

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
Havre, Montana  
March 22-23, 2005

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. in the Great Northern Inn. RAC members in attendance were Bob Doerk, Chairperson, Terry Selph, Bill Cunningham, Charlie Floyd, Dale Slade, Tony Bynum, Jeff Shelden, Lisa Cowan, Ron Moody, Randy Gray, Francis Jacobs and Mary Fay. Absent were Glenn Terry and Art Kleinjan.

Attending for the BLM were Marty Ott, June Bailey, Stanley Jaynes, Mark Albers, Don Judice, Wade Brown, Jerry Majerus, Kaylene Patten and Kay Haight.

**Public Comment Period**

No public comments were made.

**Monument RMP**

Bob Doerk stated that the reason for no discussion block on the agenda for the RMP was that the issues have all been covered, and the RAC wished to delay further discussions until the draft comes out. At that time the RAC could see how much of their discussions/consensus was incorporated in the draft and possibly make further recommendations to the BLM.

Mary requested a timeframe for the draft RMP. Jerry Majerus responded that the planning team is finishing the internal preliminary draft, which will be reviewed for 2.5 months within the BLM. The draft is scheduled to be available to the public in July for a 90-day public comment period. The RAC will see the draft at the same time as the public.

Bill Cunningham asked if the RAC could be involved in the internal review. Jerry stated that they are through the RAC representative on the team, Glenn Terry. The other current RAC member identified to participate on the team is Jeff Shelden. Jim Satterfield was attending on behalf of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Randy Gray asked if it is possible to allow RAC members to have input before it comes out in draft form. Jerry responded that the internal review is with the Montana State Office, Lewistown Field Office, Great Falls Field Station, Malta Field Office, Havre Field Station and Washington Office. They would all like to have the internal review before the draft goes out to the public.

Bob Doerk stated that through the open process and the detailed meeting minutes, the RAC has contributed much to the discussion. The draft is subject to revision and change, depending on the public comments received. He asked if the RAC waits to comment after the draft is issued, do recommendations made by consensus carry a degree of weight?

Jerry replied that the BLM will take all comments, including RAC recommendations, although they are not weighted in importance. The RAC, for the past year, has looked at the four major categories and the team has looked at all the RAC recommendations. Most, but not all, of the RAC recommendations which reached consensus are included in the preferred alternative.

Ron Moody stated that while the NEPA process does not need another level of review, the RAC feels a strong sense of ownership with this document. If a RAC recommendation is not a preferred alternative, it should be in one of the alternatives. The RAC should see where their consensus recommendations are in the document. Who wants to play a part in reviewing the draft? How will we allocate our time?

The RAC agreed to discuss the issue later in the day during Jerry's presentation on the Monument RMP oil and gas leases.

## **Welcome/Synopsis**

Kaylene welcomed everyone, introduced the BLM personnel in attendance, and reviewed the meeting agenda. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved and signed with a correction from Terry Selph concerning a statement he made during the last meeting. There are 48 navigable waterways in Montana, 6 of which allow motors. Kaylene will note the correction in the minutes.

The procedure for listing items on the agenda was reviewed. Requests for additions to the agenda should be sent to the chairperson or Kaylene.

Jim Satterfield has official resigned from the Central Montana RAC (Category 3). He has accepted a job transfer to Kalispell.

Mary Fay asked if someone should replace Jim as a representative on the Monument RMP team. Jeff Shelden stated that while he cannot attend the team meetings, he does print the minutes, reads them and takes them to Mary Jones. Jeff offered to relinquish his spot on Category 2 for someone who can attend.

**A motion was made by Bill Cunningham and seconded by Charlie that Ron Moody be substituted for Jeff Shelden as a Category 2 representative on the Monument ID Team. Further discussion was delayed until later in the day.**

## **Election of Officers**

Typically, the vice chairperson takes over as the chairperson, but both Art Kleinjan and Bob Doerk will be termed out after this year, along with Dale Slade.

**A motion was made by Francis Jacobs and seconded by Dale Slade to nominate Charlie Floyd as chairperson. Consensus was reached.**

**A motion was made by Ron Moody and seconded by Randy Gray to nominate Lisa Cowan as vice chairperson. Consensus was reached.**

## **Special Recreation Permits**

Wade Brown reviewed the river Special Recreation Permit (SRP) statistics for 2004. Of 5,993 total boaters on the river, 1,869 used an outfitter. There were 8 inquiries for one-time use permits. Of the 23 permits that are allowed under the moratorium, 19 were issued. Three others will be available to be filled after criteria are developed. The outfitters can do as much business as they are able to with no allocation of time slots.

Ron Moody asked if the BLM regulates SRP outfitters who use motorboats on the river to convey hunting clients, either guiding or taking clients down the river. Wade responded that none of the river outfitters are hunting guides and that they would have to be licensed by the State of Montana for that purpose, which they are not.

Bill Cunningham stated that it is a possibility there are rogue outfitters on the river, if BLM has no record of any hunting guiding going on. Wade noted that by hunting season, staffing levels are reduced which makes it difficult to collect data on the river.

Mark Albers stated that on the north side of the river, the Malta Field Office is following hunting activities and knows where the hunting camps are located.

Jerry Majerus presented information on the 14 upland outfitter SRPs, including the number of hunters, hunter days, percent of total hunting days occurring within the Monument, and county of operation. For 2003, a total of 177 hunters in the Monument used outfitters. Currently, 3 of the 14 outfitters do not use Monument lands for hunting and have no plans to do so in the future. The outfitters must file an operating plan with the BLM and must show proof that they are a MOGA-licensed outfitter. Jerry will check on how many use the river for transportation of their clients.

Ron Moody asked if there are any stipulations for uplands outfitters that they cannot operate their business in such a way that it excludes the public from public land. Response: They cannot interfere with other uses of public land. They can have a reserved site on public land, through payment of a site fee, which enables them to stay more than 14 days.

Ron then asked about the issue of outfitters who have leases on land adjacent to public land and control access. Does the RMP have an alternative which states that an outfitter cannot have an SRP if they currently exclude the public across private land? Jerry responded that this is a complex issue. What was presented in scoping was to require the outfitters to provide access to an area before an SRP is issued. The BLM cannot force someone to provide access across private land before a permit is issued. It can, however, pursue legal public access through leases or agreements. Another possibility is to move roads. Areas of limited public access have been identified, primarily in the east side of the Monument. One alternative is that SRPs would be issued only in those areas with limited public access. Another alternative is that SRPs would be issued only where there is public access.

Jerry displayed a map showing the permitted areas for uplands outfitters. Even though an outfitter is permitted for a specific area, he does not always use an entire area.

Bill Cunningham asked how many of the outfitters operating in the Monument have a base operation on either adjacent or inholding private land and control private land which may, in turn, control public access. This information is not known.

Jerry then stated that the team is looking at maintaining the current level of 14 uplands outfitters. In September, the team was looking at issuing the 14 permits for the entire monument, but the RAC came to consensus and the team recommended to maintain the existing permit areas. The preferred alternative was changed to reflect this. The use level is not the issue, rather the public access associated with the use.

Ron Moody stated that the BLM should have the SRPs and the attached outfitter plans available for inspection and that the numbers need to be fixed because they are entirely different from anything used to evaluate outfitter operations. The term that should be used is net client hunter use. That is the quotient of hunter days per assigned geographic area.

Tony Bynum noted that it is important to understand the relationship between the people and the land, and asked if the BLM has a plan for data collection in the Monument.

Jerry responded that the BLM has not studied the level of use on the uplands that it has on the river. What they look at to decide what inventories should be collected is where major issues are located. The only issue around SRPs is public access, not overuse or conflicts between outfitters and the recreating public. He also noted that the team has discussed an adaptive management approach to set the stage in the RMP for adjusting the allowed numbers over time, following collection of data. Inventory data is based on major issues and the decisions to be made.

Ron Moody noted that a key issue is equitable access, but another issue is local economics, and a 1989 Fish, Wildlife and Parks report on an acquisition near Miles City cited the economic value in public access.

## **Monument RMP – Oil and Gas Leasing**

### Scoping Report

Jerry Majerus gave an update on the oil and gas lease issue and distributed a copy of the Scoping Report to the RAC. Attendance at the public meetings in November 2004 was lower than at the initial scoping and alternative development stages of the RMP. A total of around 5,700 letters, emails and comment forms were received, of which 5,571 were a variation of 2 form letters/emails. Around 450 specific comments were identified and included in the Report, which is available on the BLM web site.

## Range of Alternatives

The alternatives for oil and gas stipulations on the 12 West HiLine leases were distributed to RAC members. The terminology used in the alternatives is very consistent with that used in oil and gas regulations. Jerry reminded everyone that the recommendations the team makes are only recommendations, which will go through a review process, a public process, and public comment. No final decision has been made on the range of alternatives or a preferred alternative.

Alternative A is current management, with the stipulations that are currently attached to the oil and gas leases. Under the preferred alternative, all stipulations would not be attached to every lease. As an example, Greater sage-grouse leks are located in three areas. One stipulation is a timing restriction within 2 miles of a lek. It would not apply to the other West HiLine leases where no leks are located.

Ron Moody asked what the BLM would do if a local sage-grouse working group produced different data. Jerry responded that the BLM would look at the new data. Conditions of approval will be placed on applications for permits to drill. New information would be treated through a condition of approval. The BLM biologists work with MFWP biologists. If the information changes, the polygons will be changed. That has happened with bighorn sheep winter range, antelope winter range, sage-grouse habitat, etc.

Jerry noted that the RAC's time and input in the alternatives has been very much appreciated by the RMP team. They may have to see what the implications are to the RMP and the schedule by having the RAC review the draft before it is released to the public. The BLM is committed to maintaining the schedule to issue the draft this summer, but still wants to maintain a commitment to the RAC to be involved in the process.

The team's target date for completion is June 1. The process of layout and printing can then take up to six weeks. The draft is scheduled for release in mid-July. It will go out for a 90-day public comment period. Public meetings will be held midway through that time period.

Randy Gray offered to co-team with Tony Bynum as RAC representatives on the RMP team and said that there is a "flavor" the RAC supports that could be used in the management plan. Also, the terms like "objects of the monument" and "wildness" may not be in the plan, and should be.

**A motion was made by Bill Cunningham, and seconded by Francis Jacobs, that a category 3 team approach be appointed. Consensus was reached.**

Glenn Terry will represent Category 1, Ron Moody – Category 2, and Randy Gray – Category 3.

Jerry then reviewed the RMP team's schedule for April and May.

