

Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Eureka, Nevada

June 18, 2010

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:

Vince Garcia	(3) Native American
Barry Perryman	(3) Academic
Tom Connolly	(1) Federal Grazing
Patsy Tomera	(3) Public-at-Large
Tony Carone	(1) Energy/Minerals

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:

Gerald "Jerry" Smith	District Manager – Battle Mountain District
Ken Miller	District Manager – Elko District
Rosemary Thomas	District Manager - Ely District
Mike Herder	Associate District Manager – Ely District
Mike Marquart	Lead Ranger – Nevada State Office
Shawna Richardson	Wild Horse & Burro Specialist – Battle Mountain District
Doug Furtado	Field Manager, Mt. Lewis Field Office – Battle Mountain
Schirete Zick	RAC Coordinator – Battle Mountain District
Judy May	Resource Assistant – Elko District

Other Attendees:

Tom Gardner	Public-at-Large
Brian Taylor	NRSC
Ken Buckingham	JD Ranch
Steve Foree	NDOW
Ken Connelly	Public-at-Large
Jake Tibbitts	Eureka County Natural Resources Association
Rachel Clingan	HPSD
Kathy Porter	Eureka County Natural Resources Association
George Fennemore	Lander County SPC
Fred Bailey	Bailey Ranch – Diamond Valley
Carolyn Bailey	Bailey Ranch – Diamond Valley
Kimberley Wolf	Barrick Goldstrike Mines, Inc.

Note to readers: A copy of each attachment listed in the text of, or at the end of these minutes is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Battle Mountain District Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to view attachments should contact Schirete Zick at 775-635-4067.

Call to Order

Vince Garcia, (NERAC) Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. Vince welcomed everyone and asked for self introductions.

Approval of the Minutes from March 4, 2010 meeting

Tom Connolly motioned to table the approval of the March 4, 2010 minutes to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the NERAC. Seconded by Tony Carone, and motion passed.

3-Bars Project Tour Discussion

Doug Furtado and Jerry Smith gave an update of the 3 Bars Project. The project, which is a Fuel Treatment/Reduction in drainage areas, stretches over 750,000 acres in the JD and Roberts Allotments in the Battle Mountain District. Steve Foree will be the Project Manager.

Young adults from the Bootstraps program participants will assist with the project. The Bootstraps program employs youth during the summer. The Battle Mountain District Office provides funding for the program, and has contributed approximately \$492,000.00 with ARRA funding.

Environmental groups have been invited to participate in the project. Comments received on projects are a good tool to use when writing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Livestock grazing has been used to eliminate Cheat grass. Livestock grazing will be addressed through mitigation to insure objectives are being met. Multiple-use grazing always takes the brunt of the issue when issues such as AML on Wild Horses and other Wildlife uses.

Barry Perryman asked about whether or not Rangeland Health Standards are being met during the assessment of the range.

Doug explained the Standards & Guides for Rangeland Health and the importance of meeting those standards. The habitat needs to be dealt with so that the grasses will come back. Canopy cover is also not allowing the grasses to grow.

Ken Connelly asked about the hot season use and the mechanism for determining stubble height. Ken stated the height of the grass and what you leave behind is the most important thing. Doug explained that stubble height in the fall plays an important role in the spring for runoff. Vince stated it is important to understand Rangeland Health and for the Ranchers to assist the BLM in meeting those Standards. Barry also stated that people need to get out of the mindset that one size fits all.

Carol Bailey questioned Vince as to whether he feels Ranchers are not concerned about Multiple Use Objectives in regards to soil quality. Vince stated that the Ranchers need to be concerned.

Jake Tibbitts voiced his concern that the July 1st off date is just a date. Waving grass is the perfect picture of proper functioning condition of the Riparian areas.

Doug explained that steep mountain terrain and flat valleys make it difficult to keep cattle off of the riparian areas because of the fact that cows will more than likely hang out on the riparian areas.

Jerry stated that people need to get involved in the 3 Bars Project.

Tom Connolly said that the Ranchers need to get together and discuss the issues that are out on the ground and make good comments.

***Discussion of Rangeland Health Standards needs to be a discussion item at the next meeting of the NERAC.**

Cheat grass, Pinyon-Juniper and Sagebrush Management

Ken Miller addressed the war on cheat grass, Pinyon and Juniper issues on the range and the wild land urban interface. There is a need for habitat re-construction for the betterment of the Sage Grouse population. Ken gave a brief overview of the Tuscarora Sagebrush Habitat Restoration Project happening on the Elko District.

Ken Connelly asked what type of seed mix was being used. Ken replied both native and non-native species. Ken also commented that fall livestock grazing needs to be considered on the restoration areas as a way to combat the cheat grass.

Barry Perryman suggested that the Gund Ranch be looked at as an example of cheat grass reduction. Jerry asked Barry when the research would be out on the fall grazing of cheat grass and Barry stated it should be soon.

Ken Miller went on to explain the positive effects that have been seen with the removal of the Pinyon and Juniper on Spruce Mountain.

Rosemary Thomas presented the Ely District Office portion of the presentation and how Ely's RMP addresses the issues.

