DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FINAL COMMENT ANALYSIS

APPENDIX B

Public Response Documents

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Public Response Document 00001

8-7-07 U0001

Written Comment Form
Kemmerer Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision
Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement

NAME:	Jeanie Cattelan
ORGANIZATION:	
ADDRESS:	Box 74
CITY/STATE/ZIP:	Diamondville, Wy 83116

☐ Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the Kemmerer RMP Revision.
☒ No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.

Which planning issue is your comment about?

☐ Energy and Mineral Resources ☐ Vegetation and Habitat Management ☒ Transportation, Access, and Recreational Opportunities
☐ Special Management ☐ Other _____

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

More Non-motorized vehicle areas. Access by foot horses ect only. During Speafic months of the year.
Transportation Plan needed immediately. Due to excessive 4 wheeler use.
Beaver Creek area should be looked at for seasonal Closure due to Resource Damage especially West Beaver & tributaries.
Sheep Mtn - Dempsey excessive 4 wheel use also off road travel
More law enforcement needed to keep under control.
Seasonal meaning Oct 1 thru May 31.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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Thank you for your input.

Please hand this form in or MAIL (post-marked by October 11, 2007) to:

KEMMERER RMP REVISION
312 HIGHWAY 189 NORTH
KEMMERER, WYOMING 83101

Public Response Document 00002

08/07/07 00002

Written Comment Form
Kemmerer Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision
Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement

NAME:	Mary Lynn Corbett
ORGANIZATION:	
ADDRESS:	P.O. Box 334
CITY/STATE/ZIP:	Kemmerer, Wy 83101

☐ Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the Kemmerer RMP Revision.
☐ No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.

Which planning issue is your comment about?

☐ Energy and Mineral Resources ☐ Vegetation and Habitat Management ☐ Transportation, Access, and Recreational Opportunities
☐ Special Management ☐ Other _____

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

Would like to be on the Cumberland grazing mailing list

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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312 HIGHWAY 189 NORTH
KEMMERER, WYOMING 83101

Public Response Document 00003

Display Board Comment Card 00003
Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision
Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement

Please check the meeting you are attending.

☐ 8/6 Cokeville, WY ☐ 8/7 Kemmerer, WY ☐ 8/8 Rock Springs, WY ☐ 8/9 Evanston, WY
☑ 8/10 Lyman, WY

Allen (First Name) M. (MI) Jaggi (Last Name)
Wy. Leg HD #18 (Organization)
786-2817 (Phone) ajaggi@wyoming.com (Email Address)
Box 326 (Mailing Address)
Lyman (City) Wy (State) 82937 (Zip Code)

Please write your comment on the back side.

Which planning issue is your comment about?

☐ Energy and Mineral Resources ☑ Vegetation and Habitat Management
☐ Transportation, Access, and Recreational Opportunities ☑ Special Management
☐ Other _____

Write Comment Below

NWSR - glad to see Bl. Fk. River not highly considered
- Like to see Raymond Mt. area not considered

Public Response Document 00004

00004

Read 8/6/07 Cokeville Open House

Written Comment Form
Kemmerer Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision
Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement

NAME: Sam Bennion
ORGANIZATION: Landowner
ADDRESS: BOX 55
CITY/STATE/ZIP: Cokeville Wy 83114

☐ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the Kemmerer RMP Revision.**
☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Which planning issue is your comment about?

☒ Energy and Mineral Resources ☒ Vegetation and Habitat Management ☐ Transportation, Access, and Recreational Opportunities
☐ Special Management ☐ Other _____

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

The BLM is not giving consideration the Livestock use as much consideration as they need to. The wild life numbers as Not managed as they need to be. There are to many elk in the area. The BLM needs to have some say on the number of elk & game and not to punish the Live stock when elk & game numbers are to high as they are at present. We need to have gas and mineral development.

****** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ******

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KEMMERER RMP REVISION
312 HIGHWAY 189 NORTH
KEMMERER, WYOMING 83101

Public Response Document 00005

00005

Rcvd 9/6/07 Cokeville Open House

Written Comment Form
Kemmerer Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision
Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement

NAME:	Tim Teichert
ORGANIZATION:	Teichert Brothers LLC
ADDRESS:	P.O. Box 364
CITY/STATE/ZIP:	Cokeville / WY / 83114

☑ Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the Kemmerer RMP Revision.
☐ No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.

Which planning issue is your comment about?

☐ Energy and Mineral Resources ☑ Vegetation and Habitat Management ☐ Transportation, Access, and Recreational Opportunities
☐ Special Management ☐ Other _____

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

Christy Canyon Allotment

I don't agree with your decision to make Christy Canyon a Grass Bank. The grass in Christy Canyon is an early spring grass. Their is a lot of cheat grass and others that should be use early. By the first of July the grass is burnt up and is a fire hazard. There is also only a limited amount of water on this range most is reservoirs that only have water early I also disagree that it does affect ranchers in that it is a temporary use and doesn't allow one to plan to use it. I believe this allotment should be a permit use allotment.

**** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ****

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KEMMERER RMP REVISION
312 HIGHWAY 189 NORTH
KEMMERER, WYOMING 83101

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Public Response Document 00006

00006

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP) REVISION DRAFT RMP and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC MEETING	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

August 7, 2007 * 3:00 p.m.

Location: Lincoln County Library
519 Emerald Street
Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101

Reporter: Kelly Fine-Jensen, RPR
Notary Public in and for the State of Utah

A P P E A R A N C E S

FOR THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT:

Mary Jo Rugwell
Michele Easley
Matthew Warren
Michael Meyer
Pauline Schuette
Wally Mierzejewski
Neil Schiche

ALSO PRESENT:

Robert Henke, SAIC
Cameron Nuss, SAIC

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Senator Stan Cooper, Wyoming State Senate
Diane Burg
Mary Lynn Corbett

-oOo-

CITICOURT, LLC
801.532.3441

PROCEEDINGS

(Open house preceded at 3:00 p.m.)

(Opening remarks commenced at 5:00 p.m.)

MS. RUGWELL: Good afternoon.

We're going to go through just a very brief PowerPoint presentation. This is basically the briefing that we presented to the BLM Director about -- I guess it was about six weeks ago. It just hits the highlights about what is included in the preferred alternative that we're proposing for the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan Revision.

As you know, we're at the draft stage currently. The plan was issued -- was published, I should say, on July 13th. And that marked the beginning of a 90-day public comment period. The public comment period will run through October 11th, 2007.

This is the second of a series of public meetings and open houses that we are holding to attempt to get input from the public.

We appreciate the public that has come this afternoon and we appreciate our BLM specialists that are in attendance. We'll go ahead.

These are just four different views of the Kemmerer Field Office Area. People are often

surprised at how pretty it is here. So when they say, "That can't be Kemmerer." We always say, "Yes. It is. That's Kemmerer."

As you know, the Kemmerer planning area is in the extreme southwestern corner of Wyoming. We administer 1.4 million surface acres and 1.6 million federal mineral state acres. And you will notice that 25 percent of the planning area is checkerboard. Checkerboard is where the BLM administers every other section. And the section not administered by us is owned privately. That does make managing in the checkerboard much more challenging because the management that we undertake on public lands is probably not as effective if our neighbor isn't managing in the same fashion.

The major planning issues that were identified during the scoping process and during the RMP process are energy and mineral development, big game wildlife habitat, of course the sage grouse, which is an issue that is very high profile right now, and of course we have some very good national historic trail segments in the Field Office.

This slide just talks about the cooperating agencies that we've worked with since the beginning of the process. In addition to the Bureau

of Reclamation with the Federal government, we've also been working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency on air quality issues. We've also consulted quite regularly with the Congressional staffers in the southwestern part of the state. You can see that there are several different State governmental agencies. The local County Commissioners and the Conservation Districts for the three counties that are in the Kemmerer planning area. And we've also initiated consultation with the four tribes that are shown on the slide.

In addition to consulting with the tribes, we also offered the tribes the opportunity to become cooperators, but we did not have any tribal governments that were interested in doing that.

