

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Minutes
Friday March 9, 2007

*BLM – Las Vegas Field Office (LVFO)
Las Vegas, Nevada*

Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:

Chair: Dr John E. Hiatt	Wildlife
Coordinator: Hillerie Patton / Chris Hanefeld	
John Ruhs	BLM Ely Field Manager
Douglas Baker	Transportation and ROW
Claire Toomey	Permitted Recreation
Juan Palma	BLM Las Vegas Field Manager
Joni Eastley	Elected Official
Don Canfield	State Agency Representative
Julie Von Tobel Gleason	Wild Horse and Burro
Tim Carlson	Mineral Development
Dr Steven Parker	Academic/UNLV
Bill Fisher	BLM Tonopah Field Manager
Kenny Anderson	Native American
Bob Maichle	Environment
Greg Seymour	Archeology/Historic
Jeff Weeks	AFM, BLM Ely Field Office

Public Present:

David C. Laino	Public Land User
Brian Hawley	Public Land User (vegasartists.com)
Marian Goudell	Public Land User
Ray Allen	Public Land User
Cameron Grant	Non Renewable; Public Comment

Meeting Materials:

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 Las Vegas Field Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to review said minutes should contact Hillerie C. Patton, public affairs specialist, at (702) 515-5046.

8:15 AM

John Hiatt opened the March 2007 RAC meeting.

Juan welcomed everyone to the Las Vegas Field Office and went over general housekeeping. He further stated Jim Hughes will be joining the team later in the afternoon; Juan will pick him up at the airport.

Hillierie informed there will be pizza for lunch; donations are encouraged to cover expenses. She further reminded the team to sign and fill out their travel vouchers and mileage. Hillierie also mentioned the June meeting will be a joint meeting with Elko; there is a possibility the meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. instead of 8:00 a.m., the venue for this meeting will be at Ely. Please forward any comments or concerns in regards to this to Hillierie at your earliest convenience.

John Hiatt ensured everyone in the team had a copy of the minutes from last meeting. He asked the team to review the minutes and ensure they accurately reflect what took place at the last meeting.

The team had three minor spelling corrections; Hillierie will correct.

The minutes were approved and signed.

It was stated the minutes should be sent out for the team's review and approval one week prior to the next meeting.

Juan stated the agenda will probably shift a bit in the afternoon, as he would be reporting on direction received from the State Leadership Team last week on 3-Tier reorganization. Juan explained this topic briefly to the RAC team. He informed the deadline for recommendations is April 6, 2007. Juan stated the LVFO will be utilizing a facilitator to aid us in the process; she will join us this coming Monday. The LVFO's Management Team will discuss concepts for this reorganization during several scheduled meetings.

John Ruhs stated the Ely Field Office is also having a meeting on Monday to discuss this topic. The Ely Field Office has the same goals as the Las Vegas Field Office. John further stated some guidance has been received; there will not be an increase in supervisors.

Joni Eastley inquired if there is anything Nye County can do to help Law Enforcement to please inform her. She further stated the Sherriff's Department has really been a great help. Armagosa Dunes are their main concern right now.

Tim Carlson inquired on the 3-tier reorganization. He asked at what point will or should the RAC get involved?

Juan stated there is not a clear answer at the moment; however, a determination should be made via email or conference calls.

John Hiatt stated the RAC should be involved at some level in this process as a representative of the public; however, there should be no comment period for this discussion.

John Hiatt voiced out a concern in regards to an office being available in Laughlin after this reorganization. John Ruhs stated his current position would be transformed into a District Manager position. Ely would then have two Managers instead of one.

Lincoln County

Jack Tribble introduced himself; he is a recreation planner for the BLM Lincoln County Field Office. Jack further introduced this topic, which involves the Lincoln County Land Act (LCLA) of 2000, etc.

