

- 8:10 a.m. Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely District Public Affairs Specialist, collected travel receipts and information.
- 8:10 a.m. The RAC reviewed the May 1-2 meeting minutes and determined to table the review until the next meeting, scheduled Aug. 14-15, in Caliente, Nev.
- 8:15 a.m. Public Comment, Brent Eldridge, resident of White Pine County and livestock grazing permittee: Mr. Eldridge expressed concern to the RAC about the placement of Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) water improvement projects, or guzzlers, in prime livestock habitat. Eldridge is of the understanding that the Nevada State Water Engineer might have exempted NDOW from the (water) permitting process. BLM Ely District manager John Ruhs said the BLM Ely District is currently re-aligning its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to provide for earlier NDOW input. Eldridge asked about the livestock grazing permittee's role. Ruhs said the permittees should be involved early in the public process. Dr. John Hiatt reviewed the NDOW guzzler program. In brief, Hiatt said the program began an undetermined number of years ago with small game and/or bird guzzlers. He said the program expanded about 20-25 years ago when NDOW constructed guzzlers for bighorn sheep in southern Nevada. Bighorn sheep were subsequently transplanted to dozens of locations in southern Nevada, he said. Hiatt stated that sportsmen's groups want NDOW to pursue an aggressive program to enlarge big game herds, which causes conflicts between wildlife and livestock. Someone asked what the impacts were to wild horses and burros. It was noted that NDOW views wild horses as feral livestock. A brief discussion ensued regarding wildlife forage. John Ruhs suggested the RAC place the item on the August agenda to allow NDOW's water development program team to participate. Ruhs recommended BLM review its public processes to ensure coordination with grazing permittees. Ruhs closed the discussion with a review of the BLM Ely District final draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process flow chart.
- 8:45 a.m. District/Field Managers' reports:
- Ely District Office, John Ruhs, BLM Ely District Manager (attachment 1):
- The RAC asked Ruhs why it cost only \$20,000 to process 20 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Ruhs responded that some of the requestors were not billed because the information was to be utilized for educational purposes.
 - The RAC noted that Toquop Energy Project proponent Sithe Global has relinquished the water right the company leased from Lincoln County Water District. The RAC asked if BLM would issue the right-of-way (ROW) for the project, if it lacked water. Ruhs responded that BLM would not issue a ROW if the project lacked sufficient water.

- Ruhs updated the RAC on the status of the Ely Resource Management Plan (Ely RMP). Ruhs said the final document should be available in September 2008. He noted that the draft final biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would not be issued until July. Ruhs was asked about the biological opinion. He said the consultation covers listed and proposed species, but that BLM also asked for guidance in developing other conservation measures for species.
- He added that 6 protests had been resolved.
- Ruhs was asked why Florida Power and Light was interested in studying wind generation in eastern Nevada. He responded that the firm was interested in potential wind energy development.

Tonopah Field Office, Tom Seley, Tonopah Field Manager (attachment 2):

- The RAC asked Seley if the Tonopah Field Office was scheduled in FY 2008 to reclaim any mine lands under the Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program. Seley said that, in consultation with the BLM Nevada State Office, the Tonopah Field Office had determined not to conduct any abandoned mine closures this fiscal year.
- The RAC asked about the Magruder Mountain Allotment. The Magruder Mountain Allotment originally was a water-based grazing lease that was cancelled in the late 1990's. All of the range improvement projects were cancelled in the early 2000s. In 2007 the grazing lease was re-authorized as a land-based grazing lease to Denver Square Trust and then leased to another livestock operator in 2008. During the transfer process, discussions were held about there being no authorized range improvements in the allotment. BLM explained that if the operator wanted to reconstruct the water developments the process would be the same as used for a new project. Denver Square Trust stated that the surface water rights had been transferred to them from the previous permittee, however the ground water rights were still in the process of being transferred. BLM informed them that if the ground water rights are not put to beneficial use within a 5-year period they run the risk of having those water rights cancelled.

