

Mojave Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
March 16, 2012  
Interagency Building Conference Rooms A, B, and C Las Vegas, Nevada

**Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:**

Douglas “Stretch” Baker	Transportation and ROW	Category 1
Jane Feldman	Environment	Category 2
Julie Von Tobel-Gleason	Wild Horse and Burro	Category 2
Elise McAllister	Dispersed Recreation	Category 2
Heather Love Fisher	Permitted Recreation	Category 1
Mark Blankensop	State Representative	Category 3

**Resource Advisory Council members absent and category represented:**

Gracian Uhalde	Grazing/Ranching	Category 1
Greg Seymour	Archeology/Historic	Category 2
Ed Weber	Academic/UNLV	Category 3
Ed Higbee	Grazing/Ranching	Category 1
Kenny Anderson	Native American Representative	Category 3
Tim Carlson	Mineral & Energy Dev.	Category 1
Scott Abella	Environment	Category 2
Ronda Hornbeck	Public-At-Large	Category 3

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:**

Hillierie C. Patton, RAC Coordinator	BLM Southern Nevada Public Affairs
Mary Jo Rugwell, Des. Federal Official	BLM Southern Nevada District Manager
Tom Seley	BLM Tonopah Field Manager
Mike Dwyer	BLM Ely Project Manager

**Public**

Terri Robertson	Community Activist, Friends of Sloan
Robert Adams	Chairman of Pahrump Public Land Advisory Board, Nevada State OHP Commissioner for Recreational Rights
Randy Hise	Observer for Graduate Classes
Jason Higgins	Valley Electric
Sue Wanesfield	County
Gary Race	Senior Biologist Logan Simpson Designs
Pat Van-Betten	President, Blue Diamond History Committee

- 9:00 a.m. Julie Von-Tobel-Gleason, Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (MOSO RAC) Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order and conducted introductions. MOSO RAC members, along with public visitors, introduced themselves.
- 9:05 a.m. Hillerie Patton, RAC Coordinator, stated the Ely office will be faxing travel vouchers. Ronda Hornbeck, Tim Carlson, and Scott were unable to attend.
- 9:10 a.m. The RAC members have reviewed the minutes; although, there were a couple of edits made. Hillerie stated once Julie Von Tobel-Gleason signs the minutes they will be posted on the web. Hillerie encouraged members to email edits ahead of time.
- 9: 15 a.m. Hillerie Patton provided an overview of the Tri-RAC meeting; she explained the Tri-RAC is a meeting of the three Nevada RAC's; which consists of Mojave Southern Great Basin (MOSO), Sierra Front RAC, and North Eastern RAC. The MOSO RAC encompasses the Southern Nevada District, Caliente Field Office-Ely District, and the Tonopah Field Office--Battle Mountain District. The next MOSO RAC meeting will be held July 20<sup>th</sup> in Ely and the final meeting for the year will be held September 21<sup>st</sup>. The agendas will be posted online.

Hillerie Patton announced the topics of discussion will include Energy Transmission and Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 13 Project Nominations. The Renewable Energy Coordination Office will give a presentation regarding energy transmission. Mike Dwyer, Ely Project Manager, will provide an update on Ely projects. Tom Seley, Tonopah Field Manager, will provide an update on Battle Mountain projects. Karla Norris, SNPLMA Manager, will provide an update on the SNPLMA Nominations process.

Hillerie Patton stated the RAC members requested a Sage Grouse briefing at every meeting. Sage Grouse habitat and Sage Grouse listing is a big issue for the state. RAC members will provide updates at every meeting.

Hillerie Patton announced Wild Horse and Burro issues will be discussed during the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting; also during this meeting the members will take a field trip

to look at transmission and energy, vegetation identification, and take a look at some of the projects that are going on up north.

9:20 a.m. Mary Jo Rugwell, Designated Federal Official, expressed concern regarding attendance. Mary Jo asked the members to think about strategies to ensure participation. Mary Jo asked whether or not the meeting schedule should be adjusted. Jane Feldman stated it can't be the scheduling; everyone has an adequate amount of time to adjust their calendars. Jane reminded folks they need to have the mind set for the long term.

Julie Von-Tobel-Gleason stated getting out in the field is a great experience and will help a lot with improving participation. Julie also reminded folks if they know they will not make the meeting, they need to contact Hillerie in advance.

Mary Jo Rugwell expressed her appreciation and thanked participants for their time.

9:30 a.m. **District and Field Manager's Reports:**

Southern Nevada District Manager's Report reviewed (attachment #1) - Mary Jo Rugwell.

Battle Mountain District Manager's Report reviewed (attachment #2) - Tom Seley.

Ely District Manager's Report reviewed (attachment #3) - Mike Dwyer.

Ely Project reviewed (attachment #4) - Mike Dwyer.

**Ely Land Use Plan Revision/Spring Valley Wind Project:**

Mike Dwyer announced Ely is in the scoping period of revising their land use plans to protect the Sage Grouse. He had a meeting with Nevada Division of Wildlife to coordinate priority habitat maps.

Mike Dwyer announced the Spring Valley Wind project is under construction and they have made great progress; the towers are scheduled to be put up this month [March].

Jane Feldman asked what the legal challenges are, and how will it affect the Spring Valley Wind project? Mike responded by saying he is familiar with those details. He stated there was a "Request to Stay," but it was denied; the legal challenge goes on as the construction goes on. The challenge could be the project was submitted under an environmental assessment vs. an environmental impact statement. Towers are formed in a V- shape. The 65-mile-an-hour winds caused these towers to vibrate and the cross structures cracked. The company continues to build, but is leaving the towers on the ground until the structural issues are fixed. Julie Von-Tobel-Gleason asked if it was determined whether or not the towers were going through critical Sage Grouse habitat. Mike responded by stating there are known leks in the area. They have mapped the known active lek areas and the historical lek areas. There is a two- mile buffer zone, and during the Sage Grouse critical period the BLM does not allow construction. The company has scheduled their construction around those time frames.

