

# Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Thursday, August 28, 2014  
*Elko Convention Center, Elko Nevada*

## RAC Attendance

Jeff White, Chairman	(1) Energy/Minerals
Jacob Carter	(1) Federal Grazing
Tom Connolly	(1) Federal Grazing
Kevin Lee	(1) Transportation
Jack Prier	(2) Environmental
Larry Hyslop	(2) Wildlife
Cyd McMullen	(2) Archeology
Jeanne Nations	(2) Wild Horse and Burro
Julie Hughes	(2) Dispersed Recreation
David Meisner	(3) Academia
David Pierce	(1) Energy/Minerals
Jeremy Lutz	(3) State Agency
Tanya Reynolds	(3) Native American

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:

Doug Furtado	District Manager – Battle Mountain
Rosemary Thomas	District Manager – Ely
Jill Silvey	District Manager – Elko
Mike Herder	Acting Branch Chief, Renewable Resources Division of Lands Resources and Planning - Nevada State Office
Gary Johnson	Deputy State Director, Minerals, NVSO
Jenny Lesieutre	Assistant Deputy State Director, Minerals, NVSO
John Menghini	Petroleum Engineer, NVSO
Jeff Moore	Rangeland Management Specialist – Elko District
Lesli Ellis-Wouters	Public Affairs Officer – Elko District
Sandy Johnsen	Management Assistant – Elko District

## Other Presenters

Laura Leigh	Wild Horse Education
Chandler Newhall	Rockies Business Unit Asset Manager, Noble Energy
Kate Fay	Regulatory Policy Advisor, Noble Energy
Paula Beasley	Public Relations, Noble Energy

## Members of the Public Present

Jerry Nations  
Caleb McAdoo  
John Carpenter

Ron Torell  
Cathy Ceci

Minutes -

~ 9:00 a.m. Meeting called to order Jeff White  
- Approval of last month's minutes deferred until the October 2014 meeting  
- The RAC expressed appreciation to Lesli Ellis-Wouters for her many years of outstanding service as RAC Coordinator and wished her the best on her new assignment in Alaska

~ 9:15 a.m. Wild Horse Proposed Management Plan Jeanne Nations  
/Laura Leigh  
Presentation and review of the Preliminary DRAFT Supplemental Document Catch, Treat, Release (CTR) Alternative (on file)

Q&As that occurred:

- Jeanne noted that more needs to be done in the way of public outreach regarding the benefits of trap site adoptions
- Group discussion regarding the various alternatives to PZP, including field darting, the necessity for on-going use of contraceptives, and the dangers inherent in field spaying
- It was noted that wild horse advocate groups would probably support the CTR proposal

~ 10:00 a.m. Drought Management – BLM Roles and Responsibilities Michael Herder  
Presentation – Drought in Nevada (on file)

Q&As that occurred:

- Jill Silvey announced the availability of the Elko District Drought Environmental Assessment. She noted that the Drought EA gives access to tools faster, allowing decisions to be made earlier.
- Jeff Moore, described the on-going drought issues found in the Elko District
  - This is the third year of significant drought in Elko
  - Riparian areas are suffering, with some having no water at all
  - The drought is affecting both forage and the amount of hay ranchers are able to harvest
  - Some permittees have taken a complete non-use, while the majority have significantly reduced the size of their herds

- Group discussion regarding the effects of changing precipitation patterns on soil moisture and plant growth, the value of monitoring key sites and key species, and the issue of fuel management through the use of Temporary Nonrenewable Resource uses (TNR).
- Jacob Carter noted that a TNR is very site specific and should be planned for. He noted that too many times, decisions are made without field visits with the permittees – both parties need to see the same thing, so decisions can be made together.
- Julie Hughes advised that TNR is not a policy revision, and can be implemented in permits as necessary, which allows a permittee to use the land in a way that controls invasive grasses
- Doug Furtado stated that AUMs are based on perennial grasses not on cheatgrass; ephemeral grasses are managed through the RMP process; TNR must include NEPA.