Southern Nevada District Office, Mary Jo Rugwell, BLM Southern Nevada District Manager (attachment 3):

- Mary Jo Rugwell briefly updated the RAC on wild horse issues in southern Nevada, specifically the Nellis gather. Rugwell said gather funding was made available by the BLM Washington Office, which also provided funding for gathers in other Nevada districts. She said the gather began this morning with water trapping. The gather, which is expected to take three weeks to complete, is expected to bring the Herd Management Area(s) to the lower end of

the established Appropriate Management Level (AML). The gathered mares and foals will be transported to a BLM facility in Ridgecrest, California, and the studs to the BLM facility in Palomino Valley, near Reno. Rugwell told the RAC that the U.S. Air Force, based at Nellis, adjacent to Las Vegas, has assisted with water hauling and in July completed an assistance agreement with BLM. Together, the BLM and Air Force will construct easily maintainable spring developments. She pointed out that the BLM wild horse specialist was recently allowed, for the first time, to enter the Nellis-administered area as a result of a change in air base policy. The RAC discussed briefly the National Wild Horse and Burro Program and related issues, i.e., the number of wild horses on the public lands and in holding facilities awaiting adoption. The RAC pointed out that nearly three quarters of the \$38 million annual budget is eaten up by maintenance costs. The RAC noted that a planned for gather at Nellis in December was canceled because of a lack of program funding. The last gather conducted at Nellis was in 2005. A brief discussion ensued re: the effectiveness of birth control. The RAC suggested the BLM be more proactive versus reactive in the operation of the program.

- Rugwell said the BLM on June 17 sold two parcels of public lands via sealed competitive bid. Other parcels available were not bid on. Sales are declining overall due to a number of factors, including the U.S. economy and current housing market. The decline in land sales translates into fewer dollars flowing into Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) coffers.
- Re: SNPLMA, Rugwell said the executive committee has decided upon its SNPLMA Round 9 recommendations for the Secretary. She said they changed the pre-proposal process slightly. Funding issues were discussed again, briefly. Rugwell pointed out that the SNPLMA Round 9 information is available on the BLM website. She told the RAC that the final SNPLMA Round 9 recommendation(s) would be made within the next two weeks.

9:35 a.m. Visual Resource Management, John Ruhs, BLM Ely District Manager; Mary Jo Rugwell, Southern Nevada District Manager; Tom Seley, BLM Tonopah Field Manager:

- Don (Skip) Canfield asked BLM what is being done to address the state's desire for a standard list of visual mitigation conditions for structures built upon the public lands. Canfield said the State of Nevada strongly supports multiple-use activities but is concerned that development often lacks regard for visual resources. The state wants BLM to take a comprehensive and consistent approach to visual impacts as multiple-use concepts are employed on the public lands. Many times, small and inexpensive mitigation measures can have a significant impact on the compatibility of built and natural

environments. Canfield suggested BLM implement or continue to implement the following:

1. Utilize appropriate lighting: Utilize consistent lighting mitigation measures that follow “dark sky” lighting practices. Dark sky measures are inexpensive, simple to implement, and very mainstream. The result is a less obtrusive impact to other users of adjacent public lands. www.darksky.org Effective lighting should have screens that do not allow the bulb to shine up or out. In fact, lighting that is installed using dark sky fixtures (light is only aimed at the subject property) is more efficient, safer, and results in reduced electricity costs. Federal agencies should include light shields as a condition of approval for all permanent and temporary applications such as exploratory drilling rigs.
2. Utilize building materials, colors and site placement that are compatible with the natural environment: Utilize consistent mitigation measures that address logical placement of improvements and use of appropriate screening and structure colors. Existing utility corridors, roads and areas of disturbed land should be utilized wherever possible. For example, the use of compatible paint colors such as “Sudan brown” for water tanks and other vertical structures reduces the visual impacts of the built environment. Using screening, careful site placement, and cognitive use of earth-tone colors/materials that match the environment go a long way to improve the user experience for others who might have different values than what is fostered by built environment activities.

Canfield said the federal agencies should require these mitigation measures as conditions of approval for all permanent and temporary applications.

- 10 a.m. National Wind Energy EIS, Jane Peterson, BLM Ely District Energy Manager; Mike Herder, BLM Associate Ely District Manager; and John Ruhs, BLM Ely District Manager (attachment 4):
- The RAC discussed briefly the number of acres tied to wind energy development and asked who determines how much acreage is necessary. The BLM responded that it was tied to wind energy potential and location. Topography determines turbine layout. The BLM time frame allows for 3 years of monitoring and research. The actual right-of-way (ROW) will be determined by the actual project footprint. A brief discussion was conducted re: traffic management

planning, stop signs, etc. Canfield asked BLM to find out if the tops of turbines need to be lit (for public safety), to determine the appropriate light mitigation measures.

