



BLM MONTANA/DAKOTAS

Dakotas Resource Advisory Council

RAC MEETING MINUTES: Bowman, North Dakota: April 16, 2014 *Bowman City Hall*

Attending:

- BLM
 - Mark Jacobsen, BLM
 - Marian Atkins South Dakota Field Office Manager
 - Diane Friez, Eastern Montana/Dakotas District Manager
 - Rick Rymerson, North Dakota Field Office Manager
- USFS
 - Babette Anderson, USFS Public Affairs
 - Greg Morel, USFS Recreation
- Category 1
 - Bruce Bowman
 - Drew Combs
 - Ray Gilbert
 - Vern Timmerman
- Category 2
 - Kevin Forrester
 - Ellen Reddick
 - Branden Bestgen
- Category 3
 - Debra Brown
 - Robert Johnson
 - Vernon Bleich by phone
- Public Observing:
 - Shirley Meyer – Sen. Heitkamp Field Representative
 - Jon Cameron – Sen. Hoeven office, Field Representative

Mark Jacobsen opened the meeting at 9:12 am with:

- Housekeeping items

- Ground Rules
- Introductions

BLM Briefings

Diane Friez - Eastern Montana/Dakotas District Manager

- Building new fire facility at Fort Howes. The staff provides fire support to BLM lands in the area, as well as the Custer National Forest.
- Budget passed for FY14 and FY15; 2% reduction in base funds; forestry and hazardous fuels funds restored; will be planning for 5% decrease each year in the future; 12 permanent positions in EMDD will be eliminated – we are planning for the worst and hoping for the best; ND is not involved in position decreases due to oil and gas workload; ND Petroleum Council is providing funding for 5 positions.
- Another Statewide RAC meeting in July in Billings – State Office is looking at the number of RACs in MT/DK.

Rick Rymerson – North Dakota Field Manager

- RMP amendment for Greater Sage Grouse continues to be worked on.
- Mineral Leasing Act – BLM involved with any oil or gas pipeline if there are two or more Federal agencies involved, even if there are no BLM administered land involved.
- Seven permanent and seven term position are announced – 4 will start in the next few months.
- Housing in Dickinson – Approximately 10 acres was acquired from the Bureau of Reclamation at Patterson Lake. BLM plans to develop temporary/short-term housing. A public meeting is scheduled for April 29; the BLM will bring in 10 FEMA trailers and put in a hardened site (cement pads); also potential for 2 office trailers; will provide transitioning for new employees until they can find a place to stay. This site is also interagency with the USFS.
- Workload at NDFO – 548 APDs pending and 400 APDs have been either approved or not approved.
- Several Coal projects are in process.
- Mineral Materials such as scoria – surface owners may not own the mineral rights and therefore cannot sell the gravel or scoria. Violators could be trespassed.
- WO is reviewing the regulations concerning flaring of natural gas and there will be a Listening Session in Dickinson on May 9th for the tribes in the morning and the public portion will be in the afternoon.
- Pipelines – 17 tribes have expressed interest in surveying these considered areas for traditional cultural properties; there will be a Tribal Summit, co-sponsored by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe on May 7 & 8 at Fort Yates, North Dakota.

Marian Atkins – South Dakota Field Manager

- Retiring in mid-July.
- RMP and the Greater Sage Grouse concerns – hope to get final out this fall.
- Atlas blizzard in October – lots of broken trees at Fort Meade but main areas are cleaned up; worked with ranchers on removal of dead livestock but no burial pits were located on public lands.
- Fort Meade – planning for a busy summer; removing trees to decrease fire risk and to reduce mountain pine beetles; National Public Lands Day (NPLD) event was on April 12 to plant shrubs and trees at Fort Meade Reservoir.
- Fuels Management – doing work on Fort Meade and near Lead at Sugarloaf to decrease fuel loading;
- Community Assistance – Veterans Crews with Meade County, Lead and Rapid City are doing great and making a difference.
- Powertech Dewey Burdock project – 240 BLM acres out of 10,580 acres project; Final EIS and Programmatic Agreement are completed; BLM working on approval of the Plan of Operation.
- Approval to fill Realty Specialist position but not completed yet – a lot of activity in this field this year.
- Law Enforcement Ranger is part of a canine unit and has a partner now – “Hondo

Marian provided a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) info presentation.

RAC member presentation: Kevin Forrester

- Presented 2 maps – one is a replica of a BLM idea of some recreational things that could occur at Fort Meade; one is a map of lands owned by the School District.
- Meade School District lands – School needs to build school in southern part of county; school has requested annexation from Sturgis; some of the school property has residential or community plans. Meade School District is not looking at the property to be another rally venue but the area on the north side of Bear Butte Creek has the potential to be exchanged for small BLM parcels in Meade County that could be sold.
- Bob Johnson was concerned that if the small parcels were disposed of they would then not have public access and would create problems with the county planning; this parcel could be added to Fort Meade – this area contains a lot of evidence of the historical rifle ranges; how can the RAC help get the ball rolling to get this exchange to happen?; do the interested groups need to raise dollars, or write letters?
- Proper planning will promote perfect performance; Recreation on Fort Meade – lot of local groups are interested in Travel management; Kevin

has been talking with some BLM folks since the 1980's on recreation use on Fort Meade; BLM folks keep leaving so he has to start over.

- Concerned that the RMP does not have dollars attached to the actions- the 1996 plan did have a timeline and dollars attached; Sturgis is a gateway community to Fort Meade and to the Black Hills National Forest; Meade county was recently named the 8th fastest growing county in the Nation; community needs to move forward providing a trail system.
- Next RAC meeting should be in Sturgis so that the RAC can look at Fort Meade for the transportation planning and for the exchange proposal; Once the RAC looks at the area there is potential to get a smaller subcommittee to work on the proposal and get additional information or ideas to the RAC; Kevin is thinking that there is potential for two subcommittees; one for travel management and one for the land acquisition.
- There is potential for the Sturgis Economic Development Committee to be used as a third party coordinator for the exchange – they can do things like this in the state but have not looked into working with the federal agencies.
- **Kevin and Brandon will gather additional information and get out to RAC members prior to next meeting (June 16)**

USFS presentation for Recreation Fee adjustments: Babette and Greg presenting.

Jorgen's Hollow Campground – Sheyenne National Grassland in SE North Dakota (hour from Fargo) – Amenities include 14 campsites, gravel road, accessible sites, pull-through sites for livestock trailers, potable water, vault restrooms, accessible picnic tables and fire ring/grills; Campground should be completed in 2014 at a cost of \$200,000; Adjacent trailhead parking area will be constructed in 2015 funded by ND Parks and Recreation Department; Request for camping fees of \$10 per night.

Coal Creek Campground – Medora Ranger District – SW North Dakota – Campground was completed in 2013 and provides access to Maah Daah Hey Trail; Amenities include 10 campsites, vault restroom, potable water, pull through sites, accessible picnic tables, fire ring/grills, signs and fee tube; Request for camping fees of \$10 per night.

Buffalo Gap Campground – near interstate 2 miles west of Medora in SW North Dakota – Initially constructed in 1968 but was closed in 1990's; major reconstruction in 1999 and 2000; In 2000 fees were instituted at \$6 per night and have not increased; Amenities include accessible flush toilets, coin operated showers, sidewalks, electricity, curbs, gutters, interpretive area pollinator garden, accessible picnic tables, new waterlines for potable water including holding tanks, well and well liner; request of camping fee of \$20 per night which is commensurate with other local campgrounds with

similar amenities; The increase in fees at the Buffalo Gap Campground would be posted this year and implemented next year.

Discussion –

Debra Brown – fees do not look out of line; Vern Bleich – with Travel Management people can't go where they want – Do users want these amenities? USFS – dispersed camping is still OK in these areas; folks want the amenities; Drew Combs - Has trash been an issue? USFS Jordan's Hollow did not have trash facilities, just "Pack it In, Pack it Out" and had signs about no driving off road.

Bruce Bowman asked about cows in the area being disturbed – USFS mentioned that gates were occasionally left open; Diane Friez asked about vandalism – USFS yes, because there have not been hosts and limited visits by LEO.

Diane mentioned that RAC folks can talk to their constituents about the destructive nature of vandalism; Ray Gilbert and Bruce Bowman had concerns about public perspective of ranchers using the federal lands and the intermingled land owners, and concerns about motorized recreationists harassing cattle.

Bob Johnson mentioned that the cattle grazers are paying for the use but dispersed recreationists do not; Debra Brown asked about agreements with local law enforcement.

USFS said yes they do work with the counties since they are closer to the areas; Vern Bleich is not a fan of user fees but knows there are budgetary concerns; Debra Brown asked what his reasoning is?

Vern Bleich – Federal agencies need to get their spending under control; Bruce Bowman asked if campgrounds with fees are better taken care of from users and from the agency – USFS – the fees would help pay for seasonal employees to maintain the area.

Other members felt that if folks are using amenities they should pay for it and the fees appeared to be comparable to private rates; Bruce Bowman – how will the fees be collected – USFS – self serve;

Babete mentioned that this is the first of their public scoping for these fees; Once the RAC okays the fees they will get additional public input and complete the NEPA document and then get back with the RAC.

Motion from Branden Bestgen to accept the recommended fee structure with a second from Bob Johnson; Vern Bleich was nay; everyone else aye. The motion carried.

