

**BLM NEVADA MOJAVE-SOUTHERN GREAT BASIN (MOSO)
RAC BREAKOUT SESSION**

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

**Thursday, July 21
Conference Room A, B, C**

Resource Advisory Council members present:

Steve Mellington	Public at Large
Greg Seymour	Archaeology
Douglas ("Stretch") Baker	Transportation / ROW
Julie von Tobel-Gleason	Wild Horses & Burros
Joni Eastley	Elected Official (Nye County Commissioner)
Jane Feldman	Environment
Ed Weber	Academic (UNLV)
Don ("Skip") Canfield	State Agency

Resource Advisory Council members not present:

Mauricia Baca	Environment
Kenny A. Anderson	Native American Representative
Gracian Uhalde	Federal Grazing
Edwin Higbee	Ranching and Federal Grazing
Elise McAllister	Recreation (Dispersed)
Tim Carlson	Energy / Minerals

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives present:

Mary Jo Rugwell	Southern Nevada District Manager and Designated Federal Official
Tom Seley	Tonopah Field Manager
Mike Herder	Ely Associate District Manager
Hillierie Patton	Public Affairs Specialist

Visitor/Public present:

Jan Schultz	Lawton Shank
Tom Peterson	Scott Ruby
Ken Freeman	Sue Wainscott
Levi Kryder	Marci Henson
Gerald Hillier	Robert Adams

9:00 a.m. Call to Order. Joni Eastley, RAC Chairperson, called the Mojave Southern Great Basin (MOSO) Resource Advisory Council (RAC) meeting to order and made introductions.

9:10 a.m. Housekeeping— Hillerie Patton, BLM Southern Nevada District Public Affairs Specialist and RAC Coordinator, covered housekeeping duties, and announced that Chris Hanefeld will complete nominations for RAC members. Hillerie covered the BLM travel ceiling for RAC meetings and ways to keep costs down. Ely District will cover travel costs for the September RAC meeting.

Mary Jo Rugwell introduced Mark Spencer to the RAC as the new Pahrump /Renewable Energy Coordination Office Field Manager. Rosie Thomas informed the group that Ely has money and room in the travel ceiling to fund the September meeting. The Tri-RAC meeting is postponed until after the first of the year, and it will likely be held in January.

Joni Eastley will not be available for the September meeting; therefore, Co-Chairperson, Steve Millington will chair September's meeting. Mary Jo Rugwell also informed the RAC, the nomination period for Fiscal Year 2012 is closed. BLM received a couple of nominees for the State Agency position, Members-at-Large, and Dispersed Recreation, and those were sent forward to the Washington office. The Department of the Interior's focus is to have multiple applications for each open category.

Joni Eastley and Mary Jo Rugwell informed the RAC that all materials are online, once approved by the RAC, and the District Manager's report is posted a couple of weeks before the meeting.

9:15 a.m. Update on Southern Nevada Off Road Enthusiasts (SNORE) Permit— Bob Dieli, Outdoor Recreation Supervisor for the Las Vegas Field Office, informed the RAC about the post evaluation of the Mint 400. He briefed the RAC on several factors lacking with the race, including safety and new disturbances that weren't approved through the Environmental Assessment (EA). There was 13 acres of new disturbance and the BLM denied the new permit for the *Midnight Special* race due to these issues. SNORE has appealed through the Interior Board of Land Appeals. The Solicitor decided SNORE did not prove their case. SNORE is working to conduct their event on private land with Primm Valley Resort. Due to restoration and safety issues from the last SNORE race, the BLM Las Vegas Field Office suspended SNORE permits until all issues are resolved. Some of the safety issues were: managing pits without pit captains, no speed control, and passing in the pits (which is not permitted). Another issues included; no monitoring on either end of Papco road. There was also course widening/course cutting, which caused new disturbance. It was noted that managers for SNORE were more concerned with participating than managing. There was also no restroom facilities or dumpsters available in areas where

needed. All these issues from the previous race caused the BLM deny future Special Recreation Permits to SNORE until the issues are resolved.

9:30 a.m. John Evans, Planning and Environmental Coordinator for Las Vegas Field Office, and Susan Farkas, Planning and Environmental Coordinator for Pahrump Field Office, provided a status update of the Las Vegas/Pahrump Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision schedule and answered questions from the RAC members. The original timeline anticipated the RMP Revision Record of Decision (ROD) to be signed by July, 2012. Because of delays of Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) data, a classification of land based on visual resources that are integral for the analysis of the RMP Revision alternatives, the signing of the RMP Revision ROD is now projected to be completed by the winter of 2012-2013.