Tony Bynum asked if the tribes were part of the RMP team. Jerry responded that when the process started the BLM asked the tribes to be involved. There was initial interest from Carl Fourstar of the Fort Peck tribes. A representative attended only 1 or 2 initial meetings. The BLM subsequently met with the Salish-Kootenai, Blackfeet, Rocky Boy's and Fort Belknap tribes, including the White Clay Society and Buffalo Chasers Society. There was interest from the White Clay Society of Fort Belknap and the Blackfeet to be on the team. The BLM opened the door for cooperating agency status to bring them formally onto the team, but it never came about. The BLM will be sending a letter to the tribes letting them know where we are in the process and will try to meet with them again. This process of setting up meetings will begin in June.

Bill Cunningham asked if the RAC could have a tabulation in one place of everything the RAC has agreed upon in the alternatives, as well as those items the RAC has not agreed upon. He also requested feedback from the BLM on the status of RAC recommendations.

Bob Doerk noted that after the draft is issued, each RAC member has an obligation to thoroughly review the document and then come back to the table. The RAC could ask the following questions: If something that reached consensus is not in the document, why? If the preferred alternative is not a consensus item, is it proper to say to the BLM that we reached consensus, why is it not reflected?

Jerry responded that when the draft is released they will go over all recommendations with the RAC. In response, Bill Cunningham asked if they could get that information earlier, during the review process, or at least the 4 RAC representatives involved in the internal review process so they have something to judge by. Randy Gray asked that the summary include consensus points and if not agreed to by the RMP team, an explanation why. Another list would include non-consensus points and an explanation.

### **West HiLine RMP Update**

Due to lack of budget, the only 3 items being worked on this fiscal year for the West HiLine RMP are the Preparation Plan, Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, and Reasonable Foreseeable Development. Mark Albers will be the responsible Field Manager for the West HiLine RMP. The planning area is generally from Blaine County over to Glacier County (except Teton County).

### **Field Managers Updates**

#### Great Falls Field Station – Don Justice

- Oil and gas will play a large part in the West HiLine RMP and includes 400,000 acres of BLM surface land and 1.2 million acres of Federal minerals. The RAC will be involved in that RMP process.
- Oil and gas activity is continuing to be on the incline due to the economics of supply and demand. They are looking at writing a document to analyze the Bowdoin area because the current document is dated.
- At Flesher pass, north of Helena, a well is being drilled that is very interesting because it is targeting the overthrust belt. The 14,000-foot well is being directionally drilled on private land for up to one mile in order to target private minerals. The map shows adjacent Federal surface lands and minerals, and Suncor would like to drill up to five additional wells from the well pad to target the Federal minerals. Discussions will take place with the company on what that would involve and if NEPA analysis would be at the EA or the EIS level.
  - This is a sour gas target, which means the presence of hydrogen sulfide gas. After April 20, the public will be prohibited from entering the area for safety reasons. But there would definitely be an opportunity later this summer for a RAC field trip.
  - Suncor understands fully the NEPA process and the resource concerns. They would like the BLM to tour their Canadian site to view a similar operation.

#### Malta Field Office – Mark Albers

- An organizational change has taken place. The Havre Field Station is now aligned with the Malta Field Office, along with the Glasgow Field Station. This better balances the HiLine area with the Lewistown Field Office area. No personnel are moving. The vacant law enforcement ranger position that was in Havre will be located in Fort Benton. Three people from the Havre office will be working exclusively for the Monument, mostly on the north side of the river.
- The Valley County wind project was set to go out for scoping yesterday, but an agreement must be completed before BLM begins the scoping process. Impacts to wildlife will be considered. Mark asked the RAC to bring their opinions forward on this project.
- American Prairie Foundation and their bison proposal. The EA is not complete because of a fence design issue. The initial design could have wildlife impacts. At present the outside boundary fences will be as originally designed to keep the bison in. Some of the interior fences will be removed and will be strictly electric between pastures. This proposal involves about 12,000 acres. Of that, 4,000 acres is private and the balance is public. They will have to follow the same range standards that are required from cattle

producers. The American Prairie Foundation is a Montana organization affiliated with the World Wildlife Fund.

- The Little Rockies wildland/urban interface project is a stewardship project to reduce fuels around the communities of Zortman and Landusky. The BLM is trying to make this more commercial so that contractors can bid to do thinning/slashing, and offset that against the value of the timber. About 1,500 acres have been treated between the two towns.
- Blackfooted ferret surveys are taking place this week. Four females and 3 males were found so far.

#### Havre Field Station – Stanley Jaynes

- Anita Reservoir will be rebuilt this year. It holds about 300 acre-feet in north Blaine County on Battle Creek.
- Permit renewals are being completed on about 78 allotments in the Bearpaw to Breaks watershed plan. Other permit renewals are also being completed.
- The comment period on the Macum Pipeline EA ended last month. A total of sixteen comments were received, and the final EA should be released this spring. The appeal process differs with the type of action. In general, when an EA is issued, there is a 30-day appeal period during which the agency takes no action.

#### Lewistown Field Office – June Bailey

- They are advertising for a law enforcement ranger for the Monument, to be stationed in Fort Benton. The new Assistant Field Manager for Resources is Willy Frank. The new Fire Management Officer is Gary Kerpach.
- The open house for the Lewistown Field Office was held on March 18. From 130 to 150 people toured the new building.
- The BLM is seeking nominations for the five seats on the RAC which will be filled this fall. A nomination packet was distributed to RAC members.
- A site tour for the interpretive center by prospective contractors has taken place. If all goes well, groundbreaking will occur in late May or early June.

#### **Interpretive Displays at Fort Benton**

Connie Jacobs, Interpretive Center Director, gave an update on the Interpretive Center displays. Since the Wild and Scenic River designation about 20 years ago, an interpretive center has been in some stage of planning.

This will not be a Lewis and Clark center. It will interpret the natural and cultural history of the Monument and will also serve as the contact station in Fort Benton. It will consist of about 40% cultural history, 40% natural history, and 20% visitor contact. By the winter of 2006, staff from the visitor contact station will be moved from their present location to the Interpretive Center. Total staff will be two permanent positions, a career seasonal position, the law enforcement ranger, and the Interpretive Center director.

Fort Benton has provided contributions of money and land. Of about \$7 million in Federal funding for both the Pompeys Pillar Interpretive Center and the Fort Benton Interpretive Center, the Fort Benton site received \$2.9 million.

The interpretive design team, Main Street Design, will be in Fort Benton in early April to view the site and go over the design. They will then make changes based on the meeting and submit a final design for review. The content of the exhibits is in the concept stage. The grand opening is scheduled for June 25, 2006.

Bob Doerk discussed other museum displays in Fort Benton, none of which will duplicate or compete with the Interpretive Center displays.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on March 23. All RAC members were in attendance. Attending for the BLM were June Bailey, Gary Slagel, Kaylene Patten and Kay Haight.

### **Public Comment Period**

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

### **Equitable Access to Public Resources**

RAC members made the following comments on equitable access to public resources.

Ron Moody: When the public trustee negotiates an arrangement to trade off equitable access, offers special privileges in other areas of the Monument in order to get a deal in this area, that makes the BLM dependent on the landowner. One guiding principle is keep public policy apart from private policy across the fence.

The second thing is that all private access is by its very nature temporary. Any access opportunity you have across private land is temporary. The public trustee should be focusing on permanent access solutions rather than temporary solutions.

On certain areas being overutilized by hunters, it's not the fault of the outfitters. They will come in and hunt before the public gets in there, but as soon as the public shows up they're gone. What they sell to their clients is exclusivity of game. Their ability to create exclusivity by limiting access is their asset. It is the BLM's job to make policy that treats all people the same rather than creating a policy which by default creates areas that allow only exclusive private access.

BLM policy can create a situation in which the adjacent private landowner in fact controls the value of the publicly owned resource (both economic and recreation value).

Dale Slade: Agrees with Ron and would rather see the BLM spend their time and effort finding access for everyone, even if they have to get Congress to change the laws. There must be some way to get public access to public land.

Jeff Shelden: It is ironic we can have boundaries around SRPs but can't have a boundary around the Monument. Why not just designate the tracts of public land that are available in each SRP?

Tony Bynum: The philosophy is right, but wonders how making a decision to exclude the outfitter from an area that is not open to the public meets the objective. The public still can't get to the land. You're not addressing that issue at all. You're addressing exclusivity. It is still accessible through a payment or fee versus the public can't get there, so neither can you.

Charlie Floyd: Public access to public land is an emotional issue, but no one has commented that the real objective is protection of the resource. We don't want to overcrowd and ruin a resource by guaranteeing public access. The access needs to come behind protecting the resource.

Randy Gray: Multiple use has never been construed to mean access by all means to every acre. Maybe the agency should look at going back to Congress and requesting more money to allow other access to occur. There's almost 400,00 acres out there. Understands geographic constraints, but there are access means by something other than vehicle to a lot of this acreage. Look at quiet trail access opportunities by trail, horse, foot, pushing carts. Look at water development opportunities to allow people to go back by foot or horse and have water access. They should be discussing these types of access.

Ron Moody: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has to be part of that management equation. It's their job to make sure that resource is not abused. BLM has to be working with them to make sure resource degradation does not occur.

You are a hunter on public land. Across the watershed there is another piece of land you can't get to. Or you do get there and an outfitter zooms by in a pickup truck after you've walked 4 miles. That results in a feeling of inequitable access.

Mary Fay: When I think of protecting the resource of the Monument, I'm not seeing it only from the hunter's view. I think Charlie was talking about the entire resource from what people feel and experience when they hike, drive, fish and float out there. They're not just looking at the wildlife. The landscape as a whole is a resource. Do not just think of it as the animals that can be harvested from that area.

Ron Moody: Each of us speaks from our perspective, but I really mean the whole thing. Tony commented on areas restricted in access because of blocking by an adjacent private landowner and what harm that does. What happens is when the public policy allows that to happen, it creates an economic incentive for that to happen more and more. It tells all private landowners they can gain effective control of adjacent public resources by doing the same thing.

Ninety-two percent of the block management program is funded by out-of-state hunters. The purpose was to create an alternative to fee hunting. The problem is in order to get more non-resident hunters in the state, the outfitters lease more land. This program aids and abets exclusivity.

Francis Jacobs: The more you advertise places like the Monument or CMR, the more people will go there. Game on my place is not being harvested because people are going on to the public areas like the CMR.

Lisa Cowan: Agrees that public policy should be kept separate from private policy, but you should be aware of private policies around you, or public policy will be completely ineffective.

