

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, Sept. 18, 2014
BLM Ely District Office, 702 North Industrial Way, Ely, Nevada



Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:

Jason Higgins, Chairman	Energy & Minerals Development	Category 1
Robert Adams	Permitted Recreation	Category 1
Susan Agee	Grazing/ Ranching	Category 1
Douglas "Stretch" Baker	Transportation/ ROW	Category 1
Gracian Uhalde	Grazing/ Ranching	Category 1
Elise McAlister	Dispersed Recreation	Category 2
Matthew Tuma	Environmental / Wildlife	Category 2
Annette George	Native American	Category 3
Ronda Hornbeck	Public at Large	Category 3
Stan Smith (SNDO VTC)	Academic/ UNLV	Category 3
Lorinda Wichman (TFO VTC)	Nye County Commissioner	Category 3

Resource Advisory Council members absent and category represented:

Don Davis	Wild horse/ Burro	Category 2
Vacant	Archaeology/ Historic	Category 2
Vacant	Environment	Category 2
Vacant	State Agency Representative	Category 3

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representative present:

Tim Smith, Des. Federal Official	BLM Southern Nevada District Manager
Rosemary Thomas	BLM Ely District Manager
Victoria Barr	BLM Caliente Field Manager
Gayle Marrs-Smith	BLM Las Vegas Field Manager
Tim Coward	BLM Tonopah Acting Field Manager
Mark Tanaka-Sanders	BLM PFO Assistant Field Manager
Lee Kirk	BLM LVFO RMP Project Manager
Chris Hanefeld	BLM RAC Coordinator / Public Affairs
Charlie Carmichael	BLM RAC Administrative Support

Public:

Bill Lamb	Quadstate Local Government Authority
Janet Lipple	SNDO VTC – Public
Denise Delouica	SNDO VTC – Public
Robbin Warren	SNDO VTC – Public
Arlene Gawne	SNDO VTC – Public
Carmen Rhoda	SNDO VTC – Public

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 District Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to review said minutes should contact Chris Hanefeld, Public Affairs Specialist, at (775) 289-1842.

9:05a.m. Welcome introduction: Jason Higgins, RAC Chairman, The RAC members, BLM managers and Staff introduced themselves.

9:10a.m. Jason Higgins introduced the minutes and since they had been distributed prior to the meeting asked "if there are any corrections? Asking for approval of last meetings minutes, the last meeting minutes were approved.

9:15a.m. Chris Hanefeld went over housekeeping rules and sent around the sign in sheet to ensure everyone had signed in. Tim Smith went over the fact that travel vouchers needed to be done as soon as possible because of the end of year.

9:17a.m. Tim Smith gave a state wide update to the group. Sage grouse new release has been pushed back due to some other issues. Wild Horse/Burro gathers in NV, there were two new ones. He talked about new themes to pass on to the WA office, communication, adoptions, customer service, programs and procedures.

The photo contest is up on the Facebook page please go on line and look at them and vote, they will be used for the new calendars.

Sept. 7, 2014 BLM opened up nominations for the SNPLMA round 15 projects, he encouraged everyone to log on and put in for new projects by Nov. 7th that is the deadline for project nominations.

Tim talked about RAC members and new nominations, there is hope by the end of Oct. they will have the new members on board!!

The TriRac upcoming meeting will be discussed up Reno next week, they will discuss possible dates/locations.

9:21a.m. Tim Smith gave a district update on renewable energy, solar is picking up speed.

National Public Lands Day on Sept. 27, we have several planned events, one will be held in Pahrump near Bell Vista Rd, cleaning up the desert, removing debris and landscaping the area: Logandale Trail Systems, cleaning, painting, planting native vegetation: Red Rock Canyon event held at Pine Creek, volunteers will assist with trail and trailhead maintenance, trimming vegetation, painting restroom and kiosk and picking up trash.

Neil Kornzi presented SNDO the Director's Diversity Award, recognizing the staff's efforts to recruit a diverse workforce and reach a broad spectrum of the public through it's programs, during an all-employee meeting and site visit.

Fire restrictions are lifted as of September 6, 2014.

SNDO had a good turnout at the recent auction, we ended up with 5.8million, working with the companies that won these bids, First Solar, NV Energy. Hope to have the NEPA completed by the spring time. Last year the Silver State South had a huge project for solar it should be completed in 2016 and power 20K homes that.