This slide just summarizes the alternatives. Alternative A is our current management. That is the management that we started using in the 1986 Resource Management Plan.

Alternative B and C were developed with our cooperators during a series of workshops in 2004. In addition to working with our cooperators on those alternatives, Alternative B is really the resource protection alternative. And C is the resource production alternative.

Alternative D is the preferred alternative. That is what we are recommending. It is a combination of various parts of Alternatives A, B and C. And we think provides for development while maintaining and improving resource conditions in the planning area.

Alternative D was arrived at using the expertise of the BLM staff. And also we've had -- we've given our cooperators several opportunities to go through not only the alternatives table, but the draft documents and provide feedback to us. And so we've crafted that alternative with the help of all those folks.

The proposed plan -- there were several areas that the updates are very minor from the 1986 document. Those are livestock grazing, T&E special status species, water resources and fire and fuels. Those programs have just had minor updates as a result of recent changes in policy or different things that BLM has done.

The resource programs that are substantively modified: Mineral resources, land use resources, recreation and travel management, national historic trails and special designations. We're identifying three new areas of critical environmental

concern. These are very small, mainly special status plant species areas.

This particular slide is a good side-by-side comparison of the current areas of mineral production and areas where locatable minerals are currently withdrawn or are proposed to be withdrawn.

You'll notice on the left-hand side here that the mechanically minable Trona area is this area here in black on the eastern edge of the planning area. The coal leases are right north and south of the Kemmerer/Diamondville area in blue here. High oil and gas production areas are in the, I guess you would call it, fuchsia or hot pink, right there and right in here. And then moderate oil and gas production is shown in green.

On the right-hand side of the slide over here, we have -- the areas that are shown in gray are currently withdrawn from locatable minerals. The only areas that are proposed for additional withdrawal are shown in the red. Those are generally -- there is a proposal from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Cokeville Meadows Wildlife Refuge and then there is just a few areas of special status plant species. They are so small that they are

pretty hard to see. There is also the Bridger Antelope Traps area. And I believe that is down right in that area right there.

Okay. This is another slide where we've done a side-by-side comparison of mineral resource constraints and the overlapping surface resources in the planning area.

You will notice if you look at the map on the right here that -- particularly this area right here of the Field Office -- there is an awful lot going on. We have crucial big game winter range for mule deer, elk. We have -- the entire planning area is habitat for pronghorn antelope. We've got some big game migration corridors in this area. The blue dots are sage grouse lets. And then we have some very significant national historic trail segments. These segments are significant both because the physical trace is still very good and also the visual area has not been compromised by modern developments. There is still a lot of the areas where we have good physical trail traces. The surroundings are still very much like they were when the immigrants came across.

If you'll notice in this area that we have all these really significant overlapping surface

resources. What we're proposing in the preferred alternative is a couple of different areas here where we would like to have them remain administratively unavailable for oil and gas leasing during the plan, during the life of the plan.

It's important to note that this does not mean that the area is withdrawn. It does not mean that the area is permanently closed. What it does mean is that we would prefer not to issue new oil and gas leases in that area.

The other important thing to talk about here is that currently there are only three leases in the area. And it is also an area of low oil and gas development potential.

We've also got on this slide -- we talk about where the areas are available for oil and gas leasing with major restrictions. That's in this blue color. With moderate restrictions, which is in this kind of khaki green color. And then with standard restrictions is the white.

The other thing to point out here is that the mechanically minable Trona area, which we talked about earlier, is not available for oil and gas leasing due to safety concerns. Trona mining is done underground and there is currently no safe way of

drilling oil and gas leases in an area that has working Trona mines.

This particular slide just compares the acreage amounts under Alternative A, which is the current management, with Alternative D, which is the preferred alternative. You can see that available under standard stipulations, that acreage has decreased. And if you look at the next row, available with moderate constraints, you'll see that that particular row has increased at almost the same amount. And that's due mainly to constraints that we think we need to be in place because of sensitive soils in the planning area. We have a lot of areas with very sensitive soils.