Bill Cunningham: Equitable access doesn't mean that all public land in the Monument has to be equally accessible. One of the key attributes of the Monument is significant parts are wild and primitive. Those values exist because of the lack of access. It's the upland areas of private/public land where access is difficult. All of the Monument is accessible from the river. Somehow we have to strike a balance between too much accessibility and no accessibility and preserve the wild integrity of significant parts of the Monument without overusing the resource. We have to be careful of misuse, overuse. If we make it too easy to get everywhere, we've lost the essence of what the Monument is all about. To distinguish between the two we need to encourage a policy that recognizes the equity question, but not all areas of the Monument need to be equally accessible.

Art Kleinjan: A court case should be decided within six months to a year on access in the Monument. Also, A bill passed the Montana Senate yesterday that is a bad bill. It forbids the county commissions from abandoning any road that leads to a public water. It is taking local control away from the counties.

### **Lewis and Clark Signature Event**

Bob Doerk presented an update on the Lewis and Clark Signature Event. The National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council created a series of 15 Signature Events. The kickoff in April 2003 was in Monticello. Only two Events will take place in 2005: From June 1-July 4 in Cascade and Chouteau Counties; and in November at the mouth of the Columbia River heralding Lewis' and Clark's arrival at the Pacific Ocean.

Chouteau and Cascade Counties have 40 significant Lewis and Clark sites. Around 200-250 volunteers have been working for years on this. Over 150 events are scheduled for the 34-day period. Chouteau County printed their own fulfillment piece (brochure), which Bob distributed to the RAC. One item on the schedule, The Dessert Lecture Tour in the Loma Memorial Hall, has been changed from June 3 to June 1.

The first category of events is tours.

- 89 tours are scheduled during the 34-day period. 63 are by 15-passenger van or 47-passenger buses. The other 26 are walking tours.
- 15 Chouteau County tours will occur every other day. The 4-hour tours will go to a number of sites on private land. Prices and amenities vary.

A second category of events is the encampments.

- The Lewis and Clark Honor Guard is a focal point of the encampments.
- The camp at the Mouth of the Marias will be a first-person site.
- Another first-person camp will be at White Bear Island in late June or early July.
- Third-person camps will be talking to people on a modern basis, even though they will be dressed in period costumes.
- June 10-12 is the big weekend in Fort Benton. On June 13, the focus shifts to Cascade County.

A third category of events is seminars.

- The key seminars will be in late June-early July in Great Falls. There will be significant Indian involvement, including discussion of current Indian issues. This will be an opportunity to see both the Lewis and Clark story and the Indian story.
- The seminars, encampments and tours to sites will be the heart and soul of the events. Keynote speakers are planned.

Many events are free, including the National Park Service Corps II exhibit. They have a 40-foot van with an interpretive display inside along with a tent where they will hold free programming from 12-8 every day. A schedule will be published.

A \$10 day pass is not date specific. That gets one into the Lewis and Clark encampment at the mouth of the Marias, the Plains Indian encampment in Fort Benton, and passage on any shuttle. Special ticketed events include the Great Falls Symphony Association performance, a ballet, narrated tours. The tickets can be purchased online or from outlets in both Chouteau and Cascade Counties. The main headquarters will be the fairgrounds in Cascade County. Information on the events and tickets is available on the internet at [www.explorethebigsky.org](http://www.explorethebigsky.org). Or call (406) 455-8514.

No events are scheduled along the river except a buffalo feed at Judith Landing on May 28.

Art Kleinjan stated the county sheriffs are unsure about whether any activities will be taking place in the uplands and whether their services will be needed. Bob will pass that on to the events committee.

Gary Slagel advised the RAC that the BLM will have a presenters tent at the Fort Benton Fairgrounds. One presenter will cover the medicine that Lewis and Clark carried with him. Another presenter is a surveyor. At the visitor contact station, a tent will have 7-8 exhibits geared toward children and BLM will also have a Leave No Trace exhibit with demonstrations on what gear to take along the river. They also hope to have an interpreter at Decision Point.

### **Blackleaf Leases Buyout/Tradeout**

Don Justice could not attend today's meeting due to the weather, but called to say it is not essential the RAC reach a conclusion today on this agenda item. The RAC discussion on the Blackleaf leases included the following comments:

- The West HiLine RMP from 1988 needs to be updated and there is much greater potential to produce gas for the country from the West HiLine planning area than from Blackleaf. The West HiLine resource management area does not include the Blackleaf. It would be completed in 2007-2008. The Rocky Mountain Front is within the Headwaters Area, and an RMP for that area would begin following the West HiLine. This means permitting approval is at least 10 years away for Blackleaf.

- The Startech leases have been suspended. When they were told there might be a 10-year delay, they stated they need a return on their investment. The next step is an exchange, lease credit arrangement or buyout. The BLM lacks legal authority to pursue any of those avenues, so things are on hold. If there is a lease buyout/trade/credit to fairly compensate Startech, the Blindhorse area is still available for leasing. A buyout would not be the same as a mineral withdrawal. This would not mean the permanent withdrawal or permanent exclusion of mineral development in the future.
- Why would the RAC make a decision to advise the BLM, when the BLM has nothing to do with the decision that would be made here?
- Suggest we send a letter to Senators Burns and Baucus and Representative Rehberg supporting a buyout/tradeout or other retirement of the Blackleaf lease rights. There is opportunity to bring together private sector folks to bring about a buyout or tradeout of Startech's leases. Those groups need to bring the money forward to leverage a buyout.
- If the BLM has other leases, we're back in the same kind of situation.
- It opens the door for all possibilities. When the Headwaters RMP is initiated, it will be a landscape view of the entire Rocky Mountain Front. We would be clearing the deck of a major bit of confusion and uncertainty. It would not pre-empt the possibility of full field development, but neutralizes everything so all options can be looked at on a landscape level. Meanwhile, the applicant is fairly compensated. All we can support is the concept of an equitable solution for the applicant and opening up all options for the public land.
- The BLM lacks legal authority to proceed and needs congressional authority to accomplish a solution. We would make a recommendation to our congressional delegation so the applicant and BLM can begin working on it.
- This is a narrowly crafted suggestion because the RAC would not reach consensus on a full withdrawal of mineral rights on the Front.
- Startech should be fairly compensated.
- In the event that Startech is satisfied with some type of buyout option, what is the process for releasing the same lease sight to someone else as soon as the lease is distinguished?
- Any new leasing would have to wait for completion of the Headwaters RMP. Any new applications would then go through site-specific analysis.
- If that's true, conceivably nothing could happen for 10 years anyhow. The process is stymied for at least a decade even if there is no buyout.
- *Gary Slagel noted that the point of the RMP would be to address impacts to the resources from future leasing. The impacts could be such that areas could be withdrawn from future leasing.*
- Why would we compensate them? Are we trying to keep them from suing the BLM?
- They are not suing because the clock has stopped on the leases. They don't have to pay the lease fee. It's a question of being fair and equitable. It is a principle we need to adhere to. From the public's perspective, there is a cloud of uncertainty there. It is to no one's advantage to let it sit in limbo for 10-20 years.
- If there can be some private funding the taxpayer won't have to pay it. They may never reach agreement on what's fair.

**A motion was made by Randy Gray and seconded by Ron Moody to send a letter to Senator Burns, Senator Baucus, Representative Rehberg and Governor Schweitzer supporting a buyout/tradout or other retirement of the Startech lease rights in the Blackleaf.**

- Will this create a precedence?
- Eighteen months ago a letter when to the congressionals stating a unanimous decision to support drilling on the Rocky Mountain Front. Cannot vote for this motion or go sideways.
- It's not an anti-drilling resolution. We are not suggesting the area be permanently withdrawn. We're saying let's be realistic about the current situation.
- It was a great discussion but we should drop this subject and let the process happen.
- There is some potential for this but there are a couple of red flags. The public image of doing this would make the public think the RAC is against drilling. Don't care to go there.
- Look at it from the public view as supporting the ability of a company to understand their certainty better and operate within this chaotic situation. This is giving them something to make a decision about.
- Maybe we could have a preamble to this motion with a statement indicating we realize the recent decisions have put Startech in a limbo status and state as a preamble we have intent to be fair to the company. It softens or indicates we are thinking in terms of fairness.
- What about also stating this does not indicate the RAC as a whole.
- If we sent a precedent, that might backfire down the road. That oil company has enough smart attorneys on staff to realize if they wanted to they could push something exactly like we are talking about. Maybe we need to find out if they are interested in something like this. They may be perfectly happy with the way things are.
- As a member of the environmental community I am personally in favor of not drilling in that area. We are offering to buy that permanent asset and give them an expiring asset. Whatever you exchange in value for that drill lease is going to expire at the end of this process. You pay them now and 10 years down the road the value of what you bought now is zero. They are selling something they would have an opportunity to get back again in 10 years. As a businessman, I can't see this as an anti-drilling motion. It is directed at one lease in one place in one period of time. If we amend the motion to say that it would be a more accurately descriptive motion of the situation.
- Would a preface stating if acceptable by the company take care of the same thing?

**The motion was revised to say a letter will be written to Senators Baucus and Burns, Congressman Rehberg, and Governor Schweitzer to consider supporting a buyout/tradeout due to the recent decisions put forth that have put Startech in limbo, wanting to be fair to the public and the company, realizing this recent decision has put Startech on hold, and that this has to be a willing negotiation and acceptable to the company and BLM for this to happen. This doesn't say that the RAC is taking a stand on drilling on the Rocky Mountain Front, only that they are only looking at equity for the company. It would be a partly funded buyout. In terms of a preamble, it's also important to mention in no way would this resolution preempt the possibility of future leases. This is not to be construed as any kind of support for a mineral withdrawal.**

- This resolution would not compel Startech to do anything. But before anything can happen, the congressional delegation needs to act. In terms of timing, this is the time.

- Isn't it premature to write this letter when we don't know that there's anything going on yet? If Startech comes in later and asks for compensation, this letter could no longer be effective because it's been set aside.
- It's been reported in the paper that the chairman of Thunder Energy (Startech) has said they are willing to look at anything reasonable. In terms of formal negotiations, that has not occurred.
- Could support it better if the word "buyout" is taken out. The public should not spend money to buy them out.
- The term is "exchange for value."
- Before any such letter is signed, it would go to all RAC letters for review. This motion is subject to final consensus with the letter. The draft letter will include a note, "If I don't hear from you by \_\_\_\_, assume you don't have any concerns with it."

