them. It's not just that private property owner that you're affecting when you do that. They influence a whole network of people around the Monument. So it's important to do what you can to make them happy and to alleviate some of their fears and concerns.

Jeff Shelden: Rather than us take a stab at the verbiage that you'd like to see, why don't you take a stab at it and compare and contrast the verbiage you'd like to see versus what's in here, and do that in a handout that we could look at and see, compare it to Alternative A, B, C, D, E or F. I mean, it's a pretty vague thing to tackle this and hope that it satisfies, I mean, I'm looking at real specifics, right down to the dotted i's and crossed t's on this. Specific examples of what roads are being proposed closed that are adversely affecting somebody in here. I mean, specifically, which road.

Ask the private landowners that use those roads.

Jeff Shelden: No. That's a big job. If that complaint is out there, we need to get specifics.

On the verbiage on the grazing leases, it could be as simple as something that says "this Monument in itself will not adversely impact the grazing leases. You can use your standards and indicators for rangeland health to manage the grazing leases, and that's okay, but not the Monument itself. Maybe a statement as simple as that would be all that it takes to give people the security that they're looking for.

Jeff Shelden: Give me that statement again.

The Monument in itself will not adversely impact the grazing leases.

Will Patric

Good morning. I'm Will Patric speaking on behalf of The Wilderness Society. First and foremost, I'd just like to say thanks to the RAC for doing what you do and your service with this group. I think it's a wonderful volunteer effort and I really appreciate your dedication. Also, I'd like to just say publicly I appreciate what the BLM is doing as well. The BLM took a lot of bashing, I think, in some of the public hearings, and I think they deserve to be commended for their efforts as well and I'd like to do that. But I also have some criticisms I guess, too, and since I hate to start with a negative note first thing in the morning, but this is the only chance I get to speak. So I do have a few critical remarks on kind of a variety of things I'd just like to touch on.

First of all, as a member of the public looking at this RAC group from the outside in, I am concerned that the RAC may not be dealing with some tough challenges. For example, in yesterday morning's discussion some doubts were raised by more than one RAC member about whether or not the RAC's deliberations have been useful or made a difference to the BLM relative to the Monument. At that point you broke for lunch. I think that moment in the discussion really begged for some response from the BLM and some engagement. It may have been questions. It may have been a challenge or reassurance or something, but instead it was nothing. Again, I think looking from the outside at this process, there needs to be a dialogue going on with the BLM, between the RAC and the BLM, about whether this is making a difference. Because again, that was raised and it was just kind of let go, again because it was lunchtime. If anything, to me that to some extent reinforced the doubts that were raised. So I hope that you can have kind of a discussion about some of the problems that again, at least a few RAC members expressed.

Also yesterday, in the explanation about how the BLM arrived at its decision making, and this was something Jerry was talking about, there was mention of the ID team, specific mention of agency specialists, the State BLM Director, the Proclamation, management guidelines, law, and even the Governor's role, but no mention was made of the RAC. I know that was brought up. I think Mary might have brought that up to Jerry and Jerry responded. I know that wasn't intentional, but again, from the outside looking in I just want to make sure that this RAC is counting and making a difference. I hope you are as well and I hope you're having that kind of discussion about whether your role is all that it could be.

During the Antiquities Act discussion, and specifically the question of whether or not it's appropriate to collect some fossils, it seemed like just when that discussion was getting substantive, and in some ways maybe even a little tense, but it was just getting, I thought, to a point where it made a difference, again, that discussion ended. I guess because the hour was up or the time was up. I thought that was a shame too. I think that issue was really about a lot more than fossils. It's about what does it mean to be a monument. I think again it was a shame to just kind of let that one go rather than keep working on it and talking about it, and seeing if you can get a little bit beyond that. I guess in that regard I'll just say that to me at least, as a member of the public, I think the spirit or intent of the Proclamation seems very clear relative to objects of historic or scientific interest, in the words of the Proclamation. Again, I don't think the point is really whether or not you should keep a small fossil, but I think it's about creating an ethic and talking about what does it mean to be a monument and whether it's good to at least talk to the public and educate the public about leaving stuff there to some extent, and thinking about what makes it special versus just letting folks kind of do what they want. Again, I think you need to keep having that kind of discussion and get to the heart of it if you can.

With regard to the backcountry airstrips, yesterday's agenda said that the discussion was going to be on authorizations of airstrips. I guess I'd have to say that I didn't hear anything about authorizations. What I heard was a presentation that focused pretty much on the presence of airstrips prior to 1978 and that was based on a map that was brought up that had 1978 written in parenthesis on it. That's interesting and a good point, I guess, but it still doesn't get to the heart of were these airstrips ever authorized. More important, I think, is it appropriate to sanction six, or now maybe even seven airstrips in a national monument that's fundamentally about celebrating wildness, remoteness, and our western heritage. So I hope that maybe that issue could still be addressed a little further than we went.

Yesterday a person came in from Winifred to talk about road closures and lack of access with the BLM's preferred alternative. I definitely respect that position but I thought I'd bring in this map. I have shown this at some of the public meetings. But the area in red on this map, as you've heard me say before, is the places in the Monument under the BLM's preferred alternative where you'll be within a mile of a road. Again, that's under the preferred alternative with the road closures that have been proposed. So you can see yellow shows the areas where you can be two miles from a road. I think that that really tells a story. Obviously, The Wilderness Society produced this and I know a lot of folks don't trust us. We did this with BLM information, though, and I would encourage the BLM to provide something like this as well so you can talk to the public about this and show them that you're really not cutting off access and closing down roads, at least very extensively in my opinion, based on what this map shows.

I'd just like to be clear too that we don't want to see any private property owners lose their access to their land. I just think that's a given. But we do think there's a lot of roads out there and that some of them can be closed. I think again this map tells a story and I'll be happy to leave this with folks, and again, I hope the BLM can think about maybe try to tell the story this way as well. When we just throw out numbers it's hard to really get a handle on this.

Finally, my last point is with regards to the Valley County wind project, a different issue. That was talked about very briefly yesterday, just a couple minutes in the update. I think that people need to remember that if this project goes through in all three phases, it will be the largest wind power project in North America. It's a 500 megawatt project. It's being proposed in an area that I think is relative pristine prairie up in the middle of Valley County. It's a very beautiful area which I have taken a look at, and of course, as you know, it's immediately adjacent to a wilderness study area which was proposed, at least I think, for good reason. As you know, an EA is being developed for that proposal. I guess my concern is why isn't the RAC engaging in the issue and talking about and discussing it. Isn't that also an important role for this body to have. I see that project taking place and no one really

seems to know anything about it, and I'm wondering why this RAC is not engaged in at least discussing it and thinking about it and helping the BLM to make sure it's an appropriate project and the best project it can be.

Thank you very much.

Mary Fay: Do you know what percentage of the Monument is within one mile of road, the red?

Roughly 75 percent of the Monument is within one mile of a road under the BLM's preferred alternative, so that includes the road closures that have been proposed.

Bill Cunningham: A further question. Essentially none of the Monument would be more than two miles from an open road?

That's right. The green on here indicates the places in the Monument that would be. And you can see there's essentially no green.