The next row talks about available with major constraints. That has gone down a little bit.

And the administratively unavailable under current management is just over a 100,000 acres. And under Alternative D, the preferred alternative, it goes up about approximately 80,000. But this -- it's important to note that this figure includes both the wilderness study area, which is the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area, which is currently in the '86 plan and this was carried forward. There is no leasing in a wilderness study area. That includes

the mechanically minable Trona area, which again leasing is not allowed because of safety concerns. And then also includes the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide areas that we talked about earlier that we would like to have administratively unavailable for the life of the plan.

This slide just indicates what is kind of going on in terms of the preferred alternative with wind energy and utility corridors. There is a lot of activity in the Field Office. A lot of the oil and gas production in the Pinedale area is brought through our Field Office to go to the hub and be sent to other parts of the country. So there are corridors for that. There is corridors identified for high-voltage power lines.

The wind energy, the plan tries to address the elements that have been discussed in the problematic wind energy EIS that's out there. What we did here is the areas that are shown in the dark color are basically what we are considering the preferred areas for wind energy development in the Field Office.

Currently we do not have a travel management plan in Kemmerer. And so one of the things that we are trying to do with the RMP revision

is identify some priority areas where we will start doing travel management planning. It's important to have a travel management plan in order to effectively identify open areas and closed areas. Currently what we have to do is limit travel to existing roads and trails, which is problematic because new trails can be created with very little effort by a couple of OHV riders. So we're trying to get to the point where we are able to actually designate trails in the future. But in order to do that, we've got to do the travel management planning.

This also outlines some recreation management areas that we're proposing. One is the Raymond Mountain, that we've talked about before. One is the Pine Creek Canyon, a recreation management area that's centered around the Oregon/California National Historic Trail Resource. And then Dempsey Ridge.

This slide just outlines a little bit better where the special designations that we're talking about are. Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide are these two areas right here which we've discussed earlier as in the preferred alternative being administratively unavailable to oil and gas leasing due to the fact that they are currently not

leased and there is low potential for oil and gas development. There is the Emigrant Springs Back Country Byway that is right in this area. This was a proposal that was brought to us several years ago by the Lincoln County Commissioners. It is a road that starts outside the Fossil Butte National Monument and winds its way back around toward town. And so we have it in the preferred alternative for designation as a -- it's just -- it's not going to be a developed road or an engineered road. It's just going to be like a four-wheel drive road.

Then we have two segments that have been identified as eligible and suitable for wild and scenic river inclusion. It's important to note that both of these segments are small and they are contained inside the wilderness study area.

We've got the Bridger Butte ACEC, which is down right in here. That is an area of critical environmental concern that we identified based on historic and Native-American concerns. We have -- since beginning this four years ago, we have been made aware of the development of a wind farm down in that area. And so it is possible that that ACEC will be dropped between the draft and the final because the visual intrusion of a wind farm will not allow us

to continue to protect those resources in that area.

We've got a couple of special status plant species ACECs. These are very, very small. In fact, we may not even be able to find them on the map here. They are just not big at all. As you can see, the acreage is very small there.

And then, of course, we have an ACEC inside of the -- within the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area.

This basically is just a summary of the RMP revision process. We started a long time ago, June of 2003, before Michelle and I were ever even involved in this. We have moved through the process with the help of our cooperators through where we are right now, which happens to be the 90-day public comment period. Again, the draft was published on the 13th of July. The public comment period will go through October 11th.

As you can see on the right-hand side of the slide, we still have several steps to move through. Our goal is to get to a final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision by the fall of next year.

We will be giving our cooperators an opportunity to look at a preliminary final. Right

now that looks like that will occur in January.

I believe that's the last slide.

And first of all, are there any questions? Does anyone have any questions about the presentation? Again, scenes from Kemmerer.

(No verbal response.)

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. We're going to have Michelle discuss the various ways you can comment on the draft.

MS. EASLEY: All right. I think that everybody has met me.