Lunch 11:45 – 12:45 pm

Kevin and Bruce discussed the MT/DK RAC chairs meeting in Billings last year. There was a lot of good information passed to the chairs. Items of discussion were the timing of the RAC appointments, communication of RAC members (["RAC@blm.gov"](mailto:RAC@blm.gov) potential).

Field Managers need to ensure that RAC members have items to help managers with, Kate and Jamie's charge to the members "Find your niche that brought you to the RAC and wedge in and keep wiggling".

Western Montana RAC Resolution Discussion--

Appointment letters were not received until well after the first of the year. The Western Montana RAC composed a resolution that was sent to all the Montana/Dakotas RACs. The resolution read that in order to maintain functionality of the RACs, a RAC member should be able to remain on the Council until the new members are appointed and in place.

It was recommended that all Montana/Dakotas RACs should look at this and approve so that all Montana/Dakotas RAC chairs can sign a resolution to the State Director, BLM Director and the DOI Secretary.

Discussion followed on the rewriting the Western RAC Resolution to read like a Dakota's RAC proposal.

Needed to get Vern back on the phone to get a Quorum – Vernon agreed. A Call for a vote was made and all concurred.

RAC member Briefs--

Robert Johnson – Greater Sage Grouse is a major concern of folks in Harding County. They saw what happened recently with the Desert Tortoise and are concerned that if Greater Sage Grouse are listed then grazing and other development will suffer. He has had concerns with tribal interest on an oil and gas well that was to be drilled on his private land to federal minerals and with the tribal work the drilling did not happen as quickly as planned.

Debra Brown – Also concerned with Greater Sage Grouse – although there are not a lot of folks, the ones that they could impact are concerned about losing the ability to graze and want to be informed. She also is concerned about the impact to the county roads from the oil and gas drilling. Four or five trucks a day haul water from MT to SD on a 40 mile trip. She has had conversations with folks concerning the Nevada situation and cautions everyone to read both sides – look at the court cases. This adds to the concern about Greater Sage Grouse. Wall Street Journal had a good timeline of all the activity on this case. (Diane mentioned that we are concerned about the safety of BLM employees and have advised them to have situational awareness.

Bruce Bowman – He appreciated the PILT discussion – he does not like the fact that PILT is once again in limbo.

Drew Combs – Represents oil and gas and coal interests from his position with the state. His constituents do like working with Rick Rymerson and they do understand his constraints. Drew mentioned the land swap with minerals that he has brought up previously. The main issue he wanted to bring up to the RAC was the ND Supreme Court decision that lands below the high water mark along the river are run by the state. BLM does not recognize the state's survey of the high water mark. There has been a lack of communication – Drew has even tried to talk with BLM at the Washington Office. Oil companies paid for the leases that they no longer have or they have paid for them twice – the companies want to pay the royalties that are due but are not sure who gets what. An example is a BLM lease that covers 200 acres but 100 acres are below the high water line. Therefore the BLM should get royalties on 100 acres but the BLM wants royalties on the 200 acres. Drew's office is getting a lot of calls. (Diane requested Drew to send his information to her and she would pursue on her end) Drew also discussed the potential to give tours of the oil patch. He did one for the UND and would like to get Mike Nedd to come out when the Western States Land Association Conference meets. They will look at oil and gas, coal, man camps, parks etc. and discuss how BLM is addressing the challenges of the oil boom.

Ellen Reddick – there are 254 pending additions to the South Dakota Endangered Species list. Recently 2 butterflies were listed that live along the ND/SD border. She has had a lot of discussions with others about prairie dogs and Greater Sage Grouse. She wanted folks to know the difference between coordination (BLM is still in charge) and cooperation (BLM works with private folks).

Ray Gilbert – has been working with NRCS on Greater Sage Grouse and they are showing that grazing up to a point does more good than harm. He has concerns about the abandoned gas wells on his ranch – the company went bankrupt and a well head is leaking. He has been talking with the BLM in N.D. and S.D. about the federal wells under that company.

Vern Timmerman – Thanks for all the information for the new guy. He also sees the Greater Sage Grouse issue as important but he is concerned that it will be like the Spotted owl where there were thousands of jobs lost when timber was not cut and then a fire destroyed the trees there anyway. He is concerned that if the Greater Sage Grouse is listed that will increase federal control and affect the haying (if haying is delayed until August the hay is no good). Also, has talked with folks about the Keystone Pipeline and the internet concern about methane production (Bob Johnson mentioned cows produce methane too.)

Mark began the wrap up of the meeting at 2:10pm. Thanks for the information from the RAC members. The next meeting and the agenda has already been discussed (**June 16 in Sturgis** to discuss the issues on Fort Meade; agenda to be developed by Kevin and Branden).

Diane thanked the RAC for their help in the recruitment effort for this year. Dakota's RAC got enough nominations so that we did not have to go out for another round of nominations.

Dickinson will be hosting a Collaborative Stewardship of Environmental Issues on May 28th. She will send out more information to RAC members.

Bruce Bowman wanted to talk a little bit about the wild horse and burro program – especially since the staffers of the senators were present. The wild horse and burro program gives BLM a black eye and needs to be fixed.

Bob Johnson moved and Ray Gilbert Second to adjourn the meeting at 2:21.



BLM MONTANA/DAKOTAS

Dakotas

Resource Advisory Council

RAC MEETING MINUTES: Sturgis, South Dakota: September 23, 2014 *Meade County Offices*

Attending:

BLM

- Mark Jacobsen, BLM RAC Coordinator
- Carmen Drieling, Acting South Dakota Field Manager
- Diane Friez, Eastern/Montana Dakotas District Manager
- Rick Rymerson, North Dakota Field Manager

USFS

- Babete Anderson

Category 1

- Bruce Bowman
- Drew Combs
- Ray Gilbert
- Vern Timmerman

Category 2

- Kevin Forrester
- Branden Bestgen
- Martin Marchello

Category 3

- Debra Brown
- Vernon Bleich
- Robert Johnson (by phone)

Public

- Daniel Ainslie – City of Sturgis
- Bob Burns – Meade School District
- Gene Stock – City of Sturgis
- Jan Swenson – Badlands Conservation Alliance

- Mike McEnroe – North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Mark Jacobsen opened the meeting at 8:00 am with:

- Housekeeping items
- Ground Rules
- Introductions
- Announced this was the last meeting for Martin Marchello & Ellen Reddick

RAC Member presentation: Kevin Forrester

- Discussion on the proposed Ft. Meade trails project. Motion made by Vernon Bleich that the BLM dedicate the resources to complete the Ft. Meade trails project; Debra Brown 2nd the motion and all voted in favor.
- Proposed land exchange/transfer on the school land by the high school: Bob Brown from Sturgis School District talked to the RAC about receiving several public comments from their meetings that were previously held.

BLM indicated that any land exchange that would involve BLM would have to be a grass roots effort led by the local community.

RAC Member presentation: Drew Combs

- Discussed the North Dakota High water mark/mineral estate status; problems with the Missouri River and land ownership issues were discussed. Drew discussed land and mineral estate swaps.
- State Representative Chris Harvey talked about the 4901 House Bill which is in Congress under consideration which will assist with land exchanges and transfers. There were some concerns voiced by various parties regarding the bill.
- Jan Swenson talked to the RAC about areas where there are still potential wilderness areas that need to be protected. Jan also talked about protecting these lands from mineral development; and about the potential for lands being transferred.
- Mike McEnroe from the North Dakota Wildlife Society talked about mineral rights exchanges and supports the concept and the Bill to protect these lands from mineral development. Some private wells (Madison) already exist on these lands; these are 20-30 years old.

RAC Member presentation: Bruce Bowman

- The MT/DKs statewide RAC Meeting report from Aug. 26 was discussed; a rancher in Nevada was brought up, along with wild horses. Discussion on issues on the process of getting RAC appointments approved, including issues due to not enough members attending the meetings. Discussed the Land Exchange at Pumpkin Creek in the Miles City Field Office with Eastern Montana RAC member Lance Kalfell. Also had some discussion on Sage grouse conservation in Montana.

RAC Member presentation: Kevin Forrester

- Talked about the possible reduction and restructuring of the RAC due to the 15-17 % BLM personnel reduction by 2017. Currently, there are four RAC's in the BLM Montana/Dakota's. The State Office is looking at options for RAC reconfiguration.
- Discussed some ideas: longer terms like 3-4 years per member; stay with the current 15 members on each RAC board; do more communication through emails, conference calls (The RAC will try one for the discussion on reconfiguring RACs in the next month). Some folks just like the face to face. Should try changing the voting procedures so that the RAC is not handicapped by the quorum requirements. Mark will setup Doodle pool and conference call link within the next month for a test run of a RAC conference call.
- Planning 2.0 issue: RACs need feedback from BLM managers to better explain the process. State Office 2.0 representative from the State office can be invited to be on the conference call and explain some of the process.

Public Comments:

- Gene Stock from Sturgis is thankful to the RAC and Kevin for supporting the trail system at Ft. Meade and the city will follow Kevin's lead on the cities trail system.
- Daniel Ainslie, City Manager of Sturgis supports the trails in the Ft. Meade area. Since the October 2013 storm it would be helpful if the BLM would have a speedier response in the cleanup of Bear Butte Creek.