~ 11:00 a.m. Public Comment

American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign

Grace Kuhn (via telephone)

Grace read a prepared statement expressing her organization’s concerns that the voluntary reductions in livestock grazing are inadequate, particularly in wild horse and burro HMAs, and will lead to a crisis for wild horses and burros. (Copy provided)

Eureka County Concerned About Misuse of Drought to Reduce Livestock Grazing (pre-submitted)

Jake Tibbets (via letter)

Eureka County contends that improper metrics are being used to justify grazing restrictions. It is Eureka County’s belief that reliance on the US Drought Monitor (USDM) results in arbitrary and poorly informed decisions regarding forage availability and rangeland conditions, and that the proper metric is the Vegetation Drought Response Index (VegDRI). (Copy provided)

Argenta Allotment in Battle Mountain

John Carpenter

John stated that the BLM has been uncooperative regarding range conditions in the Argenta Allotment, with permittees receiving notice the week of 17 August 2014 to remove all cattle. John stated that the Tomeras have all the water rights on Argenta Mountain, and want to build fences around small riparian areas.

New Approach to Land Management

Caleb McAdoo

Caleb offered that conducting land management with a “broadbrush” approach is not useful because things aren’t universal in the landscape. There are many areas in the State of Nevada that are “hot-spots” and are chronic problems, and in these areas, we need to do something different.

Site-specific Planning

Laura Leigh

According to Laura, it is important to support the BLM in site-specific planning, and that requires communication, so that everyone can work together to move forward.

Friends Of Wild Horse and Burro

Cathy Ceci

We need to work together because we need each other, and because we need fairness on all sides of the issue. Cathy noted that historical use is not necessarily best use today.

Nevada Cattlemen's Association

Ron Torell

As President of the NV Cattlemen's Association, Ron noted that rangelands should not be managed by the courts, but by science and by range specialists.

~ 12:00 p.m.  
telephone)

Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act

Karla Davis (via

Presentation – SNPLMA Overview (on file)

Q&As that occurred:

- The last two land sales brought in \$18M and \$24M; rounds will be funded biannually; round 16 will open in the fall 2016
- Focus in the next few years will likely be Sage Grouse; Elko County is not considered eligible except for Environmentally Sensitive Lands (critical habitats, cultural resources, etc.)
- The Federal Government has purchased more land than it has sold, which has caused controversy. Acquired lands are usually in more remote areas, which are not good for development, while land sales are generally in areas more appropriate for development
- The State is not eligible for environmentally sensitive lands, but the BLM can work with State agencies to manage environmentally sensitive lands for the State
- If projects are not started/completed, organizations cannot apply for future funds

~ 1:00 p.m.  
Lesieutre

Oil & Gas Exploration – hydraulic fracturing

Jenny

Understanding the BLM's Role in Regards to Hydraulic Fracturing (on file)

Q&As that occurred:

- Nevada State Office representative is present on every job on federal lands
- Any well in Nevada is designed to protect water resources, both ground and subsurface, from contamination through isolation in the wellbore.
- The Well Construction Standard is used for subsurface risk management

~1:30 p.m.  
Newhall

Noble Energy Projects

Chandler

Nevada Exploration Project (on file)

Q&As that occurred:

- Jack Prier raised concerns on air quality. Jeff White stated air quality was a state issue as well as BLM responsibility. There are other federal agencies responsible for air quality issues.
- Larry Hyslop had questions regarding used water and re-injection sites. Chandler stated used water will be transported to Utah for re-injection.

Jeff White stated there were no outstanding items to discuss and no recommendations to put forward, but there was a robust foundation for a future recommendation on WH&B management.

Jeff White will coordinate with Nevada Division of Minerals and Nevada Department of Environmental Protection for presentations at the next meeting.

There was a reminder about the Final EIS on Sage-Grouse will be issued in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and the Record of Decision is anticipated in June 2015.

Jeanne Nations asked for comments and suggestions for her next presentation.

Next meeting was set for Elko Oct. 16.

Meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.