#### **FY 13 Budget/Southern Nevada District Issues:**

Mary Jo Rugwell noted Hillerie Patton provided good information regarding the President's FY13 Budget. Heather Love Fisher asked if this budget is in addition to what the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently receiving, and if the figure came in low or high compared to what the BLM currently receives. Mary Jo Rugwell explained that what the President is proposing to Congress, in terms of BLM, and what the BLM actually receives may differ. Hillerie Patton stated the budget is along the lines of what the BLM is currently receiving.

Mary Jo Rugwell noted the inclusion of information about the Sage Grouse, Mustang adoptions, Nevada Wild Land Firefighters, and the recent discovery of dinosaur tracks located in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The BLM is working with the hikers who found the dinosaur tracks, along with the BLM Regional Paleontologist. Currently, there is a temporary dinosaur exhibit at Red Rock. Eventually, there will be a permanent exhibit detailing the type of dinosaur that made the track, and how it came to be in the rock. Ms. Feldman responded by stating the dinosaur find is really a wonderful thing.

Mary Jo Rugwell noted the Red Rock Field Office will hold an open house at the visitor center to allow all users of Red Rock the opportunity to meet field manager's and staff, and ask questions. The Red Rock Open House is conducted the third Thursday of every month; each open house covers a different topic.

Mary Jo Rugwell announced the Partnership for Public Lands, held their annual convention in Las Vegas, and named Tim Wakefield, Red Rock and Sloan Field Manager, “Agency Partner of the Year.”

Mary Jo stated the Southern Nevada District Office held a series of public meetings over the last few months. The Las Vegas Field Office held public meetings regarding the Sloan Hills mineral materials sale last fall. There have also been three public meetings regarding the Search Light Wind Project. These meetings are collaboration between the Renewable Energy Coordination and the Las Vegas Field Offices. The BLM values the information from public meetings. Jane Feldman asked how members of the public could find out about where and when the open houses will take place. Hillerie explained the Red Rock Open House takes place at the Red Rock Visitors Center on the third Thursday of the month, and presentations are made at 2pm and 6pm. All public meetings are posted online.

Elise McAllister, Dispersed Recreation representative, stated she saw information regarding the traffic feasibility study at Red Rock and inquired about next steps. Ms. Rugwell explained Red Rock received a grant from Federal transportation sources and hired the Volpe Center. The Volpe Center came to Red Rock to take a look at the 13-mile-loop and the parking problems at Red Rock. They are working on making recommendations as to where additional parking could be located or whether transit is a better idea.

Tom Seley, BLM Tonopah Field Manager, stated the Tonopah office completed a Wild Horse and Burro gather on the Stone Cabin Complex February 18. The next day they adopted out six animals. He talked about how the rain gauges are showing less than seventy-five percent of normal, meaning Nevada is in a drought, and had they not implemented the gather they would have had horses in really bad conditions.

Tom Seley stated during the Wild Horse and Burro gather in Beatty they had a direct count of about two-hundred animals, and they captured 77 burros. The office held a trap site adoption, where two burros were adopted by someone from Pahrump. He explained that with wild burros one usually sees about half of the population, and in this particular area there are burros moving back toward Death Valley. Tom’s staff is working with the Pahrump Field Office to determine if they can coordinate on a gather. He feels there are at least five-hundred head out in that area. One of the challenges, in the Wild Horse and Burro program, is the

economy; BLM currently is not able to adopt as many animals as previous years. They have to do more marking to ensure the animals get adopted.

Mary Jo Rugwell announced one problem has been burros on the road, due to people feeding them. The BLM was able to get the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to post signs, stating “do not to feed the animals,” in an effort to keep burros off the roads. The BLM is still trying to get signs posted in additional areas.

Julie Von-Tobel-Gleason thanked Tom Seley for doing the trap-site-adoptions. She stated the trap-to-site adoptions are more cost efficient, reduce holding costs, and are easier on the animals.

Julie announced the Mustang Heritage Foundation brings in a lot of kids from rural counties, and they are incredible horseman. They brought yearlings in and did tricks with them. Adoptions held at the Reno Rodeo and have been very successful.

Tom Seley talked about the Resource Management Plan revision. He stated there was a meeting of their inter-disciplinary team where they worked on alternatives for Battle Mountain. They continue to move forward. They want to provide flexibility and also provide some specific actions Battle Mountain can take if a particular issue comes up in a program area. Tom will keep the group informed as they get further on in the process.

Tom Seley discussed the renewable energy update in the Tonopah area; stating one project will be constructed, which is the Crescent Dunes project. Last week, the company began work on the two salt storage tanks, hot tank and the cool tank. It is expected this will continue for another four or five days. He expects the company to build assembly buildings sometime this spring. The work force is expected to increase.

Tom Seley stated the Chemetal Foote Corporation, a lithium mine, applied for grants to build a 5 mega-watt geothermal power plant at Silver Peak, which would provide internal power to the mining operation. The EA is currently under review. Battle Mountain’s documents authorizing these projects are on the Battle Mountain website.

Tom Seley stated the final project is one where Nye County has a lease with a company called IN deck on Tonopah Airport. He stated BLM’s part in all this is

a power transmission line, which is 16-18 hundred feet long, BLM is required to prepare an environmental assessment because it is a historic WW2 Army Air Corp Base. It will to include a visual simulation to see if there is any impact on the visual integrity of the WW2 hangers. He did a visual inspection of the northern hanger and the visual integrity of the hanger is pretty much gone. The southern hanger is a similar situation due to the gravel pit near there.

Tom Seley stated, he has very little Greater Sage Grouse habitat; however, he does have some Mono Sage Grouse sites, which are primarily in the Carson Coity District and on Forest Service lands in California from Bishop north to Topaz Lake. Heather Love Fisher asked him to explain the Mono Sage Grouse. Tom stated the Mono Sage Grouse is a subspecies of the Greater Sage Grouse. Heather Love-Fisher asked if it is under the same protection as the Greater Sage Grouse. Tom stated its protection was put in place prior to the Greater Sage Grouse protection. The planning process on the Mono Sage Grouse is about two years ahead of the Greater Sage Grouse. He does not have any critical habitat for the bird.