USFS presentation: Babete Anderson

- There are concerns with USFS vacancies due to a variety of reasons; USFS is asking Senators to bring the OPM director to North Dakota to assist with these issues.
- Working on some implementation on vegetation projects, also working on the Sage grouse amendment.
- Working with the BLM on some pipeline projects and also working on a project at Lake Sakakawea for water development-- this will help with vehicle travel.
- Jorgen's Hollow campground proposal is underway with roads, fire pits and toilets.
- Working on getting partnerships/ volunteers to assist with projects.

BLM Briefings:

Rick Rymerson – North Dakota Field Manager

- An amendment for the plan on Sage grouse is ongoing; waiting for feedback from the recent Federal family meeting.
- Recruitment challenges remain but the NDFO staff has increased; positions are being approved but getting them filled remains difficult. Meeting with the OPM

Director on Friday, looking for an increased locality/retention pay for the area due to the cost of living.

- Patterson Lake Housing project moving along; it is for new employees until they get settled into a permanent home; possibly for 6 months to a year.
- U.S. Forest Service and the BLM are working together to fill positions that will work for both USFS and BLM due to their being co-located in one building.
- More pipelines are getting proposed for moving oil and gas across Lake Sakakawea.
- Have several coal applications pending; NDFO and the District will process these.

Carmen Drieling – Acting South Dakota Field Manager

Passed out list of items the field office is working on:

- Planning – Resource Management Plan
- Oil & Gas Leasing – Oct 2014 lease sale
- APD's/Sundry Notices – Continental Resources (2 APD's) and Z-Energy (1 Sundry Notice)
- Forestry – Summit Timber Sale –closing contract, Mountain Pine Beetle; Sheep tail Area (behind Deadwood/Lead) – ongoing contract, Exemption Area – Recon, marking trees.
- Range – Range Improvement Projects – Butte County (5 locations for livestock water), Meade County – Ft. Meade Fence Contract and Ft. Meade Pipeline Contract, Permits Transfers/Renewals – 7 transfers, 40 renewals (FY 15)
- Realty – Right of ways (ROW) 30 renewal and two are new.
- Fire & Fuels – Ft. Meade Prescribed Burn – North Unit (approximately 400 acres), Contracts – Fuels reduction/Healthy Lands (Old Stone Stewardship – Ft. Meade, Alkali & Bear Butte – Ft. Meade, Sugarloaf – in conjunction with National Wild Turkey Federation.
- Weeds – Weed agreements (Butte County – treated 65 acres, Meade County – treated 84 acres),
- SDFO Weed Summer Seasonals – treated 60 acres (Butte, Meade, Lawrence, Fall River)
- Recreation – Ft. Meade Recreation Area – preparing for fall (winterizing), Ft. Meade trails environmental Assessment (EA), Hazard tree removal.
- Mining – Abandon Mined lands Assessments.
- Solid Minerals – Moore Reclamation Plans – Bentonite.
- Locatable minerals – Dewey Burdock – working on Environmental Assessment (MCFO) and GCC Dakota Cement Limestone Mine Project.

Diane Friez – Eastern Montana/Dakotas District Manager

- New South Dakota Field Manager (Lori “Chip” Kimball) was chosen to replace Marian Atkins and her start date will be in November.

- Briefing on budget; initial report is that BLM Montana/Dakota's may be about \$3 million short for FY15, but the budget is still being refined. Currently working with other offices within the Montana/Dakotas to fill some vacant positions.

RAC Member Briefings:

Brandon Bestgen – Wanted to talk about what the city manager of Sturgis talked about - as a Sturgis City Council President. He was involved with the blizzard and the issue that city manager mentioned-- the BLM property that is adjacent to Sturgis-- the creek was flooding due to the massive runoff and there was a lot of fear that the trees in the creek would cause a flood.

Branden re-iterated that the Sturgis City Manager talked to someone in the Belle Fourche office and they stated they didn't have anyone to take care of it, which is the same problem as on the other side of Sturgis with the U.S. Forest Service. If this were to happen again it could be a big issue with Sturgis and the High School. On a different note, he extended a personal invitation to attend an oil & gas conference in Spearfish for free as his guest, let him know and he will get you the details.

Ray Gilbert - Talked about the perceived lack of funds but that the Secretary of the Interior is giving money to the tribes to adapt to climate change; this could save money by DOI not contributing these funds. He stated that there is a problem with State land and the BLM land; hunters aren't given access to cross private land to get to the BLM and State lands, and hunters need to ask permission of private land owners. This could be an education issue. He asked South Dakota State Fish & Game to put that on the licenses that they need to get permission from the land owner to get access. He wants the BLM to ask the hunters to ask the land owner for permission first, before they trespass.

Drew Combs - No further issues to report.

Martin Marchello - Talked about hunting issues and how can BLM make sure the oil companies are respecting the land and putting it back the way they found it?

Kevin Forrester - No further comments.

Bruce Bowman - Talked about bonding, and on hunting. Wild horse/burros issue: We (BLM) needs to update the process. He will write a proposal, email proposal to all RAC members and ask the RAC for their opinion on the proposal.

Vern Timmerman – Gave some horse issue comments. RAC reconfiguration comment was: "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", it only cost a little bit of money, but "not too much that we can't have the face to face meetings".

Vernon Bleich – Voiced his concern about domestic sheep on BLM lands and their interaction with native Bighorn sheep. Two years ago he also brought up this issue.

Received a message today about a virus that killed the Alberta sheep in South Dakota but it wasn't the same virus that killed the transplanted Montana sheep. His RAC Reconfiguration comment was that it's not broken, so nothing needs to be changed.

Debra Brown: Very relieved about having no fires in 2014; concern about noxious weeds in southern western Harding County.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.



Fort Meade Recreation Area

Proposed Trail System

June 6, 2014

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Black Hills Trails and its partners propose to develop a comprehensive trail system for use by the public. The trail system would use the designated road network and existing but currently unauthorized trails for transport as well as having some new single track construction connecting different segments. There would be a number of trails offering a range of difficulties, several staging areas, and associated infrastructure including signing, kiosks, and gates. Many existing trails are not requested to be included in the trail system due to issues with route sustainability.

The trail system is supported by the residents of the City of Sturgis. Sturgis as a gateway community to the recreation possibilities available on the Fort Meade Recreation Area is in the process of annexing through the Fort Meade Recreation Area to the east. This annexation will place portions of the area in-between the city limit boundaries.

The proposed trail system has received consistent support from local, regional, and national-user advocacy groups, economic development organizations, along with local city/county government. The proposed trail system has no known opposition at this time.

BACKGROUND

The 6,693-acre Fort Meade Recreation Area is notable for its place in western history. This popular area is a mix of forest and midgrass prairie on the eastern foothills of the Black Hills, adjacent to Sturgis, South Dakota, in Meade County. Fort George W. Meade was established in 1878 as a cavalry fort to protect the new settlements in the northern Black Hills, especially the nearby gold mining area around Deadwood. For most of the past 120 years, there has been some military presence at Fort Meade. Many cavalry and infantry units were stationed here, including the 7th Cavalry after the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the Buffalo soldiers of the 10th Cavalry, and the 4th Cavalry which saw the transition from horses to mechanization. Fort Meade still serves as a training site for the South Dakota National Guard and an Army National Guard Officer Candidate School. It continued to serve as a military post until 1944 when it became part of the Veterans Administration Hospital network. The original military reservation lands not needed for VA use were transferred to the BLM from Veterans Administration in the early 1960's. The attached General Development Plan Fort Meade Recreation Lands was submitted to the VA by the BLM during transfer negotiations. (figure 2, page 9).

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the project is to construct a designated trail system, offering users a variety of experiences and opportunities in a controlled and manageable setting. This would avoid future impacts, user conflicts and related problems, including new user-created trails. The need is to establish a trail system in an area that is currently underserved.

DESIRED OUTCOMES (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

- Public lands managed by the Belle Fourche Field Office provide a diverse array of benefits to the public, including economic, environmental, personal, and social opportunities.
- BLM policy (BLM Recreation Strategy, 2014 - 2019) is to develop and maintain cooperative relationships with national, state, and local recreation providers, tourism entities, and local recreational groups.
- BLM 1996 Fort Meade Recreation Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan directive to establish and maintain a system of marked equestrian, hiking, and biking trails through partnerships with user groups.
- BLM's goal is to develop and maintain appropriate recreational facilities, balancing public demand, protection of public land resources, and fiscal responsibility.
- The management direction is to emphasize and support collaborative public outreach, awareness events, and programs that promote public service and stewardship, and to encourage sustainable travel and tourism development with local communities and provide community-based conservation support for visitor service. The emphasis is placed on providing interpretive and informational signs and materials for public lands visitors, maintaining facilities to a high standard consistent with the recreational setting, and limiting development of additional facilities to those areas where public recreational use of surrounding public lands requires them.

PROPOSED ACTION

The site of the Proposed Action is on the BLMs Fort Meade Recreation Area east of Sturgis South Dakota, Meade County. See Figure 1 (page 8) for the location of specific routes which are requested.

The trail system would add 8.8 miles of mostly existing trail to the Fort Meade Recreation Area. The result would be a number of looping routes for touring of various distances and skill levels. There are a total 9 separate route sections. See Figure 1 (page 8) for specific routes.

Most of these routes are existing trails and some have been used by the public for some time as indicated by the Proposed General Development Plan (figure 2, page 9). Others are relatively newer. BLM has limited knowledge of specific construction dates or who built many of the trails since none were constructed under authorization. New construction is intended to improve safety and avoid resource concerns at specific locations or along portions of the trails.