**Call for the question: Consensus was reached.**

### **Montana Challenge**

The planned speaker could not attend the meeting due to the weather, but Ron Moody distributed information to the RAC, including studies on the economic impact of resource management in central Montana. He made the following points:

- Montana Challenge is a public/private partnership with an objective of reformulating the discussion of the public value of our economic resources.
- A successful outcome for conserving a natural resource is achieved when everyone who has a true and economic stake in the resource has come away from the table with something they can live with.

### **Community Collaborative Planning Project for the Rocky Mountain Front**

Ron Moody stated that subsequent to placing this item on the agenda, he found out there is already a substantial community effort going on in that regard and does not want to diminish or impede what is going on. Also, the BLM and Forest Service should be observant with this ongoing conversation on the Rocky Mountain Front and have some thoughts on keeping everyone involved.

### **BLM Budget**

June reported the BLM budgets are flat this year. Another decrease is expected next year. In the Montana/Dakotas area BLM is looking at ways to get the priority workload done with the money they have. They will be identifying priority work and what might be cut. That process is just beginning.

She also commented that many have brought up monitoring and patrolling areas, but we do not have money and staff to do that. We need to create partnerships to have help with those functions.

Ron Moody noted that public comments have observed that the BLM could employ neighborhood watch style programs.

Bob Doerk and Ron Moody recommended that an agenda item at the next meeting should be a discussion of public/private partnerships.

### **General Discussion of the RAC:**

## **Law Enforcement**

Randy Gray commented that one of the primary roles of the RAC is to bring to the attention of Congress things that are out of kilter. For example, a lot of the issues on public land have to do with law enforcement. We can let them know where those needs are. There is a lot of volunteer help out there. We need to encourage the agency to be thinking about volunteers.

Randy took this opportunity to comment on the orientation of new members on the RAC and that as part of the orientation they should have a list of those things which have been talked about in the past. Occasionally, another presentation is needed on a subject, such as cottonwoods.

Art Kleinjan offered that there is no reason that the BLM can't contract with the counties for law enforcement. This would avoid duplication of efforts.

Francis Jacobs agreed that the local sheriff's office should be part of the law enforcement.

## **Archaeological and Cultural Resources**

Tony Bynum stated that any discussions should be a wise use of the RAC's time, and deferred this item to another meeting.

## **Planning Systems**

Tony Bynum commented that in looking back at the objectives and scope of the RAC, there is more to the BLM than what the RAC is dealing with. The priority issues all have different planning horizons. The RAC hasn't heard any discussion of the BLM's system for planning. He would like to hear a presentation on the BLM's strategic planning system for this region and stated that the RAC needs to know how the decisions are made.

The RAC agreed this subject will be included as part of orientation for new members in the future, along with a science-based presentation on cottonwoods on the river.

## **Next Meeting Dates/Agendas**

Date/Location: May 4 and 5 in Chinook or Malta  
1:00 – 6:00 on May 4 (public comment period 1:00 – 1:30)  
8:00 – 3:00 on May 5 (public comment period 8:00 – 9:00)

### **Agenda:**

- Prehistorical cultural resources (Tony) – Learn more specifically from BLM about this jurisdiction's responsibility toward those resources. What is happening on the ground? For example, if that is what you are supposed to be doing, show us where you are doing that.
- Tour of sage grouse habitat
- Bowdoin Oil and Gas EA update
- Collaborative Community Partnerships/Public Private Partnerships (Ron)
- Field trip to see directional drilling (To be done at a later meeting)
- Sage Grouse Management Plan update
- Montana Challenge presentation

Date/Location: September 7 and 8 in Lewistown  
10:00 – 6:00 on September 7 (public comment period 10:00-10:30)  
8:00 – 3:00 on the September 8 (public comment period 8:00-9:00)

Agenda: Draft RMP

This meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

**Central Montana Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
March 23, 2005**

**Public Comments**

**Will Patric**

Good morning, folks. It's kind of an awesome responsibility to have to start your meeting here with comments. Fortunately, I just have three very, very brief things to offer here.

One is something I usually try to say, and that is a thank you to the RAC here for what you're doing. It's really a privilege to sit in the back of the room and listen and hear the good questions and the kind of commitment that you all have and that you all bring to this process, the integrity, and again just caring about this resource the way you do, no matter what your perspective is. Again, I just want to say sitting back there and listening, sometimes it's hard not to want to open my mouth and add something, but you guys are just great to do what you do. So thank you.

My second comment is just picking up on something that Jerry Majerus said yesterday. I'm a little concerned about this. I wrote it down when he said it. He said that people are counting on reviewing a draft EIS this summer. My only thought on that is I think what people really are counting on is seeing a really good, strong, visionary resource management plan. I guess my concern is don't cut corners at this point and let's make sure that we get all the opportunities we can to make sure this is the best RMP possible. I don't think people really care when it comes out. I think, again, they want to see something that we can be proud of looking back fifty, a hundred years from now that we really set the right foundation for this resource. We don't have to go very far to see examples of where if we hurried, maybe looking back we'd wish we'd done it a little different. Certainly with Zortman/Landusky or also with the problems we've had on the gas issue right here in the breaks. So again, my sentence is let's not cut corners. Let's make sure we can do the best possible job.

I heard some people talking yesterday about wanting a little bit more time to review some things and to give this RAC another chance to be engaged and I just, as a member of the public, sure hope that happens.

I guess my last thought is having sat in all the RAC meetings, I think, regarding the breaks, I think there's still a few issues that maybe you haven't covered. One would be the question of the boundary for the monument. There were some interesting comments that were raised about that yesterday. But I don't recall this RAC having an opportunity to tell the BLM whether it's on the right track with not having a boundary or whether you want to give some insight into what you think about that. So I hope that might come up because I think it's crucial.

I also don't remember really getting around to a vote on the airstrip issue. I may be wrong on that because you guys have been at this for a couple of years. But that's another kind of thorny issue that I hope that doesn't kind of get passed over by this group that's so dedicated to the issue. I'll leave it at that. Thank you very much.

**Larry Copenhaver**

I appreciate having a chance to be in front of you guys today. Yesterday I thought it was a good time to sit and listen. Through the process it was interesting to hear, just like Will said, you can go through this process for a couple of years and some of these subjects have come and gone and then they return several times. The one that's specific to Montana Wildlife Federation, I guess I should introduce myself, especially for those of you who weren't here before. I'm Larry Copenhaver of Montana Wildlife Federation in Helena. We're the oldest and largest statewide organization of hunters and anglers. In fact, we celebrate our seventieth birthday this year. That's kind of a nice little milestone.

Montana Wildlife Federation has believed in the public trust and public access to public wildlife on public lands. As a strong campaign we've fought privatization and commercialization of our public resources along places across Montana. For instance, in places in southeastern Montana where the local business operator/service provider/outfitter petitioned the county commissions to shut down a county road into public land so that that land could become his personal hunting ground. That particular incident did raise a fight. The fight was won when the

BLM came around with the Department of State Lands and punched another road to reach the same country. So there's solutions to these types of resource problems. We fought there. We fight it everywhere we can, especially on this monument. It's a particularly cherished place for most of us.

I'd like to echo what Mr. Moody said yesterday on the SRPs not being issued if the public doesn't have public access. When you think about it, you can't really blame a person who's in business at times to try and maximize their business, even though we can't condone the actions of that group to keep the public off the public lands or commercializing/privatizing public BLM lands. It's our job to try to fight those sorts of actions. However, it's inexcusable for a public land agency to nurture that. This RAC has the opportunity to recommend to the BLM when the alternatives come out to choose that alternative where the only place that SRPs will be issued is where the public has access.

I guess I'm kind of going around in circles here, and I apologize for that. But Jerry Majerus did tell us yesterday that there is an alternative which would only allow for SRPs where the public has access but it wasn't the preferred alternative. I think maybe you guys, this body here has an opportunity to recommend that become the preferred alternative in the final RMP. We just urge you to beware and cognizant of, there will be threats to this monument from the private sector and be ready for them. We'll keep our eyes open. If we hear anything we can let you know.

There are roads out there, at least one that's in contention right now because this person has made attempts to keep the public off the public lands so that they can commercialize on that public land. I know that's pretty gray. I'm going to leave it at that for this morning until we know where we are. I would appreciate if you would take at this alternative and choose that as your alternative. Thank you.

*Tony Bynum: Help me clarify in my mind, I guess, this issue of Moody's law. Not so much to answer the question as to why it is what it is, but let's just say Moody's law is if you have a solution, there's oftentimes a problem with the solution. It sounds to me like going with the alternative of only issuing SRPs in areas that are open to the public, does that not then put different pressure on a landowner who has access or could allow access to open areas, essentially public land, and then charging some access fee, and in doing that say, look, I have 10,000 acres. You can have a trespass fee to hunt on my place and it just happens to spill over onto this other great place where there isn't anybody hunting. Is there a chance of that happening? And if there is, how much of it?*

I'm sure that that's a possibility. We don't know that that's happened necessarily, Tony. But I think this is something that is out of our control so we only control the things that we can and as far as that goes, it's incumbent on the policymakers to make a policy that discourages that. I think they have a pretty good opportunity to do that.

*Tony Bynum: It seems to me that by supporting the SRP in areas only open, you're by default setting up a situation where certain landowners would be more encouraged to charge trespass fees onto their property because they've got an isolated piece and it may be more in the future than it is now, simply because of doing what you're suggesting might be the best alternative.*

What you're implying is that this would also create a secondary situation. I'm not sure that the BLM would have any control over what a private landowner does and he doesn't at this point either if what he has control of is past the boundary. I can't imagine a situation where they would close down country into public land at that point. I don't know. I don't have a solution for you. I can see where you're coming from, that one might spurn off another reaction. Maybe you guys can discuss it. You have that possibility all over the state. There are places where they do collect a fee that borders on public land, and the access fee is go across the property. The public agencies, even the block management access enhancement program, makes opportunities to help resolve impact problems by, they do allow for access across private land to the public land and will make a block management arrangement in order to do so. So this is not far off of reality. It's well within the way our society is working these days. I don't know if that answers your question, but I can see that scenario with that already. I don't know that that would necessarily be an outcome of proactively managing the public lands, especially the monument, which is so exciting as a special place.