Pat Gunderson: That map doesn't make any differences between the ones that are seasonally restricted and the ones that are open year round? You're considering in that analysis all of them open year round?

We're considering roads on the ground and what's out there. And I think that's an important point. It's a fair point. But you know, I think a lot of the road closures are also at a time of year when most people think of the Monument as not being a good place to go out driving anyway. I think what we're concerned about is roads that are open during the time when the Monument is used, which is the summer and the fall for the hunt, and what's the right number of roads to have out there for that. So good question.

Mary Jones

My name is Mary Jones and I am with the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument. I had a whole list of things I wanted to cover today, but I decided I'd just hone it down to just a couple of sentences. That is that this is a landscape monument. I want to encourage the RAC today to keep the vision in mind of what a landscape monument should be. It should be a protection and a restoration of the natural landscape. So today, as you make a decision on each of these issues that is going to be before you, does it enhance the naturalness of this landscape. That's it.

Ralph Rogers

Good morning. I'm Ralph Rogers, a 30-year resident of Winifred, Montana. I'm a retired educator and a full-time contract biologist. I've been involved in natural resource issues for most of my life. I'm a past president of the North American Falconers Association and I was the founding Chairman of the Board of the North American Grouse Partnership. I'm as green as you're going to get coming from Winifred. I'll have complete comments on the RMP before the end of the comment period, but today I would like to address the backcountry airstrip portion of the plan and submit this testimony and two documents I have for the administrative record.

I would like to thank the BLM for the proposal, alternative of leaving six of the airstrips open. I'm very familiar with these airstrips, having both worked and recreated from aircraft on most of them over the years. I've used these strips for rest stops for myself and my pilot while doing bird surveys on grouse and raptors and other birds in the breaks. Within the last year I fulfilled a lifelong dream of getting my own pilot's license and flying my own plane onto these strips where sometimes I camp and sometimes I just sit there and look around and enjoy the breaks from a perspective that was previously not available to me.

While I support the proposal to leave open the six airstrips, I was disappointed to find the Middleton strip, also known as Woodhawk on the maps, was scheduled for closure. It's the strip closest for Winifred, the one we use the most, and it remains in excellent condition. There has been some confusion regarding its origin and its maintenance and therefore, the proposed closure as a landowner trespass. I would like to submit this affidavit which I have here, and I suppose it goes in the back of the room when I get through, from Ted Thompson who affirmed that he, as a

BLM employee, constructed the strip in 1970 and maintained it until his retirement in 1993. All work performed on BLM time with BLM equipment, with the knowledge of BLM supervisors. Ted also affirms that he's seen the BLM use this strip while fighting fires.

The second document is a signed statement from Tom Ford. As many of you know, Tom Ford was the operator who grazed most of that country until recently. It has been assumed that Tom provided the maintenance and the construction for that strip. Tom indicates in his statement that I'll provide, that he did not construct nor provided any maintenance to the strip at any time. The fact is, Tom didn't need to do that because the BLM was doing such an excellent job and Tom quit flying shortly after 1993, prior to any time before the strip needed any maintenance.

I would like both things to be entered in the record. Lastly, Middleton Ridge is shown on the BLM maps to be out of the winter range and lambing areas for large ungulates or sage-grouse habitat.

We moved here in part because of the breaks 30 years ago. We raised two kids here. Both are now full-time wildlife biologists. Our family loves and are protective of those breaks. If we believe that the support of these airstrips would any way degrade the Missouri River breaks, you'd find me in opposition without any problem. Instead, my personal experience tells me that leaving these backcountry strips open for recreational use provides an access and perspective that enriches the breaks experience. It certainly has ours. I urge the RAC and the BLM to support leaving open as many of these strips as possible and I would urge the BLM to leave Middleton Ridge open all year.

I have a procedural question for Gary. Is this administrative record separate and different from the public comment administrative record?

Kaylene Patten: Yes.

Alright. So if I need to get these into the public comment, I only have one original affidavit, where should it go?

Kaylene Patten: A copy should go to the RAC.

A copy to the RAC and original to the public record?

Gary Slagel: Yes. If you want to submit a copy with your comments later on, that's fine.

Mary Fay: I have one question, Ralph. What was the position of Ted Thompson in 1970?

He was a road maintenance man. I mean, you guys would know his official position better than I.

Mary Fay: He was with road maintenance?

Yes. Full-time employee?

Gary Slagel: Yes.

Bill Cunningham: I was just wondering if you can give us a feel for the amount of recreational flying that occurs with these airstrips. You mentioned that you just recently began that yourself.

Except that I live there.

Bill Cunningham: But you were doing research and doing biological surveys and using the airstrips that way. But is it more recently that you've begun flying in and out for recreational purposes?

Myself? The answer is yes, because it's the only time, I never had the ability to do it before.

Bill Cunningham: Are there very many other recreational pilots that you know of that utilize ...

There are occasional fly-ins, and periodically will come up in Super Cubs and 180s and fly in and out of those airstrips for fun. But in terms of is there air traffic, constant air traffic, the answer is no.

Bill Cunningham: Are these airstrips adequately maintained for public safety?

You would not want to land some airplanes in there. But you wouldn't want to land some airplanes on the Winifred public strip either. You're limited by length. The ones that they've suggested be open are in sufficient condition to maintain the sort of traffic that I would expect that would go in there. Idaho has embraced backcountry airstrips as opposed to opposing them. That's an interesting situation there. Again, as green as I am, if I didn't have personal experience I could easily from a distance be on the other side of this issue. But now that I have, I see that in fact most pilots tend to be very green people themselves.

Dan Clark: You said there is a number, six, whatever the number is, of airstrips that would be open. You were talking about this Middleton Ridge which you'd like to see that one open rather than closed. So if the number were to be static at six, what other airstrip would you suggest close to Middleton Ridge to be included?

I wouldn't have a recommendation. I just see no need to close any of them. I don't believe they're doing any harm. And they afford access to country which will soon be, it's correct that Middleton Ridge is within a mile of a road, but it will be a vertical mile of wet bentonite on occasion.

Dan Clark: What would I look at if grading that, if there is one that really dropped off the bottom?

There are other people that would answer that question with more knowledge than I do. If it looks real rough I won't land on it.

Mary Fay: I have two more questions. First about airplanes and if you were making a recommendation of what kinds of planes should be able to land or which ones shouldn't, do you have any suggestions there?

I would, but I would defer that. You have professionals in here and you're asking about an airplane question rather than a backcountry strip question and I'm a low-time pilot.

Mary Fay: Okay. My next question. If the BLM were to establish and authorize airstrips outside the suggested boundary of the Monument in different areas so that you could, as Idaho has done, you would welcome that. This is a monument so I think it's different than any other land in Idaho or wherever. So if you could get the BLM to authorize and establish safe landing strips outside the boundary but on BLM land in certain places where airplanes could ...

Charlie Floyd: I'm sorry, but we've got other speakers ...

Chuck Jarecki

Thank you Mr. Chairman. For the record my name is Chuck Jarecki. I live at Polson, Montana. In previous public comments before this group I have addressed issues related to airstrips within the Monument. But lo and behold, at this time I'm going to address a different subject.