1. The Grind (Fall 2014) would be approximately 1.26 miles long and would start by the Fort Meade Trailhead parking area and would be run to the top of Mount Meade. Some new construction would be required along this route due to previous version of user trails not being sustainable and recent logging activity.
2. The Gas Line (Spring 2015) would branch off from The Grind and run .5 miles on an

existing route down the Williston Basin Gas Pipeline access to the Upper Rim. Water bars are needed.

3. The Upper Rim (Spring 2015) starts at Old Stone Road and follows the southern exposure .94 miles on an existing route to the Turnaround Gate. There are three small areas requiring trail alignment adjustment to mitigate erosion.
4. Lower Rim (Spring 2015) starts at the Turnaround Gate and follows the southern exposure .68 miles on an existing route to the Centennial Trail near the Frog Pond.
5. The Turnaround Road (Spring 2015) Is a BLM access road that connects the top of Mount Meade to Centennial Trail. .89 miles
6. The Horse Jumps (Spring 2015) Connects the Centennial Trail near Alkali Creek Campground to the Centennial Trail near the Frog Pond. The existing route follows along the fence on the west side of the Calvary horse training jumps.
7. The Tile Plant (Spring 2015) Connects with City of Sturgis via section line access or if approved a railroad crossing, and connects to the Centennial Trail at Alkali Creek. This existing 1.28 mile route provides direct access from Sturgis. No trailhead is proposed and only trail access is proposed.
8. The Power Line (Spring 2015) uses an existing route 1.50 miles long that aligns with an existing utility corridor. The route connects Alkali Creek Trailhead to Old Stone Road.
9. The Fort Meade Reservoir (Fall 2015) is entirely new .75 mile construction and will connect the Fort Meade Reservoir to the Centennial Trail.
10. Old Stone Trailhead (Fall 2015) is at the top of the hill on Old Stone Road, and is accessed directly from Sturgis city limits. The existing parking area is already graveled and offers access to the trail system as well as "Sledding Hill". This access has been identified by the 1996 Fort Meade Recreation Area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan but has never been opened for such use.

All requested trails except for the Fort Meade Reservoir and the Old Stone Trailhead are existing at this time, but are not authorized. Appropriate treatments will enhance safety standards, and sustainability described below. The total impact is estimated at being at most < 11 acres (approximately 8.8 miles of trails X 10 foot width).

There are many additional routes that are not being requested to be included in the trail system. These routes are generally not sustainable without major reroutes and are located where travel habits will not generate need. See figure 1, Non-sustainable Existing Trails (page 8)

Construction Methods

Trail Network: The Proposed Action is to officially designate and improve to safety standards the existing trails depicted in Figure 1 (page 8). The trails would be designed for multiple non-motorized use. Design standards would maximize trail “flow” and natural hydrologic flow patterns. Construction is not anticipated on these routes but there may be some minor alterations such as liming of overhanging trees, installation of water bars, or short reroutes.

Any construction would be performed by hand construction by groups such as the Black Hills Trails, BLM staff, contractors, and volunteers. Hand crew construction would focus on sensitive sites such as stream crossings, steep drainages, rocky outcrops, sensitive wildlife habitat.

The trail corridor would be a width of up to 10 feet. In this corridor any standing brush or tree branches which might be hazardous to riders would be removed if unable to be pruned out of the way. No trees over 8 inches diameter would be cut. All stumps would be removed from, and immediately adjacent to, the trail bed. Branches extending over the trail would be cut no less than 10 feet above the trail bed.

Currently all of the proposed trails are in place, many with some form of water barring. These trails would be reviewed and monitored for accelerated erosion. Where problems currently exist, new water bars or grade reversals would be installed. In areas of new construction, water bars would be installed.

Trailhead Parking Area: The Existing Alkali Creek and Fort Meade trailheads would be utilized along with a new small trailhead and parking area at the west boundary of the Fort Meade Recreation Area along Old Stone Road at an existing entrance road to the network of designated roads and unauthorized trails described above. The proposed parking area would provide parking for no more than 5-6 vehicles, space sufficient for entrance, exit, and safe turning of vehicles into parking spaces. Trailhead facilities would consist of an information kiosk, perimeter fencing of a wooden pole and rail type, parking barriers. The parking area would also allow for City of Sturgis snow removal equipment to turnaround.

Signing at trailheads and along trails would provide safety messages and resource information such as multiple uses.

Timeline: Implementation of the initial trail system can be tentatively set for fall of 2014 for trail #1, spring 2015 for trails 2-8, and fall 2015 for 9-10. See figure 1(page 8) The supplies and equipment would be staged at previously disturbed lands at the entrance parking area, which is large enough to accommodate the equipment and supplies while still providing for ongoing use.

In subsequent years Black Hills Trails will continue to maintain the system and offer services to the BLM to correct erosion and alignment issues with the Centennial Trail.

Impact Mitigation Measures:

Trail Construction: These measures are incorporated into the Proposed Action to minimize potential impacts from the construction of the proposed trails

- 1) Trail tread construction would be limited to non-rain periods.
- 2) Disruption of natural hydrologic flow paths, including diversion of stream flow and interception of surface and subsurface flow would be minimized through trail design.
- 3) All construction tools or equipment would be inspected and cleaned of any plant parts capable of reproduction prior to entering the project area to minimize the introduction of invasive, non-native vegetation/plant species.
- 4) Any trail segments which cannot be used due to resource concerns would be closed, and camouflaged or barricaded to prevent further use.
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- 6) Retain vegetation around the periphery of the trailhead parking lots to provide as much shade as possible to discourage invasive, non-native plant invasion.
- 7) Discovery of Unrecorded Cultural or Paleontological Resources Protocol
 - a. The trail construction operators and users of the trails would immediately bring any objects or resources of cultural or paleontological value discovered as a result of trail use under this authorization to the attention of the authorized officer. The trail users would suspend all activities in the vicinity of such a discovery until notified to proceed by the authorized officer. If human remains are discovered or suspected the operator would suspend operations immediately, physically guard the area, and notify the BLM Billings Field Office immediately.
 - b. The trail users could be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing, altering, injuring, excavating, removing or destroying any historical or archaeological site, structure, building, or object on Federal lands.
 - c. The Authorized Officer will evaluate the discoveries brought to his/her attention, take action to protect or remove the resource, and allow trail use to proceed within 10 working days after notification to the Authorized Officer of such discovery. The decision as to the appropriate measures to mitigate adverse effects to cultural or paleontological resources will be made by the Authorized Officer.

Management and Use:

Trail Use: The proposed trails are designed as offering a range of difficulties, yet be challenging routes that combine quality scenery, a diversity of natural features, a fun trail experience and opportunity for physical exercise for all users. The trails would be open year-round for all types of non-motorized use. The trail is expected to be used intermittently during the winter months, although dry times between storms may afford good opportunities for use.

The BLM would monitor trail conditions frequently to assess potential erosion or trail rutting, inspect the function of drainage features, and stream crossings, and to detect any unauthorized motorized use on the trails. If unforeseen impacts, particularly sediment movement begin to occur during the wet season, then a seasonal closure would be an option to prevent erosion. Monitoring would also help determine trail maintenance needs.

Rustic trail signs would be placed at all trail junctions and limited marking will be placed along trail corridors. These signs would provide directional orientation, trail numbering, and distance indication. Off Highway Vehicle restrictions would be posted at appropriate locations, and gates or barriers would be installed as “filters” for deterring motorized vehicle traffic.

Trailhead kiosks will include maps for the trail system. Printed maps will be available at trailheads and through the Black Hills Trails web site. Map data will be available for all non-commercial use.

Parking Area use: The proposed trailhead parking area would be utilized for parking by users of the Fort Meade Recreation Area trail system and for any other visitors to these public lands. (These lands are currently used by other recreationists as well as trail users). Overnight use would not be permitted. Trail information, interpretation, and regulations, including the Discovery of Unrecorded Cultural or Paleontological Resources protocol, would be posted on a standard Belle Fourche Field Office trailhead kiosk.

Information regarding the trail system including general description, length, level of difficulty, trailhead parking areas, sensitive resources, etc. would be included in the Black Hills Trails web page, trail description interpretive displays at both of the proposed improved Trailhead parking areas.

Trail Maintenance and Impact Minimization measures: BLM has developed partnerships with local trail enthusiasts to help maintain and promote appropriate use of the trail. BLM staff, Black Hills Trails crews, and seasonal employees would also perform trail maintenance (brushing, log outs, tread repair, etc.). The majority of trail maintenance would be accomplished utilizing non-motorized hand tools only. In the event of maintenance requiring motorized equipment, such as chainsaws, or repairs greater in extent than routine maintenance the following impact minimization measures would be incorporated:

- 1) Maintenance and repair work involving movement of soil would be limited to non-rain periods, except remedial repairs to drainage features.
- 2) Maintenance and repair work would incorporate all other impact minimization measures as those specified for trail construction.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The Fort Meade Recreation area many diverse uses. The development of the Fort Meade Recreation Area trail system will not adversely affect these diverse uses. All current use will continue with no change and the possibility exists to benefit other use. Archery hunters unfamiliar with the network of user created trails will be better prepared to choose their locations by viewing maps made available to them through various sources. BLM fire management will be able to utilize these maintained trails as fire breaks.