There are multiple opportunities to comment during this comment period. What is important for you to know is that we will take written comments here. If you want to provide on one of the display cards here, you can just write out a comment and put it right on the display. You can take a comment form and write a more lengthy comment and deposit it in the box here. If you want to comment form home, if you want to think about it a little bit, you can fill that out and then send it back to me at the office. And the comment forms actually have the mailing address to send those. You can also comment via our website. And the website address is located on the dear reader letter that's

on the -- in the front of the draft there. And we can also provide that to you. I don't have it off the top of my head, but we can provide that to you very easily here. You may fax your comments to us.

Robert, does the comment form have the fax number on it?

We can provide you with a fax number if it does not.

MR. HENKE: No. It's not on here. I think it's the dear reader letter.

MS. EASLEY: It's probably in the dear reader letter. But we can also provide that with -- here at the meeting if you need that phone number.

We encourage you to comment. We encourage you to let us know what you think about the -- not only the preferred alternative, but the way the different issues have been handled.

What is most valuable to us is if you can give us very specific comments. If you are looking through the document and there is something that you don't understand, for example, in the analysis, if you would give us the page number, the line number or the statement that's in there. And state, "This is confusing to the public. Please give us a better explanation." Or something like that. We can handle

that. What's difficult for us is something that's so general that we can't even put our finger on it. If you give us a general statement that says, "I don't like the way you are handling managing historic trails," we don't -- we aren't able to really gauge what you don't like. We would like to know what you don't like about it and how we can do it better. If there is something that we're -- that you feel is so off the mark, we would really like to know how we can do it better. If you can give us specifics on that.

And we're -- and I am always willing to answer any questions or provide additional information.

My telephone number is common on most of these things. So if you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

MR. HENKE: Michelle, the website is in the dear reader letter, but the fax number isn't.

And we've also got the kiosk up here.

MS. EASLEY: All right. And we also have a kiosk where you can provide comments on.

The other thing we can do is if you have any oral comments that you want to make right now, we can take those. We have a court reporter here who can take them down.

MS. RUGWELL: Thank you, Michelle.

I believe that -- Robert, I think that Senator Cooper wanted to make some comments.

Has anyone else signed up to do that?

MR. HENKE: No.

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. That does not mean that you cannot do that. Even if you have not signed up to do so, you can certainly come up and provide comments now. And that way the court reporter will be able to capture those for us. Okay.

Stan, did you want to say something?

SENATOR COOPER: Okay. I just wanted to make sure in the analysis and the plan that -- and Mary Joe, you and I talked about this -- but about the ORVs -- ORHs, I guess --

MS. RUGWELL: OHVs.

SENATOR COOPER: The OHVs. Anyway, I just want to make sure we designate or provide for our recreationistists in the plan. Because, you know, as we discussed, too, if we don't, then people are going to get off and probably use other areas maybe that we may not prefer them to use. And I'm all for getting out in the open range and being able to use your ATVs. I have no problem with that. It's just that I'm a little concerned that -- I don't want to see us

close off all the areas so folks can't get out and recreate with their off road type vehicles.

So that would be my comment.

MS. BURG: Are there any rules and regulations for those vehicles? Is there a speed limit for BLM land? Or any rules or restrictions or guidelines for those people?

MS. RUGWELL: Well, currently because we don't have trails designated, the rule is that you have to use existing roads and trails. The problem with that whole concept is that it's hard to define what those are, you know. And someone going off road a couple of times can create a trail that wasn't there before. And then people will continue to use it because, you know, it's there.

MS. BURG: But do they have speed limits, like with cars?

MS. RUGWELL: You know, I'm not aware of any speed limits. I think that --

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: There is one in the oil patch.

MS. BURG: Is there? There is a speed limit?

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: In the oil patch.

But two-tracks there is none.

MS. BURG: I was just curious if they have control over that.

MR. HENKE: Mary Joe, if I could just make an announcement.

We're having a court reporter record this for BLM. So if you speak up and say your name.

Senator Stan Cooper started and obviously Mary Joe, with the BLM Field Office.

And Diane?

MS. BURG: B-U-R-G, Burg.