Historically, I was a cattle rancher in Polson for 29 years. My primary focus during that career was management of rangelands and their stewardship. I continue to pursue an interest in rangelands and serve in various positions in the Society for Range Management, of which I have been a member for the last 39 years, a life member, and I was president of our local and international mountain section, which includes the western half of Montana and Alberta, and I served on the parent society's board of directors for three years.

I also spent four years on a committee of the National Academy of Sciences Natural Research Council, and a committee assignment was to determine new methods to classify, inventory and monitor rangelands. Our 180-page report entitled Rangeland Health was published in 1994.

As you are well aware, the rangelands of the Monument evolved under grazing by large animals, principally the bison. As stated in the Monument Proclamation, little has changed on that landscape in the past 200 years. The only difference is the species of grazing animals has changed. Yet the ranchers, the true stewards of the land, must have been managing the lands in an ecologically sound manner in order for the lands to remain unchanged since the time of Lewis and Clark. Not only does the land provide a source of forage for livestock, but it also supports a vibrant wildlife population of numerous species.

When you are discussing the recommendations you make to the BLM on the Monument Draft RMP, you need to consider that the ranchers are the best on-the-ground folks to provide continuing grazing management in the Monument with the lowest cost to the federal government. Their roots are in the land. Many of the ranches are multi-generational and they want their descendants to continue on the land.

Those of you that attended the recent round of public meetings heard many of these ranchers speak. I was at the Big Sandy meeting. They spoke from the heart. Many of them had their spouses with them. They all had calluses on their hands. Some have been awarded accolades for their land stewardship. They need a Monument management plan that will enable them to continue the fine job they are doing now without being hamstrung by needless rules and regulations that would make their ranch business untenable.

Although the Proclamation provides for continued issuance of grazing permits, an unreasonable burden of bureaucracy could render that continued holding of a grazing permit indefensible. The CMR is an example. Do you want these Montana ranchers, an integral part of the local social fabric, to be forced to sell their ranches when they are good stewards of the land? They should be encouraged to remain in the ranching business that is profitable and sustainable. These ranchers are the managers that know the land. They are here year after year, fixing the fences, maintaining the water facilities that benefit wildlife as well as livestock, and controlling exotic species and rotating their stock.

Like it or not, the cost factor is one thing that will drive the management plan for the Monument. One thing they can do with the BLM is to develop a sound monitoring system. Several years ago the Montana Stockgrowers Association and Montana State University Extension Service developed a booklet outlining the methods to carry out a meaningful rangeland monitoring program. I propose that the ranching community and the BLM come up with a cooperative agreement that will facilitate a range monitoring effort that is based on science and not on the perceptions of third parties, some of whom would like to drive the ranchers off the land.

It is the open vistas of the farms and cattle ranches that help make Montana “the last best place.” Visitors come from all over the world to see the wide open spaces that Montana has to offer and experience the mystique of the cowboy and cattle drive. The environmental community should do everything it can to help the ranchers on the land. Ranchers doing what they do best—tending their stock and caring for the land.

My perception is that the key to a workable Monument management plan is to provide a balanced transportation system for a diversity of visitors, tools that allow the ranchers to continue to be the permanent presence, and a sound monitoring system that charts ecological changes over time, thus enabling management alterations to be based on science and not perception. If there is not a problem today, and not forecast to be one in the future, then let’s not create a problem for the users. Thank you.

Jeff Shelden: What specific rules and regulations are hamstringing the ranchers in the Monument right now?

Well first of all, if you affect the ability to access your land.

Jeff Shelden: And where is that taking place at?

On some of the road closures.

Jeff Shelden: I mean specifically which roads?

I don't know the specific ones.

Jeff Shelden: Okay. Well, that's hard for us to deal with then. And I guess if you could give me an example of some third-party monitoring group that's causing problems for you right now.

I'm looking down at the future, that if we don't have baseline monitoring data now that would carry through, somebody in the future could say, hey, this range is no good. It's being destroyed by the ranchers. Let's cut their stocking numbers down.

Jeff Shelden: But somebody else could say you're imagining problems. You're making problems up.

No, monitoring is an ongoing thing and the BLM does it themselves. The Forest Service does it. A lot of ranchers do monitoring. When I had my ranch I had photo plots.

Jeff Shelden: But there isn't any third-party monitoring that's creating a problem for you right now?

No, I didn't say there was a third-party monitoring. I am saying it's a third party that would come in, in future years, and by their own perception would say that there's been in a decrease in the quality of the range.

Jeff Shelden: Well, it's hard to deal with an anecdotal worry like that. That's my own comment.

Ron Moody: I have one question. Do you have information which says to you that BLM is not adequately conducting rangeland inspections and, in fact, is not in possession of adequate baseline data at this point in time?

I don't know. But I don't know if the ranchers and the BLM are actually working together on an allotment-by-allotment basis jointly doing the monitoring. They have problems like all the other agencies. They are short staffed by vacancies in staff and so on. I know from the people that I talked with in the Range Society, there is a real shortfall in having people on the ground doing the monitoring on a timely basis. They may go out and do a snapshot at one point, but you've got to keep coming back in periodic intervals to plot the trend, and this usually doesn't take place. Monitoring is a real concern because you can't make long-term decisions without seeing what the trend is.

Barb Cole: What I hear Chuck saying is let's be proactive, rather than reactive.

Russell Dahl

My name is Russell Dahl. I'm from Nashua, Montana. I currently serve as an airport support network member for the AOPA, but I am here today as the state president for the Montana Pilots Association. I've been a licensed pilot for 30 years. For the last 20 years I've been carded by the Office of Aircraft Services and so I've flown BLM and the federal Fish and Wildlife, both their biologists and their wardens, primarily in the CMR and eastern Montana. I've also flown the state biologists and their wardens and other personnel as well.

I am also a full-time pilot for the Francis Mahon Deaconess Hospital and I fly air ambulance and I have for the past 12 years. I am also an aircraft owner and partners with a couple of people in a pre-World War II Taylor Craft, which is a small two-seat airplane that's really suited to land on this type of airstrip. I would just like to point out that aircraft is my mode of transportation. I don't drive a big fancy diesel pickup. I happen to enjoy an old airplane that puts along at about 80 miles an hour. Having these strips open in the Monument would allow me the opportunity to utilize the Monument with my kids.

I would like to state on behalf of the Montana Pilots Association that we support the preferred Alternative F but we would like you to consider the public use of the Woodhawk or the Middleton Ridge airstrip which would give us an additional airstrip on the south side and would like to see it available year around. All these airstrips we believe could be maintained in a casual manner using only hand tools. They have clear approaches and they are aligned with the prevailing winds. They are not readily visible from the ground from what I've heard. I've never seen them by road on the ground, so I believe there's virtually no visual degradation of the ground and natural rangelands.

I appreciate all your time in putting this together and I sure appreciate Clark's presentation yesterday. I thought that helped clear up some things like there are some strips inside national monuments other than in the State of Montana, such as the Craters of the Moon in Idaho.

Mary Fay: I had heard from a discussion yesterday that in fact there were four airstrips in the Craters of the Moon, and I would like some verification of that.