Livestock grazing is currently approved annually, and embraced by trail users. Trail user experience is enhanced after pastures are grazed. The Fort Meade Recreation Area is currently a popular recreation location, and has been for some time. Current uses and use levels and have resulted in few documented conflicts between livestock and the recreationalists in the past.

Figure 1: Map of Proposed Trail System

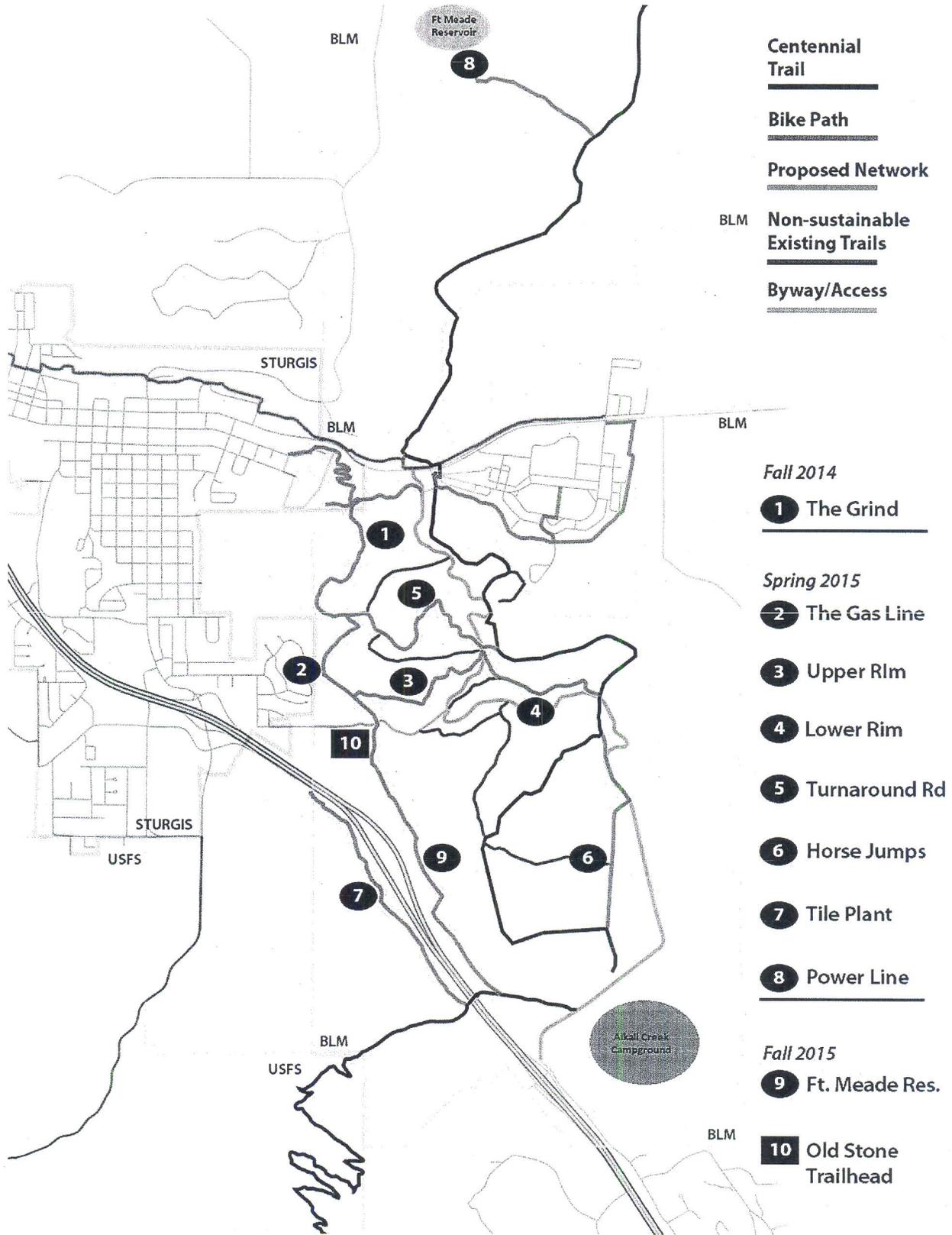
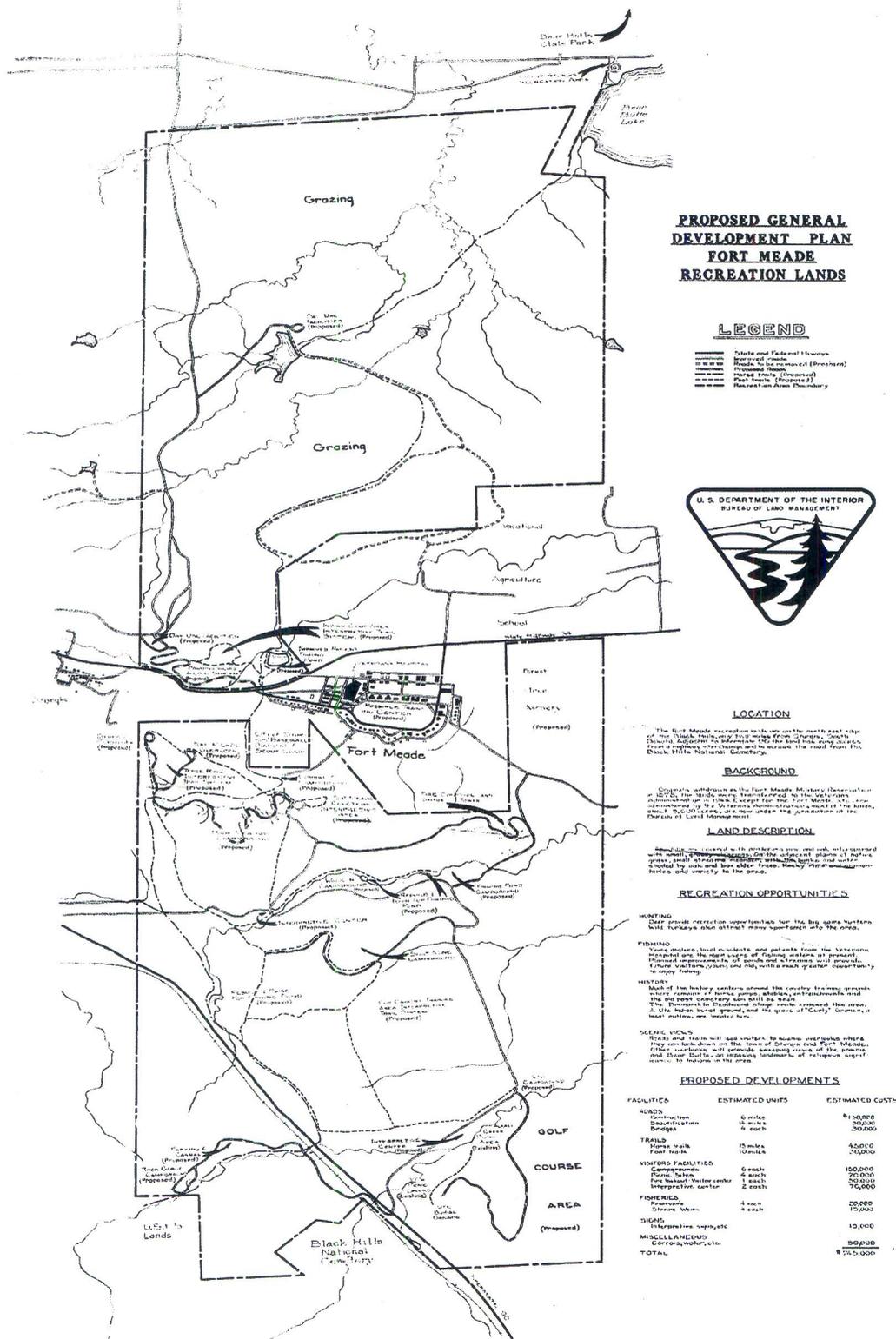


Figure 2: Proposed General Development Plan Fort Meade Recreation Area Lands



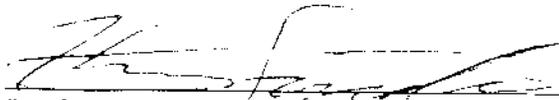
**Dakotas Resource Advisory Council
Resolution 2014-002**

Purpose: To support the Fort Meade Recreation Area Proposed Trail System.

Resolution: The Dakotas RAC supports the Black Hills Trails, Fort Meade Recreation Area Trail System Proposal, and requests that the BLM initiate necessary procedures to implement the project.



North Dakota Chair, Dakotas Resource Advisory Council



South Dakota Chair, Dakotas Resource Advisory Council



Date

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Missoula	150,000 surface acres	200,000 subsurface mineral acres
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RAC Area of Responsibility

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Western MT RAC

Lewistown, Malta, Havre, Glasgow, Missoula, Dillon, Butte

4.5 million Surface Acres 9.9 million Subsurface Mineral Acres



Bureau of Land Management

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council

Central Montana District Office, 920 NE Main, Lewistown MT 59457

Chairperson
Clive Rooney

Lewistown, MT
59457

Vice Chairperson
Dana Darlington

Members include:
Damien Austin
Jason Birdwell
Troy Blunt
Wayne Fairchild
Mary Jones
Ralph Knapp
Dan Kluck
Jim McCollum
Ron Poertner
Dave Reinhardt
Nick Schultz
Hugo Tureck

**BLM Central Montana Resource Advisory Council
Resolution 2014-002**

Purpose:

To endorse BLM Director Kornze's proposal to revamp the BLM's planning process

The Central Montana RAC endorses Director Kornze's proposal to revamp the BLM's planning process. As part of this effort, BLM should recognize the current amount of staff time dedicated to planning is excessive.