10:30 a.m. Public Comment

Terry Robertson, from Friends of Sloan, announced that on March 3-4 the Friends of Sloan Group took the After School All-Stars, twenty-eight students from Ore and Cashman Middle School, on a camping trip to Gold Butte. She told Mary Jo how much she appreciated the helpful BLM staff who worked with her to fill out the paperwork in preparation for the trip. She also recognized Law Enforcement Ranger, Jeff Tarpoly for taking time to meet with the students. She stated her group came up with the philosophy that “conservationist must accept the responsibility for introducing our special places to the hearts, minds, and feet of children.” Heather Love Fisher stated she has a bike tour company who sometimes takes inter-city kids from Chicago on tours to Death Valley. Although the area is large, the kids choose to stay close together. She expressed her excitement regarding the Gold Butte camping trip. Terry Robertson talked about possibly getting together with Ms. Love-Fisher and doing a project.

Gary Race, Senior Biologist Logan Simpson Design stated he and his supervisor Bruce Palmer attend the RAC meetings because they are so informative and keeps them abreast of what is happening throughout the state. He is particularly interested in the Sage Grouse briefing. He and his wife are perhaps the only Nevada Department of Wildlife volunteers in Clark County who perform Sage

Grouse Select Survey work. He thanked the RAC members for the Sage Grouse presentation.

John Hiatt expressed his concern over public lands being trashed by shooters. Shooters are bringing tons of trash, to include TV sets, plastic bottles, etc. on public lands. People shoot the objects and then leave them.

The trash never goes away it just compounds, and the broken glass never gets cleaned up. The activity is increasing at an exponential rate on most of the roads leading out of Las Vegas. John Hiatt expressed major concern over the Sunrise Mountain area; stating there are so many shooters out there it is unsafe to pick up the trash. He talked about the Old LA Highway, going south along I-15 towards the top of the hill, stating it is wall-to-wall shooters. Shooters are out in that area at night using their headlights to illuminating the area. He also expressed concern over the lead contamination from the bullet casings and the potential of this activity to produce fires. He stated it would be wise to take a look at this situation now and decide how we, collectively, are going to deal with it. In closing John stated we need to raise the awareness of the value of public lands, which other countries throughout the world do not have. Mark Blankensop raised his concerns regarding dumping on public lands; stating it is a safety issue for fire fighters when toxic trash burns on public lands.

Hillierie Patton responded to John's concerns by stating the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership has a SNPLMA funded campaign called "Don't Trash Nevada." The University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) Public Lands Institute lead by Dr. Elizabeth Barry coordinates the initiative. She announced the kick-off of a new campaign with West Career Technical Academy to come up with a new campaign using social media. The students use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to build a movement around the "Don't Trash Nevada" concept to bring awareness to the problem of litter and dumping on public lands. R & R Partners is working with the West Career Technical Academy students; their goal is to get everyone in the valley wrapped around the "Don't Trash Nevada" campaign. Terry Robertson stated she would like to help with the project by bringing the students to the public lands. She stated if the students are going to know the importance of what they are doing they need to be out in our public lands and seeing what is there. Hillierie said she would love to work with Terry to coordinate a student involvement with the RAC members as well. She would also like to tie in with John Hiatt for content in the project regarding environmental issues. Hillierie encouraged all members to keep in touch and stay engaged regarding the "Don't Trash Nevada" campaign.

Robert Adams, Chairman of Pahrump Public Land Advisory Board, announced the town of Pahrump is working on informal shooting ranges and he would like to work with John Hiatt. Robert would also like to work with Hillerie Patton regarding the upcoming Earth Day in Pahrump; Earth Day is scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup>. Currently, Robert is working with Mark Spencer (Pahrump Field Manager). Robert announced Ranger Shane Nalen has done an excellent job patrolling Pahrump and finding out who is dumping on public lands. Robert thanked the BLM for going through with the disposal sale for the expansion of the Spring Mountain Motor Country Club. He looks forward to moving ahead with the Pahrump airport project. Last year the BLM, town of Pahrump, and the State Historic Preservation Office entered into agreement where the BLM would pay for the mitigation at the Last Chance Park site. However, funding is not currently available. The town of Pahrump hopes to have the funds to move forward with the project.

Mr. Adams asked when the public comment period would be opened regarding the over looked trails in the Pahrump area. He stated that the inventory was quite extensive, but in Pahrump there were some trails missed in the inventory. He would like to meet with Bob Diele regarding this issue. Hillerie Patton stated Mr. Adams could contact Marilyn Peterson, as she is the lead on the RAMP. Mr. Adams stated he would like to invite Marilyn to Pahrump for one of the town meetings to discuss the over-looked trails and to take a look at establishing equestrian only trails within the multiuse area. The equestrian only trails have been requested by many equestrian groups in Pahrump. Mr. Adams stated he had a conversation with Mr. Bob Diele and explained how he would like to have equestrian only trails. According to Robert Adams, Bob Diele stated this was not possible. Jane Feldman inquired as to why Mr. Diele stated it was not possible. Mr. Adams stated he did not know and he wanted to talk to Mr. Diele, but he is retiring so he would like to speak with Ms. Peterson. Heather Love Fisher suggested having the trails used by people on even days and used by equestrians on odd days. Mr. Adams responded stating that is an option, but he would rather have it designated an equestrian trail. Julie Von Tobel-Gleason suggested having separate trails and staging areas for equestrians to ensure the safety of all users.

Tom Seley stated, currently there are two permitted wildcat oil well Application for Permit to Drill and he is working on a third. Two are in Railroad Valley and one is in Hock Creek Valley. Typically his office sees three applications for permit to drill in a year, this year he has seen three in about four months.