I don't have that.

Mary Fay: Not from you, but just from BLM.

I do have a ___ chart, but I don't have a sectional. The sectional would be the one to show a public airstrip.

Mary Fay: My question to you would be the same one I had asked Ralph but he didn't have time to answer. What about putting and authorizing airstrips outside the boundary?

I heard you ask him that and I was thinking myself, if I fly in there in my old airplane, now I have to walk how far? If you are allowing the person to drive on the same road I am landing beside, I don't understand why you want me to have to land outside of that now and then walk on that road to where that old airstrip is. You see what I am saying?

Mary Fay: No. I'm trying to get the airstrips out of the Monument, so that's why ...

The airstrips are right beside the road. Every one of them is right beside a road. So if you are allowing a vehicle to drive that, why would you discriminate against me and require me to land outside the Monument and start walking down that road to where that airstrip is?

Mary Fay: There's just a difference in values. I know that you say there's no visual degradation, but if you're trying to have a peaceful solitude trip and there is airplane noise, it does degrade that opportunity and that experience. I know that's difficult for pilots to understand. Thank you.

Ron Moody: The question I am struggling with on the issue of backcountry airstrips in this particular monument is not whether we should or should not have any airstrips in the Monument, but the number in the preferred alternative, and to a lesser extent the distribution. Can you explain to me why it is desirable to have six airstrips as opposed to two or three? I don't want to discuss all airstrips or no airstrips. I want to get at why that many.

One of the comments that I've heard is that by having six, I mean you're spreading it out a little bit so that you're not concentrating all in one area so that you don't have a high noise impact or maybe some game concern or all that noise is generated at one place. The other thing, from a pilot standpoint, I mean sometimes the conditions aren't suitable, maybe at this one, and they would be at the other one.

Ron Moody: We could make the same argument on roads...

Right, and we recognize that as well, but ...

Tony Bynum: But what?

Well, I mean, if you're closing some of these seasonally and you're closing some of them, I've heard they're not even included in Alternative F. Because there was over 10, wasn't there? So we're only really looking at seven now, possibly. Well, there's six but we're asking that you consider that Woodhawk.

Tony Bynum: This question is going to be directed to you but it could be to any of the people who are here to support the allowance of one or more airstrips in the Monument. I'm failing myself, and I'm thinking I'm pretty open minded a lot of times. Sometimes I'm not. But I'm failing to get why it is that pilots believe there ought to be, similar to the same question, six, but even fewer. Why is it that you feel you have a right

when we look at the Proclamation and read through it, when it doesn't say anything about aircraft specifically. But even more, it talks about historically what it looked like and how it felt and what was there. So I am trying to in the same vein as the BLM telling us how they want to do things based on what's in the Proclamation, find a way to understand that these airstrips, none of which seem to be approved, no one has shown any of us that these are airstrips that have any authorization whatsoever other than maintenance.

I'm going to ask the question. Please answer for me how it is that you guys come up with your justification for these airstrips. Where do you get that?

I mean I can't justify all of these airstrips. But I mean, they are already there so we'd like to use them is all I can say. Like the roads.

Mark Good

My name is Mark Good. I work for the Montana Wilderness Association out of Great Falls. I just wanted to make a couple of short comments here. One, I would just say we were one of the conservation groups that in the beginning supported the idea that livestock grazing be an activity which is allowed in this Monument. We did that primarily because landscapes are changing across this state.

I don't know that the landowners, ranchers who use this land are any better stewards than other places on the river, but currently if you look upriver you do see that the landscape is changing, that the uses are changing on that land. You are seeing houses where you weren't, and it's not because those stewards are bad stewards, that it's just they're selling out their land and it's changing. This land too, over the next fifty years. I mean, we're not going to be here, most of us.

That land is going to change hands. And the fact is that probably some of that land and uses on that land is going to change as well. I think it's unfortunate because some of the values for which this Monument exists also are on private lands, and I think it would be important and BLM ought to look for ways to kind of maintain this land so they've got, they're consistent and they're compatible manners, the uses are consistent and compatible. So I just wanted to make that point.

I think it's not fair also to compare it with the C. M. Russell. There, people are paying something closer to market values for grazing permits. That area is supposed to be primarily, almost exclusively for wildlife. So I'm not sure it is a fair comparison there either.

Let me just say something about the airstrips too. Clark said this yesterday, but I just wanted to re-emphasize it. In 1979 or earlier they did a wilderness inventory checking out the condition of the land, and in that they talk about everything from fences to roads to gas wells to all sorts of activities that have gone on in that unit. What they don't mention on that, and I am looking at the Bullwhacker evaluation here, is airstrips. They don't say anything about airstrips. They don't notice them. They don't show them on a map. They don't show them.

I want to emphasize too that this is an area that is described in the Proclamation as containing some of the wildest country on all the Great Plains, including important wildlife habitat. That's a quote from the Proclamation. It's probably one of the best areas that offers some kind of opportunities to have some kind of a remote experience in there. Again, another value for which this monument is to be managed. You are proposing to put four airstrips into this area. I think that is not compatible with the values for which this is supposed to be managed. On top of that, this is where most of the oil and gas activity is supposed to occur. On top of that, this is where there is a pretty significant road network into this same area. Again, I don't think those are compatible with the values for which this area is supposed to be managed. I have walked. I have hiked to all of these airstrips. You can do it. I'm in my fifties. You can do it. It's not that hard. So I just think this is not, you know, if you're looking for a place to put airstrips, it should not be in the Bullwhacker.

Thanks.

Resource Advisory Council
July 13, 2006
Cottonwood Inn, Glasgow, MT

8:00 – 5:00 p.m. Field Trip on July 12th

Field Trip to the Wind Farm and parts of the Glasgow Field Station areas.

Regular Meeting on July 13th:

8:00-8:30am Public Comment Period

Will Patrick, Wilderness Society, read a statement.

- Thanks the RAC for volunteer efforts
- Valley County Wind Energy Project Proposal
- Supports development as a good energy source – He thinks Judith Gap makes good sense yet has some concerns about the Valley County project.
- Concerns:
 - Narrow way it is considered, especially the location
 - Advancing too quickly, under the radar, and not enough information is going to the public
 - EA – only offers three alternatives, proposal, no action, slight change. Should be an EIS
- Does it really need to be next to Montana's greatest wilderness areas in the Great Plains? The WSA is in many field guides as a WSA unmatched in the prairie. It gives sense of prairie remoteness. Is this the only place for it? The Canadian government deemed very similar country north of the border worth becoming a National Park
- EA dismisses the impact. Because the project is outside the WSA, the EA states it would not affect the quality of the WSA. 300 towers, some less than a mile away, would have huge impacts.
- Benefit of wind power should benefit private landowners – most of the project is on public lands.
- Detracts from hunting/hiking experience
- What about the Reservation and their interest in the Wind Farm?

Asks the RAC to become engaged, increase exposure, lengthen the public comment period, suggest alternative sites, and change the EA to an EIS. It could be North America's largest wind farm.