LCLA Legislation:

Disposal of Public Land (Sec.4)

- Within year one – dispose of 4,817 acres
- Within year five – dispose of 8,683 acres

Total 13,500 acres

Disposition of Proceeds (Sec.5)

- 5% of gross proceeds paid to State of Nevada general education program
- 10% of gross proceeds paid to Lincoln County (emphasis on Schools)
- 85% of gross proceeds deposited into US Treasury “special account”

Availability of Special Account (Sec.5b)

- Archeology (inventory, evaluation, protection and management)
- Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Development only in LN County)
- Costs of the LCLA Land Sale (processing Rights of Ways)
- Acquisition of Environmentally Sensitive Lands (Priority Outside Clark County)

Actions from the LCLA Legislation

- ❖ Land Sale Complete – 13,500 acres sold
- ❖ Funds Dispersed (NV State Ed. Fund \$2,126,715, Lincoln County \$4,726,933, LCLA Special Account \$40,416,221)
- ❖ Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan is underway. Two years funding
- ❖ Lincoln County Archeological Initiative. Round 1 is in progress.

Lincoln County Conservation Recreation & Development Act (LCCRDA) Legislation

Title I – Lands Disposals

- Directs the BLM to sell within 75 days approximately 13,500 acres of land previously identified for sale under the 2000 Lincoln County Lands Act.
- Directs the BLM to set up a Special Account for the land sale proceeds of up to 90,000 acres of public land in Lincoln County. Lands to be sold are to be identified in the new Ely RMP.
- This 85%, 10%, 5% split is consistent with the LCLA

Availability of Special Account

- Reimbursement of Costs of the Land Sales in Lincoln County
- Archeology (inventory, evaluation, protection and management)
- Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Development & Implementation in LN County)
- Right of ways for LCLA Land Sale
- Silver State OHV trail processing and implementation
- Wilderness processing and implementation

Title II – Wilderness

Designates 768,294 acres of wilderness in 14 separate wilderness areas with in Lincoln County

Releases from wilderness study area (WSA) status 251,965 acres of BLM-managed public land

Title III – Utility Corridors

Established two utility corridors (1/2 mile wide) on public land in Lincoln and Clark Counties

(The corridors are 299 miles for Southern Nevada Water Authority and 171 miles Lincoln County Water District)

Requires the USGS to complete a water resources study of groundwater in White Pine and Lincoln Counties. Directs SNPLMA funds to pay up to \$6 million for study to be completed within 36 months.

Allows the use of funds from SNPLMA in Lincoln County

Relocates the “Aeroject-General right-of-way” from the lands east of US Route 93 to west side of US Route 93

Title IV – Silver State OHV Scenic Trail

Designates a 260 mile Scenic OHV trail in Lincoln County on existing roads and trails across BLM-managed public lands.

Title V – Open Space Parks

Transfers 4,851 acres of BLM lands to the state for expansion of three existing state parks

Requires the BLM to work with Lincoln County to identify up to 15,000 acres for transfer to the County for park purposes

Title VI – Jurisdiction Transfer

Transfers 8,382 acres of land west of US Route 93 from the FWS to the BLM and 8,503 acres of land north of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge from the BLM to the FWS.

Actions from the LCCRDA Legislation

- Wilderness areas are signed for the public
- Utility Corridors Right-of-Way actions: SNWA, LCWD Kane & LCWD Tule EIS's
- Silver State OHV scenic trail management plan to be complete this summer (2007)
- Jurisdiction transfers for USFWS and BLM are complete
- Implementation Plan for management of Special Account completed

LCLA-LCCRDA Special Account Management

- Implementation Plan (June 7, 2006)
- Effectively involve all interested parties
- Defines roles and responsibilities for affected agencies
- Produce tangible results consistent with intent of LCLA and LCCRDA Legislation

Some Specifics on the Agreement

Provides mechanism for cost recovery for LN CO land sales (when RMP is completed)

Sets up teams to review criteria of legislation for project funding:

- Archeology Team for LCLA
- Land Acquisition Team for LCLA
- Wilderness Team for LCCRDA
- Silver State Team for LCCRDA

After the PowerPoint presentation was complete, the floor opened up for Q&As:

Greg Seymour inquired about who will be on the ranking team. It was stated the list of participants has been initiated, but not yet finalized.

It was also stated the RAC will have participation and roles in the process.