Tom Seley stated on the Recreation front he received an SRP from a group called Tough Mudders. Tough Mudders would like to hold an event in the Beatty area in October. They will be staging on private land. The route is approximately 10 miles, up to four miles on BLM land. Tough Mudders is expecting approximately two thousand people to attend the event. The event is a foot race in which the racers will run through different obstacles. Jane Feldman asked if the attendees will camp. Mr. Seley stated they would not camp at the site. Ms. Love Fisher asked what event will be on BLM land. Mr. Seley stated only the foot race would be on BLM land on existing burro trails or on small segments of road. All of the obstacles would be on private land.

Tom Seley stated he received an SRP from a group called Zero One Oddessy. It is a recreational tour consisting of Subaru powered race vehicles. The tour will go through the Tonopah Field Office and then through a small section of the Still Water Field Office, Carson City District, and then through a small section of the field office in Battle Mountain. Zero One Oddessy is currently getting together their operating plan and other documents prepared. Mr. Seley did have Zero One Oddessy hold events last year to get an idea of how they work on county roads.

Tom Seley stated his office did receive the “Best of the Desert” special recreation permit for 2012, which starts in Beatty and will be a one day event. Carson District is taking the lead. It is a preexisting authorized route analyzed in the 2008 EA.

Tom Seley stated he is heading to Reno for the litigation with the Hage family. Mr. Seley’s office instituted civil litigation in the fall of 2007. They are going to trial March 27. It will be a full hearing. The issue is continued open livestock trespass since 1992 on public lands in the Tonopah area.

Morning public comment period is now closed.

11:15 a.m. Sage Grouse briefing is now opened by Julie Von Tobel-Gleason.

Mike Dwyer stated he is in the public scoping period right now. He had a meeting with Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) this week to come to an agreement regarding the Sage Grouse priority habitat map.

Tom Seley stated the public meetings were held about three weeks ago between Ely, Elko, Winnemucca, along with a couple other locations. They solicited everyone’s comments up front to ensure public issues were not missed. Mr. Seley

reminded folks it is a combined effort between the BLM, USFS, NDOW and all other partners. He explained this will impact things such as Right-Of-Ways. If the Right-Of-Way goes through the Sage Grouse priority habitat the BLM will be looking at whether or not there is a way of meeting the same need, but not putting the Right-Of-Way through the priority habitat. He envisions more restrictions of the timing of construction in areas adjacent to these areas in order to protect the Sage Grouse breeding grounds.

Tom Seley explained one of the things impacting the Sage Grouse breeding grounds is adequate grass cover near the edge of the Sage bush. If there is no grass cover the nest is visible to predators such as ravens, and coyotes. This impacts the safety of the nest. The map NDOW is working on considers any nests that have had birds in them within the last five years as priority habitat and any nests that have not had birds in them within the last six or more years as non-priority habitat. There are some blanks in the Winnemucca District that still need clarification on whether the areas are priority or non-priority habitat.

Mary Jo Rugwell stated it is important to understand the Sage Grouse issue is a tough one. It involves a very large area of the western United States and it is not just Nevada. While we want to do the best we can prior to the listing, there are so many pressures on the lands involved in this. She reminded folks there is still a lot of hard feelings about the listing of the tortoise and the folks that were involved when that happened refer to it as the "Tortoise Wars." The process does affect so many users using public lands and one of the things the BLM does, is try to include all stake holders in the decision process.

Mike Dwyer presented the group with the Sage Grouse Priority Habitat map.

Robert Adams stated the stake holders did not feel they were being dealt with in good faith during the "Tortoise Wars." On one hand tortoises were being euthanized, while on the other hand, users of public land are being restricted on the use of the public land because of the tortoise being an endangered species. Mr. Adams stated you cannot do both of those at the same time. He hopes that the public will be more involved on the issue of the Sage Grouse. Mrs. Rugwell reminded folks the goal is to avoid some of the same problems that occurred with tortoise. Terri Robertson reminded folks of the archeological study that was done by Amy Gillory. Ms. Gillory said for four thousand years, the tortoise was named as a food source for the early Native Americans. We have now come full circle by protecting the tortoise and ensuring its survival.

Gary Race pointed out a short coming of the Sage Grouse Priority map stating NDOW recognizes more Sage Grouse breeding areas than the BLM. Stating many of the non-ground breeding grounds, breeding grounds spotted by the helicopter were left off the BLM maps. He inquired as to what type of BLM vegetation data was used in NDOW's development of the core area map in the habitat suitability. Tom Seley responded by stating he believes it was the NRCS survey information, GAP analysis, and was based on the information currently in the system. Mike Dwyer stated he appreciated the comments on the differences between the maps, and said when he met with NDOW the BLM referred to the NDOW map. BLM used NDOW's data. Mr. Race said that means the referenced map is in addition to the 2010 Breeding Bird Density map that the BLM released. Tom responded with a yes. Mr. Race thanked the members for taking his comment.

John Hiatt stated the BLM Ely District has issued many grazing permits over the last couple of years which are ten year permits; and asked will some of those be revisited as part of the Sage Grouse planning process or are the basically done for the term of ten years? Mike Dwyer said he did not know off the top of his head, but from what he understands, the BLM is going to be pretty aggressive, and he believes the grazing permits will be revisited.

John Hiatt stated a lot of effort went into delineating exactly where the Sage Grouse are located; it was done on a county by county basis throughout all Sage Grouse habitat in the state. The data is really good on where the Sage Grouse have been and the status of those birds. Plus, there is a lot of information that has been gained from satellite tracking on birds, and it turns out Sage Grouse are much more mobile than anyone ever imagined. People have noted Sage Grouse at altitudes of several thousand feet above the ground with flying aircraft. Tracking has shown birds can move more than thirty miles in a twenty-four hour period. The Sage Grouse is exceedingly mobile for a chicken like bird therefore every lek is suitable habitat.