QUESTIONS:

1. Bill Cunningham - Is the BLM national programmatic EIS for wind development adequate?
 - Will - The issue is that the EA here is not adequate for this specific site. He thinks there are extreme impacts and it deserves the best possible look.
2. Ron Moody - Has the Wilderness Society or other national organization proposed a standard to evaluate the appropriateness of place as alternatives for the RAC?
 - Will - The Society considers placement in areas that have already had some impacts, like existing roads, power lines, farming. Seems like the proponent

picked the most remote, pristine area possible.

Public Comment Period Closed at 8:17am

8:30- 9:00am Welcome/Chairperson Synopsis/Meeting Notes

- Kaylene, the normal facilitator, was unable to attend the meeting. This meeting will be run a little looser by the Chairperson (Tony Bynum), June Bailey, and Mark Albers.
- Group members and other attendants introduced themselves.
- Darryl Seely, a former RAC member, recently passed away. He served two terms, took one off, started back, and then got sick. It is a big loss to Malta. He was willing to work with anyone and exemplified the spirit of cooperation that the RAC needed.

AGENDA:

- Some changes to the agenda –RS-2477 and the Proposed Revisions to Grazing regulations were cut to be replaced with discussion on the Wind Farm.
 - RS-2477 comments – the information will be presented in November at the next RAC meeting. The State office is working with the solicitors to get some Guidance.
 - Grazing Regulations are not out yet. The RAC will review them in November. Some Discussion if they were indeed out yet. June stated they were not out one week ago. The RAC would like to have a copy before the meeting to review. June will forward some summary bullet points from Billy McIlvain.
- Comments on Minutes from last meeting -
 - Pg. 17-18 (Terry) – The discussion on the Motor Issue and days of the week (no wake Monday through Wednesdays). He did not want to be on record for specific days – He wants the BLM to review possible restrictions. The days could have been an example.
- Bowdoin Gas Field Update – Don Judice not here yet, Mark might be able to give an update.

8:30-9am Look at Proposed Wind Farm. Will pick it up later if need more time for discussion.

1. Bill C – Was there a letter about the Fort Peck tribes agreeing to the project? Could we get a copy or learn the contents of the letter? What has transpired with the tribes?
 - a. Tony – Receive a letter “signed” by the tribe, told John Morales Jr. signed it. Summary: The tribes are requesting an extension of the comment period for the Valley County Wind Farm proposal. It was initially proposed to the Executive Council and was denied. The current board is in favor of all energy projects. Reasons: contacted by Wilderness Society, would increase employment (55% unemployed), and increase revenue. The extension will give them time to form a proposal and questions.
 - b. Why initially rejected? Not because they do not support energy development, but for some unknown underlying reasons.
2. Jeff wants a copy of the EA. Can make comments via email?
3. Some discussion about public awareness and extending the comment period.

- a. Mark: There is already a two-week extension in place. The 30-day comment period initially not long enough. There were many requests from organizations to extend the comment period. As far as notifying the public, public announcements in all the papers. A copy of the project was available at the County Library.
4. Terry – concerned with the project moving forward with little or no public involvement. He wants to see it further extended, if for no other reason, than the RAC is just getting a hold of it now. Not sure if he can get his comments in by Monday.
 - a. Something wrong with the Big Picture. The power line corridor is troubling. The rights-of-ways over private lands have big impacts. Once get out there, he realized it is very neat piece of country. For us, it is natural space in great condition. Future generations will treasure this area. Look to future values of it. The development impacts not just the tower site, but also the area along the power line corridor.
 - b. Does public want energy use without conservation? Regardless that Phase I on Private Lands, there are other private lands that could be developed. Floats the motion for at least another 30-day comment period. What would that hurt?
 - c. Can we see the National EIS? What does it say for WSAs versus more developed areas?
 - i. Mark – Impacts for roads, avian impacts are covered in the Programmatic EIS. The tiered EA would address site-specific issues.
 - ii. Mark – Regarding the schedule issues, he thinks the BLM addressed and had adequate comment arenas available. Extending the comment period just delays the proponent’s schedule. The proponent scheduled the initial groundbreaking next spring.
 - iii. Mark - NEPA requires alternatives for a given project. The private land initial location limits the alternatives. BLM cannot tell the proponent to move to Tribal Lands. That would be an alternative project not an alternative of the existing one.
5. Bill – The Wind Farm is huge! 334 towers, over 300 feet tall. Roughly three times larger than the Judith Gap project.
6. Terry – **Make a motion to make a 30-day extension.** Discussion.

Lisa – need to make comments on what we have right now. **Seconds the motion.**

 - a. Tony – there are other ways to develop the project, even with the current boundaries. The initial phase does not have to be right next to the WSA. 20,000 acres is a lot of room.
 - b. Apparently amending the phases is not an option. Seems like the option is Yes or No, and some haggling on the power line. Valley County thinks it is a good project, public favors alternative energy. No real alternatives presented. No one knows what will happen putting in over 300 towers in an area that has the greatest diversity for prairie grassland birds. This is a national issue that is precedent setting. It is worth taking the time. Tony is comfortable with another year of study and discussion, though it is not feasible.
 - c. Bill does not think 30 days will buy anything, especially with the summer season and harvests. Suggests a 90-day period. Have more meetings – public, with the applicant, the tribes. Do not extend it if it is only 30 days. We need a meaningful

extension to get some real activities done. The proposed area is undeveloped, unblemished, and truly unique. The last short-grass prairie in the Nation and the RAC and community needs to serious think before continuing.

- d. Francis suggests the discussion is tabled until later.

Break from 9:00-9:13am.

9:15-10:30am American Prairie Foundation, Scott Laird

“The Mission of the American Prairie Foundation (APF) is to create and manage a prairie-based wildlife reserve that, when combined with public lands already devoted to wildlife, will protect a unique natural habitat, provide lasting economic benefits, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the prairie landscape.”

- Scott Laird, Field Director of the APF. It is a non-profit organization created in southern Phillips County three years ago. It is headquartered in Bozeman, with a field office in Malta.
 - APF is creating a resorted prairie landscape in North central Montana.
- Polly Cavill, part time employee of APF and the Forest Service, attended.
- APF is in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
 - APF is not a subsidiary of WWF. They are scientific partners.
 - WWF – a global network with two international headquarters in Switzerland and Washington D.C. Works in over 160 countries. WWF is not an advocacy group but a science group.
 - Classifies over 200 ecoregions on Earth.
 - Priority regions in North America: Northern Great Plains, Chihuahuan Desert in Mexico, Gulf of California, and the Southeastern U.S. Rivers and Streams (to the Everglades)

Why did APF chose North-central Montana?

- Temperate Grasslands of the World – least protected, most developed in the whole world. Graph: % protected – temperate grasslands at very bottom of the list
- Large landscape planning: where are there enough intact prairies that we could have some impact with restoration? The Northern Great Plains range from the Sandhills of Nebraska to Grasslands of Saskatchewan/Alberta. See map on PP. Consistent with US EPA classification. The Nature Conservancy came up with same answer.
- What’s to conserve? Three major activities shape the Northern Glaciated Plains Ecoregion:
 1. Drought – almost constant
 2. Fire
 3. Herbivory (Grazing) – done by Bison, large ungulates, prairie dogs, locusts
 - Two Keystone Species (Prairie Dogs and Bison) have been removed on a large scale.
 - Slide show how birdlife handle different grazing pressures. Have a diversity of bird survival. Ex: Chestnut-Collared Longspur. Decline is marked in the past few decades
- Largest species loss in the Northern Great Plains.
 - 15% endangered or threatened

- Lewis and Clark – saw largest amount of large mammals on their whole exploration along Ft. Peck Lake.