Public Comment Period

Ray Allen – (Government Relations Officer) discussed recreation on public lands in the BLM. He explained the interest of their organization is Environmental as well as entertainment. The main concern dealt with fair access to land as well as stewardship of public lands. Ray further stated his passion for recreation and believes BLM land should be preserved, but also used without hurting the environment. Ray is concerned fees for use of public lands is increasing for “Dark Skies” by 1600%.

John Hiatt said the RAC will further discuss this topic and include it in the next meeting’s agenda.

Cameron Grant – (Vegasartists.com LLC is a community based art group.) Cameron explained Vegasartists.com produces the Dark Skies events. The next event is scheduled for 17-20 May. He explained after each event, the group always ensures to clean up all debris and garbage left behind.

He expressed his group’s desire to promote Dark Skies twice a year. He stated this event brings around 240-685 people on sight for a weekend. He expressed a sentiment of being treated unfairly by the Las Vegas Field Office (LVFO). Cameron also stated his group would like to rectify this situation, as they see no logical reason for the increase in fees. Cameron left his contact information. He also stated there would be no vending on sight. (see attachment)

John Hiatt stated there will not be another RAC meeting prior to this event. However, the team is interested in this subject and we will follow up on this issue.

Marian Goudell – (Festival in Black Rock Desert) Explained her group has been trying to guide people/companies to use BLM land. The regional contacts are responsible for creating a relationship with BLM. The fee increases are making the events impossible/too expensive. Either events will be cancelled or will be done without security and other infrastructure.

Dave Laino – (Retired property owner) Expressed his support for art events and stated he has attended the Dark Skies events in the past. He believes this is a wonderful event and fully supports it.

Jeff Weeks (Ely Field Office) Led a brief discussion on:

- Fire Management
- Power Plant Projects,
- Whitepine Energy Station
- Fuels management discussion

Energy

This topic was presented by Jeff Weeks.

There was a comment on the amount of pollution this coal plant would produce.

Hiatt explained there are two uses of water: 1) is for steam generation 2) for evaporating cooler. The first type is mostly recovered. The water that is used for cooling is not recoverable due to evaporation.

The proposal here is for the ELY energy center (in the wintertime a combination of air and evaporating cooling would be used). In the summer, only evaporating cooling would be used.

As part of the process all of these companies would need to obtain state permits as well as Environmental Analysis processes.

Maichle stated the quality of the air before the fact determines how successful you will be at obtaining these permits; hence these plants would be placed in areas with good, clean air.

Hiatt stated high emissions of CO₂ should be considered a pollutant because of global warming. This should also be taken in consideration for the building of these plants. He inquired on wind power. Jeff explained the process for this as follow. It starts when a proponent submits an application for a project area to place an anemometer. These areas are studied for a period of three years. When the site is deemed viable or not, an application and a draft of the project are submitted. This would trigger an Environmental Statement. At the end of the day, someone will be able to make a decision based on all this information.

As of now, we have not gone past the first step.

Tim Carlson explained wind plants are more expensive than coal plants.

Energy supply in the Reno area was also discussed. There is currently a wind project just outside the Reno area.

Tim explained a third of Sierra Pacific's power comes from Utah's coal plant.

Jeff stated all of the projects undergo a very open public process; the public is encouraged to participate and submit any comments for these projects.

Hiatt stated Palma met with the Dark Skies committee; a resolution is expected within 30 days.

Renewable Energy (Sites/Corridor)

Lucas Lucero introduced himself to the RAC team as a BLM Project Manager. Lucas led and presented the discussion for this topic. He distributed supporting documents to the team. He summarized the current wind energy rights-of-way (ROW) pending/granted authorizations for Battle Mountain, Ely and Las Vegas. He also summarized the Solar Energy ROWs pending/granted authorizations for Battle Mountain, Ely and Las Vegas. Steve inquired on the geographical aspects for the Solar Energy ROWs.

Hiatt inquired on the existing eight granted authorizations for Wind Energy ROWs in Ely. Lucas explained these authorizations are purely site testing. Juan stated in Las Vegas there is a rule of 3-5 anemometers to test the site for wind. We currently have granted a couple, one in Table Mountain.

Juan further explained the BLM Wind Energy Development Policy.

Lucas began by identifying the areas in Nevada of Potential Wind Energy Development and Potential Geothermal Energy Development.