*Bill Cunningham: The overriding principle that we can get a lot of agreement on is this concept of equitable public access to public lands. The question is how do you achieve equity. Recognizing that for*

*every action there is a reaction, this is a really complicated situation. We could, in fact, invoke Moody's law either unknowingly or unintentionally, but my mind is spinning with different scenarios that when we beginning deliberating this on the RAC, when we have the draft RMP and are working on our recommendations, we're going to have to put a lot of thought into all the ramifications from SRP policy or other aspects of public access in terms of alternative routes around private land to get to public land because ultimately we've got to foster policies that encourage the best possible relationship between private landowners, the sporting community, and the public land agency.*

A couple thoughts came to me while you were saying that, Bill. Number one is we've been talking for quite a long time about nurturing that same relationship like you described for block management with Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Even though at this point they might be a little reluctant to go down that road because this is a big chunk of Federal land and that in itself would impose some hurdles to jump over. But I would just return to what Tony was saying as far as someone could charge an access fee. That's something we don't have control over. However, the BLM as a licensing/permitting agency ends the action of outfitters being permitted. That is something the agency itself would have control over and perhaps the best is to departmentalize and work on what you can and then deal with the ramifications later. In the long run we would hope there is a vision there of a better situation than allowing and nurturing the privatization of our public lands by allowing such SRPs throughout the whole monument, therefore encouraging a situation where the public would be blocked from going on any public land simply because somebody else could make better money if they could keep their own private hunting preserve.

*Tony Bynum: Is there a map for that scenario anywhere? Have you put together any maps for that where we could identify those areas where under Alternative A, this is what's open. B, this is what's open.*

I'm just guessing. I guess we should ask Gary. Has such a scenario of maps been mocked up for the RMP?

*Gary Slagel: We've got maps of where our existing outfitters now are permitted.*

Jerry said yesterday that there's an alternative that includes just putting out SRPs where the public has access. Do you have that? Is there a map like that?

*Gary Slagel: Not that I'm aware of right now. That may be something we could put together. I just want to throw out a thought or two. You probably have already thought of this, but it seems like I've got to mention it anyway. There are some thought processes that we've gone through based on what Larry's just said. We are always trying to be aware of illegal outfitters. If we were to issue SRPs only where there is public access, I see two things happening. We will continue to have outfitters using those areas that the public doesn't have access to. We will probably not be able to monitor or enforce it very well because we don't have access either. We're fairly confident that's going to occur.*

*The other concern is that if we issue SRPs only where the public has access, the pressure on those areas would increase dramatically. As you guys are aware, outfitters are out there all week where a lot of folks like myself or you folks may only be out there on weekends. We're all trying to recreate in the same places. Where the outfitters have been out there all week and we go out on the weekend, it makes it tough for the weekend recreationists in those areas.*

*Those are some of the thought processes we've gone through as we've discussed these alternatives. The question is, and I don't know the answer to this, is it better to have everybody recreating in the same area or allow those outfitters to recreate in those areas where they pay the landowner an access fee to keep them separate from everybody else. I don't know the answer to this, but it's something that we have to keep in mind.*

(End of Mr. Copenhagen's comments. This discussion was continued by the RAC. See Minutes, page 8.)

## **Bill Thackeray**

I in the summer teach a class called “Seminar in Lewis and Clark” and this class has been offered in various forms for over 20 years now. As a part of the class we make a trip anywhere from Fort Benton to Coal Banks, Coal Banks to the Judith Basin [sic], or the Judith Basin to the bridge. Sometimes we do them all at once. Sometimes we do them in stages. Over the 20-some years I have, of course, observed a tremendous increase in the number of people and the amount of damage to the area along the river. One observation I would make is that if we’re going to get cottonwood groves along the river we’re going to have to do something about fencing because cows like all cottonwood groves. You’ll see cottonwoods starting along the river in various places and it’ll break your heart. The next season you’ll come by and they will be all cropped off by cows. It simply is essential that cows be either fenced off or the trees be planted on islands. At least they have a shot at growth if they start on islands now.

I noticed some islands are being planted, and I think that’s a good direction to go because at least that preserves the cottonwoods until this shoreline, because the cottonwood will seek the shoreline if it’s on the island. Cottonwoods distribute tens of thousands of seeds individually, so they’ll seed themselves if they’re growing there. They’ll grow on islands because they’re protected there from cattle. I think the direction, a virtual direction would be to reseed the islands with cottonwoods. The islands are not going to be seriously flooded anymore with water backup, so lots of the larger islands have not flooded in 20 years or better. I would urge that islands be seeded.

A second thing that is simply heartbreaking as far as I’m concerned is the number of access roads that have multiplied and multiplied and multiplied. Especially on the lower end of the river from, well, below the takeout point there at the bridge clear to the second bridge. The lower end of the river. Now that’s a beautiful, pristine badlands area, one of the most beautiful on the whole river as far as I’m concerned. But people are driving in there. There are literally hundreds of small tracks, roads and so on. The farther you get down the river, closer to the lower bridge, the more you see. I mean, there just has to be some manner of patrolling that because these are unauthorized roads. Nobody has a right to go out on all these places. A lot of it is public land so you don’t have a right to drive all over the place there. With some sort of control measure I think that could be reduced at least and the roads could again be replanted to grass and would grow out. The roads that are accessible and graded now can be readily discerned. I mean, because they’re well graded. The unauthorized roads are easy to detect.

A third concern is the potential that aircraft will have easy access to the lower end of the river. They have what, 13 landing sites out there? Good lord almighty. Why can’t they do with one. That’s incredible. Well, that’s about all I had to say. Thank you.

**RAC Meeting**  
**May 5, 2005**  
**Great Northern Hotel**  
**Malta, Montana**

**RAC members present:** Francis Jacobs, Lisa Cowan, Glenn Terry, Dale Slade, Terry Selph, Mary Fay, Bob Doerk, Bill Cunningham, Ron Moody, Charlie Floyd, Tony Bynum and Art Kleinjan. Absent: Randy Gray and Jeff Shelden

**BLM staff and presenters:** Kaylene Patten, facilitator, Meagan Gates, note taker Mike Stewart, John Fahlgren, Stanley Jaynes, Dr. Greg Auble, USGS, Joe Frazier Don Judice, Rob Brooks, Montana Challenge FW&P and Willy Frank

**I. Public Comment Period** – closed because no private citizens in attendance

**II. General Discussion**

Updates and Comments:

1. Letter to Congregationals – need to fax and/or scan and sent to Washington D.C.
  - a. Julia Gusteson, contact for Rehberg's office
2. Review of Schedule
  - a. Rearrange agenda if need to
3. Greater sage-grouse Field Trip – Great! Mary F. Reviews morning trip
  - a. 4:45 am at Lek – no birds on lek, above w/ cattle
  - b. 10 males, 1 female
4. Bill C. - Malta Museum – worthwhile visiting if you have time after the meeting
5. Sage grouse handouts – from John Carlson
  - a. Working group update
  - b. BLM flyer
6. Introduce:
  - a. John Fahlgren – Glasgow Field Station Assistant Manager
  - b. Meagan Gates – intern for John Carlson, takes notes today

**III. FIELD MANAGERS UPDATE**

MIKE STEWART, Lewistown Field Office

1. RAC nominations
  - a. 18-19 applicants for 5 positions
  - b. Send info to Billings, State office Review > Secretary's Office
2. Late Fee Assessment for Grazing
  - a. Previously – manual delivery; 30 day time period to return papers
  - b. Currently – automatically distributed (no control of timing); 45 day mailing and response period
  - c. Issues?
    - i. Terry – River guides in Ft. Benton affected?
    - ii. Tony – Question of Late Fees for man w/trespass cattle; some cows through grazing assoc.
      1. Lost his permit for individual allot.

- 2. No one picked up his lease – RMP review, allotment on reserve
  - 3. Monument RMP – is being prepared for the Internal Review at State Office
    - a. June 6-7 Team Mtg, review comments
      - i. Bill – RAC representation?
    - b. Mid-Aug – draft for public comment (90 day review)
    - c. Sept/Oct – public mtgs (Kalispell and Helena)
  - 4. Fire –
    - a. Fully Staffed; anticipate a big season
      - i. Extremely dry - built up fuel loads last year
      - ii. Terry – Prescribed burns
        - 1. Wild horse Burn – for sheep habitat, went well
    - b. Tony – staff and National Guard?
      - i. Bad fire year go to NG for help
      - ii. Art – coop agreement w/ BLM
        - 1. Splits the Bear Paws
          - a. North – County
          - b. South – BLM
        - 2. Workers must meet equip and training standards
          - a. DNRC supplies trucks to frontier counties, drivers be red carded
            - i. Pack 45 pounds for 15 min mile
        - 3. Ron - Big Fire in Garfield Co (2003) – news attn
          - a. Public didn't understand Agency responsibilities
            - i. Bill - Depends on where the fire starts
          - b. Ex: private fence burned – who replaces?
          - c. Idea – Public Ed. Mtg
          - d. Art – Blake Co. public educated; know responsibilities
      - iii. Dale – fire crews good employment opportunity for college students
    - c. Bob – 2 LE officer's per million acres of BLM, difficult to monitor
5. Fort Benton Interpretive Center
  - a. Snag – bid opened yesterday, glitch in contract
    - i. Re-Opens May 17<sup>th</sup>
    - ii. Shouldn't shift completion date
  - b. Bob – two ladies working on exhibits doing a good job
6. Lewis and Clark Corp II
  - a. Director Clark attends on June 3<sup>rd</sup>
7. First Note –
  - a. Willy Frank of Buffalo, WY replaces Chuck Otto
    - i. Coal bed Methane experience
    - ii. Range experience
      - 1. We will meet him today
  - b. Stanley James replacement starts in June (Archeologist)
  - c. Law enforcement Officer – stationed in Ft. Benton

## JOHN FAHLGREN, Glasgow Field Station – HI LINE REVIEW

1. Havre added to Malta Field Office
  - a. GFS provides 3 people for whole Hi Line
    - a. Archeologist, Hydrologist, and Recreation Planner
  - b. Finalizing JVP – headed by Jody Miller
  - c. Environ. Doc for the Bowdoin Field – contracted to update operations
    - i. Process is producing more water – how deal with wells and power sources
      1. power lines – raptor protection (buried or strung)
      2. Dale – Mtg. in Billings; 8 contactors to pick from
        - a. Don Judice – preference for contractor to do the EA
2. Havre RMP
  - a. Mike Stewart – just beginning, completion depends on fiscal year
  - b. West Hi Line divided at Glacier National Park
  - c. Main Issue – Oil and Gas development
3. Watershed Assessment Reports
  - a. Great Falls Field Station – finished last watershed
    - i. Larb Creek Watershed Assessment Completed
    - ii. 7 watershed reports completed since 1996
      - a. Preliminary riparian review in 1995
      - b. 1 Million Acres, 600 miles of stream, map wetlands
    - iii. Sage Grouse habitat assessment
    - iv. Schedule 5 year review of each watershed of management
      - a. North Willow Creek 5 year Review Near Completion
  - b. Mary – asked about what the main issues were in the watersheds?
    - i. Standards & Guidelines developed by RAC**
      1. Upland Standard – PFC (Performing at Functioning Condition)?
        - a. Look for: erosion, native community of plants, weed infestation, grazing practices/impacts
      2. Riparian
      3. Water Quality – meet MT quality standard
        - a. Riparian PFC, assume Water quality PFC
      4. Air Quality – not an issue
        - a. Tony – expand assessment
        - b. Nothing affecting air quality – not affected by livestock grazing
      5. Wildlife Habitat/Biodiversity
        - a. Fortunate w/ John Carlson and David Waller
        - b. Grassland Birds experience – accurately assess habitat requirements
        - c. Greater Sage-grouse conservation plan update
    - ii. Francis – assist ranchers with fences?
      1. Problem usually with riparian areas – make a riparian pasture, limit cattle access and timing