The foundation of APF's efforts to restore the prairie landscape is bison.

- Genetically pure bison – there was a program to cross breed Bison with Cattle back in the early 1900s. Very few pure bison exist outside of Yellowstone Park, are treated as wildlife and not crossbred (genetic changes).
 - increasing domestication
 - small herd size
 - Contamination with cattle DNA (hybridization)
 - Over 95% of plains bison are raised commercially.
- 50 conservation herds: only a small percentage is genetically pure
- The need to establish satellite herds for genetic conservation is URGENT!
 - How do it?
 - Prairie dogs and associates. Black footed Ferret reintroduction is complex, shaky on the CMR. There are not places to grow big prairie dog towns, thus nowhere to grow ferrets. Plowing Native prairie is still growing. Subsidies favor sod busting over cattle ranching. See graph from South Dakota.
 - ECONOMICS
 - Industries struggling – slow decline while subsidies increase. Many prairie communities are depopulating. Trends have not looked good for many decades.

What is next?

- Conserve the prairie. This is a place people would want to see. Add to the economics of a community. See MT Governor's "Restoration Economy"

What need – major criteria for conservation?

1. Biodiversity targets – core populations of grassland birds, black-footed ferrets, prairie dog towns, imperiled mammals, insects and plants, bison
2. Restoration potential – low road density, untilled land (S. Phillips 70%), low/declining human population, high proportion of public land,
 - Economic constraints/opportunities – oil and gas, land prices.
 - #1 is CMR for large blocks of untilled land and very low O&G

THE PROJECT:

Located North of the UL Bend Wilderness, CMR. Total 31,904 deeded/leased acres.

- Goals: large-scale restoration, public access for recreation, education, research
- Strategy – acquire land from willing sellers, public cooperation in land mgmt (CMR, BLM and state, private, APF lands), restore key species and processes, respect human history (settlers have kept it the way it is), local/national and international support

Restoration Priorities:

- streams and riparian areas
 - Pictures of telegraph creek running into Forchette creek – Restore habitat, reestablish Fisheries
- native plant cover

- Matt Lavin and Tim Seipel, of MT State University, are doing plant surveys. They are very excited about the lack of noxious weeds and the diversity that is not elsewhere in the state.
- Prairie dogs and black footed ferrets: Controversial. Move unwanted prairie dogs in from other areas to APF.
- Birds (grassland obligates): 129 species counted this spring
- Bison and other ungulates
 - Antelope collared in Wild Horse moved over 400 miles on migration
- Establishing the “natural” grazing regime as the project grows
- Carnivores: No, they are not moving in Wolves.

BISON – a major concern of landowners.

- APF has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ranchers in Southern Philips County. Discussed disease issues, fencing, and other concerns.
- 16 agencies moved in species
 - Ex: Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. All tested genetically pure bison. Bought 15 bison of different age classes and sexes. Imported as Livestock across the state line.
- Soft Release, 2 acres enclosure of large round hay bales (2 high), electric fence trailed them for 30 days. Let them into a small pasture of 70 acres with five-strand electric fence. Then to a 450 acre: Three-strand (top and bottom hot, 44-inches high). The two lead bison cows are radio collared to track them. The fence allows wildlife through. This month APF will be moving them to 2000 acres.
- Research – bison vs. cattle grazing. Bison graze different to cattle: some areas are grazed heavy, some not touched. They do not loaf as much as cows. Mosaic very different, good for the bird obligates.

Community Outreach

- Started grant funds to fund community projects. Invited lots of kids out for Education Days.
- Prairie Union School. Rebuilt schoolhouse using some of the original materials. They interviewed previous students and teachers and documented its history as a one-room schoolhouse, where the teacher lived and taught. Little historic site.
- Yurts built on the prairie. Guests can stay out there for three days and be educated in the prairie and APF. 250 people last year. APF has two events scheduled this year so far (Primarily involved with fund raising). These guests come into Malta and boost the economy.
 - Activities: Plant trees, set trap lines, talked about Buffalo Jumps, etc.

QUESTIONS:

1. How are you restoring the native plant communities? Starting with riparian areas (more science in existence to reference). Slowly starting working on the upland prairie landscape as leases run out.
2. Are the bison calving? Yes. Have about 20 right now. APF will buy more this coming spring. What is the carrying capacity? Idea to supplement the herd as the land area increases to maintain/improve the genetic diversity. Each type of land is managed

- differently – BLM, to State, to Private. OK to move the bison onto the Telegraph creek allotment next year. AUMs the same.
3. Will the BLM cross fences stay? Yes. Deeded land is treated differently.
 4. Will APF allow hunting on their land? Yes, APF is moving about 5200 acres of deeded ground into Block-Management. Some will be identified for hunters to find. Bison pastures excluded.
 5. Economic impact on county assessment being evaluated? Yes. Comparing the previous ranches and the APF. APF is spending a lot locally in startup (ex: buying all their fencing locally). As the project moves along, there will be continual adjustments.
 - a. Outfitters asking to bring people in – rafting, birding, hunting
 6. Malta the Gateway Community? Mostly – APF has a base office there. Lewistown, Glasgow also. Airports, where rent cars?
 7. Can people get in trouble with the Bison when out hunting? Will post signs that there are bison in the allotment pasture. Element of education involved. Always danger involved when hunting.
 8. Why headquartered in Bozeman and not in Malta? The president lives in Bozeman, the Board of Directors is all over the Nation. The WWF has an office in Bozeman. Scott sees an active Field Office in Malta as things continue to grow. APF has a ranch manager, Bill Wilcox, living on site. APF hires contractors out of Malta.
 9. What is the bigger picture of Prairie Restoration and Economics? What are the costs of trying to restore the prairie? What is your perspective of the area for native prairie site for the Wind Farm? Natural Resources – very valuable. It is extremely difficult to restore it once plowed. However, the land value is lower and cheaper as native prairie than improved pasture or cropland. Costs include equipment, seeding, waiting on rainfall. Costs vary depending on whether riparian or upland sites.
 10. Visiting “Safaris” – are they by invitation? What season? Safaris are expensive events by invitation. The ranch manager can give tours anytime if you just call ahead to Scott or Bozeman. APF has a restored ranch house on site that sleeps 10 people comfortably.
 11. Pat – FWP was initially lukewarm when APF showed up. Now there is a lot of opportunity for FWP and APF to work together. Very professional and able group of people.
 12. WEBSITE: www.americanprairie.org
 13. Scott would invite ideas on whom else to contact or speak with about prairie restoration or the South Phillips County project.

BREAK FOR 10+ minutes.

