

Draft Meeting Minutes
Sierra Front – Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
July 22, 2009
Carson City, Nevada

I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

8:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 22, 2009 – meeting was called to order by Chairman Gebhardt with the following members of the RAC present:

Sierra Front – Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Council Member	Resource/Expertise	7/22
John Gebhardt - Chair	State Agency	X
Patricia Herzog – Vice Chair	Elected Official	X
William Bennett	Transportation/ROWs	X
Rochanne Downs	Native Americans	X
Brian Doyal	Public-at-Large	X
Tim Dufurrena	Nevada Cattlemen	X
Charles Matton	Wild Horse and Burros	X
William Molini	Wildlife	X
Ernest Paine	Livestock	X
Will Roger Peterson	Recreation	X
Lee Turner	Environment	X
D. Craig Young	Archaeology	X
Dennis Laybourn	Mining	
Steven Siegel	Energy/Minerals	
VACANT	Academic	

BLM Staff Present: Chris McAlear, Gene Seidlitz, Meagan Conry, Doran Sanchez, Alan Shepherd, Mark Struble, Briant Smith, Linda Kelly, Terri Knutson, Allison Beck

Public Present: Sharon Netherthon

Chris M. welcomed everyone to Carson City. Recognized Joanne and Don Murray, the National Make-A-Difference Volunteer award winners for 2009. The Murrays volunteer to help the stewardship program in Nevada. They have documented various sites and Don created a GPS database and they provide stewardship reports to the BLM.

Mark Struble presented a plaque to Brian Doyal in appreciation of his work with the RAC, as this is his last year on the RAC.

Chairman Gebhardt extended his congratulations to the Joanne and Don Murray for their hard work. Craig Young also expressed his appreciation for the Murrays and all other volunteers who help with the stewardship program.

II. Summary of Motions Other Than to Approve Minutes

Motion – Will Roger Peterson made a motion that Jon Willers replace Chuck Dodd on the Black Rock RAC Subcommittee. Craig Young seconded – **motion passed unanimously.**

Motion – William Molini moved to approve the recommendations from the Black Rock subcommittee, Charles Matton seconded – **motion passed unanimously.**

Motion – Rochanne Downs moved to table the vote for endorsing the selection of the new member on the Nevada Recreation RAC until questions about the procedure and process for adding new members to subcommittees are answered. Will Roger Peterson seconded – **motion so carried.**

III. Summary of Action Assignments

1. A committee was formed to draft a letter regarding the Ruby Pipeline to send to the State Director. Steven Siegel, Lee Turner, William Bennett and William Molini will be members of the committee. The letter will express the RAC's concerns that the best route that has the least biological and cultural resource impacts is not being considered, and the RAC supports the route that will have less impacts to public lands.

IV. Minutes from the Meeting in Winnemucca, April 2009

The minutes for the April meeting were recommended to be approved by Will Molini. They were seconded and approved unanimously.

V. RAC Subcommittee Reports

Black Rock Subcommittee – Will Roger Peterson

The subcommittee met on July 18, 2009 at the State Office in Reno. The subcommittee approved recommendations and decided that the NCA subgroup will be the Riparian Team. They endorsed a new sign plan for NCA areas and came up with yearly meeting schedule. They endorsed the preliminary BLM intention to build an Administrative facility in Gerlach. There were some questions on the proper procedure for replacing a member on the subgroup, which were clarified by the chairman and Doran. The subgroup is still looking for members to represent Native Americans and off-road vehicle users.

Wild Horse and Burro Subcommittee – Charles Matton

The subcommittee drafted a letter to the state director, which the chairman signed. The letter was also forwarded to the other RACs for their review. The subcommittee has not heard anything from the other RACs or director.

Adding New Member to Recreation RAC

Rodney Ward has been nominated by the State Director to be a new member on the Nevada Recreation RAC. He expressed interest to the HT Forest Supervisor and thus was considered for the position. Several members expressed concern about the process for adding new members to the subgroup in that qualified and interested people may not have the right platform to be considered. Peterson commented that Ward would be valuable on the Recreation RAC and that the nomination process seems to be more of an internal vehicle and that there does need to be a public way to announce openings or needs on RACs.

Ruby Pipeline Meeting Report: Downs had a meeting with the tribes, and they expressed some concerns about the pipeline going through their land without benefiting from it.

VI. Field Managers Reports

Chris – The Carson District is working on nine Stimulus projects, including reclaiming mine lands near Virginia City, repairing 63 riparian exclosures, and restoring roads in several recreation areas. The district just wrapped up the Red Rock/Trailer 1 fires; they burned about 12,000 acres and a BAER team will be looking at the area soon.

