

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2010
Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office, SLC, UT

RAC members in attendance: Bill Hopkin, Frank White, Fran Amendola, Paul Jacobs, Lowell Braxton, Ray Bloxham, Stu Sprouse, Riley Cutler, Mike Roberts, Gary Kofford, John Malechek, Manuel Morgan, Dell LeFevre

RAC member not in attendance: Chuck Hawley

BLM employees in attendance: Juan Palma, Sherry Foot

The BLM's state director, Juan Palma, was introduced to the group.

What's Happening in Utah – Juan Palma, State Director

National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) – NLCS celebrated its 10th anniversary with events throughout Utah. NLCS units are managed on a landscape level to conserve, protect, and restore their scientific, cultural, ecological, and recreational resources.

Oil and Gas – Working on APDs; leases sold but not issued; new leases to issue; judge ruled litigation on 77 leases; beginning master leasing planning on oil and gas and potash; West Tavaputs EIS (Bill Barrett/SUWA/BLM working together); GASCO – EIS, working with the WO to release it in draft form

Roads – 2 litigation fronts going on now; Juab and Kane Counties (getting close to settlements); Iron County Pilot Program – RS 2477 roads and begin quiet title court-ordered action to turn over to counties; Title V – process roads; Signage – BLM needs to do a better job

Youth – Promote more environmental education in our schools – need to get the youth outdoors; Employment, need to bring more young people to work for BLM

Wild Horse/Burro – Gather taking place in the Conger area. There are 2,000 horses in 2 areas: West of Delta and CO border (east of Price); Hindrances – very windy which means the helicopter cannot fly and the Army has to provide the BLM with the authority to fly (only certain times this can be done). Another gather to happen next week. In a month or so, there will be a gather in the Uintah County area. BLM is trying to keep limits within the herd management areas. Gunnison Prison facility – horses are brought to the facility and trained by the inmates. 95% of the inmates won't go back into prison because of working in the Wild Horse program.

Recreation Program – Utah benefits from the recreation program. How can we tap into the visitors to come to BLM lands to recreate?

ARRA Funding - \$30 million given to BLM Utah. We will spend all funds. \$7.5 million has been designated to build the new Kanab FO building. Funding has also been used to build campgrounds and resurfacing roads.

Balanced Resource Council (BRC)– Ted Wilson

Ted was Salt Lake City's mayor and now works for Governor Herbert. The governor met with the Secretary of the Interior and they felt that people needed to get together to create the Balanced Resource Council. The council was established at the time Mr. Wilson came to the Hill. He was asked to be the senior advisor on environmental affairs on the Council. The Council offers to help when projects emerge (e.g., Gooseberry Reservoir, Scofield Land Dispute, Paiute County (cabin owners), Garkane Power and working with SUWA and the Tropic to Hatch power line.

RS 2477 – As Ted saw it, this was an opportunity for counties to block wilderness. BLM became more serious with Title V's permits. SUWA had no-contest with 2200 roads. Recordable disclaimers of interest are possibilities. Iron County discussions are on-going (for roads). Carbon and Emery Counties may want to discuss options.

Land Bills – After success in Washington County, 12 additional counties are interested. Senator Bennett had chosen San Juan and Emery Counties; Senator Hatch chose Beaver and Paiute Counties. They are starting land bill discussions—trying to follow the Washington County process.

Department of Agriculture – The BRC works with the Dept. of Ag. on their cattle operation in order to help benefit the environment. They had toured the Desert Land and Livestock facility to look at their operation. It's a great production model in looking at usage.

Oil and Gas Leasing - There is a deep concern about the 77 permits. BLM is still working on this. The Secretary said that as long as lawsuits (Vernal, Price, Moab) are out there, Federal government lands are tied. On September 23, there is a meeting in Vernal to discuss the governor's energy initiative, RMP issues, and the 77 permits. There are new orders on how permits are reviewed and the governor has taken positive efforts on this.

Statewide Energy Plan – Ted is to lead.

- Protects traditional resources
- Transition wind/solar
- Drill where appropriate
- Use new techniques
- Preserve land
- Find the balance point
- Global warming/air quality

Public hearings on 9/14 (SLC) and 9/23 (Vernal)

Stream Access – Access for anglers issues. The outdoor retailers are very concerned. There is a concern that anglers aren't taking care of the land (ethics). There is a meeting, Sept. 23, 2010, 9:00, east end of Capitol bldg. RAC was given an invitation to attend.