Chair, Central Montana Resource Advisory Council

5-27-14

Date

cc: Central Montana RAC members
District Managers

Bureau of Land Management – Montana/Dakotas

Options for RAC Reconfiguration

September 4, 2014

The BLM Montana/Dakotas has four RACs: Western Montana, Central Montana, Eastern Montana, and Dakotas. Each year the terms of about one third of the 15-member councils expire, and members occasionally resign for personal reasons before their terms expire. Recruiting enough qualified candidates to fill these vacated positions has become increasingly difficult.

In 2013, all four RACs required three nomination periods to gather enough qualified candidates to fill their vacancies. Frequently there are an insufficient number of qualified alternate candidates. Before the final appointments were made, the terms of the outgoing members had expired and each RAC was forced to cancel at least one meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Before the 2014 nomination period, the State Director and Associate State Director determined that if any of our RACs again required three nomination periods, we would explore the possibility of reconfiguration.

Although the Eastern Montana and Dakotas RACs received enough qualified candidates after only one nomination period this year, the Western and Central Montana RACs conducted three rounds of nominations in 2014.

The following chart lists some options.

OPTION		PROs	CONS
1	Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short term, no further action required. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to recruit enough candidates. • Difficult to get a quorum; three members must show up from each category. • Inefficient/ineffective use of BLM staff and RAC member time. • Unsustainable with shrinking BLM staff & budget
2	Keep 4 RACs but reduce council membership (ex., from 15 to 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Less funding needed for meetings. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get a quorum with only 3 per category; two members must show up from each category. • No deciding vote available in tie vote • Workload remains with 4 RACs; difficult with shrinking BLM staff & budget
3	Keep 15 members but increase term length to four years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed members in place longer • Fewer vacancies to fill annually. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No precedence, even in other states. • Complex logistics of switching from 3-year terms. • Longer commitment for members.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload remains with 4 RACs; difficult with shrinking BLM staff & budget
4	Reconfigure to 3 RACs (Western Montana, Central Montana, and Eastern Montana/Dakotas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • Narrows span of control/issues/topics. • Groups similar landscapes and topics. • Varied and dynamic issues to address. • Fewer RAC members would reduce related costs and workload for EMDD. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May still be difficult to fill vacancies. • Larger geographic area for EM/DKs RAC.
5	Reconfigure to 2 RACs (Montana and Dakotas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • May attract candidates interested in variety of multiple-use challenges. • Fewer RAC members would reduce related costs and workload. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic area for Montana RAC. • Members must be fluent on and willing to engage in a wider range of issues/topics. • Increased travel distances/costs for meetings. (However, fewer members would be traveling.) • Would be essential that members have broadened commitment to all categories.
6	Reconfigure to 2 RACs (Western/Central Montana and Eastern Montana/Dakotas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • May attract candidates interested in variety of multiple-use challenges. • Varied and dynamic issues to address. • Less RAC members would reduce related costs and workload. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic areas. • Members may be reluctant to address issues not in their own localities. • Different issues in different geographical areas. • Increased travel distances for meetings. • Essential that members have broadened commitment to all categories.
7	Reconfigure to 1 RAC; use subgroups extensively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • May attract candidates interested in variety of multiple-use challenges. • Varied and dynamic issues to address. • Fewer RAC members would reduce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic areas. • Wider span of issues; lose some local knowledge. • Subgroup non-RAC members aren't paid per diem; interested individuals may be difficult to recruit. • Meetings could turn into briefing sessions, which members don't seem

		<p>related costs and workload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<p>to like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased travel distances for meetings. • Would be essential that members have broadened commitment to all categories.
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**Any change in RAC configuration will require thorough outreach to governors, stakeholders, the public, etc.*

Requirements for Reconfiguration:

Reconfiguring the number of RACs and the areas they serve would require several pieces of documentation.

1. Justification
2. Membership balance plan
3. Draft charter
4. Briefing paper
5. *Federal Register* notice

With State Director approval, the entire package would be submitted to Lauren Luckey, National Advisory Committee Coordinator, who would route it through General Law, the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Committee Management Officer (CMO), Ethics, and finally, the Department. If all concur and the proposal satisfies FACA regulations and GSA guidelines, Lauren will prepare a transmittal memo for approval from the Director.

The State Director has visited with the chairs/co-chairs and Designated Federal Officer about the possible reconfiguration.

Prior to implementation, we would need to notify current RAC members personally and issue a news release announcing the decision. Current members would have to reapply for appointment to a newly established committee. Current RAC charters expire on January 3, 2016, so the BLM Montana/Dakotas is taking steps now to inform the State Director's decision in the coming months.

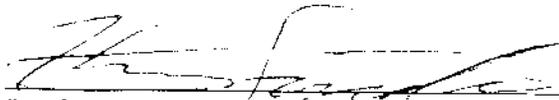
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Fort Meade Recreation Area

Proposed Trail System

June 6, 2014

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Black Hills Trails and its partners propose to develop a comprehensive trail system for use by the public. The trail system would use the designated road network and existing but currently unauthorized trails for transport as well as having some new single track construction connecting different segments. There would be a number of trails offering a range of difficulties, several staging areas, and associated infrastructure including signing, kiosks, and gates. Many existing trails are not requested to be included in the trail system due to issues with route sustainability.

The trail system is supported by the residents of the City of Sturgis. Sturgis as a gateway community to the recreation possibilities available on the Fort Meade Recreation Area is in the process of annexing through the Fort Meade Recreation Area to the east. This annexation will place portions of the area in-between the city limit boundaries.

The proposed trail system has received consistent support from local, regional, and national-user advocacy groups, economic development organizations, along with local city/county government. The proposed trail system has no known opposition at this time.

BACKGROUND

The 6,693-acre Fort Meade Recreation Area is notable for its place in western history. This popular area is a mix of forest and midgrass prairie on the eastern foothills of the Black Hills, adjacent to Sturgis, South Dakota, in Meade County. Fort George W. Meade was established in 1878 as a cavalry fort to protect the new settlements in the northern Black Hills, especially the nearby gold mining area around Deadwood. For most of the past 120 years, there has been some military presence at Fort Meade. Many cavalry and infantry units were stationed here, including the 7th Cavalry after the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the Buffalo soldiers of the 10th Cavalry, and the 4th Cavalry which saw the transition from horses to mechanization. Fort Meade still serves as a training site for the South Dakota National Guard and an Army National Guard Officer Candidate School. It continued to serve as a military post until 1944 when it became part of the Veterans Administration Hospital network. The original military reservation lands not needed for VA use were transferred to the BLM from Veterans Administration in the early 1960's. The attached General Development Plan Fort Meade Recreation Lands was submitted to the VA by the BLM during transfer negotiations. (figure 2, page 9).

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the project is to construct a designated trail system, offering users a variety of experiences and opportunities in a controlled and manageable setting. This would avoid future impacts, user conflicts and related problems, including new user-created trails. The need is to establish a trail system in an area that is currently underserved.

DESIRED OUTCOMES (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

- Public lands managed by the Belle Fourche Field Office provide a diverse array of benefits to the public, including economic, environmental, personal, and social opportunities.
- BLM policy (BLM Recreation Strategy, 2014 - 2019) is to develop and maintain cooperative relationships with national, state, and local recreation providers, tourism entities, and local recreational groups.
- BLM 1996 Fort Meade Recreation Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan directive to establish and maintain a system of marked equestrian, hiking, and biking trails through partnerships with user groups.
- BLM's goal is to develop and maintain appropriate recreational facilities, balancing public demand, protection of public land resources, and fiscal responsibility.
- The management direction is to emphasize and support collaborative public outreach, awareness events, and programs that promote public service and stewardship, and to encourage sustainable travel and tourism development with local communities and provide community-based conservation support for visitor service. The emphasis is placed on providing interpretive and informational signs and materials for public lands visitors, maintaining facilities to a high standard consistent with the recreational setting, and limiting development of additional facilities to those areas where public recreational use of surrounding public lands requires them.

PROPOSED ACTION

The site of the Proposed Action is on the BLMs Fort Meade Recreation Area east of Sturgis South Dakota, Meade County. See Figure 1 (page 8) for the location of specific routes which are requested.

The trail system would add 8.8 miles of mostly existing trail to the Fort Meade Recreation Area. The result would be a number of looping routes for touring of various distances and skill levels. There are a total 9 separate route sections. See Figure 1 (page 8) for specific routes.

Most of these routes are existing trails and some have been used by the public for some time as indicated by the Proposed General Development Plan (figure 2, page 9). Others are relatively newer. BLM has limited knowledge of specific construction dates or who built many of the trails since none were constructed under authorization. New construction is intended to improve safety and avoid resource concerns at specific locations or along portions of the trails.

1. The Grind (Fall 2014) would be approximately 1.26 miles long and would start by the Fort Meade Trailhead parking area and would be run to the top of Mount Meade. Some new construction would be required along this route due to previous version of user trails not being sustainable and recent logging activity.
2. The Gas Line (Spring 2015) would branch off from The Grind and run .5 miles on an

existing route down the Williston Basin Gas Pipeline access to the Upper Rim. Water bars are needed.