Lucas further stated this Policy IM which:

- Identifies wind energy projects as high priority workload to be processed timely
- Establishes three types of use:
 - o Site-specific wind energy testing and monitoring (limited to three-year term)
 - o Wind energy site testing and monitoring (3 year renewable term; lands unavailable to competing wing applications)
 - o Long-term commercial wind energy development grant (typically 30-35 year term)

The Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Wind Energy Development on BLM Lands in the Western U.S. was discussed:

- Established Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize environmental impacts.
- Amended 52 Land Use Plans in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming
- New projects can tier off PEIS to expedite NEPA review

Solar Energy Development Policy IM#2005-006:

- Identifies solar development projects as high priority workload to be processed timely
- Annual rent determined by appraisal; no rent royalties
- Revised solar policy developed and waiting signature by BLM Director
- Revised policy will reflect the "new" April 2005 ROW regulations

Programmatic EIS for Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in 11 Western States (draft)

- Section 368 of Energy Policy Act of 2005 directs Federal agencies to work together to designate energy corridors
- Corridors must be consistent with regional/local land use plans
- Internal draft currently out for agency review (DOE, BLM, DOD, USFWS, Forest Service)
- Draft EIS to be released to public for 90 day review approximately May 30, 2007
- Anticipate ROD to be signed at end of 2007

Geothermal Energy

- New proposed BLM geothermal policy to be published in Federal Register end of March 2007
- Nevada second largest US geothermal producer (276 MW per year = 250,000 homes)
- Nevada currently has 15 power plants with 19 more proposed

He explained that many places north of Nevada have great potential for geothermal energy. Nevada is the second largest producer in the US with approximately 15 power plants authorized.

We are in the process of updating our ROW manuals and handbooks.

Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit (PTC):

- Created by Energy Policy Act of 1992
- Currently offers 1.9 cents per kW hour for new investments in geothermal, solar and wind
- Extended by Congress through the end of 2008
- Useful only for large-scale developments

California PUC bans power import from “dirty” plants:

- Prohibits power companies from signing long-term contracts with sources that emit more carbon dioxide than a modern natural gas-fired power plant
- PUC voted 4-0 on ban January 2007; became effective February 1, 2007
- 20% of California’s power comes from out of state coal plants.

Hiatt stated there have been concerns in regards to the actual location of corridors. Lucas explained there would be a very open public comment period for the location of these corridors.

Lucas explained the figures for acreage were obtained from LR2000 database applications; these applications contain the number of acreage requested.

These applications reserve the land for wind project use, so other competing wind projects cannot access these areas.

The production tax credit is a major driver for these projects; giving incentives to energy projects. This credit will expire at the end of 2008.

California has a ban on “dirty” power. This refers to companies developing power from coal. With 20% of California’s power coming from dirty coal, the effect is yet to be seen industry-wide.

The Reid Gardner power plant was discussed. It was stated it is a coal plant producing 300MW of power. This plant is projected to close in 2012.

It was stated these renewable projects will assist California and Nevada to be in compliance with the existing laws dealing with this topic.

It was also noted Nevada currently does not rank within the top 20 wind-energy potential states.

Wild Horse & Burro gather Update

Karla Norris led and presented this discussion. Karla introduced herself as the acting Assistant Field Manager (AFM) for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). She explained prior to this position she has been the AFM for Recreation & Renewable Resources.

Karla presented the RAC with a PowerPoint presentation of this topic.

Nevada Statistics:

- Appropriate Management Level (AML) established for 99 of the 102 Herd Management Areas
- AML is set at 13,500
- Official statistic avail June 2007
- 198 WH & B where adopted in 2005
- 290 in 2006

Spring Mountain Herd Management Area consisting of Red Rock and Spring Mountains (west of Indians Springs) and the Johnnie (at the other side of Pahrump)

A gather took place in 2006 in both BLM and FS property.

Karla explained the health condition level of scale, which is 1-9. Most of the horses gathered were at condition level 4-5. There were two euthanized at a level 1.5.

Karla explained the AML are reviewed every five years.

When BLM establishes AML, a range is provided.

When the Forest Service establishes AML, a specific number is provided.