On Dec. 14 SNPLMA will hold a land sale with about 516 acres in the Las Vegas valley; the proposed competitive sale will be by sealed and oral bidding in accordance with the Southern Nevada Land Management Act.

Pahrump Gravel sale on July 31 had a successful auction of 30,000 tons of gravel that was stockpiled at the Pahrump Community Pit. The material was sold as a single lot; the sale will bring in a total of \$86,470.

RRC/ Sloan Field office, construction is almost complete on electrical grid for the fire station and camp ground. The new electrical service will replace the battery backup systems at these facilities and significantly reduce operations and maintenance costs.

We had an exciting Artist in Residence opening reception at the Red Rock Visitors Center; it was showcasing a variety of technique such as wood carving, soft pastels and water colors. Nice work that was done there.

Questions; what was done with the proposed Wind Farm at Search Light: Tim's reply, the grant was approved we are waiting for the company to get started on this.

9:30a.m. Tom Coward from Tonopah Field Office, Tom sent a report out to RAC members; they have a lands day on Sept. 27th they will split their efforts between Rhyolite and Crescent Dunes to clean up those two areas.

On Sept. 23 they will have a Wild Horse/Burro gathering of about 120 horses, 60 of them will be shipped off to CA. Adoptions will be held next Sat for about 15 or so. The adoption will be in the town of Tonopah in their arena, they are hoping this will increase the participation for the adoptions. The horses are in pretty good shape.

This fire season they have been pretty lucky, this year no response to any local fires, they did assist on several others.

MT Moriah Cemetery, Nye County submitted a request for a direct land sale of approximately 7.5 acres of public lands. This cemetery is located on the out-skirts of the historic town of Manhattan. The patent will be issued to Nye County in the near future.

Solar plant at LLC Crescent Dunes in underway when completed, the project will produce 110 megawatts of power this project should be completed by Feb. 2015.

Alice asked when the horse gathering was and when is the deer hunting season starting, Tom didn't think they will have any problems or a large effect on the hunting season.

9:35a.m. Vegas is having some tech difficulty so they are taking a break to wait for them to dial in.

9:45a.m. Vegas, Caliente and Tonopah all dialed in now. Jason called the meeting back into session

9:47a.m. Jason Higgins is explaining to the new arrivals via VTC where we are in the agenda

9:48a.m. Jason Higgins asked that we all introduced ourselves for the new arrivals joining in.

9:51a.m. Victoria Barr gave the Ely District update, Victoria talked about the bald Mountain Mine and that the time for public comments closed on Sept. 15.

The Ely RMP had a 5 year review and was in final review, going over the management plans. The Water Shed analysis was completed with about 8 documents this year, waiting to develop these plans. Sage grouse finalized the ROD by the end of the year.

Tonopah Energy is in holding pattern they completed a little bit of work on the power plant road. Wind energy develop is the Spring Valley wind project, working with the solicitors office to talk about the mortalities. The Dry Lake sales were being handled by Mike Dwyer but he will be retiring the beginning of Oct 2014. We should have a draft mitigation plan done sometime this fall for public meetings. We looked at some old fire scares that happened in the 40s or 50s that do not have good vegetation, those areas could be updated.

We are waiting for the Trans West ROD and for public comments. Fire management in our area, we had a fire today in the Coozee Wilderness, a half a mile from the pph, they sent a crew up there to put that out and to protect that local habitat, PPH (preliminary priority habitat).

Fuels reduction and restoration, Ely won the trophy this year they have been very successful at that, they have done a great job of taking care of those goals to improving sage grouse habitat.

Lands and realty, two land sale in White Pine, Lincoln County are competitive bid. Talked about the different types of bids that can happen and how they have to qualify for them. The county receives 10% of the sales, 5 % for education and the rest back into blm. They sold a 40 acre lot last year and hope to keep sailing.

Minerals, the Bald Mountain EIS just closed, this is for a major expansion to the mine the next public comments will go out in Oct. They have already identified lands for the next round of sale to help the county keep up funds.

A lot of gold activity around the Egan mine. (refer to Ely district notes on this one)

Oil and gas, Caliente Field office received an ADP to develop an action plan for straight drilling no fracturing.

Range land management processed three TPRs for plan range improvement projects (Ely has only two personnel in the range positions, need 6 filled) grazing permits that are able to be processed.