3. The Upper Rim (Spring 2015) starts at Old Stone Road and follows the southern exposure .94 miles on an existing route to the Turnaround Gate. There are three small areas requiring trail alignment adjustment to mitigate erosion.
4. Lower Rim (Spring 2015) starts at the Turnaround Gate and follows the southern exposure .68 miles on an existing route to the Centennial Trail near the Frog Pond.
5. The Turnaround Road (Spring 2015) Is a BLM access road that connects the top of Mount Meade to Centennial Trail. .89 miles
6. The Horse Jumps (Spring 2015) Connects the Centennial Trail near Alkali Creek Campground to the Centennial Trail near the Frog Pond. The existing route follows along the fence on the west side of the Calvary horse training jumps.
7. The Tile Plant (Spring 2015) Connects with City of Sturgis via section line access or if approved a railroad crossing, and connects to the Centennial Trail at Alkali Creek. This existing 1.28 mile route provides direct access from Sturgis. No trailhead is proposed and only trail access is proposed.
8. The Power Line (Spring 2015) uses an existing route 1.50 miles long that aligns with an existing utility corridor. The route connects Alkali Creek Trailhead to Old Stone Road.
9. The Fort Meade Reservoir (Fall 2015) is entirely new .75 mile construction and will connect the Fort Meade Reservoir to the Centennial Trail.
10. Old Stone Trailhead (Fall 2015) is at the top of the hill on Old Stone Road, and is accessed directly from Sturgis city limits. The existing parking area is already graveled and offers access to the trail system as well as "Sledding Hill". This access has been identified by the 1996 Fort Meade Recreation Area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan but has never been opened for such use.

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 - a. The trail construction operators and users of the trails would immediately bring any objects or resources of cultural or paleontological value discovered as a result of trail use under this authorization to the attention of the authorized officer. The trail users would suspend all activities in the vicinity of such a discovery until notified to proceed by the authorized officer. If human remains are discovered or suspected the operator would suspend operations immediately, physically guard the area, and notify the BLM Billings Field Office immediately.
 - b. The trail users could be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing, altering, injuring, excavating, removing or destroying any historical or archaeological site, structure, building, or object on Federal lands.
 - c. The Authorized Officer will evaluate the discoveries brought to his/her attention, take action to protect or remove the resource, and allow trail use to proceed within 10 working days after notification to the Authorized Officer of such discovery. The decision as to the appropriate measures to mitigate adverse effects to cultural or paleontological resources will be made by the Authorized Officer.

Management and Use:

Trail Use: The proposed trails are designed as offering a range of difficulties, yet be challenging routes that combine quality scenery, a diversity of natural features, a fun trail experience and opportunity for physical exercise for all users. The trails would be open year-round for all types of non-motorized use. The trail is expected to be used intermittently during the winter months, although dry times between storms may afford good opportunities for use.

The BLM would monitor trail conditions frequently to assess potential erosion or trail rutting, inspect the function of drainage features, and stream crossings, and to detect any unauthorized motorized use on the trails. If unforeseen impacts, particularly sediment movement begin to occur during the wet season, then a seasonal closure would be an option to prevent erosion. Monitoring would also help determine trail maintenance needs.

Rustic trail signs would be placed at all trail junctions and limited marking will be placed along trail corridors. These signs would provide directional orientation, trail numbering, and distance indication. Off Highway Vehicle restrictions would be posted at appropriate locations, and gates or barriers would be installed as “filters” for deterring motorized vehicle traffic.

Trailhead kiosks will include maps for the trail system. Printed maps will be available at trailheads and through the Black Hills Trails web site. Map data will be available for all non-commercial use.

Parking Area use: The proposed trailhead parking area would be utilized for parking by users of the Fort Meade Recreation Area trail system and for any other visitors to these public lands. (These lands are currently used by other recreationists as well as trail users). Overnight use would not be permitted. Trail information, interpretation, and regulations, including the Discovery of Unrecorded Cultural or Paleontological Resources protocol, would be posted on a standard Belle Fourche Field Office trailhead kiosk.

Information regarding the trail system including general description, length, level of difficulty, trailhead parking areas, sensitive resources, etc. would be included in the Black Hills Trails web page, trail description interpretive displays at both of the proposed improved Trailhead parking areas.

Trail Maintenance and Impact Minimization measures: BLM has developed partnerships with local trail enthusiasts to help maintain and promote appropriate use of the trail. BLM staff, Black Hills Trails crews, and seasonal employees would also perform trail maintenance (brushing, log outs, tread repair, etc.). The majority of trail maintenance would be accomplished utilizing non-motorized hand tools only. In the event of maintenance requiring motorized equipment, such as chainsaws, or repairs greater in extent than routine maintenance the following impact minimization measures would be incorporated:

- 1) Maintenance and repair work involving movement of soil would be limited to non-rain periods, except remedial repairs to drainage features.
- 2) Maintenance and repair work would incorporate all other impact minimization measures as those specified for trail construction.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The Fort Meade Recreation area many diverse uses. The development of the Fort Meade Recreation Area trail system will not adversely affect these diverse uses. All current use will continue with no change and the possibility exists to benefit other use. Archery hunters unfamiliar with the network of user created trails will be better prepared to choose their locations by viewing maps made available to them through various sources. BLM fire management will be able to utilize these maintained trails as fire breaks.

Livestock grazing is currently approved annually, and embraced by trail users. Trail user experience is enhanced after pastures are grazed. The Fort Meade Recreation Area is currently a popular recreation location, and has been for some time. Current uses and use levels and have resulted in few documented conflicts between livestock and the recreationalists in the past.