- 2. GFS has good cooperation – ranchers assist with monitoring
  - a. Badlands Grazing District (S Valley Co) – do spring checks, document with pictures, take pride in changes
- iii. Ron – term: prescriptive grazing? Apply a certain grazing system. Follow a particular schedule. Goal for grazing condition – flexibility on when move cattle, AUMs
- iv. Bill – Condition and Trend of Rangelands?
  - 1. Trend for GFS is up
    - a. Uplands in Glaciated Plains – club moss issues, change is very slow – do not have churning impact of bison and fires
    - b. Riparian – quicker change
  - 2. Attribute it to grazing system implementation and changes – initially big increase, slows to reach potential
    - a. Document lists habitat/communities potential aids in defining if PFC (less arguments)
  - 3. Francis – increase in education
  - 4. Ron – no change in permanent AUMs, adjust for drought
- v. Dale - Stream flow – question of what is a riparian zone?
  - 1. Ephemeral vs. intermittent channel
  - 2. Plant types, Channel status
    - a. Valley Co – Rock Creek only perennial stream
    - b. 2000 miles of ephemeral streams – treat differently
- vi. Question of Assiniboine Creek
- vii. Art – drought and livestock question
  - 1. voluntarily moved cattle onto CRP (BLM to non-use)
- 4. Wind Power back on the table
  - c. May 24<sup>th</sup> – scoping mtg in Glasgow

STANLEY JAYNES, Havre Field Station 9:00 – 9:22 AM

- 1. Malta – April Blowdown in Little Rockies cleaned up
  - a. Contractor from Ft. Belknap;
    - a. 7000 BF of Sawed timber; locals of firewood
  - b. Montana Gulch and Zortman
- 2. Anita Reservoir – bid by end of month
  - a. Francis – pipe washed out; how rebuild?
  - b. Breached, dig out dam, replace (more work, better design)
    - i. Old dam – 1950s design
    - ii. Est. 120 days construction
  - c. Mike Montgomery – assessment of cause
    - i. Key factor – soluble clays within compacted fill – built, filled, and breached within 3 days
  - d. Water source – N. of Chinook – drains into East fork of Battle Creek, fed by snow melt

3. List of Projects for Havre – mail out soon
  - a. Categories:
    - i. NEPA
    - ii. Range Improvements
    - iii. On-demand Projects
  - b. Macum Pipeline Assessment
    - i. Received comments
    - ii. Final EA decision released by end of Month
  - c. New GIS person (Amanda) – provide map of Havre Field Station area
  - d. Tony – new technology: need a big map of RAC area to bring to each meeting for reference
    - i. Ron – State FWP website: access maps (or NRIS web site) of any area of state with different data layers (hydro, roads, etc)
4. Ron – appreciates info on BLM Web Sites
5. Art – Listo Land Exchange Status?
  - a. N. Chinook Exchange – goal to block up land around N. Chinook Reservoir. Some short grass native prairie and riparian zones.
    - i. Original joint owners who started the trade sold it to different people - lead to imprisonment
    - ii. Question of who owns base properties but new owners interested in exchange
6. Francis – American Prairie Foundation and the buffalo fence
  - a. Mark – Malta works on EA, be out w/in 1 week

**9:22 – 9: 45AM BREAK**

**IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW (STANLEY JAYNES)**

1. background – foundation in law and regulations
  - a. Reviews of Acts 1906-1990 for BLM management
  - b. Affected by National Historic Preservation Act 1966
    - i. Section 106 – before activity, consider affects to properties on national register
    - ii. Est. of SHIPs in all 50 states and Advisory Councils
    - iii. 36 CFR 800 regs – detail of federal actions
    - iv. Programmatic agreement with advisory council in DC
      1. MT protocol – conditions daily activities, speeds up process (reviewed annually)
    - v. Final decision rests with Fed Agency
  - c. 1969 NEPA passed – Get dominant direction from this document
  - d. Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLMA)
  - e. 1976 lands converted to public ownership; periodically evaluate properties
2. **National Register Categories**
  - a. Broad patterns of history
  - b. Historic persons
  - c. Distinctive style
  - d. Has/can yield significant information about the past

- e. Level – local, regional, national level
  - i. National – ex: Pompeii’s Pillar
  - ii. Tony – External MT BLM internet site (analysis of management situation) extra info
- 3. Northern MT – 1<sup>st</sup> people 12000 years ago – no strong evidence w/in monument
  - a. 9,000 year old Clovis point found
  - b. Spear /Dart thrower (smaller point)
  - c. 1500 Bow and Arrow; Pottery
    - i. Innovations much later up here; even for farming
    - ii. Mobile Groups
  - d. 1700 AD horse introduced again (Blackfoot and Assiniboine Indians)
  - e. 1805 Lewis and Clark
  - f. 1859 Fur Trading; 1<sup>st</sup> boat to Ft. Benton
  - g. 1855 Stevens/Lame Bull treaty (Judith Landing)
    - i. Est. Northern MT hunting ground
  - h. Modern Reservations established – yr??? late 1800s
  - i. 1862 Homestead Act – Principle Migration 1909-teens
    - i. LU Land – 50% plus homesteads failed
- 4. Monument – could expect evidence of all those time periods
  - a. Visible evidence of L&C to WWII
  - b. Missouri Breaks – River Corridor and bottoms, occupied
  - c. Uplands – scattered small sites (low cultural site densities)
  - d. 115 prehistoric sites recorded in 375,000 acres
  - e. 44 historic period sites
    - i. Why not denser? Rugged terrain; Not a great deal inventoried
- 5. Questions?
  - a. Bob -
    - i. BLM own land on Eagle Butte? Private Ownership
    - ii. Chief Joseph Battle Field in Bear Paws taken over by National Park Service – work with BLM for increased traffic at rifle pits? Options to work in Cow Creek area? Interpretive Center? No agreement at affected property.
    - iii. Pictograph at Eagle Creek – more of deterioration, how preserve with Darlington Family? Conservation lease for Cultural Resources.
    - iv. Prioritization of sites for protection? 17 standing structures, evaluated and prioritized
      - 1. Middleton, Hagedone,?,?
  - b. Challenge Cost Share – timeframe for work on bottoms
  - c. TP rings on Bench at Battle Creek on Private Land – BLM agreement? All vandalized. No legal access for repercussions.
  - d. Dale – Inventoried N. Phillips County?
    - i. weigh inventories – once recorded, exhaust information gain
      - 1. TP rings match broad patterns of history (for National Registry) nomination did not pass. How approach issue?

2. Jerry Clark, Lewistown: team study problem – BLM records them to a higher standard now. Looking at an accumulation of TP rings over time rather than one event

## V. COTTONWOOD REGENERATION ON THE RIVER

JOE FRAZIER AND GREG AUBLE, USGS – Power Point Presentation

Part A: Dr. Auble, USGS ecologist from Ft. Collins, Colorado

1. History – Dams affecting cottonwood regeneration in Wild and Scenic Streams
  - a. 1990s – Review Report
  - b. Need more info on impacts of grazing
    - i. Joint effort of USGS and BLM
2. Introduction: Mike Scott and Greg Auble, others at the Univ. of MT; Partnership with BLM, BPL MT, USGS, FW
  - a. Why Cottonwoods important?
    - i. Ascetics, shade – E. of Mississippi it's a weed
    - ii. Structurally dominant native tree – esp. Missouri Breaks where uplands too dry to support trees
      1. focal point for stream flow, riparian change – very sensitive
      2. Dams block generation of CW (ex: Colorado R., lower Missouri – plant cottonwoods vs. Platt R. pull CW)
  - b. Issues – licensing of hydropower, restoration activities, water rights, changes of drainages
  - c. Scientifically- disturbance pioneer plant
    - i. What controls lateral and longitudinal distribution of CW?
    - ii. How regenerate or propagate?
    - iii. Suitable recruitment site? Disturbed land – bare and moist during narrow germination window (1mo a year); cannot be redisturbed the next year.
    - iv. What kind of processes create suitable sites? **\*\*Meandering\*\***, narrowing, flood deposition, allusion
      1. seedlings est. on point bars as channel meanders (ex: Judith River)
      2. Narrowing (Platt R. 1in deep, 1 mile wide – narrows with dams, CW est. in old bed)
      3. Longitudinal Variation w/in a river – wider and narrower, bigger mvmt down length of river
3. **Studies** on Upper Missouri
  - a. Early 1990s - Dendrochronology – relate age of trees to water flows from 60 years ago that established those trees? Use for management suggestions
    - i. Winter 1995-96 Big ice event – ice scarring
  - b. Bird habitat in mixed aged stands
  - c. Population Dynamics with grazing