Rich County Allotment Consolidation Project – Bill Hopkin

Powerpoint presentation made available upon request. Portrayed multiple values (with data) of well-managed livestock grazing on the Deseret Land and Livestock facility. Possibility of exporting that same model to a large public land block nearby.

Public Comment

One member of the public present, Sterling Brown (Utah Farm Bureau) – no comments were made.

Energy by Design – The Nature Conservancy

Powerpoint presentation made available upon request. Developing additional energy resources and protecting critical resources through a planning process that has been successfully applied both within the U.S., as well as, internationally. The approach can be scaled appropriately and applied to alternative or traditional energy development. The approach is complimentary and informative to existing regulatory processes and seeks to provide a solid science foundation for regulatory processes where possible.

Rapid Ecoregional Assessments – Kit Muller, WO (via conference call) and Verlin Smith

Powerpoint presentation made available upon request. The history, mandate, purpose and expected activities of these assessments, climate change centers, landscape conservation cooperatives, how they relate to the RMPs. RAC asked to be updated every six months on these assessments.

Wild Horse and Burro (WH/B) Strategy Update – Jeff Rawson

Handouts made available upon request. WH/B Initiative – the 2011 budget request will begin implementing a new national management strategy for protecting America's wild horses and the open lands on which they roam. Under BLM protection, wild horse populations that were once fast disappearing from the American scene have rapidly grown. To prevent starvation of animals and to protect the lands from over-grazing, the BLM each year, moves thousands of wild horses to short-term corrals and long-term pastures. On October 7, 2009, the Secretary announced a new comprehensive long-term plan to put the WH/B program on a sustainable track. Full implementation of the plan requires increased funding in the short term and additional legislative authorities. The plan identifies 3 management strategies to improve the protection and management of WHs: Managing sustainable herds through aggressive application of fertility control measures; establishing new WH preserves; and providing special designations for selected treasured herds in the West. The plan will enable BLM to achieve appropriate management population levels on the range by 2013.

January RecRAC Meeting – Aaron Curtis

Gave an overview of the RecRAC – The BLM and FS work with two types of advisory committees that make recommendations on recreation fee proposals: Advisory committees established for other purposes (such as BLM Resource Advisory Councils) and FS established Recreation RACs. They serve in an advisory capacity to the FS and BLM officials on matters including the implementation of recreation fees, the elimination of fees, the expansion or limitation of the recreation fee program, the implementation or elimination of noncommercial, individuals special recreation permit fees, and, implementation of fee-level changes.

Riley Cutler’s (RecRAC Advisor) term expires this year and a replacement is needed. Chuck Hawley was nominated to fill the slot (Bill Hopkin nominated, Dell LeFevre seconded). Although Chuck was not present at the meeting, Lowell Braxton (RAC Chair) will be notifying him for his response.

Our next RAC/RecRAC meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2011, Salt Lake City. At this time, the BLM does not have any fee proposals; however, Aaron will be following up with the FS for any proposals they may have.

Future topics/meeting dates/locations – Juan Palma, Lowell Braxton

Because we are chartered to have RecRAC meetings in January and June of each year, a combined RAC/RecRAC meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2011, Salt Lake City. The State Director has asked the RAC to create a subcommittee (aka the Utah Healthy Lands Subcommittee) (6 members) to meet and talk about grazing and restoration issues as they relate to oil and gas and recreation. A report from the subcommittee will be presented at the January meeting. The subcommittee will consist of: Bill Hopkin (chair), Lowell Braxton, Dell LeFevre, Ray Bloxham, Frank White, and Paul Jacobs.

A question was raised by Frank White (RAC member) – Safety Concern - the railroad (UP) left guy wires, from poles to ground, lying around which may cause OHV rider damage and environmental concerns on the land. This location could possibly be located within the Salt Lake Field Office jurisdiction – the SD will look into this matter.

Future topics – subcommittee report; master leasing planning; status of air quality (DEQ); roads (specifics)

Meeting was adjourned (4:30 p.m.)

Approved: _____ Lowell Braxton _____ Date: 10/1/10
RAC Chairperson