

## Final Meeting Minutes

### Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

March 30 & 31, 2011

Carson City, Nevada

#### I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

8:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 30, 2011 – meeting was called to order by Will Roger Peterson with the following members of the RAC present:

##### SIERRA FRONT – NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

<b>COUNCIL MEMBER</b>	<b>RESOURCE/EXPERTISE</b>	<b>3/30-31/2011</b>
<i>Mark Freese</i>	State Agency	X
<i>Jim Billingsley</i>	Elected Official	
<i>Mathew Gingerich</i>	Transportation/ROWs	X
<i>Thomas Burton</i>	Native Americans	
<i>Michael P. Drews</i>	Public-At-Large	X
<i>Tim Dufurrena</i>	Livestock Permittee	X
<i>Dennis Laybourn</i>	Mining	X
<i>Charles Matton</i>	Wild Horses & Burros	X
<i>William Molini</i>	Wildlife	X
<i>Ernest Paine</i>	Livestock Permittee	X
<i>Will Roger Peterson – (Chair)</i>	Recreation	X
<i>Deborah Lassiter</i>	Energy/Minerals	X
<i>David Von Seggern</i>	Environment	X
<i>D. Craig Young</i>	Archaeology	
<i>Dr. Tamzen Stringham</i>	Academic	X

**BLM Staff Present: Gene Seidlitz, Chris McAlear, Lisa Ross, Mark Struble, Bryant Smith, Linda Kelly, Joe Tague (NSO), Raul Morales (NSO).**

**Public Present: Matt Tuma, Senator Reid's Office. Terri Pereira, Churchill County Planning Department.**

**II. Summary of Motions Other Than to Approve Minutes**

1. Willie Molini made the motion to approve the letter drafted to Secretary Salazar, by the Black Rock Subgroup, regarding the BLM's national wild horse and burro strategy with suggested changes. Chuck seconded. The motion passed.
2. Tamzen Stringham made the motion that the RAC send a letter to the UNR president expressing their concern of the decision to close the College of Agriculture, along with other departments. Willie seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

**III. Welcome & Introductions**

Will Peterson welcomed all.

**IV. Minutes from January meeting in Sparks, Nevada**

Chuck Matton made the motion to approve the minutes. Willie seconded. The motion passed.

**V. RAC Subgroup Reports**

- **Black Rock Subgroup** –Will Rogers  
Will Peterson reported that the RAC subgroup met two weeks ago in Reno. He presented the letter written by the subgroup regarding the BLM's wild horse and burro strategy. See motion above.
- **Wild Horse and Burro Subgroup** – Chuck Matton  
Chuck Matton reported that the Legislature passed Assembly Bill AB 329.

**VI. District Manager Reports**

**Carson City: Chris McAlear, DM – See DM report.**

**Winnemucca: Gene Seidlitz, DM – See DM report.**

**VII. Landscape Approach/Land Health Assessments – Joe Tague, NVSO**

Land health assessments will determine what and where action is needed to meet land health standards. The process will include project panning to determine treatment areas and methods of treatment. There will be project implementation on the ground and monitoring to determine if project goals were met and to adapt if not. Landscape focus project areas must be 200,000 acres or more. A 3-5 year program of work will be developed for each area. It is

critical to work across ownership and jurisdictional boundaries to be effective at the landscape level. The focus of current land health assessments will be sage grouse habitat and renewable energy areas. This effort is in partnership with Great Basin Institute. Data collected will be consistent across Nevada. Each BLM District will identify an area and there will be assessment teams on each district. The tentative completion date is February 2012.

**VIII. Geothermal Program Overview – Carla James, CCDO**

Geothermal resources are treated as mineral rights under federal law. Federal law, does not preempt state water law. Geothermal development is regulated by the Nevada Division of Minerals. The State Engineer regulates permitting of ground water. The four steps of geothermal development include: Geophysical exploration, Exploration drilling, Utilization and production, Reclamation and abandonment. Nevada currently has 552 geothermal leases which comprises over 1.1 million acres. Competitive lease sales have generated over \$50 million for 235 leases, totaling 684,158 acres as of July 2007. There are seven active exploration projects undergoing NEPA analysis on BLM managed lands.

**IX. Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) – Robert Wandel, SNDO – (Round 12 Nominations)**

The public comment period for Round 12 nominations will end on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Recommendations will be decided in June and the package will be ready for the Secretary in August. 52% of SNPLMA funds will go to federal agencies in 2011. The eligibility criteria have been tightened and the total requested is approximately 29 million. The potential exist that they may have to skip a round because of fund availability. Comments should be sent to Acting State Director, Amy Lueders or [snpma@blm.gov](mailto:snpma@blm.gov).

**X. LiDAR (Optical Remote-Sensing Technology) – Jim Carter, CCDO**

LiDAR is optical remote sensing of a distant target. A video of the Hidden Cave using Lidar was shown. Hidden Cave receives approximately 1500 visitors a year.

**XI. Impacts to Proposed Wind Energy Projects – Steve Abele, USFWS**

Since publication of the Eagle Rule, the planned development of wind-power facilities has increased dramatically. Golden Eagles, in particular are vulnerable to collisions with wind turbines. In some areas collisions are a major source of mortality. Options to reduce bird mortality are being explored. The service doesn't have permits, but has the Eagle Conservation Plan. The draft Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance explains the Service's approach to issuing programmatic eagle take permits and provides guidance to applicants and biologists for conservation practices and management necessary to meet

standards required for the permits. This all is in compliance with the Eagle Act. The guidelines close May 2001 for public comment, then will come out in draft form.

**XII. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – There were no public comments.**

**XIII. Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.**

**XIV. Thursday, March 31 – Field Tour -** Grimes Point Archaeological Site/U.S. Highway 50 Rest Stop & Brief Overview for Discussion of Salt Wells Energy Projects. Draft EIS/NV Historic Marker Dedication for Pony Express Trail at Salt Wells/ENEL Salt Wells Geothermal Power Plant. Lunch back at Grimes Point with discussion on BLM Wildlands Policy. Tour of Hidden Cave completed the field tour. No RAC motions were made during the field tour.

**XVIII. Discussions other than agenda items.**

Tamzen Stringham updated the RAC on UNR and budget cuts within the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources. Tamzen will draft a letter for the committee's review. See motion above.

Will gave an update on Burning Man. He explained the five-year permit ended in 2010. The BLM had issued a permit for the 2011 permit and have started the EA process for the following five-year permit.

**The next RAC meeting is June 15-17 at Gerlach, Black Rock NCA & Soldier's Meadows Ranch.**

***\*These minutes were approved on June 15, 2011, by vote of the RAC at their meeting in Gerlach, Nevada.***