Figure 1: Map of Proposed Trail System

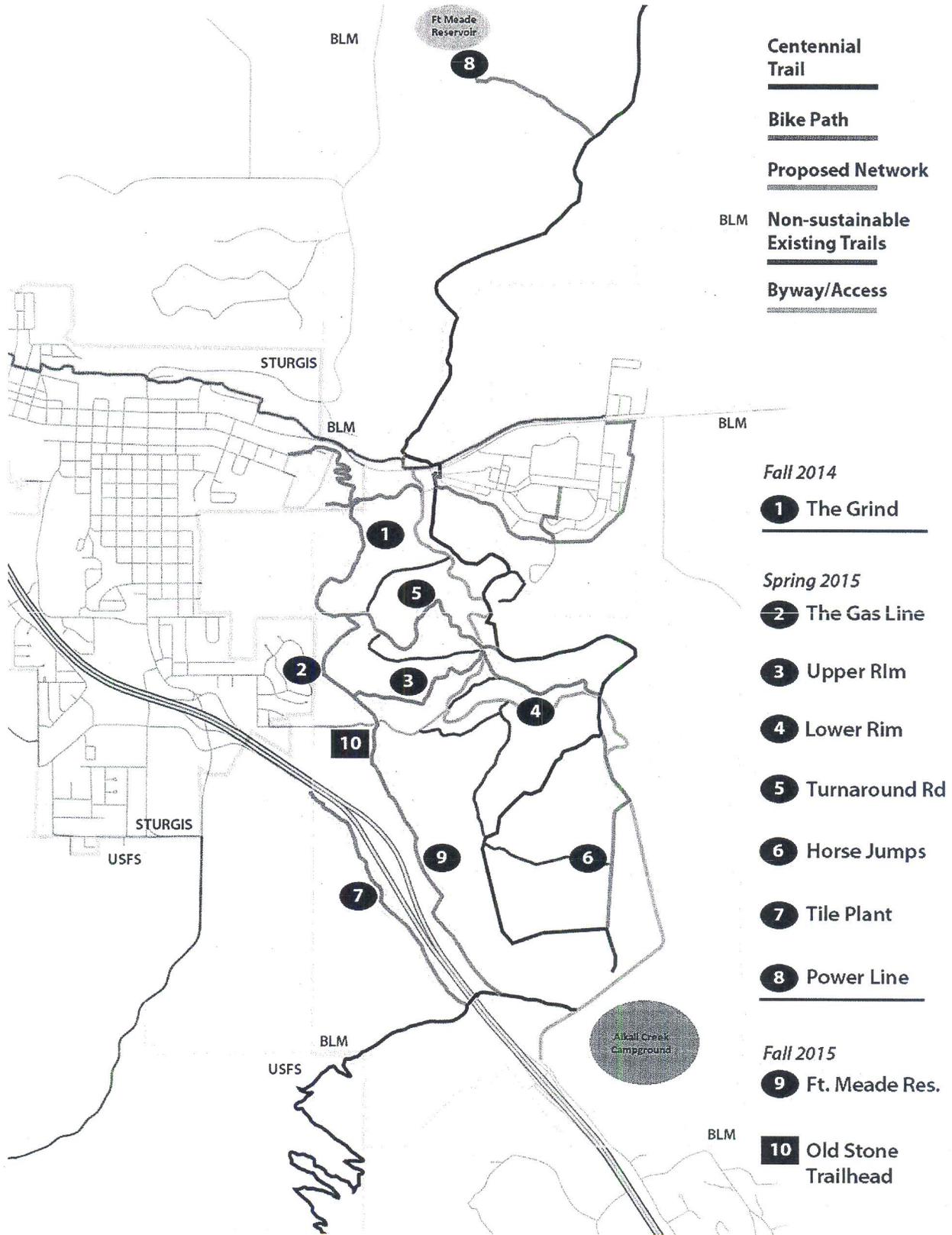
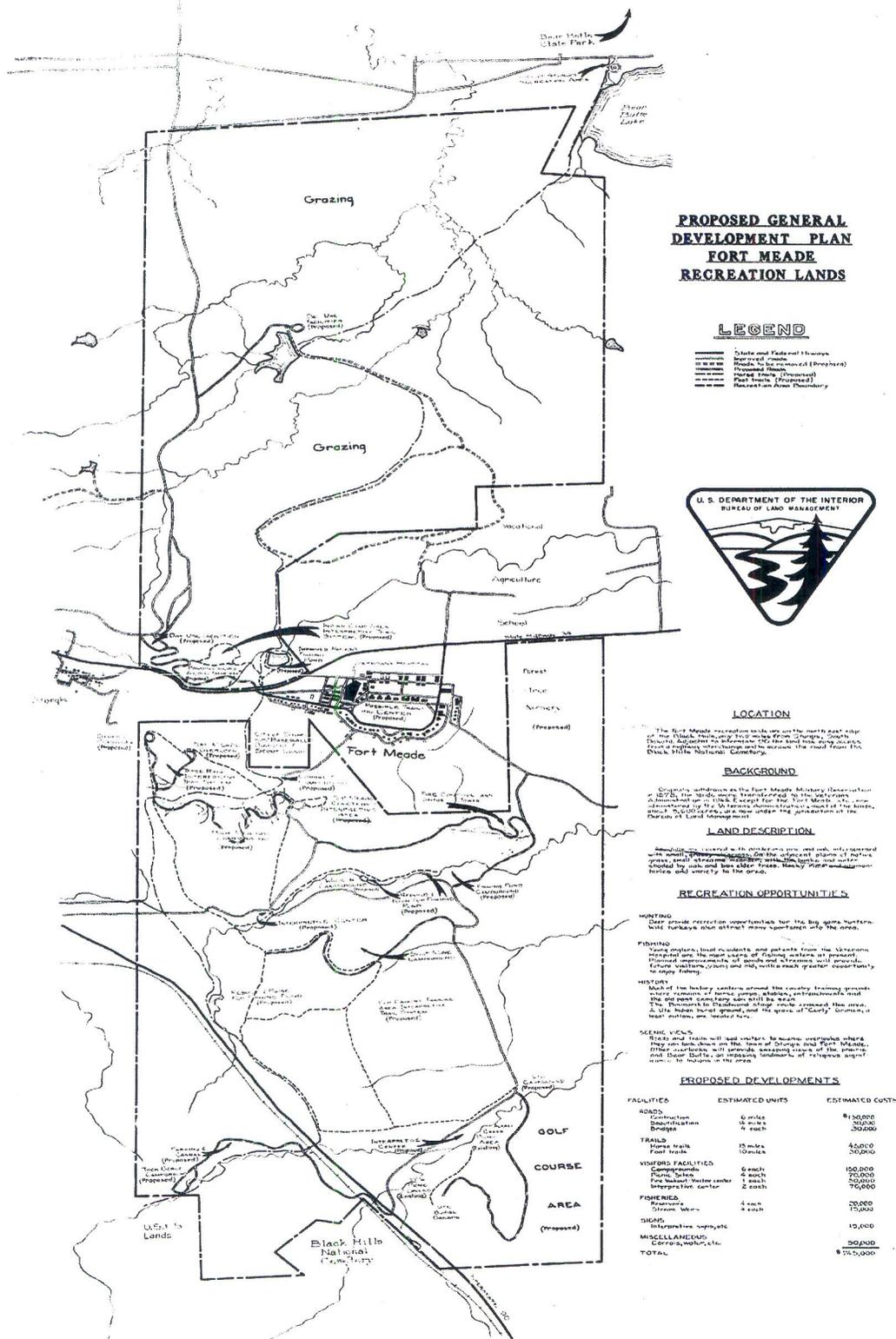


Figure 2: Proposed General Development Plan Fort Meade Recreation Area Lands





Bureau of Land Management

Central Montana Resource Advisory Council

Central Montana District Office, 920 NE Main, Lewistown MT 59457

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Clive Rooney

Lewistown, MT
59457

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Dave Reinhardt
Nick Schultz
Hugo Tureck

**BLM Central Montana Resource Advisory Council
Resolution 2014-002**

Purpose:

To endorse BLM Director Kornze's proposal to revamp the BLM's planning process

The Central Montana RAC endorses Director Kornze's proposal to revamp the BLM's planning process. As part of this effort, BLM should recognize the current amount of staff time dedicated to planning is excessive.

Chair, Central Montana Resource Advisory Council

5-27-14

Date

cc: Central Montana RAC members
District Managers

Bureau of Land Management – Montana/Dakotas Options for RAC Reconfiguration

September 4, 2014

The BLM Montana/Dakotas has four RACs: Western Montana, Central Montana, Eastern Montana, and Dakotas. Each year the terms of about one third of the 15-member councils expire, and members occasionally resign for personal reasons before their terms expire. Recruiting enough qualified candidates to fill these vacated positions has become increasingly difficult.

In 2013, all four RACs required three nomination periods to gather enough qualified candidates to fill their vacancies. Frequently there are an insufficient number of qualified alternate candidates. Before the final appointments were made, the terms of the outgoing members had expired and each RAC was forced to cancel at least one meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Before the 2014 nomination period, the State Director and Associate State Director determined that if any of our RACs again required three nomination periods, we would explore the possibility of reconfiguration.

Although the Eastern Montana and Dakotas RACs received enough qualified candidates after only one nomination period this year, the Western and Central Montana RACs conducted three rounds of nominations in 2014.

The following chart lists some options.

OPTION		PROs	CONS
1	Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short term, no further action required. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to recruit enough candidates. • Difficult to get a quorum; three members must show up from each category. • Inefficient/ineffective use of BLM staff and RAC member time. • Unsustainable with shrinking BLM staff & budget
2	Keep 4 RACs but reduce council membership (ex., from 15 to 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Less funding needed for meetings. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get a quorum with only 3 per category; two members must show up from each category. • No deciding vote available in tie vote • Workload remains with 4 RACs; difficult with shrinking BLM staff & budget
3	Keep 15 members but increase term length to four years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed members in place longer • Fewer vacancies to fill annually. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No precedence, even in other states. • Complex logistics of switching from 3-year terms. • Longer commitment for members.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload remains with 4 RACs; difficult with shrinking BLM staff & budget
4	Reconfigure to 3 RACs (Western Montana, Central Montana, and Eastern Montana/Dakotas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • Narrows span of control/issues/topics. • Groups similar landscapes and topics. • Varied and dynamic issues to address. • Fewer RAC members would reduce related costs and workload for EMDD. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May still be difficult to fill vacancies. • Larger geographic area for EM/DKs RAC.
5	Reconfigure to 2 RACs (Montana and Dakotas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • May attract candidates interested in variety of multiple-use challenges. • Fewer RAC members would reduce related costs and workload. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic area for Montana RAC. • Members must be fluent on and willing to engage in a wider range of issues/topics. • Increased travel distances/costs for meetings. (However, fewer members would be traveling.) • Would be essential that members have broadened commitment to all categories.
6	Reconfigure to 2 RACs (Western/Central Montana and Eastern Montana/Dakotas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • May attract candidates interested in variety of multiple-use challenges. • Varied and dynamic issues to address. • Less RAC members would reduce related costs and workload. • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic areas. • Members may be reluctant to address issues not in their own localities. • Different issues in different geographical areas. • Increased travel distances for meetings. • Essential that members have broadened commitment to all categories.
7	Reconfigure to 1 RAC; use subgroups extensively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer vacancies to fill. • Broader pool of candidates. • May attract candidates interested in variety of multiple-use challenges. • Varied and dynamic issues to address. • Fewer RAC members would reduce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger geographic areas. • Wider span of issues; lose some local knowledge. • Subgroup non-RAC members aren't paid per diem; interested individuals may be difficult to recruit. • Meetings could turn into briefing sessions, which members don't seem

		<p>related costs and workload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor nomination review process remains as is. 	<p>to like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased travel distances for meetings. • Would be essential that members have broadened commitment to all categories.
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**Any change in RAC configuration will require thorough outreach to governors, stakeholders, the public, etc.*

Requirements for Reconfiguration:

Reconfiguring the number of RACs and the areas they serve would require several pieces of documentation.

1. Justification
2. Membership balance plan
3. Draft charter
4. Briefing paper
5. *Federal Register* notice

With State Director approval, the entire package would be submitted to Lauren Luckey, National Advisory Committee Coordinator, who would route it through General Law, the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Committee Management Officer (CMO), Ethics, and finally, the Department. If all concur and the proposal satisfies FACA regulations and GSA guidelines, Lauren will prepare a transmittal memo for approval from the Director.

The State Director has visited with the chairs/co-chairs and Designated Federal Officer about the possible reconfiguration.

Prior to implementation, we would need to notify current RAC members personally and issue a news release announcing the decision. Current members would have to reapply for appointment to a newly established committee. Current RAC charters expire on January 3, 2016, so the BLM Montana/Dakotas is taking steps now to inform the State Director's decision in the coming months.