**MALTA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, Claire Trent, RMP Project Manager
10:50-11:30am**

Purpose:

1. Explain the RMP process
2. Identify the existing management plan (till ROD is signed)
3. Discuss Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team), their responsibility
4. Schedule

5. How do we involve the public and stakeholders in the process?

Required Planning Step

1. Pre-Plan: an internal document that identifies issues. Issue a Notice of Intent to be published in the Federal Register
2. Analysis of the Management Situation – in-house. Evaluate current management, current condition of the land and projects
3. Scoping Report – included public scoping period. Take Comments and how relate
4. Draft RMP/EIS – summarizes info, 90 day public comment period
5. Proposed RMP and Final EIS – addresses comments and amends stuff, governor's review period, another 90 day comment period
6. Approved RMP and Record of Decision

Why need a new RMP?

- provide collaborative planning approach for the planning next 20 years of management
 - o Realignment of field offices, new data, changed conditions
 - o Establishes goals
- The new RMP incorporates the West HiLine RMP (Havre Field Station) and the Judith, Valley, Phillips RMP (Lewistown) together. The old RMP did not have any info on the Oil & Gas leasing. Parts are now part of the Upper Missouri Monument.
 - o Slide of the new planning area. 2.5 million surface acres, 3.5 million acres of subsurface acres

Who Formulates the RMP?

- Thirty-five people on the BLM part of the team (core and support team). It is a very diverse team from GIS, wildlife, range, economics, admin, etc.
- Preliminary issues?
 1. Energy Development
 2. Management of Vegetation
 3. Management of wildlife
 4. Conservation and recover of special status species
 5. Water quality, quantity and aquatic species
 6. Travel management and access to public lands
 7. Management of areas with special values
 8. Availability and management of public lands for commercial uses
 9. Land tenure adjustments

Schedule:

1. Notice Of Intent – Aug. 2006; already submitted to Washington
2. Scoping – Oct. 2006 (17-18 planned events)
3. Alternative development and Environmental analysis - Jan 07-June 07
4. Draft RMP/EIS published – April 2008 potentially
5. 90-day Public Comment Period – July 2008
6. Proposed Final – April 2009
7. Record of Decision, Final RMP – late September 2009

How we would like stakeholders' and publics involved:

1. Making information readily available
2. Important tool for selecting alternatives
3. Increasing contacts that encourage interaction – websites, email, radio

Benefits of cooperation

- better decisions made, relationships improved, resources managed more efficiently
- will impact next 15 to 20 years

Contact:

Claire Trent: Garrie_Trent@blm.gov

Claire's Phone: 406-654-5124

RMP Email: MT_Malta_RMP@blm.gov

Project Website: <http://www.mt.blm.gov/mafo/rmp>

Questions:

1. Is this the number one priority for the BLM? Yes, for Northern and Central Montana, it is on the forefront.
2. What about the areas not included in the Malta RMP? Lewistown/Headwater's RMP is scheduled for FY2009. However, all these areas will be living under the JVP RMP until the ROD is signed.
3. Can the RAC get a copy of the new administrative regions? You can download it from the state website. <http://www.mt.blm.gov/lands/planningmap.html>
4. RAC suffering from mass email burnout – Suggest something that is administratively important: mail a post card posting a meeting. They will take more notice. BLM will initially do a card like that or mail newsletters so people know to access the info on the website.
5. Next Step with the RAC and BLM: Most important issues to the RAC? Set up Sub-Committees?
6. Is there a section of Native American Consultation for this area? Before the Scoping Meeting, during the daytime will be out talking to locals. Jody Miller and Barney Whiteman are BLM contacts for Tribes that have some experience. BLM wants better relationships with the Tribes than what we had in the past. How find ways to open the door?
7. Ron – Would like to discuss time management for the RAC. Do not want to be totally consumed by the RMP like did with the Monument, so there is room for other projects.
 - a. Will have a discussion after lunch about how to do that. Ex: What is happening in the Watershed Plans, the Wind Farm? How individuals can communicate between meetings.

BREAK FOR LUNCH 11:30-12:30**Bowdoin Gas Field Update, Barney Whiteman, Great Falls Field Station
12:30-12:45pm**

A Summary Handout was passed out.

Scoping Process Completed. Thirteen comment letters were received from the public (compared to the 60,000 for the Monument)

- ID Team working on the initial chapters of the EA. All required field surveys completed.
- Tribal consultation in progress, a few tribes have not responded yet.
- Initial draft will be out this fall.
- Copies will be sent to the RAC.

- 400 notice letters sent out to the public.

Questions:

1. Will a map of the Bowdoin EA area be included? There is one in the EA.
2. How has the old field changed? Most of the development is back drilling.
3. Has the number of wells per section increased? Possibly. That will be explored in the Alternatives.
4. Are they shallow wells? All under 2000 feet.
5. Who is running the evaluations? A private consultant from Wyoming.
6. How will this be included in the new RMP process? This will make the RMP process easier to do. The Bowdoin EA will just be rolled into the RMP.

Transportation Planning Process, June Bailey

12:45 – 1:20pm

Previous Travel Planning was piecemeal. Planning was reflective for each site. BLM has not done a very good job including the public. Transportation management is a very sensitive issue.

- June is asking the RAC to put together a subcommittee to have input on the Judith Moccasin Area project. The Lewistown BLM office is in the process of talking with stakeholders, publics and DNRC. Identify other areas for Transportation uses. Drafting an outreach plan. Any thoughts?
 - Ron – complete concurrence with this idea. A “working group” would be useful if one person from each category was part of the subcommittee that can report to the RAC as a whole. Work smart with phone and internet. Consensus is a long process.
 - Bill – what kind of time commitment, and the duration for the Judith Moccasin? Complete within the year. Would need help contacting the public. The BLM needs as much input as you are willing to give.
 - Tony – What is the subgroup mission? The goal of the subcommittee is to give solid input reflecting the public’s opinion about Travel Planning and to take back information to the public about the progress.
 - Mark – What does the Charter say about the composition of the subcommittee? Do they have to be from different interests? Will look into it. Initially June will be contacting them from the BLM. In the mean time, the group could be communicating with the community. When the group gets ideas, convey that to the whole council to share the info.
- *Volunteers:*
 - Terry Selph (close to his area)
 - Ron Moody
 - Glenn Terry – will help until his term is up, then Bill can take over.
 - Bill Cunningham – very interested, but he is far away. Will help as he can.
 - Tony – Do we need to make a motion to appoint the Subcommittee? How will this function end up? Is it on paper, officially? It is not practicing politics. It is just information gathering. Always put a notice in the paper, so one party is not left out. The working group would operate the same way as the RAC, so things are documented and in order.