Heather Love-Fisher asked John Hiatt if there was a finding on how big the Sage Grouse range is. Mr. Hiatt responded by stating it depends on where you are if there is great habitat in a concentrated or small area. If the habitat needs are such that they need to move long distances they will. Satellite tracking opened up a whole new window into just how mobile animals are. The potential habitat for the Sage Grouse is huge.

Tom Seley stated people ask why the BLM manages the Sage Grouse habitat if they are not there. Mr. Seley stated he explained to the individuals asking the question that birds can leave a habitat and not come back for years, but we manage the habitat to the best quality possible so that when they can come back and reintroduce themselves into the habitat it is there.

Elise McAllister asked what was the fall like in the Sage Grouse area. She stated she was looking at the map and a lot of the critical habitat area is deer hunting area and was wondering if that was a critical time for the Sage Grouse. How might that impact the Sage Grouse? Tom Seley responded by stating he does not believe the fall is as critical a time for the Sage Grouse as is the nesting period; because if the birds cannot nest and raise their young, they are doomed to lose their population. By the time the next fall hunting season comes around, the birds are already 4-6 months old. Ms. McAllister asked if the Sage Grouse needs to bulk up during the Fall. John Hiatt stated the Sage Brush is ninety percent of the Sage Grouse's winter supply of food. The Sage brush needs to be healthy and actively growing. The problem with the Sage brush is that it contains lots of toxic chemical compounds. The Sage Grouse are unique in that they clip the leaves in half. They do not grind up their food; rather they dissolve the nutrients out of the leaf through the cut edge, and leave the skin of the leaf, which contains all the toxins, intact. This is how the Sage Grouse is one of the only animals that can live off a Sage Brush only diet. The Sage Grouse needs actively growing plants. Sage Grouse need to be able to find plants free of snow during the day to eat.

Julie Von Tobel-Gleason asked if the area impact on the new map is going to be bigger. Mike Dwyer said yes. John Hiatt stated that if you overlay the Sage Grouse Priority Habitat map with the proposed wind- energy projects one will see there is a lot of overlap. Ms. Von Tobel-Gleason said these are areas where the birds of prey can perch that may prey on the Sage Grouse. Mr. Hiatt stated birds of prey need to be defined, because Ravens are the biggest problems, although, they do not prey on adult or chick size birds. Ravens are fantastic nest predators.

Gary Race cautioned the RAC committee stating there is a "no man's land" within their area with no information, and that would be Lincoln County and the Lee Canyon area. There are leks that have not been studied. If someone went to the White River Narrows, and looked at the petroglyph panels that faces north on the south end, you will see a hunting time line that incorporates Sage Grouse at exactly the right time period for nesting activity and this was historically an important Sage Grouse area. We know very little about it, and it is very deficient in reports. John Hiatt responded by stating he had gone through this area pretty

thoroughly and he did not find any sign or see any Sage Grouse. He did find Rough Grouse in this area.

12:00p.m. Working Lunch

12:20p.m. Rhodes Project (attachment #5) - Bob Ross, Las Vegas Field Office Manager, gave a presentation on the Rhodes project. Mr. Ross explained a company who owns the land plans to build atop a hill surrounded by BLM land. The BLM anticipates a Right-of-Way application from Rhodes to access the land. Mr. Ross passed out a map and on the first page the curvy line coming in from the east, is the projected right-of-way application which the BLM expects to see in the future. The second page goes into more detail. He explained when the BLM receives the application it will look at the various kinds of alternatives to the route its self; alternatives such as accessing the location from the Summerlin area or with a direct tie in with I-215. The BLM will conduct an Environmental Analysis likely an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. He explained this would be a public process with opportunities for scoping, public comment and review of a draft document. He explained there has been a lot of discussion with Clark County on accessing the area from highway 159 and the existing mine-hall road. The mine-hall road has a gate on it and has not been in use by the public. The county has a claim on the mine hall road under Revised Statute 2477. The BLM has a separate Right-of-Way to James Hardy Gypsum on the same route and recently terminated it. It had been relinquished in 2005. The BLM terminated it in January and was appealed. Access can be provided along that same route via the BLM's plan of operations.

Mary Jo Rugwell explained the BLM had conversations with the company where they asked for a land exchange; at which time the BLM stated they do not do land exchanges. The company has not submitted a Right-of-Way application thus far. Bob Ross reminded folks the BLM's process will be a public process with public meetings where the public is encourage providing comments. The BLM will look at the impact of BLM administered lands that are adjacent to Blue Diamond Hill as well. This will look at and describe the anticipated actions on the private land, in terms of what they do in mitigating flooding or other drainage issue that might develop in that area. The BLM will look at how adjacent public lands will be protected.

Mike Blackensop asked if the area was active for mining. Mr. Ross stated that only on the private lands currently. The company does rework some of the stock piles and some of the material they have up there, but on the BLM administered

lands there are no existing mining claims and all they can do on the one-hundred-forty acres is reclamation. The BLM does anticipate providing them with a letter in the near future that will talk about the time frame of the reclamation and the standards by which the BLM lands can be reclaimed. At that point, the BLM might be able to get out of that plan of operations. It is jointly administered by the BLM and the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection. Mark Blackensop asked if there were other alternatives other than a straight shot to 160. Mr. Ross stated the county was looking into making the roads tie into I-215.

Heather Love-Fisher stated there are two scenarios and one scenario is zoned for one house per two acres, and the scenario in the developers concept to the county is quite different-- thousands of people different. Is there any way the BLM can say you are only zoned for rural and you only get a rural access? Mr. Ross stated that is not within the BLM's jurisdiction, but it can look at that in its analysis. If the BLM looks at the need to allow access to land locked private lands then there is no need to allow a large road. The BLM will look at what standard of road would be appropriate to get up to the top of the mountain. At a minimum the BLM has to allow access to land locked lands. Mrs. Love-Fisher asked if the land in question is in the disposal boundary, and if so there might be pressure to develop along the access road. Mr. Ross responded by stating it will still remain BLM land and stated a Right-of-Way would be issued along BLM land but it does not transfer ownership of the land. The land is not currently in the disposal boundary.