At the time of the RAC meeting, the planning process for the RMP Revision was at the Alternatives Development stage. There will be four alternatives considered. Each alternative is a collection of management actions; it is a range that captures what BLM can legally implement. The four alternatives to be considered are a no action alternative that uses existing management, and three action alternatives: a conservation alternative with emphasis on resource protection, a development alternative that promotes increase in human and development use, and a preferred alternative that is often a middle-range hybrid of other alternatives. While every alternative is complete and can be a stand-alone RMP, there is no requirement to choose one alternative; the final alternative can be components from any of the analyzed alternatives.

Pending the receipt of the VRI inventory by July 29th, the completion of the Draft of Alternatives is expected by early August, followed with a BLM internal review by the Southern Nevada District Office (SNDO) and Nevada State Office (NVSO). A revised draft of the alternatives will then be sent for review to Cooperating Agencies comprised of local, regional, state and federal government agencies who have agreed to participate in the RMP Revision process. Cooperating Agencies will have 2-3 weeks to review and comment on the alternatives before a 2-day Cooperating Agency meeting is held to review the comments. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 19-20, 2011. All comments received from Cooperating Agencies during this review period will help aid in the final revision of the alternatives. Once the alternatives are finalized, the analysis phase will begin.

Some issues to be addressed in this RMP Revision include Renewable Energy, Areas of Critical and Environmental Concern (ACECs), and Recreation. Each will have the full range of alternatives analyzed. Along with the Solar Energy Zones (SEZ's) identified in the Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), the Las Vegas/Pahrump RMP Revision will analyze areas that may be suitable and which areas may be avoidance/exclusion areas for Renewable Energy development.

The RMP Revision will also look at areas nominated by the public and government entities for considerations to become ACECs. Both Clark County and Nye County have submitted nominations. A week prior to the Cooperating Agency meeting, BLM and Clark County will have a discussion on the nominated ACECs in Clark County. Again, comments received during this period will be help aid in the final revision of the alternatives before analysis begins.

In addition to the RMP Revision, a separate Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) is currently being completed by the Las Vegas Field Office and will address implementation management directions for recreation in Clark County. A similar RAMP for the SNDO managed public lands in Nye County will be done after the RMP Revision is completed.

BLM is working collaboratively with a third party contractor on the RMP Revision planning process, including the writing of the document. Public involvement is a critical component of the planning process, and BLM is engaging the public, tribes, RAC, and Cooperating Agencies throughout the process. Once the RMP Revision is completed, the document will provide land use planning management directions for the public lands in SNDO for the next 15-20 years. Evaluations will be conducted every five years to review the functionality of the management directions and, if changes are warranted, plan amendments will be done.

Tom Seley will bring in the schedule of the Battle Mountain RMP once things are closer to being finalized. The Battle Mountain RMP update has the same VRI issues. Currently, Battle Mountain is working on those issues. Wild and scenic rivers are also being updated along with cultural. Tom Seley informed the RAC that the Nellis test site and training range offered a class so BLM employees will know how to work with military for the RMP and rights-of-ways.

Michael Herder from Ely updated the RAC on the Ely RMP. Ely RMP was revised in 2008. At that time, not all renewable energy was taken into account. Maps for Sage grouse habitat were produced for decisions about whether Renewable energy in those habitats will be allowed, and that decision will be up to State Director on whether or not Renewable Energy is allowed in Sage Grouse Habitat. However due to the sensitive nature, most of the renewable energy projects in Sage Grouse habitat will not move forward.

10:00 a.m. Public Comment Period Opens. Joni Eastley opens public comment period.

Gerald Hillier Executive Director Quadstate Local Governments Authority - Several things involving public lands. One – Rapid EA mostly technical specialist they are supposed to finish work in 2012, but not sure how data will be used or supplied. Assembling resource information from several state and federal agencies across the country. Coming up on analysis phase. Is there a plan to

integrate REA data into RMP since that Data will be in before RMP is complete? Desert tortoise recovery plan. Maybe should have been the month for the release. How is the desert tortoise recovery plan going to be integrated into RMP? Alert council of things that are in the mix that will need to be involved in the RMP. Coordinating agency status. 30 years old and was forgotten when FLTMA was integrated. How is BLM going to use that in the Land use plan? BLM has to coordinate with local plan not local coordinating with BLM.

Terri Robertson from Friends of Sloan Conservation of lands National parks foundation is bringing Friends of Sloan back to life to have a working viable group to work with BLM.