Recreations/Ash Springs, looking at getting a group together to assess the site, do a fish survey, the past was two years, the spring fish have doubled in populations, the vegetation has come back along with other things in the springs, they are putting together an action plan for recreation use. The county can work with US Fish and Wildlife to come up with a plan to use the area with less environmental impact on the area and the fish. Thru consultation they are trying to come to an agreement so both county and Fish would be satisfied with the outcome.

Other highlights, they are looking constructing 40 miles of new multipurpose track trails in Oct. of this year they are looking at a plan to hire high school kids out for the summer this would be good work for kids and family's everyone, and 40 miles of new trails is a good thing.

Wild Horse/Burro, an EA that came out during the summer is available on line for public review and will help the next gather in mid Oct. about 90 horses in two locations, these are horse that have been in the highway, so the gather is for safety reasons/ Butt Valley and Oaks Spring Summit for the gathers.

Public Lands Day Sept. 27 in Ely will be at the Paw Recreation area to install fences, and clean up.

Cracian Ughade was glad that the permittee was notified on the ground, he was happy to be a part of that. This is the first time pre-notification has happened.

Bob Adams talked about permits, about more calls for them, OHV on the different types of OHVs that exist now, to change the name of them, OHV light vehicle etc. Fire services looked at the 50ins and narrower or wider and look at the foot print that the vehicles leave.

10:22a.m. Jason Higgins was pushing the planning committee up with Lee so they will have more time for Elise.

10:22a.m. Elise talked about recreation planning, to engage the public about the RMP and engage them on how to make good comments for the RMPs. To get the info out too all the different groups to get good public comments, to get them in involved with lands managements. These groups use the lands and their comments are needed, Elise will help organize meetings to get the information out there to different recreational groups.

Last year they developed an OHV informational program for youth, the basics about the RAC and RMPs. Public lands date, outside Las Vegas on Oct. 25th at Craig Road Park, the BLM will have the mobile trailer there, for the public to learn what things can be done on public lands for recreations.

10:27a.m. Jason Higgins asked everyone to really commit to this RMP and really take a look at the document. He wants to have a meeting early to mid Oct. for the RAC team to meet and divvy up the document and then meet again early Nov. /Dec. to go over the comments, put them together and get them in order to present them to BLM. He's encouraging everyone to really step up and get good comments on this document.

10:30a.m. Lorinda Wichman, Nye County Commissioner commented that the Land Transfer report was completed with all 17 counties and all were involved for the expertise. The document was taken before the Legislative Committee and Bob Isley decided it would not be heard during the regular work hours. This upset a lot people, Senator Gocachia (phonetic spelling) has backed the report and he will take the it into the Nov. session. Vegas is asking Lorinda to read some of the report to them, Vegas is asking where they can get a copy of the report. It is on the county NEPA.org and can find the report there. Jason asked if the senator was really going to take this into the Nov. session to be looked at, Lorinda did not know for sure, but this is what she was told. This was a very comprehensive report and she was very disappointed it did not get heard during the legislative session. Bob Isley did not read the report and had concerns that were actually answered in the report but since he did not read it, he excused it without getting familiar with it. (nego.org). Bob asked why so many officials and people want to make a changes, but working with the task force on different ways for land management.

Nye County lost 9 mil dollars to the reassessment of their tax values. Nye County has the responsibility to provide emergency services to everyone in Nye County but is not bringing in enough revenue for this. Lorinda is very passionate about this; we need revenue to fund the BLM.

Jason is asking if this report does pass where does it go from there. Lorinda said, if it goes thru the house and senate at state level, it would go to the US senate and house from there. They can do part of it, change it or whatever, she says it needs a watch dog to see it thru the entire process. Jason is thinking this needs to be looked at again by the RAC councils to get this thru.

10:44a.m. Jason Higgins wants to run back into the RMP remarks, asking on thoughts on how they can tackle this RMP. Mathew Tuma asked if they have to be a committee member to attend the planning meetings, the answer was no but they have to have a RAC member chair the meeting. Jason is by default the chair for the subcommittee, he would like the entire RAC committee members to be on the planning committee, this is a big enough issue it should take all of them to look at this. Tim Smith is adding his comments for his anticipation that the start of the public comments would be around the end of Oct, 26. For the RMPs to come out and gives them roughly until Christmas to get this looked at and comments in to BLM..

Jason Higgins reiterated the need to get the experts here to get the brainstorming going to get the RMP looked at and commented on.