- Glenn – can contact the ranchers, OHV users now so there is not a shouting match at the end. They have valuable input to add.
- **Francis – Moves that we make a Subcommittee for the Judith Moccasin Transportation Plan, including Terry, Ron, and Glenn on the committee. Lisa seconds. Vote: All in favor.**

QUESTIONS FOR JUNE:

- How is the Monument RMP going?
 - Completed reviewing over 7000 comments from 67,000 letters.
 - Major issues: access, transportation, roads, airstrips, float planes, and roadless issues.
 - ID Team will review the work of the specialists.
 - Hopefully will have a final decision by September 2007.
 - Ron and Glenn have been attending the meetings as RAC representatives.
- Jeff – How is BLM doing with Crystal Cave in the Judith Mountains? Have some volunteers, inventory almost completed. Will do a management plan. We do not know yet if it will be open to the public. The cave could have potential draw from Lewistown. Access is through Private Property. Been kept very quiet. Gated access because of liability issues.
- Ron – Watershed plan? Lewistown has one going at present. How are you listed as an interested party? Come in and sit down to learn more about it. BLM can also come to a RAC meeting and present information about the process.
 - Francis reviewed what the process when the BLM redid the Watershed Plan. Complete inventories for riparian, grazing, wildlife, etc. and then based management decisions after that.

Wind Farm Discussion:

Francis: Amazed by how big and open the prairie was. Nice scenery. He enjoyed the day. On the other hand, most of the initial phase of the wind farm is slated for Private Property. BLM would be included on the Power Line issue. Public Land is for Public Use. Wildlife – saw pastures were well kept, not degrading, stewardship is improving the area. The Power Line would have few impacts, and the animals would get used to it eventually. With good stewardship, he thinks it will be even better over time. He is concerned about whether the proponent is serious about making the wind farm, or is he starting something that he will not finish. Wind Power is new. Does he have the resources? Francis does not have any objections. It would be nice if it were closer to the power grid...

Jeff: Where are the wind resources exactly? He saw the maps of the resources. Will talk more later.

Glenn: Heard about the Wind Farm for some time, but was so involved with the monument, it got set aside for a later time. It is now, and almost too late. Need to be more efficient and spread out to look at more projects. We want to be at the beginning but ended up at the end.

Pat: In the RMP planning process, do you envision planning future areas for wind development? Acknowledge mule deer winter range, where is closer to power grid?

- YES! There will be a section in the RMP on Alternative Energy.
- Mark showed a map about where the data shows the high quality wind is.

Bill: One example of the quality of the Assessment: Quote: “Because the proposed wind farm would be entirely outside the WSA, it will have no effect on the naturalness.” Having been there, and seeing it, that is not at all accurate and warrants more discussion and time. The Wind Farm will persuadably be in place forever. Everyone will be that much better off for the expanded debate.

- “Naturalness” definition comes from the Wilderness Act states what is directly in the WSA boundary.
- However, the 360-degree view affects the whole experience. Sights and sounds from surrounding area affects the quality of the wilderness, but things outside the boundary cause sights and sounds that affect it. Point: there are different ways of looking at naturalness.
- Jeff: Hearing the area misrepresented. He could see the water towers and facilities at St. Marie from the Collector Site. There is no free lunch. All the Wind Farm is clean air in and clean air out. Where do you compromise? Is the disrupted view of the WSA so critical that it is more worth putting a coal plant in Great Falls and reduce visibility from 60 miles to 10 miles? Jeff would not be in favor of any steps that delay this process for the reasons stated at this time.
- Bill: He does not want to indicate that he is against wind farms. It is very important and exciting to have renewable energy. It is a question of site. Is the quality and extent of intact prairie, quality of wildlife, worth the sacrifices?
- Lisa: agrees with Jeff. The wind is there. That is why the site is limited. Initially it is private, then there will be revenue coming into the BLM, as a taxpayer she appreciates it. As far as development goes, there will be public comment.
- Tony: public comment so far has been limited. Are people not aware or do not care to come and talk? If people were so for it, they would be here at the meeting to endorse it. Point – they have come to the RAC in the past to endorse ideas. Questioning why there is that absence this time.

Ron: Sitting here wanting to see a wind farm constructed. When one finally happens, it ends up being the one place that is ideal to preserve from any development.

- Earlier made the motion to extend the comment period another 30 days. Fact is we are getting interested in the bottom of the ninth. All we can hope to do now is to go and get some more comment from the interested public. Another 30 days is not enough to hurt the proponent or the development. **Motion stands. Bill seconded it.**

Discussion:

- Francis: If we vote for an extension, will anything come of it? The BLM would look at the reasons, are they substantive, talk with the Assistant Secretary.
- Ron: Basic Reason for Motion – **The process has been overshadowed by other RMP processes in the area, so the Wind Farm did not get adequate attention from the public. Bill seconded that amendment to the motion.** Bill asking if the RAC would consider a 60-day extension based solely on the time of year. We do not want to sink the whole project by making the comment period too long. The extension would not bother Ron, what about the rest of the RAC?
 - Mark: if the intent of the extension is to build opposition, then it goes back to a Yes or No decision. Feel we owe the proponent an answer.

- Bill: Was there adequate Public Review to acknowledge that the last best native short grass prairie would be irrevocable damaged?
- Jeff: Though the members of the RAC were busy and late to respond, that does not mean the public was unaware or too busy to respond.

Francis: Calls for a question.

RAC: majority does not agree to the motion.

- Pat: FWP are drafting comments at present. Putting the power line along the highway is better than running it south through the fairly undeveloped prairie to the highway. If the costs are too prohibitive, then should they be doing the project anyways? If we could back Phase I away from the rim of the WSA, that would be a great alternative.
 - Mark: BLM is a multiple use agency. Will this one use limit all the other uses in the area?
 - Bill: Important to use existing corridors, places already impacted, if the wind energy is there.
- How do you submit comments? Deliver to John Fahlgren, Glasgow Field Station. The website only has existing comments posted, cannot enter them that way.

Closed Wind Farm discussion.

OTHER TOPICS?

- Francis: Barthelmess received a Stewardship award.

Next Meeting:

- Orientation meeting for six new members in Middle November. Nov. 6-10th better days.
- November 8 and 9 in Lewistown.
 - 8th: 10am to 6pm Orientations
 - 9th: 8am to 3pm Presentations
- Ideas for Agenda Topics:
 - Invite in the Undaunted Stewardship Program to review what they do.
 - RS-2477 county roads
 - Proposed Grazing Reg's
 - Recreation Resource Advisory Committee – committee reviews recreation fees in general
 - Preliminary content analysis for the Monument RMP
 - Judith Moccasin Council update
 - Bowdoin EA out?
 - Malta RMP initial scoping comments
- Any other ideas send an email.
- Jeff and Glenn's last RAC meeting. Gifts were extended. June wants to say how much she appreciates working with Jeff and Glenn. Thank you for all you have contributed to the RAC.
- Travel Vouchers.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:30pm

The meeting was attended by:

RAC Members:

Glenn Terry
Ron Moody
Pat Gunderson
Barb Cole
Charlie Floyd
Robert Schoonover
Francis Jacobs
Terry Selph
Jeff Sheldon
Bill Cunningham
Lisa Cowan
Tony Bynum

Others Attending:

Mark Albers, MaFO
Claire Trent, MaFO
Meagan Gates, GFS
Will Patric, Wilderness Society
June Baily, BLM
Scott Laird, American Prairie Foundation
Patty Cavill, American Prairie Foundation
Deb Madirn, Fort Peck Tribes
Linda Conner, Fort Peck Tribes
Barney Whiteman, GFFS
John Carlson, GFS