- Hiatt recessed the meeting at 10:15 a.m., reconvening at 10:35 a.m. –

10:35 a.m. Groundwater development in eastern Nevada, Dan Netcher, BLM Deputy Groundwater Project Manager (attachment 5):

- The RAC asked Netcher if a peer review was considered in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the water development project proposed by the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA). Netcher replied “No”.
- Netcher said that historical data collected for SNWA included information on springs. He said a draft of the baseline data is being reviewed and would be released when the draft EIS is released. The RAC briefly discussed various projects and state jurisdiction (Nevada and Utah) over respective basins.

11:15 a.m. Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development Project, Zane Marshall, SNWA Environmental Resources Division Manager:

- Marshall discussed briefly biological research and monitoring in Spring Valley.
- Jim Prieur, SNWA senior hydrologist, discussed briefly the Spring Valley Hydrologic Monitoring Program.
- The RAC and public questioned if construction of the monitoring station at Kalamazoo could compromise integrity of the data. Other questions raised included quality assurance and use of the best available instrumentation. The RAC and public were assured that calibration tapes, manual probes and field notes are all used to comprise the data base. Monthly audits are conducted to ensure data quality. The raw field forms are filed, as are all chemistry and stream measurements. Everything is done according to industry standards.
- Dr. Peter Starkweather suggested a scientific adversary (Really? Adversary?) and proposed that a Mr. Jim Deacon make a presentation to the RAC at an upcoming meeting. A brief discussion ensued.

11:45 a.m. Fortification Range, Parsnip Peak, White Rock Range Wilderness Management Plan and Draft Environmental Assessment, Dave Jacobson, BLM Ely District wilderness planner:

- Dave Jacobson told the RAC that the Fortification Range, Parsnip Peak, White Rock Range Wilderness Management Plan and Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) will soon go out for a 45-day public comment period. A mass mailing and press release are

scheduled, as is a public comment meeting in Pioche, the Lincoln County seat. Jacobson provided the RAC members with copies of the draft document (attachment 6) to forward to their constituents for comment. He also noted that draft EA is located on the BLM Ely District website.

- 12:10 p.m. Wild Horses; Mary Jo Rugwell, Southern Nevada District Manager; Tom Seley, BLM Tonopah Field Manager; John Ruhs, BLM Ely District Manager:
- The RAC briefly discussed again wild horses and related issues, and the Nellis gather.
 - Ruhs provided the RAC an update on an emergency gather being conducted for public and animal safety on public and private lands at Indian Ridge and Highland Knolls, on the west side of U.S. Highway 93, about five miles north of Caliente. He said so far the BLM has gathered and removed eight wild horses. BLM hopes next month to gather and remove about 15 additional horses. The BLM is encouraging area residents to not feed or water the horses in an effort to keep the animals within the boundaries of the Highland Peak Herd Management Area, located northwest of the housing development.
- 12:35 p.m. Housekeeping; Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely District Public Affairs Specialist:
- Hanefeld collected travel documentation from RAC members. He reminded the members that the next meeting is scheduled Thursday and Friday, Aug. 14-15, at the Caliente Youth Center, in Caliente.
 - The RAC asked how BLM is addressing the single vacant position (Environment) on the Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC. It was explained that the position will be filled in the normal manner (currently underway).
 - The RAC asked for a list of all the member's terms. Hanefeld was directed to update and distribute the RAC contact list.
- 12:50 p.m. Hiatt adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED BY:

Date: _____

John Hiatt, Chair
Mojave-Southern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Rebecca Hammond, BLM Ely District Office -

Attachments:

1. BLM Ely District Manager's report
2. BLM Tonopah Field Manager's report
3. BLM Southern Nevada District Manager's report
4. BLM Ely District Office Wind Energy Projects (power point)
5. Overview of Groundwater Conveyance Rights-of-Way on BLM-managed Lands in Clark, Lincoln and White Pine Counties (power point)
6. Fortification Range, Parsnip Peak, White Rock Range Wilderness Management Plan and Draft Environmental Assessment