

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
February 18, 2010

BLM Southern Nevada District Office 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada

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

Douglas "Stretch" Baker	Transportation and ROW	Category 1
Tim Carlson	Mineral Development	Category 1
Heather Love Fisher	Permitted Recreation	Category 1
Ed Higbee	Ranching/Grazing	Category 1
Gracian Uhalde	Ranching/Grazing	Category 1
Mauricia Baca	Environment	Category 2
Julie Von Tobel Gleason	Wild Horse and Burro	Category 2
Dr. John E. Hiatt, Chairperson	Wildlife	Category 2
Greg Seymour	Archeology/Historic	Category 2
Don "Skip" Canfield	State Agency Representative	Category 3
Joni Eastley	Elected Official	Category 3
Steven Mellington, vice-Chairperson	Public at Large	Category 3
Dr. Peter Starkweather	Academic/UNLV	Category 3

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

Elise McAllister	Dispersed Recreation	Category 2
Kenny Anderson	Native American	Category 3

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

Doran Sanchez	BLM Chief of Communications
Hillierie Patton	BLM Southern Nevada Public Affairs Specialist
Mary Jo Rugwell, Des. Federal Official	BLM Southern Nevada District Manager
Thomas Seley	BLM Tonopah Field Manager
Rosemary Thomas	BLM Ely District Manager
Patricia Heinbaugh	BLM Ely District Management Assistant
Tim Wakefield	BLM Red Rock/Sloan Field Office Manager
Michelle Bilodeau	BLM Environmental Coordinator (Contractor)
Wells McGiffert	BLM Project Manager (Energy)

**Public:**

Kyle C. Walton	Nye County
Gary Reese	Logan Simpson Design, Inc.
Stephanie Phillips	US Forest Service
Todd Eagleston	NV Energy
Jason Higgins	Solar Millennium

**Public Continued:**

Cindy MacDonald	
Tom Peterson	Clark County Dept. of Aviation, Planning
Richard Nelson	Nye County/BEC Environmental, Inc.
Eileen Christensen	Nye County/BEC Environmental, Inc.
Scott Piscitello	RES Americas
Darrell Lacy	Nye County
Ken Freeman	Southern Nevada Off Road Enthusiasts

A copy of each attachment is listed in the text of or at the end of these minutes and is also on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Ely Field Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to review said minutes should contact Chris Hanefeld, public affairs specialist, at (775) 289-1842.

8:00 a.m. Dr. John E. Hiatt, Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) chairperson, called the meeting to order and conducted introductions.

8:10 a.m. Hillerie Patton, BLM Southern Nevada District Public Affairs Specialist, collected travel receipts and related information.

8:15 a.m. The RAC reviewed the draft minutes from the Friday, Nov. 20, 2009, breakout session at the Tri-RAC meeting. The RAC approved the minutes as presented.

8:20 a.m. Public Comment.

Ken Freeman with the Southern Nevada Off Road Enthusiasts expressed concern to the RAC about off highway speed event restrictions regarding the RMP. Off road racing is a huge economic contributor. John Hiatt asked that these comments be provided in written form. Mr. Freeman stated that he has in fact done so. Mr. Freeman further stated that he would like to see an open area set aside for events.

No further public comment.

8:30 a.m. District/Field Managers' reports:

Ely District Office, Rosemary Thomas, BLM Ely District Manager (attachment 1):

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

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

District reports discussed. Chairperson Hiatt asked about pending legislation on Nellis Dunes of Ms. Rugwell. Pending legislation conveys 1,000 acres to Clark County for an OHV park. This would allow for improvements and an actual course tiered toward family use more so than the hard core user. No further information available regarding budgeting.

BLM announced reduction in funding. Will this affect the RMP's? Rugwell said she did not believe so. RMP revision is very focused with a tight time frame of three years. If it takes longer than that, it could be an issue.

Joni Eastley commented that the Nye County Commission approved the comments on the RMP. A resident of Amargosa Valley spoke and said 99% of RMP involved activities in the Las Vegas area and very little applied to Pahrump and Amargosa. Patton said that a presentation will be made to the Amargosa board. The group talked about the 1970 & 1980 way of thinking that is in the RMP and the need for additional focus. There will be an opportunity to start from scratch on some issues.

Tom Seley commented that he has received notification from RAM Power of notice of intent in the next few weeks. Seley believes that the monies are there and it will proceed quickly. Seley informed that they are looking at a horse gather in early July due to exceeding AML. BLM will also be moving forward on Gold Point and Ione trespasses. These have been ongoing issues since the 1980's.

EIS comment meetings scheduled for "Conservation Transfer Area". There will be public meetings next week. There will be a form available on the BLM web to comment as well. There may be an extension of time offered at the request of local governments.

Rugwell informed that there will be an April 10 grand opening of the Red Rock Visitor Center.

Rosemary Thomas informed that SNWA has made application for their water rights and BLM will have the ability to protest as they have in the past. Thomas reassured the audience that the BLM is looking at being responsive to new applications and will look at stipulated agreements for the basin. BLM is aware of challenges.

Looking at water and feed baiting to trap 50 nuisance horses along US 93. Lots of scrutiny has been placed on horses due to recent events gathers. The Secretary's initiative to establish sanctuaries will move forward. BLM is becoming very proactive. Team developed for outreach, education, etc. to help communicate to the public. It is important to educate the public and it is a challenge.