John Hiatt asked if the Right-of-Way is only for a road or is it also for power lines, sewer lines, and water lines. Mr. Ross stated the county indicated all utility lines would be under ground. Julie Von-Tobel-Gleason asked whether or not a Right-of-Way for roads meant a Right-of-Way for utilities. Mr. Ross stated he is not sure. The BLM has to see the application first and process applications on a case-by-case basis. Mary Jo Rugwell stated the BLM, like most of the community, would like to see Red Rock's view stay the same but the reality is the company owns private land on Blue Diamond Hill. The only effect the BLM can have is if they file a Right-of-Way application. At that point, the BLM can engage the public in the process and try to make the best decision given the information received for their access. The BLM cannot tell the company what they can do with their land, but the BLM can analyze what the effect would be on public lands.

John Hiatt stated the road referred to as a haul road off of highway 159 was only used for equipment and employees. Mary Jo Rugwell reassured folks that if the BLM gets an application, the public will be notified.

1:00p.m. Renewable Energy/Transmission Update (attachment #6). Nancy Christ and Greg Helseth gave a presentation regarding the purposed Searchlight Wind Energy Project. The project is located adjacent to Searchlight Nevada, and is approximately sixty miles southeast of Las Vegas, forty miles north of Laughlin, and 1.5 miles from the western boarder of the Lake Mead National Recreational Area. The Right-of-Way application area is approximately nineteen-thousand acres, and if approved the project foot print would be one-hundred-sixty-three acres. No new mining claims can be filed in the nineteen-thousand acre application area while the BLM is considering the project. This will be in effect for two years, and does not affect valid existing mining claims. The project will consist of ninety-six 2.3 megawatt wind turbines. Each turbine requires a concrete foundation and transformer. The project will also require underground electrical collection and communication systems, as well as two electrical substations and 8.7 miles of transmission line. Switching yards would be required to transmit power and would consist of 1.5 acres with a twelve-foot chain-link fence and an outdoor lighting system. Four meteorological towers, approximately two-hundred feet tall are needed, and three out of the four were installed in 2009. An operations and maintenance building, with parking, would be required and would span over a 3.5 acre area. Nine miles of existing roads would need to be widened and twenty-seven miles of new roads would need to be constructed for access roads. Along with the permanent structures, there the project calls for two temporary ten-acre lay down areas for the staging of equipment.

There are other alternatives being considered for the project; the first being a ninety-six wind turbine layout. This option would provide up to two-hundred-twenty megawatts of power, but it exceeds air quality standards for admissions. The second and BLM's preferred method is an eighty-seven wind turbine layout. The BLM prefers this method because it would require less land disturbance. The final alternative is the no action alternative which would mean the project would not be developed.

The scoping period for this project opened December 16, 2008 and closed February 17, 2009. The Environmental Impact Statement was released January 20, 2012 which initiated the ninety day public comment period that ended April 18, 2012. Public comments will be collected and addressed in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BLM is still working on a final EIS,

and estimate a December 2012 release. The EIS is followed by a Record of Decision signed by the Secretary of the Interior thirty days later. The Record of Decision will approve or deny the project.

Heather Love-Fisher inquired as to whether or not the sites need to be mitigated for tortoise. Ms. Christ stated the applicants were made aware of the tortoise areas, and two larger turbine alternatives were not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

Greg Helseth announced there are a total of five EIS currently under way, with four of those looking to come to a Record of Decision in 2012. This first EIS is Kay Road at the apex Paiute tribal location. The final EIS should be out today. The project itself is on tribal land but the BLM is involved due to the right-away.

The second project is the Search Light Wind Energy project which was presented by Nancy today. The third project is the supplemental EIS for First Solar in Prim, and the fourth is the Valley Electric Hidden Hills project consisting five hundred KV transmission lines over sixty miles and a gas pipeline connecting to the Kern River.

Heather Love-Fisher asked is the state is going to be covered in transmission lines, and are they coming up with projects in areas already developed? Mr. Helseth stated that Nevada, as a state has already met its renewable energy quota and does not need more renewable energy projects but California does. Companies looking to build on Nevada lands are looking to sell their power to California, and the transmission lines run parallel to already existing lines so the impact is lessened. Mrs. Love-Fisher asked why we can't tap into existing lines. Mr. Helseth stated we can't because the lines can only take so much power. Nevada also has good sun, flat lands, and is suitable for large scale renewable energy. Mrs. Love-Fisher asked if the BLM has a map with the areas that are better suited for renewable energy and if it is out yet. Mr. Helseth stated the map is out and if you can Google Solar PEIS, and it is called Solar Energy Zone. The map is dated Oct 28, 2011.

Jane Feldman stated Nevada does have a renewable portfolio standard of twenty-five percent by 2020, and that is by some standards considered low. Clean energy advocates are going to Carson City to advocate for a higher renewable energy standard. They will also be discussing a Feed-N- Tariff that would pay people for their power and the grids would have to be updated.

Arlene Gaune asked if in the physical structure of the companies able prevent ground shake. Mr. Helseth stated companies have added rubber dampers and relocated generators to the base. Ms. Gaune asked what would be the impact on bird life. Mr. Helseth stated there have been lots of studies. The results can be viewed on the BLM website.

Jane Feldman asked if translocation would be required or affective for the Search Light Wind project. Mr. Helseth stated wind farms are considered a site type right-of-way, but almost considered more linear in nature because they are spread out and not bunched together like a solar project. There is also no fencing to keep anything away from the towers, although, some of the roads might have tortoise fencing on them. There has been careful consideration to avoid tortoises and tortoise borrows.

John Hiatt asked as to why the Secretary of the Interior would be signing off on EIS and not BLM Nevada personnel. Greg explained this is due to the high interest in renewable energy projects. He stated that if someone does not like a decision they can go through the Internal Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) to appeal it, but when the Secretary of the Interior signs it that takes the IBLA out of the process. So if there is an issue with the project it goes straight to the District Court. It is a process control.