Gather summary:

Horses

- Gather finished in December
- Planned : Johnnie 45; Red Rock 0; Wheeler 221
- Removed: Johnnie 49; Red Rock 0 ; Wheeler 224
- Remaining Johnnie 41; Red Rock 25; Wheeler 61

Burros

- Planned: Johnnie 513; Red Rock 161; Wheeler 106
- Removed Johnnie 362; Red Rock 172; Wheeler 106
- Remaining Johnnie 75-110; Red Rock 29-43; Wheeler 30-45

Karla stated the next gather is planned for March of 2007 in the Lake Mead Complex. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Decision Record were sent out Wednesday. This is almost entirely within the National Park Service's boundary. We have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Park Service to assist with this gather.

Karla explained The National Park Service is not mandated to gather WH&B; for them, Burros are an exotic species. On the other hand, the BLM is mandated to remove any Wild Horses and Burros from the mandated gathering areas.

AML is established for:

- El Dorado for 0
- Gold Butte 22-98
- Muddy 0

Estimated Numbers (Burros)

	Within HMA	outside HMA
EL Dorado	0	14
Gold Butte	34	104
Muddy	0	77

Total Number Estimated for Removal 195

During our last RAC meeting Julie presented several adoption proposals. Karla presented the team with the following update on these proposals:

- two adoptions in 2007
- Clark County Fair scheduled for April 12-15 in conjunction with the Wild Horse adoption association of America. Two wild horses will be gentled to showcase and adopt for this event.
- June 21-24 in conjunction with the Mustang Heritage Foundation and the National Wild Horse Association a showcase and adoption of 40-50 wild horses and burros.

Pilot Adoption Strategies-Status:

Volunteer Program Coordinator

- Will hire for a three-year term
- Nevada Volunteer Toolkit posted to website-January 2007
- Assistance Agreement with NWhA in progress.

Public Education and Outreach

- Take a mustang to school-tied to the Virtual Adoption program in-draft
- Junior Explorer Badge and Activity Book in-draft
- Mustang adopter survey-mustang Heritage Foundation – March 2007

- Girls Scout Council of America Wild Horse and Burro Merit Badge instituted in Northern Nevada under consideration as a national program

Other strategies

- Sister city Mustang Adoption work with Moore, Oklahoma Field Station – Fall 2007
- Gentling and Adoption Program in-draft

Hiatt addressed this year's rainfall (no rain). He inquired if the group anticipated removing more animals this year?

Karla stated there is a program to do monitoring on both range and animal conditions. If the condition levels begin to drop, an emergency gather is then implemented.

Vegetation was discussed. Karla stated range tours have been instituted to educate the public on available vegetation for health land conditions for these horses.

Steve Parker asked for the total number of gathers within the last 10 years and for the percentage of animals being adopted and gone back to the range. Karla will provide these numbers to John Hiatt for distribution.

Karla stated one of the problems with Wild Horses and Burros is when they become a nuisance, going out to the highways and causing motor vehicle accidents. No Wild Horses and Burros have been seen in Cold Creek since the gather.

Field Managers' Report

Bill Fisher stated there is a 30-day-waiting period. Bill also provided an update for the Beatty Land Sale. A burn took place on Locks Pond, Feb 22.

Don inquired on potential buyers interested in adding other properties in case other properties are cut out.

Bill stated there are currently no specific interests.

Bill further said the AF provided a clearance. The land needs to be cleared for multiple uses. However, he has been unable to get anyone from AF to sign the documents to release it.

Juan Palma introduced Jim Hughes to the RAC team; the RAC team members introduced themselves as well.

Juan provided the team with an update of the Las Vegas Field Office (LVFO).

He stated the LVFO just had a land sale; Juan served as the auctioneer for this sale.

___ Acres were sold for \$24M, the rest will be for sale on the internet

The next sale will be this fall.

SNPLMA Round 7 Update:

The EC did take into account all the RACs input and talked about it All input was considered.

SNPLMA Round 8 is now open (Closes May 1, 2007):

We have a new SNPLMA manager to arrive in April 7th, his name is Steve Tryon.

Affordable Housing update:

-1340 acres have been set aside.