- Treatment and funding come together
- Working in the winter seems to be better for the land and Sage Grouse habitat
- The number of fires over the years in the Mojave Desert
- Areas of restoration need to be large areas not small areas such as those on the Elko District
- Bio mass plays an important role

Pasty Tomera asked how the areas, that have been chained, were responding to the treatment.

Rosemary stated it has taken them awhile but they have had a positive effect.

Shawna Richardson questioned the interest in the bio mass. Rosemary responded by saying that co-generation is supporting the interest.

Gold Belt Coalition on Sustainable Development

Gold Belt Coalition is a collaborative regional effort with the goal to foster solutions for long-term regional sustainability where mining is the region's primary economic base. George Fennemore gave a presentation on the mission of the coalition.

Elko will be hosting the mining summit in October 2010 and it was noted that the Gold Belt Coalition was awarded in 2007 with the Mineral & Hard Rock award. There will also be a tri-state conference for the coalition in Oregon in 2011.

Pasty commented on the amount of monetary contributions the local mining companies contribute to the youth of our communities in scholarships.

Sustainable coalitions need to be addressed in District RMP's and is being addressed in the Winnemucca RMP.

ARRA money is used for sustainability which is managed by the County. Also, renewable energy development study data is being collected and how to diversify local economies.

Law Enforcement BLM Laws, Actions, Recent Developments, and Upcoming Developments

Mike Marquart Lead Ranger for State of Nevada BLM gave a presentation on the history of BLM Law Enforcement and the duties of the Officers. Nevada, Utah and Wyoming are the only states that BLM Rangers do not have state authority to enforce state laws, unless they are sworn officers of that state.

Patsy asked if the law of 1885 was still in effect even though the BLM was not formed until 1946 and Mike stated that yes it was.

Vince asked where the prosecution took place if a person was issued a citation on Public Lands. Mike stated the prosecution would take place in the County where the citation was issued.

District Manager's through the BLM State Director are given the authority to close roads for various reasons such as the protection of the Public in regards to safety issues.

Ken Miller addressed the issue of the road closures during a Wild Horse gathers. Roads would only be closed during the gather period. The Elko County Sheriff's Office has been notified and is in support of the road closure restrictions for the Tuscarora Wild Horse & Burro gather that will take place in early July 2010. The main reason for the road closure will be due to the fact that protesters could be present and the need for crowd control so the protesters have a place to protest.

BLM publishes all road closures in the Federal Register.

Public Comment Period

Jake Tibbitts of the Eureka County Natural Resource Council provided the following comment in regards to Wild Horses in the Diamond Valley Herd Management Area. Jake asked if it was Wild Horses or livestock that is consuming all of the available forage in the Diamond Valley area. Jake also voiced his concern about waiting until 2012 to do a gather in the Diamond Valley area.

Jake asked that the NERAC send a letter of support to the Nevada State Office or Washington Office in support of areas that need to be gathered such as the Diamond Valley Herd Management area. Not addressing the AML in the Diamond Valley HMA is not the answer to the problem.

Ken Miller suggested to Jake that more funding is need to support the collection of data to warrant the gathering of Wild Horses in the Diamond Valley HMA.

Wild Horse and Burro Strategy Roll Out

Doug Furtado gave a brief introduction to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's Wild Horse and Burro strategy and then turned the time over to Shawna Richardson to do a presentation of the strategy. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

Vince encouraged members of the Public to comment through the NERAC on the Wild Horse and Burro program. Local BLM Offices will be gathering information for input into the Draft, of which will be

presented to Secretary Salazar in October 2010. The 2010 Appropriations Language stated that Wild Horse and Burro populations have exceeded estimated population grows.

NERAC's input into the Wild Horse and Burro issues are very important to the strategy plan. Slaughtering of the animals is not an option for the BLM due to the language written in the 1980 Appropriations Language. Animal Rights groups do not live out West and they do not see the inhumane life the Wild Horses live out on the range due to drought and lack of forage. The Human Society has painted a very bad picture of the horses and the way they live in the holding facilities. Jake again stressed the fact that AML should be maintained instead of conducting gathers in areas where we have already caught, treated and released the Wild Horses and Burros. The Diamonds gather should have been pushed to the top of the priority list.

Pasty asked why the mares were not spayed instead of give the PZP vaccination. Shawna responded by saying that the BLM has not look at that method due to the large scale it would take. Vince stated this is just a pacifier of Secretary Salazar's in answer to the public outcry. Shawna went on to say that fertility drugs seem to have a rebound affect.

Patsy asked once the fertility drugs wore off if the mares would have twins and Shawna answered by stating mares do not have twins. Vince asked that the members of the NERAC have their comments on Secretary Ken Salazar's strategy to Schirete Zick by July 15, 2010 and then Vince will contact Jerry Smith to set up a date to review the comments.

Manager's Report

Due to the length of the presentations Vince asked if there were any questions for the District Manager's that they be contacted directly.

Meeting Adjourned

Tom Connolly motioned to adjourn the meeting and Barry Perryman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.