

RAC/RRAC Minutes

June 19, 2009, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Radisson Hotel

Salt Lake City, UT

RAC members in attendance: Carl Albrecht, Frank White, Lowell Braxton, Ray Bloxham, Ashley Korenblat, Riley Cutler, Jerry Spangler, Chuck Hawley, Fee Busby, Val Payne, Manuel Morgan, Dell LeFevre

RAC members not in attendance: Fran Amendola, Paul Jacobs

BLM employees in attendance: Jeff Rawson (for State Director Selma Sierra), Sherry Foot, Suzanne Garcia, Russ von Koch, Aaron Curtis, Glenn Carpenter

Others in attendance: Carol Ryan (FS), Julie Cox (FS), Ann King (FS), Andrea Brand (Grand County)

Welcome and Election of Officers (Sherry): RAC Coordinator, Sherry, welcomed the members. New members Frank White, Chuck Hawley, Val Payne.

Carl Albrecht nominated Lowell Braxton as chairperson, Riley Cutler seconded the nomination. Lowell accepted. Ashley Korenblat was nominated by Ray Bloxham to fill the vice-chair seat. Jerry Spangler seconded the nomination. Ashley accepted.

What's Happening in Utah BLM (Jeff):

-Two dozen people were indicted after an undercover investigation into ancient artifacts that were stolen from public and tribal lands in the Four Corners area. This continues to be a sensitive issue.

-Secretary David J. Hayes led a Departmental team that evaluated the Utah December oil and gas lease sale and made recommendations regarding the matter. A multi-disciplinary team of BLM officials who have not been involved in the decision-making regarding the 77 parcels will be appointed to conduct a further evaluation.

-Land Exchange (certain lands in Grand, San Juan, and Uintah Counties). The Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to convey specified federal land in Grand, San Juan, and Uintah Counties to the state of Utah in exchange for specified non-federal land in such counties. Requires the conveyance to be in three phases. A motion was made by Ashley to write a letter to support the land exchange. She will pull the data together. **A fact sheet is to be sent to the RAC members.** If additional attention is required, this will be discussed at the next RAC meeting.

-Energy (**Wind**) – In October 2008, BLM Utah issued its first wind energy development right-of-way for the Milford Corridor I project by First Wind and construction is now underway. The First Wind project is a 300-megawatt capacity project on approx. 25,000 acres near Milford. Cedar City Field Office is processing two additional applications for wind energy

development—one from Evergreen Wind for a location in the Mineral Mountains and one from Wasatch Wind for a location near New Harmony. **(Solar)** Last year, two solar right-of-way applications were filed but subsequently withdrawn. However, recent inquiries from industry indicate that BLM Utah can expect future applications for solar energy development. DOE and BLM began work on a six-state Programmatic EIS on public lands. **(Geothermal)** The BLM in California, Nevada and Utah will hold a combined geothermal lease sale in Reno on July 14, 2009. BLM Utah is offering 1 parcel of approx. 228 acres located in Iron County. **The RAC would like a presentation on geothermal (renewables) at our next RAC meeting.**

-RMPs – In effect now, three of the RMPs (Vernal, Price and Moab) are tied up in litigation. All six plans are in litigation from the western watershed protection group. The GSENM Grazing EIS – scheduled for completion in the fall of 2009. New planning starts may include Cedar City in 2010.

-West Tavaputs (development of natural gas resources) – the BLM is beginning the next phase of consultation to develop a programmatic agreement which will include specific processes to deal with potential adverse effects. The consultation process is scheduled for completion by mid-August 2009 and no significant issues or delays are anticipated.

Wild Horse/Burros – There continue to be many challenges—increasing costs for the animals. Hay and transportation costs continue to increase. There are approximately 20,000 horses located in all of the BLM's horse centers. BLM is continuing to seek additional funding and aid in the adoption of the animals.

Concern: The RAC members expressed their concerns and frustrations about not being used effectively as a Council. We need to get back on track and allow the RAC to become more involved. Jeff will relay this message to the State Director.

Federal Lands Recreation Act (REA) (Aaron, Carol Julie): Powerpoint presentation (made available upon request) – Refresher and objectives of the Act.

Summary of Fee Proposals (Riley): Riley explained his role as REA Work Coordinator. The Utah RAC has taken on the responsibility of the Recreation RAC (RRAC). He screens all agency (BLM/FS) fee proposals to determine if they are ready for consideration by the RRAC.

Fee Presentation – Forest Service (Ann King): The Manti-La Sal National Forest is proposing to raise the Christmas tree permit fee from \$5 to \$10. This increase will allow the program to continue and will provide funds to enhance visitor services and experience. All other Utah Forests charge \$10/tree permit—BLM charges \$5/tree permit.

RRAC Recommendations: Fee increase approved.

Fee Presentation – Grand County (Andrea Brand): Powerpoint presentation (made available upon request) - Andrea is the Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA) Manager. The SFRA is managed as a self-sustaining entity in partnership between Grand County and BLM's Moab Field Office (Canyon Country District) through a Cooperative Management Agreement. Current Fees are Day Use - \$5 per vehicle for 3 days; \$2 per bicycle, motorcycle or shuttle for 3 days.

Future fee recommendations – Day Use Fee - \$5 per 4-wheeled vehicle per day or \$10 per week; \$2 per bicycle, motorcycle or shuttle per day or \$5 per week; Trailer fee \$2.

RRAC Recommendations: Fee increases approved

Fee Presentation – Moab Camping Fee Areas (Russ von Koch): Powerpoint presentation (made available upon request). BLM is initiating a six month notification period as an initial step towards charging fees for one new group site and three new camping areas in the Moab Field Office. If implemented, BLM would collect overnight use fees from future campers. A site reservation fee and a use fee would be collected for the proposed group site with a minimum fee requirement for group and event registration. At this time, BLM is asking the RRAC for general support while awaiting public comments. Russ will entertain a summary report of the public comments and will get final approval from the RRAC at a future meeting.

RRAC Recommendations: Will await summary report of the public comments from Russ. Will give final approval, pending summary report, at an upcoming meeting.

Additional Presentation – Update on Fivemile Pass Recreation Area Plan Amendment (Glenn Carpenter, West Desert District Manager): At our last RAC meeting, a request was made for the RRAC to provide comments on the draft plan amendment on the Fivemile Pass Recreation Management Area. Fivemile Pass is located west of Lehi (within the Utah/Tooele Counties). The RRACs changes have been incorporated into the old plan and we now have a current plan amendment (copies available upon request). We are trying to make it responsive to the public’s needs. The District Manager would like to have the approval of the plan by the end of this FY. We may need to address fees in the future. May consider a single annual permit that would allow access to Little Sahara, Fivemile and Knolls Recreation Areas. Concerns were expressed regarding private land ownership (Interstate Brick), fence lines needed, livestock usage, and weed treatments. RAC was asked to look over the current document and provide the District Manager with any feedback.

Public Comments – none

Next meeting date, agenda topics, location: September 14-15, 2009 (will coordinate this date with the State Director’s schedule); topics of interest: Renewables (geothermal)-an introduction and possibly field tour of BLM sites; OHVs and designating routes and trails (what’s happening, funding, enforcement, problem places); RMP updates (how they’re being implemented, biggest single issue BLM deals with involving the six RMPs); location – TBD

Meeting adjourned 3:45 p.m.

Approved:

Lowell Braxton

Lowell Braxton, RAC Chairperson

Date:

7-6-09