MR. HENKE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MS. RUGWELL: Certainly, Diane, we do have BLM law enforcement present in the Field Office. Obviously we have one person to cover the whole planning area, which is not an easy thing to do. But he is working very closely with the Land Department, Game and Fish, and they are really trying to have a presence out on the ground and to -- you know, our focus is, we first like to try to educate people.

MS. BURG: See. That's what I was wondering.

MS. RUGWELL: If we see people doing something bad, then what we do is we contact them. We educate them.

Now if we catch them the next time doing the same thing after we provided the education, then that's the point at which we would --

MS. BURG: But there is education out there for them?

MS. RUGWELL: Not enough. There needs to be more.

MS. BURG: They are so popular.

MS. RUGWELL: Yeah. I've been trying really hard to get our Public Affairs person to do some op-ed pieces for the local papers prior to the summer, prior to hunting season. But I think one of our challenges is going to be that a lot of the people that recreate in this part of the State are not from here. I mean, there are certainly some from Kemmerer, but we're getting a lot of people coming in from Utah.

So we need to probably come up with a strategy to try to reach those folks, too.

MS. BURG: Right.

MS. RUGWELL: And maybe we can do that in concert and maybe with BLM of Utah. You know, I don't know what they've got going on up there.

But certainly the first step is trying to educate people about why it's important to stay on

the roads and trails, why you don't want to take off across -- you know, just take off across the range. You know, some people may not agree that it's precious resource, but it really is. And it can be damaged by improper use.

MS. BURG: Yeah. I never heard of any speed limits. That's why I was wondering if anybody sent brochures out?

MS. RUGWELL: I'm not aware of speed limits for OHVs. You always hope people will use good common sense.

MS. CORBETT: Now there is not any requirement for helmets.

But the real big issue for off road is people not sticking to established roads.

Mary Lynn, two names, Corbett, C-O-R-B-E-T-T.

SENATOR COOPER: Stan Cooper, Wyoming State Senate, again.

I just wanted to mention, too, that there is other reasons that -- a lot of our livestock people now use those ATVs and OHVs to round up their livestock and keep track of them. So we have to be concerned about that. And if anything, I guess what we need is some sort of a thing that folks out there

using this recreation vehicles know that there is rules. And the hardest part, I think, and Mary Joe, you and I discussed this, but I'll say it publically, is where they come off the public road that now they are allowed to be licensed, if you are on a regular road, you run off into the wild, blue yonder, so to speak, and then they come back on the road and they think the same rules apply. And I think, Diane, that relates a lot to what you're saying. I think they are going by the same rules, but there probably should be a different set of rules.

MS. RUGWELL: And there really is, I think, misconception out there that there are no rules on BLM-administered public lands. And that is not true.

But obviously we need to do a better job of educating people about that. Certainly the ability to designate in the RMP would be very helpful, but again, before we can do that, we have to do the travel management planning. So we're going to have to -- it's like a huge elephant. We're going to have to start, one bite at a time, and try to get at the areas we know there is a lot of use and start there.

SENATOR COOPER: Stan Cooper, again.

One thing is we have to understand, too, that these off road vehicles are now taking all kinds of shapes and forms. If you can imagine, they have these things now called "mules" and things almost as big as a pickup truck. So it's not necessarily that little, small four-wheeler out there now. We're dealing with all kinds of issues.

The reason I say that is because in the Legislature in the last couple of years we've actually been dealing with that same issue and the same problems. We've got everything from guys who want to ride dirt bikes out there to guys who want to ride big, six-wheeled outfits.

MS. RUGWELL: Sure.

MR. SCHICHE: Mary Joe, are they clear that there is an opportunity for public participation in the travel management plans?

MS. RUGWELL: We probably haven't talked about that much, but you are absolutely right.

When we start working on the travel management plans, that's when it's going to be critical to have -- I mean, very critical at this stage of our RMP that it's going to just as critical, if not more so, because the travel management planning we need feedback from the people that are

out there running their livestock and the people that want to be out there recreating. Because that helps us to focus on what areas we really need to be concerned about and what areas are more important to address earlier than later.