Rosy commented that this is setting a 20 year plan in place and asking everyone to look at and review this document and to reach out to all the different groups they represent for comment as well. Tim gave his experience with other RACs and how important it is to get this review done, significant RAC involvement is really needed and hoped for. The last RMP was 1998 we need to get this one done and taken care of. 6 public meetings will happen and encouraged the RAC members to attend these meetings. Elise was talking about overlapping knowledge to look at all the different areas when looking at the RMP. Bob talked about having a close group formed to look at this RMP and getting people involved quickly. Set a meeting mid Oct. to get the initial review and divvy the work up. They are talking about Jason's availability for the first meeting, 20 thru the 22nd of Oct; they are looking at the afternoon on the 22nd Oct, meeting by VTCs as much as possible (12:30 to 4:30) pick a backup date? (Look at option with skype) they determined skype was not an option most cannot use that on their systems.

11:00a.m. Open public comment, 4 people want to speak,

1st one: Las Vegas VTC/ Arlene Gawne, she proposes on Wild Horse/Burro management issues, they came up with an alternative experimental management plan. Can anyone confirm a time when the RMP report is going to be issued for public comment. Forest service is doing an EA for the Corn Creek area but BLM does not have one. (Above with spring mountains range Jul 31 2013). Their proposal was in portion of the HMAS for the Spring Mountain complex, regular PCP on all the mares, and gather young horses for adoptions and to work with other agency to get this done and safely. The problem with the darting of the mares was they were unable to do this and now there will be new borne and this will affect the population and have adverse impacts on the range.

2nd: Las Vegas VTC/ Denise Delouic comments on the 90 horses being rounded up and the horses on private land that is a valid argument, if its safety that's one thing, the horses are good at cleaning up the underbrush so consider them in our fuels reduction program, and the horses do not compete with the

burros but with the elk and deer. She was upset that the report was on drought/horses and but it needed to be considered in the drought/ watering.

3rd: Las Vegas VTC/ Janet Lipple comments on fuel reduction, paying attend to fire and where the horses are being removed from areas that the horses are being removed from, that moving them they get rid of the fuels.

4th: Las Vegas VTC/ Robin Warren comments on applying for the Wild Horse and Burro Specialist position because there's no age limit and she should be considered, and she agrees with catch and release the horses take care of the fuels, and she wants to let people start shooting PCP darts.

5th: Ely comments/ Bill Lam comments on 9counties in four states, 1990 desert tortoise was listed and changes were made to the grazing rights, quad state local gov authotaiy. USFWS revised the plan, the recovery office in Reno has been active in recovery activities, to element the threats to the desert tortoise, the prior monitoring and research for the first of these plans was sent out this past spring They are very interested in how BLM will use these plans because they will impact the public lands.

6th: Las Vegas VTC/ Arlene Gawne added additional remarks/ give us some details on the experimental plan, they are asking for the removal about 65 young horses, 2 to 4 year olds, and treat all captured mares, which works for one year and return the intact family bands back to the same areas/ranges, this will help the horses stay safe during fires and other events if the older horses are kept together. Mares with young fouds do not go into the upper elevations because of the mountain lions, they stay lower... If you allow the family bands to stay together the older mares can work with the younger mares to fight off the lion attacks and keep the ranges in good health. They are asking the different agency to work with UNLV to look at the elk/deer/rabbits/ on the use of the range management to do detailed scientific studies on range issues.

7th: Las Vegas VTC/ Carmen Rhoda comments wants with any type of analysis that they look at SN differently then they do the rest of the state, take into consideration during these studies that we don't have the same concerns has their northern part of the stat.

8th: Las Vegas VTC/ Arlene Gawne, commented on an email she got from an African couple that came thru, they visited the Corn Creek area, they emailed her on their trip was the best experience was the Corn Creek area was their best park ever that they visited in that kind of physical setting, to see them (horses) interacting was overwhelming, they felt that Yellowstone was too touristy but our area was the most outstanding!! BLM should help to increase tourism

11:25a.m Jason Higgins moved us back into RMP discussion. Any more import on to segregate the RMP maybe an email blast to sign up for chapters to go over. Mathew liked the idea of getting together in Oct; he's going to bring some other people to the table, reach out beyond the OHV user groups to get comments for the RMP. Elise will go out to other groups and try to get the single users to participate. The horse users too. To help take away the over whelming ness of the size of the RMP and help them break it down into areas they can concentrate on. Bob thinks the way the RMP is broke down it will be easier to look at and get thru it.