Ken Freeman from SNORE wanted to let the BLM know of the loss of 1.5 million acres for OHV use at APEX and Nellis Dunes. Over 200 miles of competitive trails have been lost as well. Mr. Freeman also wanted to inform the BLM of the fact that there are no competitive events are being held, in Jean/Primm, due to Desert tortoise conservation, and that OHVer's lose thousands of acres every year for renewable energy projects. SNORE would like to see the dry lake area in Jean set aside for competitive events. OHVer's have lost almost two million acres of land and hundreds of miles of track with nothing in return. SNORE would like to see the Jean dry lake area preserved for events. Also BLM fees have increased and have caused proponents to move to other areas where it's cheaper to have their event. Due to increased fees, SNORE could not afford to have the event this year in Las Vegas and moved to Ridgecrest, CA instead. Mr. Freeman wanted to inform the SNDO that it cost \$10,000, to have the event at Ridgecrest, versus the \$40,000 cost recovery in the Southern Nevada district. Mr. Freeman updated the BLM on the fact that promoters are moving out of LV/Clark County due to costs; therefore, we are missing out on 25 million in economic stimulus.

Sue Wainscott from Clark County Conservation wanted to know if there was going to be a lot of detail in the district updates like there are in other districts. Will there be more detail from SNDO? She requested a list of projects before they reach the *Federal Register*.

Robert Adams of the Pahrump Land Advisory Board wanted to know about ATV recreation and wanted to make Pahrump home base for a trail system. Since Pahrump encompasses two BLM Field Offices and Forest Service land, it makes it difficult to get trails designated.

10:30 a.m. Joni Eastley closes public comment period and opens for break.

10:45 a.m. SNPLMA Round 12 Update. Mary Jo introduced Karla Norris as the new manager for SNPLMA. Karla Norris updated the RAC on SNPLMA Round 12, which consisted of the following projects;
Parks, Trails and Natural Areas (PTNA) - \$1,319,222
Capital Improvements - \$1,109,275

Conservation Initiatives - \$1,641,671
Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions - \$877,600
Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention - \$1,496,600
Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project - \$996,100
Multi-Species habitat Conservation (MSHCP) - \$92,000
Lake Tahoe Restoration - \$34,139,397

Karla Norris informed the RAC of the different Parks Trails & Natural Areas (PTNA) projects around Las Vegas, which consists of the I-215 Regional Trail Connectivity, Kiel Ranch Historic Park Phase II and the Caliente Pool Park Complex Phase II for a total of \$1.3 million dollars. Capital improvements - consists of Lehman Caves Visitor Center Campus, ADA Access & Fire Safety and the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area Reconstruction for a total of \$1.1 million. Karla updated the RAC on the Conservation Initiatives Projects which are; Patterson Pass Sage Grouse Habitat Restoration Project, Long Valley Watershed Analysis and Sage Grouse Research and Interagency Law Enforcement for a total of \$1.6 million. The Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions consists of Tahoe Meadows and Roselund. The Hazardous Fuels projects are; Mt. Rose, Spooner Hazardous Fuels reduction, Genoa, Urban Lot and Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park. Karla updated the RAC on the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Projects as well. Those projects are; Pioche/Caselton Wildland Urban Interface Project and the East Schell Bench Wildlife Habitat. The Multi-Species Habitat Conservation projects are; Visitor and Use Management of the Boulder City Conservation Easement and the Media Campaign Promoting Responsible Desert Use.

Mary Jo Rugwell informed the RAC that the Mojave Discovery center was terminated due to the infrastructure at Red Rock and money for the center was put back into the SNPLMA fund.

Karla updated the RAC on the Executive Committee (EC) held June 14th -16th. The Partners Working Group and SNPLMA Staff were present. In addition, our partner agencies/entities were invited to attend. The focus of the meeting was:

- A. To report on projects from earlier rounds (Round 6 and prior) that were not making sufficient progress towards completion. Partners were asked to report on these projects. Can they be completed, should they be completed, would a time extension be necessary? The BLM terminated and agreed to return, projects totaling approximately \$22 million. The majority of the other partners felt that their projects would be completed.
- B. The EC laid out a process to try to handle the time extensions, scope changes and SARs that would be necessary to keep these projects progressing. However, the EC also stressed that partners were making a commitment to finish these projects and future time extensions wouldn't be granted.