In the Wild Horse and Burro program, several census flights were completed in 2008. There are not any gathers scheduled for FY 2009. In the next fiscal year, in October 2009, there is a gather scheduled for the Garfield Flat HMA, which is one of several HMAs above AML. Currently, there are about 1,500 wild horses at Snow's facility in Fallon and 800 at the Northern Nevada Correctional Facility in Carson City. There are about four adoptions a year; the next one is scheduled for August 22.

The Range staff is completing EAs for several allotments.

In the Stillwater Field Office, a competitive auction for geothermal lands was held in Reno on July 14. The auctions generated \$8.9 million for Nevada lands. The highest bid per acre was for land located in Edwards Creek Valley.

The Sand Mountain Recreation area trail designation/signing/fencing project is 99% completed. Traffic at Sand Mountain is down this year, most likely due to the recession. The office is working on filling an outdoor recreation planner position. There is also a new law enforcement officer, Shawn Hyrons, responsible for the Sand Mountain area. He will be a canine officer when his dog's training is complete.

In the Sierra Front Field Office, NV Energy is proposing a new overhead transmission line from Blackhawk to Heybourne; the EIS is underway. The field office also has several wind projects that it is working on. Work is continuing on the Truckee River Restoration Project.

Gene – The district has several ongoing geothermal exploration projects, including the Blue Mountain project, which will be starting production this fall. The money from the geothermal lease sale may go towards filling some positions in the district. There is significant interest in uranium and lithium mining in the Montana Mountains, which is an area of cultural and biological interest. Coeur Rochester is working with NDEP and BLM to achieve a complete plan of operations. Gene has met with Governor Gibbons and talked with Sens. Ensign and Reid’s offices about this project. In early August, recommendations about the level of NEPA that needs to be done should be made. WDO acquired lands near Poodle Mountain in Round 8 of SNPLMA.

The Ruby Pipeline project is still high on the radar. The Draft EIS was released for a 45 day comment period on June 19, 2009. Public comment meetings are scheduled for July 23 in Winnemucca and July 28 in Elko. In May, a Ruby Pipeline/Tribal Meeting was held in Reno to discuss comments, questions and concerns from tribes. The Bio Team for the project also met; their comments were sent to FERC and the contractor that prepared the draft EIS. Gene is aware that there are still significant cultural concerns about the proposed route and that the cultural inventory is still being completed. The first draft cultural report that was submitted four months ago was rejected because it was not complete. The final EIS is tentatively scheduled to be released September or October 2009, and construction is scheduled to start in the spring of 2010. Ron Wenker will be signing the ROW for the project based on the EIS. Because of cultural, biological and draft EIS concerns, it was decided that a committee will draft a letter to the State Director stating those concerns.

The district is working with Burning Man LLC to finalize permitting of that event. Still working on the draft RMP.. District received significant comments from Washington on the second draft regarding the visual resource inventories and wilderness characteristics. Gene is hoping the field work will be done by August and that the draft will be available to the public by the end of the calendar year.

The Winnemucca District is working on four stimulus projects, three of which are within the NCA, dealing with transportation and access roads and the administrative site in Gerlach. The other deals with repairing riparian exclosures.

VII. BLM - Nevada Wild Horse and Burro Program Strategy

Alan Shepherd SO - updated the RAC on the new WH&B strategy. The state is currently evaluating and updating the strategy. They are doing population inventories right now and have five gathers planned between now and winter. There are two in the Ely District within the Seamen Mountains and the Caliente complex, two in the Winnemucca District, within the Tobins and the Calico complex, and the Garfield Flat gather in the Carson City District. H.R. 1018 passed in the House of Representatives; there is not currently a companion bill in the Senate for it. The NS Director received the letter from the RAC and appreciates the comments. The draft of the new WH&B strategy should be ready by the October SLT meeting. Shepherd is looking at new options to

control populations like fertility drugs and skewing the sex ratio. The NSO received a copy of the state's lawsuit regarding horses and sent their comments back to the state.

VIII. Public Comment

1) Sharon Netherthon – Executive Director of Friends of Nevada Wilderness - thanked Gene for all the work they are doing on the Ruby Pipeline. In regards to HR 1018, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, the Cattlemen's Association, and Sportsmen have been working together, and recognize that wild horses have an impact on resources. They put together a letter to the Nevada delegation about problems with the House bill and the need to control the wild horse population. They are working with senators to hope that there is not a companion bill.

IX. New Comstock Wind Energy Project

Rich Hamilton, Great Basin Wind LLC - company formed in 2006 to combat climate change. Presented a PowerPoint presentation about the project. Commented that he feels it is really important to maintain the historical aspect of Virginia City. Work to date: aviation radar studies, archeological inventory, fall and monthly environmental studies, bat and bird studies. Working on Draft EIS now.

X. Field Trip

XI. Adjournment