9:00 a.m. Stephanie Phillips provided an update on Spring Mountain NRA. Left visitor guides for audience (attachment 4). On December 31 the ROD was signed for the EIS on Middle Kyle Canyon Project in Spring Mountains. Appeal period ends next Monday. Look at breaking ground within 18 months. SNPLMA provided money to upgrade campgrounds, etc. on the Spring Mountains. Work is in progress so bear with us and will hopefully be completed by next spring. Record snowfall this year so lots of winter recreation. Issue with traffic and are experimenting with shuttles. Fuels wild land interface project began a couple of years ago on public land to establish a defensible space to fight fires. This project will be completed in Nov. or Dec. of this coming year. Had successful indictment against individual who stole rock art.

9:15 a.m. Red Rock Canyon Conservation National Area fee proposal. Barb Keleher. Draft business plan provided for public comment and committee recommendation. The process was to have the subcommittee listen to public comments and read them and then based on draft business plan there were a number of items including raising fees on autos, pedestrians (establishing a fee), campground, group reservations, etc. Encourage purchase of annual support pass. Plan provides for a guest pass and incorporates the same features as the America the Beautiful pass. There is a business plan that shows approximately \$986,000 will be raised annually over the next ten years which will provide for maintenance. Approximately 1.5 million visitors per year go through the Red Rock Canyon NCA.

Chris Dempsey commented that he is an avid user of Red Rock and volunteers for Friends of Red Rock. BLM could have looked at other ways to increase revenue rather than entry fees. Need ways to generate operating funds and do it efficiently and this plan provides for that. BLM has suggested the least obtrusive method.

The Rec RAC has recommended to this group that we approve the fee increase with these amendments to the plan. Love-Fisher recommended additional locations be added. Logistics were implied at the meeting that this would in fact

be done. Signage will be established as well as other locations to pay fees. The following recommendation was read into the record:

*The Recreation Resource Advisory Committee subcommittee recommends to the Mojave Southern RAC that the proposed changes to the Red Rock Canyon Amenity Recreation fee schedule be approved with the following provisions:*

- a. That the plan provides for an annual “support” pass;*
- b. That the plan provides for a volunteer service pass;*
- c. That the plan provides for a guess pass that complies with the guidelines for guests in the “America the Beautiful Pass” and*
- d. That the plan provides for the analysis and implementation of an electronic by-pass to be at the entrance of the scenic drive.*

All members stated their support, with no opposition expressed.

#### BREAK

10:00 a.m. Tim Coward BLM Battle Mountain District RECO Renewable Energy Project Update, attachment 5

Wells McGiffert, BLM Ely District, Renewable Energy Project Update, attachment 6.

Gregory Helseth, BLM Southern Nevada District RECO Renewable Project Update, attachment 7.

LUNCH 12:10 to 1:00

1:00 p.m. Chairman Hiatt called the meeting to order.

Scott Piscitello, Senior Vice President, Development RES Americas gave background on wind energy, public v. private and how to improve process. A 1 mw turbine running for one hour at full capacity will generate 1 mwh of energy. Today’s wind turbines range from 1.5 to 3.0 mw. A wind farm costs about \$2.1 million per mw. Energy projects have support from the government, be it ARRA monies, etc. Project challenges are interconnection and transmission and permitting. These will slow the process considerably.

What BLM can do to make it easier to develop public lands? Institutional measures would include selection of strong, capable and committed project

managers; clear communication; coordination among agencies; single point of contact/project champion.

Procedural measures would include follow the intent of NEPA; NEPA docs don't need to be bullet proof; Let RACs be sounding board for the public.

Managerial measure would include prioritizing management skills over NEPA experience.

- 1:30 p.m. Jason Higgins provided solar energy industry perspective. Direct and indirect solar energy explained. Mandate that a certain percentage be developed up to 2025. Available funding thru ARRA. Two plants in Nevada as of today. Will use 100 acre feet of water for mirror washing. Mirror should last for 30 years. Wet v. dry cool plant explained. Dry cool is like your auto radiator. Military has issues with mirrors because it looks like a big lake from the air (4,000 acres of mirrors.) concerns them also due to radar – how will it affect?
- 2:00 p.m. Geothermal discussion by Tim Coward. See attachment 8. Battle Mountain district is an excellent geothermal location. Three types – Flash/Dual, Binary and Engineered Geothermal System. Flash plants lose a lot of water thru steam. Binary loses very little fluid, which is the encouraged plant. Process begins with lease acquisition of the land, exploration activities begin, drilling productions and injection wells, utilization (power plants, direct use facilities), abandonment of wells and facilities and reclamation of surface. Plant is expected to have a life of 30 years.
- 2:45 p.m. Todd Eagleston provided energy transmission industry perspective. NV Energy renewable portfolio encompasses 41 projects totaling approximately 1100 MW. California #1 and NV #2 in geothermal resources. Geothermal challenge is finding the resource. There are currently 17 plants in service totaling 315 MW. Showed wind power potential throughout the US. Discussed China Mtn., SVW. If turbines are over 250' high, it has to be lit for aircraft visibility. Solar v. Thermal v. Thermal w/storage. 25% of standard goes to energy efficiency.
- 3:45 p.m. Wrap Up Session
- OHV subcommittee will meet before the next meeting. Planning will be ongoing. Will need to have the subcommittee meet to discuss the RMP for Las Vegas. Will visit via email to get their thoughts together. Nye County will provide their comments to the subcommittee.

Peter Starkweather requested that the next OHV meeting include true alternative voices instead of just advocates. Need to have competing ideas at the meetings. Need to hear from environmentalists re OHV.

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4:30 p.m. Dr. John Hiatt adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED BY:

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

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

- Minutes provided by Patricia Heinbaugh, 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