- C. The EC asked the SNPLMA staff to assist partners, through the use of our database & quarterly reporting to ensure increased accountability towards project completion in a timely and cost effective fashion.
- D. Changes to the Implementation Agreement (IA) since the last issuance in July 2007 were discussed. Most of the decision memos altering the IA have been approved by the EC. Once decision memo regarding the SAR process, project terminations, and project time frames is under consideration by the EC and is expected to be signed when they meet on July 26th.
- E. In order to increase transparency, that decision memo was sent to all partners for review and a two-week comment period. In addition a draft of all changes affecting the IA was sent out for review. Comments or questions were received by ELFO, City of North Las Vegas, SNWA, and the DCP/MSHCP. Those comments have been forwarded to the EC. Once the decision memo is approved by the EC, the revised IA in draft will be sent out in its entirety to all partners for final review and comment period. The IA will then be finalized and posted to the website.
- F. Impediments to the process were discussed and solutions proposed. The EC recommended that PWG form a committee to discuss solution and report back.
- G. Comments were made that local government was not receiving adequate representation on the PWG or the EC. The EC is composed solely of federal government representatives. The PWG has a rotating local representative (and a non-voting shadow member), a representative from the State of Nevada, and a representative from the Nevada Association of Counties. The EC did direct the PWG to consider adding another local representative. They are tasked with nominating said representative and reporting back to the EC.
- H. In order to continue to ensure progress is made on projects, further discussion may occur between the EC and partners. Also, annual meetings will be held with the EC, PWG and the SNMPLA staff and the partners to increase transparency and ensure project progress continues.

Next steps are; PWG will meet on August 26th to discuss tasks assigned by the EC and to establish criteria for project nominations in Round 13. Some of the criteria discussed that could be included are:

- a. Better project descriptions and deliverables
- b. Past project performance as a rating factor
- c. Discussions of partner capacity and project readiness (NEPA complete)

- d. Leveraging funds
- e. Better discussion of O&M
- f. Base category priorities on strategic plans or administrative priorities (green projects)

12:00 p.m. RECO Update – Mark Chandler Renewable Energy Coordination Office (RECO) Realty Specialist updated the RAC on the Solar PEIS. They are looking to do a supplemental to the Solar PEIS because of the Solar Energy Zones (SEZ). Mark Chandler also informed the RAC of the approved First Solar project in Nevada and the plan is to be fully built by December and generating electricity by then. First Solar project N-85930 is expanding. PSI is in the SRMA for Dig Dune and currently looking at alternative sites. BLM is looking to segregate the land from mineral entry if there is a solar project application on the land meaning that if there is an application for solar there already no one can come in with a mining claim in the same area. This will be part of the PEIS. BLM is working with National Park Service (NPS), for the Searchlight project, due to NPS having a Visitor Entrance Station next to the proposed substation for the project. Valley Electric Association (VEA) has a transmission line proposed through Tecopa road and 160. That project will have an EA. Amargosa Valley projects are slowly moving on or terminating. Currently there are no power purchase agreements with NV Energy, which has made it difficult for the proponents to have a solar project or any kind of project.

Joni Eastley informed the RAC that during the last Nye County Commissioner Meeting, Amargosa was allowed to become an elected board of Officials.

12:15 p.m. Wild Horse and Burro Update – Mike Herder Ely District ADM Triple B gather had injunctions that delayed the gather by a week with a cost of \$17,000 per day. Gather operations began July 20. The Projected goal is 1700 horses removed from the range over a six-week period, and Ely is working with Elko district as well. RAC members can go watch the gather, but they will need to contact Mike Herder first.

Privately held facilities policy was released recently and the Director has made it clear that in terms of the gather operations, the public can be involved. This will allow the public to see what's going on safely with little to interruption to the gather.

12:30 p.m. District Managers Report – Mary Jo Rugwell gave a brief update on the desert cleanup project. Nathan Coleman who was leading up the desert cleanup crew did an amazing job at organizing cleanups and working with communities to get people involved. Red Rock is having monthly outreach meeting every third Thursday and will focus on a different item each meeting. These meetings engage users and give the public an opportunity to meet BLM staff face to face.

Mike Herder updated the RAC on open comment periods for the ground water project, and there is an executive summary. The Draft comment period was open until September 8. Joni Eastley informed the RAC the Great Basin Online project is trashing Nye County Roads for the project. BLM has not put any restrictions on the road restoration or road use, and will need to work with the county for the project to have the roads repaired when they are finished.

Tom Sely Tonopah Field Manager updated the RAC on Tonopah solar energy bonding for Notice to Proceed. This will allow for excavation of tower base and will have to have a migratory bird survey every year. The project is moving forward. Geothermal will have Record of Decision signed on Tuesday. Ram Power EA was done and ROD was signed about eight weeks ago. For pre-application meetings, all partners (state, county, federal etc.) are involved, and the proponent knows ahead of time what is expected of them.

12:45 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

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