Gary Race asked what has been proposed for the removal of Yucca and Cactus. Ms. Christ stated there will be a Yucca and plant salvage plan that would be required mitigation and Fred Edwards, our botanist, is working on the plan and it has not been finalized yet.

Nancy Christ thanked everyone for their time.

1:45p.m. Tom Seley stated up in the Tonopah area, Battle Mountain District, the renewable energy projects consists of wind, geothermal, and solar. Currently, there is only one project being constructed which is Crescent Dunes. This project is a power tower with hot and cold salt storage tanks. The concrete tower was complete at end of December.

Tom Seley stated Ormat is constructing two 40 megawatt binary air cooled power plants, which start power production in July 2012. Also, Chemetal Foote Corporation's, a geothermal exploration project operations plan has been accepted and a draft EA is currently under review.

Mary Jo Rugwell passed out an Ely project list from Mike Dwyer. Mrs. Rugwell asked all members to send specific questions to Hillerie Patton and she can forward them to Ely or email Mike Dwyer for a response, since Mr. Dwyer had to leave early.

2:00 p.m. SNPLMA Progress (attachment #7) - Karla Norris made a presentation on the progress of SNPLMA as of December 31, 2011. SNPLMA is in the middle of Round 13. All sub-group meetings have taken place in the last couple of weeks. Managers are in the process of putting together the ranking sheets and the notes from those meetings. The Partners Working Group meeting is scheduled for April 17. Once that meeting is held and recommendations are put together they will then go out to the public with the recommended projects for comment.

Currently, SNPLMA has six-hundred-fifty projects in progress, six-hundred-five projects have been closed; one-hundred-twenty projects have been terminated, there have been a total of eleven-hundred-seventy-five projects, and forty-five percent have been complete, closed, or terminated. In the next two years the goal is to be eighty or ninety percent closed. Round twelve is significantly smaller

than

round eleven. Round thirteen is expected to be even smaller, it is expected to be around ten-million dollars. SNPLMA is only making around a million dollars in land sales a year. If the rounds are not slowed down, SNPLMA will be out of money in a few years. SNPLMA is working on closing out the current projects while keeping a small portion going until land sales picks up.

Heather Love-Fisher asked if the inventory stays consistent or dwindles. Ms. Norris stated SNPLMA's inventory stays consistent because it is a boundary, which is inside the Las Vegas Valley. SNPLMA has a set number of acres available for sale, about twenty-five to thirty thousand acres left and only thirty-five thousand acres have been sold. SNPLMA probably has enough, even if land sales pick back up, for about fifteen years of inventory. If someone wanted to purchase land within the SNPLMA boundary, they would, depending upon where the land is, ask the city or county and they nominate that land. The city or county would say yes it is in accordance with our Land Management Plan would approve the potential use. The nomination is then brought to the BLM, and the land is then sold. Last year, the BLM was only asked to sell five acres and disposed of about nine-hundred acres for public use.

Karla Norris explained there are forty-three nominations for a total of twenty-three million dollars in SNPLMA Round 13. There are seven categories, and

between six and eight million dollars for the sub-groups; this means about one million dollars for each category. SNPLMA is asking the sub-groups to only nominate two projects per entity and include a lowest cost option. Two projects per entity means the BLM, Ely, and Southern Nevada would only get two projects, and the Park Service, Great Basin, and Lake Mead would only get two projects. SNPLMA is also asking entities to focus on, on-the-ground-projects, and on projects where there are leveraged funds.

Karla Norris distributed a contact list. All contact information can also be found on the SNPLMA website.

SNPLMA will have an online reporting system that will show how many projects are ongoing. A second local representative has been added to the local Partners Working Group. The Partners Working Group is scheduled for April 17 and the Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for mid-July. SNPLMA 101/201 training will be conducted in conference rooms A, B, and C on March 28. It will also be available by webinar.

Jane Feldman stated last year's SNPLMA projects included a conservation initiative of nine-hundred-thousand dollars for the Forest Service for law enforcement. Is there a conservation initiative for law enforcement in this coming year? Ms. Norris stated there is not a conservation initiative for law enforcement this year. Ms. Norris explained there is a Sage Grouse habitat survey (ranked number two), coordination and closeout of service first projects (ranked the lowest), emergency funding for the inventorying and storage of interagency archeological collections, the habitat model on the Western Burrowing Owl, the Johnson Lake Mine Historic District Stabilization (ranked the highest), the Lake Mead Institute a Center for Learning and Youth Engagement and Citizen Science, the Spring Mountain Inventorying and Monitoring, and the Spring Valley Monitoring and Restoration Plan.

Gary Race asked if there is a policy with SNPLMA that any data collected can be freely exchanged with other agencies. Ms. Norris stated it depends on the data. Some data can if it is accordance with federal regulations. Contact Ms. Norris and she can let you know whether or not the data collected can be freely exchanged.

2:30p.m. Public Comment Period is opened.

Max Hema, Citizens Group, is part of the group that is researching Gypsums

Resources project. Mr. Hema has offered his time as the group's primary researcher and writer in regards to project. The Citizens Group is making arguments as to the size and scope of what the project has become in comparison to the more in line zoning at one house every two acres that the company had, now it is five times that. There are a lot of plans and infrastructural issues. Mr. Hema will refer back to the maps which Bob Ross had distributed. In the counties plans there is only one major big ask from the BLM and that is the primary access road coming off of highway 160 to the east. That is the primary access road. At maximum build out that road is designed, from the companies own traffic reports, to accommodate forty-five thousand car trips a day; which at the present time he recently received information from Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) that roughly about eight to ten- thousand cars a day run on highway 160.