- d. Flow Modeling (late 1990s)
- 4. Geomorphic Context very important –
  - a. Above Ft. Peck not a lot of flow modification
  - b. Glacial History – near where Morias R. comes in (very young river) moved with last Glacier. Highly constrained – not a wide flood plain like the Missouri South of Ft. Peck in ND. 10-30,000 years ago.
  - c. Go back to what recorded in L&C diaries and compare to 1990 pictures – indicate timber trends
- 5. Climate –
  - a. Flood production? Rain shadow of the Rockies. Increased flow in May or June; get large rain events on top of snow melt runoff, causes flood events
  - b. ICE –
    - i. Warm Chinook winds rapid change in temperature – snow in tributaries melts faster than in main stem (ice drive) creates a surge to force ice and water meters higher than normal flood plain. Bank geometry changes rapidly. (can see ice scars on trees)
    - ii. Ex: Winter of 1995 and 96
- 6. Study Results**
  - a. Very strong Flood Dependence – 70% trees established by floods, most establish at high elevations above base flow.
    - i. Young est. at range of elevations
    - ii. CW that age to trees est. at higher elevations – survive higher flows, esp. ice.
    - iii. Est. requires floods > 65000 CFS to position above ice line
  - b. Bird Study
    - i. Bird Communities and Veg Structure
      - 1. Common: Mature trees with not much understory
      - 2. Greater diversity with mixed vertical structure
    - ii. bird diversity depends on riparian diversity
  - c. Flow Modeling
    - i. Compare if not hindered by dams to actual river course
      - 1. flow massively reduced by dams
    - ii. Restore flood plains without removing the dams
      - 1. How regain high flows to est. CW seedlings above ice line?
    - iii. CW historically sparse in constrained reach
  - d. Flow and Grazing
    - i. 8 study sights in Wild/Scenic region
      - 1. Permanent transects – count seedlings – relate to upstream discharge
      - 2. Hydrographs – good pattern, manage for seed establishment
        - a. As flow declines, spreads pattern of CW establishment
        - b. 1997 high water year 12000 m/sec (est. below ice line)
        - c. 1999 some seedling/sampling survival

- d. 2000 dry year
- ii. Grazing effects
  - 1. Lower survivorship with heavy grazing
    - a. mortality from trampling, browsing
  - 2. Movement of seedlings > Saplings
    - a. Browsed so no major establishment.
  - 3. Survivorship increases over high water mark 1-2 meters, too high, die from drought stress
- iii. Management
  - 1. Scale – CW life span 100-150 years
    - a. Flood events once a decade
    - b. *1 in a million seedlings in a given year will make it to a tree*
  - 2. Multiple causes acting over multiple years – no single answer
  - 3. Disturbance dependent – changes in the river that leave behind CW
    - a. Water flow and channel movement
    - b. Need to preserve capacity for the river to change
      - i. do not constrain laterally
      - ii. “in order for the river to stay the same, the river must change”
- 7. Have (relatively) a lot of information in comparison to other rivers
  - a. Auble has publications – contact him for copies/references
- 8. Continuing Work?
  - a. Scientific value – haven’t seen events that would be most important
    - i. flood event or ice drive
  - b. Management – BLM made changes in grazing management; answer this recurrent question with increment answers.
  - c. CW attention and documentation of the importance of flow variability.
    - i. Low level degradation – not gaining it back (ex: Tiber operation)
    - ii. Incremental flood plain development

Part B: Joe Frazier, BLM Lewistown Hydrologist  
 Management with Grazing - WHAT CAN BLM DO?

ISSUES: Beaver, grazing, ice, etc.

- 1. Manage for grazing – no big impact with other effects
  - a. Bureau of Reclamation – possible help on stream flow
  - b. Effects of grazing changes – Options
    - a. Riparian Pasture – ex: Cow Island
      - i. July 1 – continual hot season grazing (concentrated)
      - ii. 2000 – created riparian pasture
        - 1. same AUMs, grazed May 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>
        - 2. off site water – reservoir construction
    - b. Rest-Rotation schedule

- c. Total exclusion
- 2. Ice/Water event/Fire/Beaver/Disease – cannot predict when an event could happen
  - a. Manage for healthy riparian else have poor condition areas
  - b. Result of range reform
  - c. Entire south side of W/S River has new watershed plans
  - d. Tony – Climate Change? Drier years will not change ice line and its effects, less floods – shrinkage of CW closer to base line
  - e. Bill - Hot season (July, Aug, Sept) grazing effects – regeneration window in early to mid June – if cattle still on in June how effect seedling survival?
    - i. Cows not spend a lot of time in deep mud
- 3. Along Missouri, any hot season grazing? Yes. Work with permittees – change season of use? What are most imptr riparian areas in allotments, put in exclosures.
- 4. Bob – positive opinion of presentation. Impressed by thoroughness of data – how share with public and future RAC members? Build up and pass on cumulative knowledge.
  - a. Orientation meeting for each new member. IDEA: video tape presentation. USGS put together a semi-technical Fact Sheet.
- 5. Ron – cost/benefit of management model – exclusions, upland water system construction, changes in grazing system – cost in pound per beef?
  - a. 100,000s of dollars – Cost Share Money. Budget constraints coming into effect, so \$ go to maintenance not development
- 6. Est. monitoring sites: one a year on upland and riparian
  - a. 86 additional sites visit every 1-3 years
- 7. Mary – how encourage B of Reclamation to assist in this project.
  - a. Answer political not resource values. Have different mandates. Pallid Sturgeon issues. Trees are not fish.
- 8. Different work with Narrow Leaf Cottonwoods – Clonal replacement

## **VI. BOWDOIN OIL AND GAS EA UPDATE – NATURAL GAS PROJECT IN VALLEY COUNTY, MT (Don Judice)**

Some of this info presented last meeting

- 1. 630,000 acres – 34% BLM lands, 60% private, 6% state lands
- 2. Background of Oil and Gas:
  - Gas field discovered in 1913
    - i. Activity started in 1930-40s
    - ii. NO oil production, just “sweet” gas
    - iii. Leases 50-60 years old
  - Top producing field in MT
    - i. 1500 producing wells – 4 wells/section
- 3. History of old EA:
  - May 1989, Malta Office programmatic EA
    - i. Predicted 662 new wells

- ii. Master APD implemented field-wide: set up how handle activities, reduces paperwork
  - Long economic well life (40-70 years old)
    - i. Continued interest in peripheries of Bowdoin dome
- 4. Purpose and Need:
  - EA now 16 years old – NEPA: relook at analysis
  - Disposal of produced water changed – increased water production, centralized water pits, injection wells
  - T&E species – Piping Plover (threatened species); Other species of concern (ex: greater sage-grouse)
  - Other federal agencies involved – BOR and USFWS
    - i. BLM manage minerals under their surface management
  - Transportation planning evolves with number of wells
    - i. Roads/pipelines – spiderwebbing
- 5. Resource Issues
  - Mule Deer, Pronghorn, Migratory birds, greater sage-grouse and sharptailed grouse, prairie dog towns w/ black footed ferret, raptor nesting (Bald eagles), Pipling plover
    - i. Socioeconomics
- 6. Cultural Resources
  - Cree Crossings
  - Drive lines and Tipi ring
  - Stone features
  - Henry Smith and Beaucoup sites
  - Milk River ACEC
- 7. Typical Gas Wells
  - Small 1300-2000' depth – smaller wells (takes less semis to transport)
  - Disturbance about an acre
  - Wells drilled in 3 days
  - Long term disturbance
  - Native Prairie v. Cultivated fields
    - i. Most private lands in cultivation
    - ii. However, some private lands are involved with Federal Minerals
- 8. High Natural Gas Prices (\$ per MCF – 1000 cubic feet)
  - As prices get higher, the well doesn't need higher reserves
  - Trend shows that old wells, previously not economic, now are
- 9. Why contract the EA out?
  - Timely completion
  - Proponent interests contributing funds (ex: Fidelity, Athena, Decker, Noble Energy)
- 10. Opportunities exist for public participation
  - Do not anticipate an EIS
  - Est. Time line
    - i. May – contractor selected
    - ii. June 05 – Scoping Notice

- iii. Jan 06 Draft EA
  - iv. May 06 Final EA/DNR
  - Judice will forward copies to Kaylene > to RAC group
11. Questions:
- Bill – development and potential of new wells?
    - i. Between 600 and 650 wells developed since 1989.
    - ii. Future – some wells are muddying up – proposing replacement wells on the same well pads (no longer have solids in natural gas) Fidelity proposing 40 replacement wells per year
    - iii. Helps existing resources to locate on the same wellpad
    - iv. DALE Noble Energy Future Plans: will have 4 wells in everything they have leased
  - Mary – conflict with proponents paying for EA
    - i. Standard procedure. BLM document overseen by Albers and Judice. Simply expedites the completion of the EA – good all around.
  - JVP and the Monument info out soon – busy working on that.
  - Bill – update on the Suncor well?
    - i. April 18<sup>th</sup> – checked rig, excitement of progress and seismic info
    - ii. Mid-June in Target Zone (about 14900 ft)
      - 1. Might be permitting to drill a Federal Well under FS land – drill SW reservoir may be 25-30 sections large. Waterton sized field.
      - 2. Environmental assessment for the new APD – any additive disturbance to what is already constructed.

Introduce:

Rob Brooks with Montana Challenge.

Willie Frank, new assistant field manager for resources

LUNCH – be back by 1 pm

Passed out travel vouchers and direct deposit forms.

## **VII. MONTANA CHALLENGE PRESENTATION – ROB BROOKS, MT FWP, Helena**

\*\* handed out “Montana Challenge” pamphlet

Project w/ FS and FWP

How do economic changes affect wildlife and wild areas?

1. MT changed immensely – culture, economics, etc.
2. GOALS
  - a. Document changing econ/culture
  - b. Resources and human use
  - c. Discuss - Tell story, get information out to people for resource management and econ develop

3. Sponsors
  - a. BLM, USFWS, MT FWP, some out of state funding
4. How things changed in last 30 years
  - a. 1970s MT rewrote it's constitution
5. Sources – credible, unbiased, Montanan
  - a. review structure
  - b. 8 vignettes – short stories to explain what issues confront MT today
6. ONLINE – a report from each author, vignettes, library of charts/graphs/maps by county
  - a. <http://fwp.mt.gov/tmc>
7. Simple story that reflects national trends
  - a. Mass migration to Rocky Mtns, huge decline in the Central Heart Lands
  - b. “3<sup>rd</sup> Coast”
  - c. Different Circumstances generated
8. Demographics – reflect national trends
  - a. Montana Divisions
    - i. Western Mountains – steady increase
    - ii. Central Front – slight declines; a lot of “churning”
      1. Big turn over of population
    - iii. Eastern Plains – steady decrease (esp. younger folks – employment and school; increase in older generations)
  - b. State Average growth Rate (about 12.9 %) does not reflect ground truth
  - c. CHURNING – people moving in and out
    - i. Ex: Cascade and Valley Counties
    - ii. Ex: Ranchers from Western MT selling out and moving to Central/Eastern MT
9. Who is moving in?
  - a. Pre-retirement Baby Boomers (for next 10-15 years)
    - i. 45-65 years old
    - ii. Means still employed
  - b. Eco-Boomers – group A's kids
    - i. More into Tech and not Outdoor activities
  - c. 2000 – 13% 65 +    2030 – 26% 65 +
    - i. Only 4 states with higher older populations
10. Why move here?
  - a. Environmental Amenities – resources, public lands
11. How change economy?
  - a. Increase demand for goods and services
  - b. Non-labor sources of income (SS or Investments)
    - i. Can take \$ any where
  - c. Bring new businesses and new capitol
  - d. Cascade County – Lrg. decrease in \$ from wages
12. National Global Restructuring
  - a. Previously had to be in house – immobile
  - b. Now
    - i. Smaller companies