Red Springs Phoenix Project

There was an arson incident on the boardwalk; the boardwalk burned down. This project will reconstruct the boardwalk with the help of volunteers. This event is scheduled for this coming March, 17th.

Hillierie stated if anyone receives questions from other communities on how to start their own "Don't Trash Nevada" message, to have them contact her for direction, as the BLM would like to make it a state wide campaign.

Gold Butte

Hillierie informed George Phillips will be presenting a PowerPoint presentation at UNLV regarding Nevada Cultural Site Stewardship - Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (SNAP). She further stated currently, there are 267 volunteer site stewards in Nevada. Stewards monitor the sites and report on visitation. Stewards also report damage and destruction

A comparison of Damage Reports for Gold Butte was discussed. It was noted there has been a traffic increase in visitation of 200%.

Observations:

- Biggest Problem – visitation volume (200% increase over 2006)
- Deterioration of cultural sites from Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) incursions. Whitney Hartman Midden Pile, Sheep Procession Panel, Kohta Circus, Hobgoblin).
- Signage is working. Must be maintained by stewards and Law Enforcement Officer (LEO). Good results at Red Spring and Mud Wash areas.
- Restroom facilities are badly needed in primary camping areas. Stewards are picking up used toilet paper at Whitney Pockets, Devil's Hole and Mud Wash.

Stewards are not being positioned strategically in areas where little or no damage has occurred. This will help protect the resources timely and more effectively.

John Hiatt stated the most disturbing thing was the number of disturbed sites. If something very dramatic is not done fairly fast to better the situation, we are at risk of losing the site all together.

Is the County doing anything to reserve or buy areas for the OHV users? Stewards are not aware of any action from the County in this regard.

Hiatt stated the long-term solution is education; however we don't have the time to educate the public. We need to take a more aggressive approach of protection to prevent this site from disappearing.

Don Miller stated the visitation is exploding. One of the reasons for this increase is acknowledgement of the area by different magazines and other informational resources. The majority of the people come from Las Vegas, St. George, Cedar City and Wyoming. Don further informed Easter weekend is the busiest weekend of the year. This area is considered one of the last pristine areas in Clark County.

Don further presented the group with various photographs to support this discussion.

Some photographs demonstrated:

- Road deterioration
- Abandoned Climbers' Trailers
- Stolen trailer
- Dumping
- Arson
- Graffiti
- Abandoned Mine Hazards
- New site discovered
- Unauthorized off-road excursion
- Range improvements

John Hiatt inquired on recommendations Don could provide to better the situation. Don stated education would play a huge role. There are kiosks that are being placed to inform the public. Strategic placement for other information kiosks was mentioned and discussed.

The importance of signs was stressed; it was noted people need to know who is responsible for these lands and the numbers to call to report any damage or disturbance. We need to start implanting consciousness into the various OHV clubs, to ensure they are working with us and not against us in our efforts for resource protection. Partnerships can really work to our advantage.

Native American involvement was discussed in regard to rock art protection and preservation.

The site stewardship program was briefly discussed.

Nancy Hall, president of Friends of Gold Butte introduced herself. She appreciated Don's efforts to protect Gold Butte and inquired how Friends could help with his efforts. Don stated we need to find a way to get the appropriate equipment (ie ATVs) to ensure duties are performed effectively.

Nancy stated the effectiveness of the Site Stewardship Program is great. She feels many residents of Mesquite share this feeling. The Friends of Gold Butte now has 75 members. She stated we need to identify the site as being a transportation plan opposed to a recreation plan.

We also need a trail system as one is not available or established yet.

Hiatt inquired on ability to maintain resources with the upcoming budget restraints. Juan stated the LVFO has the greatest Law Enforcement (LE) workforce in the western side of the US. Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) programs have been used as a source for funding for rangers such as Don Miller.

The MSHCP however, did not provide for LE funding this year. We are hopeful the Virgin River MSHCP will provide for funding this year. Conservation Initiative funding 2010 is also available for LE workforce funding. In the future, as SNPLMA sales increase, we plan to increase funding for LE three years at a time.

Kevin Oliver provided the team with a PowerPoint presentation. Kevin is the Fire Management Officer (FMO) for the LVFO.