This would be a huge jump in traffic, and at the intersection it was estimated that about 1/4 to 1/3 of that traffic coming off the hill will turn to the west on highway 160, because it is a nice drive through the canyon and into Summerlin. Gypsum would like a six lane highway at final build-out, which they would build in phases. Last week there was a meeting and Gypsum stated they plan to put all utilities underground. There was a question as to how the company plans to put it all underground going up the east face of Blue Diamond Hill, to which the company did not respond. Another ask of the BLM, already built into Gypsums plans, and is the mine hall road off the property. The entrance of that road is just off of Blue Diamond on highway 159. The road is presently being used by Gypsum Resources to get up to the top of the hill. In their plans, the road is designed to be used for health and safety purposes as a secondary access road for emergencies only. About 2/3 of the road goes over National Conservation Land, which is a one-hundred foot Right-of-Way. In the current plans the company is asking for a two-hundred to two-hundred-fifty foot Right-of-Way that will be graded and paved to NDOT standards. Gypsum owns twenty-four-hundred-sixty-four acres on top of the hill. In their prime building zone in their concept plan they will have a central foot print of about sixteen-hundred-fifteen acres; in last August it became eighteen-hundred-eighty acres, and know it is two-thousand-sixteen acres.

Heather Love-Fisher asked if the company can still build roads across land that is not theirs. Mr. Hema stated the BLM would have to reassign those rights-of-way from mining support operations to public access road. In the PFNA Gypsum purposes to move all schools, fire stations, etc. off their land and on to BLM land. Lastly, it is not right to land lock private land, but after lots of research Mr. Hema believes that the reasons for the access have to make sense and have to be

righteous. He has serious philosophical differences regarding the 3809 because he believes it is a thin veneer to get heavy equipment up there to do a little piece of the project but to also get access to all of it. He also has doubts regarding the company's reference to Nevada Revised Statute 2477. The mine-haul road has never fallen under RS 2477, it has always had restricted access. Gypsum has allowed their Right-of-Way to expire. The company did not do anything to revive it, but Gypsum has appeal their Right-of-Way closure.

Terri Robertson asked if there is a process were the BLM can remove the northern counties from the ability to have the use of the SNPLMA money, because it is slowing down now. She asked if SNPLMA money could have been used to purchase the land at the top of the hill. Jane Feldman responded by stating SNPLMA has to have a willing seller.

Max Hema thanked the RAC members for their time.

Pat Van Betten, President of the Blue Diamond History Committee stated the mine access road never had any public access and asked whether the BLM would consider moving the boundary land on the hill that is considered disposal land. She asked if it would cost anything to take it off the disposal list and listed as a National Conservation Area. Mrs. Rugwell stated it does not. Ms. Van Betten stated the land belongs to the public and is on a list to be disposed. The land can be taken off the disposal list and reclaimed as a National Conservation Area, considering as it is bordered on all sides by National Conservation Area land. Bob Ross stated the land is not part of the SNPLMA boundary, rather it is the West Valley disposal area and does not require any congressional approval.

Jane Feldman stated one of the things she wanted to talk about was the subcommittees, one of those being the Resource Management Plan (RMP) subcommittee. She wanted to know the details of what they will be doing. Hillerie Patton said unfortunately, their leader, Joni, is the lead on the RMP subgroup and is not here today. John Evans and Susan Farkas are the lead on the RMP revision. Ms. Feldman stated she did not know there was BLM staff working on the RMP draft. How far along are they and when can the subgroup members start? Bob Ross and Mark Spencer are working on putting together chapter 2 and will try to have a meeting in May with the cooperating agencies. The draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be ready until the end of 2012.

The next RAC meeting is scheduled for July 20<sup>th</sup> in Ely.

Public comment period closed.

3:00p.m. Jane Feldman stated she thinks there are many issues with the RMP that the RAC members are interested in. The Sierra Club and other environmental organization are interested not only in the disposal boundaries but also in: land use designation that need to be considered in the RMP, wilderness study areas, and, ACEC's.

Hillierie Patton stated the RAC needs to choose three members for the State Recreation committee. Elise McAllister explained the State Recreation RAC committee is charged with working on any recreation issues when there is a p charged. The recreation subcommittee needs at least three members currently, there are two members consisting of Elise and Ms. Von-Tobel Gleason. Heather Love-Fisher stated she would be the committee as discussed at the last meeting.

Hillierie Patton proposed a new subcommittee wrapped around the idea reaching out to the community. The BLM needs to move towards the new generation in an effort to cultivate the new "Terrie Robertsons, and John Hiatts." Ms. Patton decided to put together a youth subcommittee, in an effort to cultivate advocates for the BLM. The committee would include high school and college aged students. The college students could help with putting together papers, research, and things of that nature. The students could to help her outreach to others. Ms. Patton asked the RAC members as well as the audience if there was anyone willing to participate in the new subcommittee. Terri Robinson stated she would like be on the committee and asked if the age limit could be dropped down to middle school. Ms. Patton stated middle school students are more than welcome, any youth who are willing to participate are welcome. She expressed the need to acquire advocates of all ages.

Heather Love-Fisher stated she had a friend who was required to work volunteer hours for the BLM to get rid of a violation. She asked if it would be possible to give volunteer credits for participation. Ms. Patton stated that would be possible.

Robert Adams stated he will talk with the Pahrump County board.

Hillierie Patton asked if this would be a subcommittee they would like to keep under the RAC. She stated the subcommittee will tie in with the Don't Trash Nevada Media Squad, and she will provide updates to the MOSO RAC on the subcommittee's progress. Mary Jo Rugwell stated this subcommittee goes very well with the Secretary's wanting to get youth involved.

The decision was made to add a Youth Subcommittee on the RAC.

3:16 p.m. Julie Von-Tobel-Gleason Vice Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED BY:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rosemary Thomas,  
Designated Federal Official

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joni Eastly, Chair  
Mojave-Southern Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Vivian Browning, BLM Southern Nevada District Office -

Attachments: available online or in the District(s) offices

- 1. BLM Southern Nevada District Manager’s report
- 2. BLM Tonopah Field Manager’s report
- 3. BLM Ely District Manager’s report
- 4. Ely Project review
- 5. Rhodes Project map
- 6. Renewable Energy Project presentation
- 7. SNPLMA Progress presentation