- ii. More outsourcing
    - iii. Located in clusters – ex: Silicon Valley
    - iv. Very Mobile
  - c. Service Industry – main growth area
    - i. Both Wal-mart and doctors
    - ii. Health services the highest subgroup
  - d. Slowly construction and fire are increasing
  - e. Ag Services climbing but ag/farming stable
  - f. Declining subgroups
    - i. Timber/Mining/Motion Picture
    - ii. No longer have businesses sited next to natural resources
    - iii. Human resources jobs can be where ever they want to be located
      - 1. Where do I want to live, and then create a job there
      - 2. Discussion – resentment: they come here to get away from it all, but they bring it all with them.
  - g. MT has been discovered and cannot stop the influx of people.
    - i. So, need discussion to direct where we want MT to end up.
    - ii. Flathead County is the fastest growing county in the Nation! (2005 census data)
13. Natural Resources increasing in Value.
- a. Tourism, Recreation,
  - b. Not just public lands people are keyed into the look of.
  - c. NR Amenities in competition with neighbor states
    - i. Colorado “Rocky Mtn high”
    - ii. Wyoming “Cowboy Country”
    - iii. Montana “Wild Wildlife” – only state that promotes wildlife and wild lands in the Dept. of Commerce
  - d. Montana Visitor Activities
    - i. #1 Shopping
    - ii. #2 Watching Wildlife
  - e. Resident Activities
    - i. #1 Wildlife Viewing
      - 1. Fishing, Hunting, Parks and Recreation
  - f. Economic Benefits far greater than expenditures
    - i. PT: Survival is not mandatory.
    - ii. Direct the growth – no major urban center (ex: Seattle)
      - 1. Have 7 major urban areas – how utilize?
  - g. Do not want to commercialize these opportunities
    - i. *Public Trust Doctrine*
    - ii. Think about access on private lands also
      - 1. State’s prosperity comes from them also... not changing property rights, but an econ opportunity
14. Requires facing Challenges
- a. Habitat fragmentation and degradation
  - b. Habitat consolidation (buy up land and then closing it off)

- i. “Owning Eden” Video - new ranch owner obligations to the MT way of life
  - c. Diversion of water and streams
    - i. Canada proposes to siphon off the Milk River
    - ii. Water development within the state itself
  - d. Competing and Conflicting uses of Resources
  - e. Access
- 15. \*\*21% of growth in unincorporated places (not in cities)
  - a. Second and third homes booming in MT
    - i. Concerns with their impacts
  - b. Have 2+ vehicles
- 16. Addressing challenges requires Political Will!
  - a. FWP trying to get info out to the public; promote ideas
  - b. Address with community leaders
- 17. Montana drastically different
  - a. Politically – big difference between W and E
  - b. ex: New Game Farms Initiative barely passed
  - c. need people with the courage to rise to the challenge and do the right thing
- 18. QUESTIONS
  - a. ART – drafted questions/discussion – Phase 2: disseminating information
  - b. BOB – Report on the Rockies (will share with new RAC members). Need agencies (Fed and State) need to gather and approach the challenge in a common way. Push addressing the issues and not wait for the public generation.
    - i. FPW having “In-reach Meetings” with other agencies
    - ii. RON – think this RAC group aptly suited to address these challenges (all the issues are here in the RAC area)
  - c. ART – concern of people who come in and create own jobs do not involve themselves in the community
    - i. Madison Valley Bit ranches – how educate them on operational details? How incorporate them into the community? Making effort to reach out to new land owners.

BREAK FROM 2:30 TO 2:45 pm

**VIII. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION PARTNERSHIPS/PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS – RAC deliberation**

- 1. Ron suggests to roll the subject forward
  - a. Make it part of management for the BLM
    - i. Ex: create a neighborhood watch for the monument
      - 1. Resource monitoring, etc.
  - b. Fahlgren – each office give examples of existing collaborative projects
- 2. Bill – reading material on collaborative management to understand more what it is about before the discussion
- 3. Dale – Attended “Partners and Partnership” thing in Lewistown – very beneficial

- a. Put on my the National Training Center (50-60 people attended)
- b. How to make decisions on difficult issues
- c. Suggest RAC members complete that training

**IX. NEXT MEETING ADGENDA** – Lewistown, MT - Sept 7-8 (Wed public comment starts at 10 AM, Thurs 8 AM)

1. Francis – explain grazing systems and BLM/permitee relationships
  - a. Give examples of successes
  - b. Bring in a Range Management Specialist
2. Comments on the RMP meetings
  - a. Come prepared to make recommendations on the draft RMP
  - b. Tony – concern on how to review comments
    - i. Table – preferred alternatives, how the BLM responded
    - ii. Important to have before the RAC meeting with the document
3. Bill – Timing of Meeting concern
  - a. Enough time to review/digest? Only time available.
  - b. Date to have the RMP out
  - c. Bob moves to have the RMP draft mailed to RAC Members no later than Friday, August 19, 2005 or the RAC meeting will be changed.
    - i. Ron seconded.
    - ii. Group Consensus
4. Terry – need a lunch break on Wed to review
  - a. If need to work late, agree to do so
5. American Prairie’s Foundation doing a presentation (discuss with Mark)
  - a. Look at for a subsequent meeting
6. Orientation – willing to offer a whole day to informational updates
  - a. BLM Planning
  - b. EA
  - c. Cottonwood regeneration
  - d. Travel
  - e. General Information
  - f. Art – depends on what big issues come through before meeting
  - g. Francis – what next after RMP finished? West HiLine RMP, etc.
  - h. Mary – next meeting will have new members so need to have an overview to fill in subject information
    - i. OK with group to have orientation items spread out in meetings
7. Directional Drilling Tour
8. Community Collaborative discussion
9. Terry - Float trip Friday the 9<sup>th</sup>. Family invited. Meet in Winifred at 8 am, be back 6ish
  - i. <http://hole-in-the-wall.org>

Closing Comments – appreciate attendance. Working hard next meeting.

Adjourned at 3:17 PM.

**May 4, 2005  
RAC Meeting  
Great Northern Hotel  
Malta, Montana**

**RAC members present:** Francis Jacobs, Lisa Cowan, Glenn Terry, Dale Slade, Terry Selph, Mary Fay, Bob Doerk, Bill Cunningham, Ron Moody, Charlie Floyd, Tony Bynum and Art Kleinjan. Absent: Randy Gray and Jeff Shelden

**Public Comment Period:** No members of the public were present.

**Welcome/Meeting Notes/Synopsis:**

Charlie welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Bob Doerk for his time and dedication to the RAC during his term as Chairperson. He mentioned he was very happy to fill the position of Chairperson and looked forward to the work the RAC was going to doing.

The meeting notes from the March 22-23, 2005 meeting were approved with the addition/correction of the information presented on the Anita Dam rebuild needs changed to the “drainage of Battle Creek” instead of just Battle Creek. This discussion was under the Field Managers update.

**Sage Grouse Tour:**

John Carlson from the Glasgow Field Station took the entire RAC on a tour of Sage Grouse habitat and discussed the local working group and their plans for implementing the State Management Plan for Sage Grouse.

Prior to the tour John discussed the local working group happenings and answered many questions of the RAC. The State management plan is final now and the Glasgow Field Station is incorporating that plan into their local area and the working group.

John presented a slide presentation discussing the strong holds for breeding populations of sage grouse in the Western North American area.

The conservation issues which are the major issues for the Glasgow Field Station are:

- Harvest management
- Mining and Energy Development
- Noxious Weed management
- Outreach, Education and Implementation
- Power lines and Generation facilities
- Predation
- Vegetation

Tasks for the Glasgow Local Working Group:

- identify and implement at least one project
  - population study north of the Milk river
  - it's a cooperative study with UM and Parks Canada
- annual Lek census
  - cooperative surveys with FW&P and volunteers
- affects of various treatments (ie chisel plowing) on sage grouse habitat
- re-establishment of sagebrush on created wheatgrass stands
  - LU and private lands

Other on-going sage grouse projects:

- Sage grouse habitat monitoring
- Sage grouse winter habitat study
- Sage grouse lek viewing and informational tour

Other BLM activities:

- oil and gas leasing, working on the JVP O&G supplement
- Windpower development
- Rangeland Improvements

When trying to address the issues of the Sage Grouse out of the State wide Plan, the leks would be protected by a no surface occupancy within ¼ mile of a well. In regard to the Rangeland improvements they are trying to buffer the leks from any sage grouse leks and disturbance.

The big question is how can we protect the sage grouse habitat while still maintaining other activities, this is the major challenge.

Information about Sage Grouse promoted from the RAC's questions:

Historically the birds come back to the same lek and dance in the same place. Typically 40% are outside the 2 mile buffer that the BLM uses for nesting.

The West Nile virus does have an effect on the birds, but it's the wild card.

The question was raised about North Blaine County and John responded that sage grouse are essentially gone out of that area and what is left is up with Canada. The weather seems to play a major role in it.

The sage grouse don't have a gizzard to digest and grind down seeds, so that's why they need the sage brush. Also the young birds need forbes when they are young because they can't digest the seeds. You will often see them in alfalfa fields and eating grasshoppers.

The average age of a sage grouse is 5 days from hatching of when they die, if they live past that they usually will make it. Once past the fledgling state they live about 5-6 years.

The Glasgow working group doesn't have any major issues because the sage grouse are doing very well in that area.

The FW&P does their annual survey off what % of birds is taken by hunters and their numbers have gone down since the 70's but not a totally accurate number.

One of the recommendations from the local working group will probably be to take a petition to the State management plan, because the local working group should be protecting their own resources at the local level.

The coyote issue has come up in the working groups meeting as the culprit and that's the main reason that the numbers are low, but it's not the only cause so you want to look at all the issues.

Tour of sage grouse habitat was North of Malta where we looked at a lek in Blue Sage. On the lek there was numerous feathers and droppings as well as the black tar stuff from the sage grouse. John talked about the lek and how the birds interact with each other while on the lek. John discussed the habitat which they typically pick for a lek, the nesting habitat and just general information about the sage grouse.

The group returned to Malta at 5:30 p.m. and adjourned.