11:30a.m. Public comments officially closed.

Break for lunch.

12:55p.m. Jason Higgins, reinstated the RAC meeting, talked about drought wild horses by Victors/ NV is in an extreme drought, we have had a good monsoon season, the effect the drought has on the wild horse bands, horse condition decline, the brush is not growing like it should, so they assessed plant conditions for the elk in the area as well. The rain is helping but they have two Wild Horse and Burro specialist working full time.

1:00p.m. Lee Kirk LVFO talked about the RMPs, showing the presentation (partial) of what he gave yesterday. Back in 2008 they conducted a process check of the RMP process and evaluation. They determined there were some areas that needed revised text and updates and updates on renewable energy. The entire RMP revision, we have the planning area, our neighbors, the decision area, the areas we have decision over or jurisdiction of and Public scoping and cooperating agencies, (in his report). A bar graph was displayed showing the type of comments received, OHV was at the top of the list. A list of agency was shown, only one tribe sent in comments on the RMPs. Lee went over how the RMP is broken down and the different areas it is broken into: Chapter one, Introduction. Chapter 2, Alternative section. Chapter 3 Affected Environments, Chapter 4 environmental consequences, Chapter 5 consultation coordination. Appendices, glossary, references, abbreviations. he talked about issues analyzed, and how to go thru it. They will go over the different alternatives available to look at, each alternative will be provided so you have a range to look at for analysis so there's not just one write answer. Each alternative can be a standalone resource plan, but does not have to be. Lee went over how to read the charts in chapter 2, and determine which alternative to look at for each area on the left side of the chart. The chart gives you a range of choices.

Tim Smith let the group know the alternatives show ranges so look at all of them regardless of what the preferred one states.

Lee talked about the planning process and what it all entails. What time frame for each process has to go through. Lee went over the different ways to submit comments to the RMP, he went on line to show everyone how to look up the RMP and make comments online. He showed them how to find the electronic document, on the NEPA e-planning systems the system is not BLM wide yet, but will eventually be BLM wide. Lee went over the RMP document from Yukon Alaska to show how to navigate thru this system. He showed them how to get to the project site for SNDO. He went back to the interactive document they will use to look as specific areas and make comments on that particular area.

Lee let everyone know if they have question on this he is available for contact, either by phone or email, he would be there to help out. He showed the layout of out of the RMP, just real quick with no real detail. Jason asked if you could search by keyword, Lee said yes, that was available to do, so you can look for specific items.

Lee showed them how to use keyword search, into file and find.

Lee talked about how to make a good comment opposed to a bad one they cannot use. Be specific, give details with substance. Providing background information on why you like or don't like this that will give more detailed information.

Once this goes live Lee will be available to help anyone who needs help with this form. You can get a hard copy but it's expensive we are asking you to pull an electronic copy, and on CDs, a very limited number of hard copies will be made.

Lee showed them one last thing, on e-planning to show where to get the maps, go to appendices, click on maps and it will show you all our maps, they could not be put into the document up front in e-planning.

Lee closed his presentation and asked if any questions on this. He asked Tim Smith if he had anything to add, he likes the eplanning process, and how to get the comments out of the eplanning and how much quicker this will be for that process.

Rosy thought the interesting challenging was to support questions from the RAC. Lee reiterated the need to make more productive comments. Everyone was discussing ways to download a pdf or an individual page to make your comments in the areas they want to comment it.

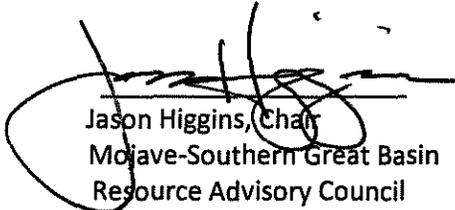
1:55p.m. Jason Higgins asked Lorinda if she had anything else to add, she did not.

Arlene had procedural comments, any reason the public comments come in early and the information comes in later but with no more public comments... Jason said they would look at moving the public comments to the end. Or maybe a short second public comment period.

1:59p.m. Motion to adjourn, second, all agreed

APPROVED BY:

Date: 11 FEB 2015


Jason Higgins, Chair
Mojave-Southern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Charlie Carmichael, Southern Nevada District Office -

Attachments:

1. Southern Nevada District Office report presented by Tim Smith
2. BLM Ely District update presented by Victoria Barr
3. Tonopah's Field Office Update for MOSO RAC presented by Tim Coward