Presentation Goals

- Brief overview of LVFO Emergency Stabilization and Rehab (ES & R) desert tortoise habitat efforts
- Brief overview of concerted effort between NV (ELY & LVFO) and AZ – “Burned Tortoise Habitat Meeting” May 2-3
- Credits – LVFO ES & R Team

LVFO Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation in Desert Tortoise Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

ESR National Intent & Local Focus:

- Rapid response to fire impact on natural resources (ES)
- Three year effort to rehabilitate damage resources
- LVFO focused ES & R on Tortoise ACECs and NCAs

Desert Tortoise:

- The LVFO has approx 743,209 acres of Desert Tortoise ACECs
- In 2005 and 2006 approx 11% acres of ACEC in the LV District burned

Hand Seeding:

- All fires that occurred in Desert Tortoise ACECs were seeded by hand collaboratively by USGS, BLM and NCC crews.
- Only native Mohave Desert species were seeded
- No non-native species were used in any part of the Las Vegas District
- 2006 Re-seeding of Treatments: addition of More Diverse Seed Mix to Tortoise Habitat

Effectiveness Monitoring of Seeding

- Production of invasive and native annuals varied among fires notably Tramp had greater native production but lower invasive production on the seeded sites, which will likely influence tortoise over time.
- Rainfall was low in spring 2006 it is premature to conclude about seeding effect, but seeding of 3 of the 4 perennial were detected.
- In 2006 , tortoise moved along the boundary between the burned and unburned habitat
- Burned habitat provided greater annual plant forage at these sites in 2006, but tortoises likely remained close to unburned habitat where shrub cover provided shade
- If the native annual in the seed mix applied in 2006 successfully establish, tortoises will have more dietary choices in the seeded areas. USGS will continue to monitor vegetation and tortoise activity in 2007.

Seed Collection for Desert Tortoise Habitat

LVFO has a large contract with a commercial seed collecting company through 2009 to collect Desert Tortoise habitat-specific species.

Regional Effort

- ESR efforts are being approached as a regional effort LVFO ESR personnel work very closely with the ESR program leads from the ELY BLM FO and the ESR program lead from the Arizona Strip Field Office

Challenges:

- Success of Treatment – Long Term Question
- Monitoring beyond 3 years
- Future Response to Critical Habitat loss
- New treatment methods?

Maichle inquired on the viability of seed duration in terms of survival. It was noted Mojave species tend to last longer. Kevin stated seeds are bought and not used immediately; it is kept in cold storage to improve viability.

Mohave Desert's unique terms of rain patterns were discussed. Juan stated this has been identified; an invitation has gone out to invite our managers to discuss success ratio for restoration. This will help us determine and ensure the BLM is doing the right investments to aid in the Mohave Desert Restoration efforts.

The Mohave Desert is suffering a bit on Pole position. The western side of the Mohave is not getting great results on restoration.

Burned Tortoise Habitat Meeting

-Purpose:

- Spotlight ES & R efforts across State & District Boundaries
- Ensure National Office and SO knowledge of the issue, efforts and needs
- Gain support and ideas to develop, clear plans for the future

-Who:

- BLM Washington Office
- Nevada State Office
- Arizona State Office
- District Office
- USFWS
- USGS
- NPS
- Tortoise Council
- Statewide agencies

-What

- Compressed 1.5 Day Meeting and Field Tour

Where

- Mesquite NV.

Bill Fisher awards and recognitions

John Hiatt recognized Bill Fisher, as today is his last RAC meeting. He thanked Bill for his efforts and participation for the last six years.

Bill Fisher was presented with an Excellence certificate from acting BLM Director Jim Hughes.

Bill provided a thank you to the group.

Juan reminded the team the next RAC meeting is scheduled in June in ELY

- There was a suggestion for the next Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition tour to include additional information of the Field Trip in the agenda.

The floor opened up to a Q&A session for Jim Hughes

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVED BY:

Date

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

- Minutes provided by Olivia Sierra, BLM Las Vegas Field Office Executive Assistant
and Misti Hinson, BLM Las Vegas Field Office SNPLMA Assistant-