So that's a very good point, Neil, that public participation will be critical.

MR. SCHICHE: And which roads and trails will be opened and which ones could be closed. So there could be existing ones that could be closed during this process.

MR. HENKE: That's Neil Schiche, with the BLM.

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. Do we have anyone else that would like to say anything?

MS. CORBETT: Well, I really probably shouldn't even open my mouth on this. Just quickly looking over this, what you are doing for sage grouse?

MS. RUGWELL: Well, we do have -- we have lots -- we've had lots of things in place for a long time in this Field Office in terms of buffers for nesting and habitat.

I believe that we're continuing a lot of the same types of stipulations as we've used in the

past.

The other things that we are doing, Mary Lynn, which doesn't really -- well, it certainly dove-tails with the RMP, but it's a little bit different focus is you've probably heard of the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, where, as part of the President's Healthy Land Initiative, funding is coming down from the Department of the Interior to southwestern Wyoming to start doing some landscape-scale projects for wildlife, not just sage grouse, but certainly sage grouse is a huge issue right now. And this is kind of -- I guess I would call it separate, but parallel process that we're embarking on that we are going to need, again, help from the general public, the Safe Grouse Working Groups, you know, all the folks that are -- the Game and Fish Department, other State agencies, our local government cooperators, in trying to figure out what kinds of projects make sense, what kinds of things we can get the biggest bang for our buck doing right now.

So while that's not directly related to the RMP, it is related in terms of, you know, our overall goal to try to protect the resources.

MS. EASLEY: And I'll add a little bit

more to that, Mary Lynn.

Michelle Easley.

If you look in the preferred alternative, under the sage grouse, which you would find under "Sensitive Species," in the "Biological Resources Alternatives Table," we've also added in there considerations and stipulations for winter habitat areas for sage grouse.

You'll also find in the "Biological Resources" section, large, contiguous blocks of sage brush, mountain shrub and I think aspen habitat are -- we have some additional requirements there as far as if there would be development in those areas, we're asking for a much smaller footprint of development where we have contiguous habitat areas.

The other opportunity we have for protecting some good quality sage grouse habitat is in the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide area where we have, under the preferred alternative, the unavailable for the life of the plan oil and gas leasing. Because we have a lot of habitat in that areas that's not just sage grouse, but it's also big game.

So those are some new things that are in this particular plan that provide opportunities for

helping protect sage grouses.

MS. RUGWELL: Michelle, do you remember what number in the alternatives table the "Biological Resources" is located?

MS. CORBETT: Is it -- I have chapter three --

MS. EASLEY: It would be under -- go under chapter two.

MS. CORBETT: 3.4 is biological resources.

Chapter two?

MS. EASLEY: The alternatives table is actually table 2-3.

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: 2-3. Page -- go to page 2-62 and 63.

MS. EASLEY: I think under the preferred alternative also we have some language in there that we would be -- that we could have additions or changes to the sage grouse stipulations based on information that we get and recommendations from Sage Grouse Working Groups. Because we know that those are -- you know, that people are in place to try to do things that are even better than what we have right now.

MS. CORBETT: Okay. Because -- okay.

The other thing that concerns me is water.

And I think we're going to try to work with that landscape thing and see if we can't funnel some of those dollars into -- into some water stuff. That will benefit sage grouse, but also -- because the issue -- you know, sage grouse makes a good poster child. But what we're really talking about is sage brush habitat. You know, there are all these possible -- you know, everybody is throwing money at sage grouse right now.

SENATOR COOPER: What about the Wildlife Trust Fund?

MS. CORBETT: The trick is to figure out where -- which ones of these things you want to attempt to get the maximum. Well, yeah. And so we get -- we're not duplicating efforts. And we're getting this spread out so we do the most that we can with the available dollars.

But, you know, right now we've got groups on top of groups and funding on top of funding.

MS. RUGWELL: I know what you're talking about.

Anyone else have anything they would like to --

MS. CORBETT: Well, of course, I -- you know, I understand why you don't do these in paper

copies, but I will not read them on a disk, on a computer.

MS. RUGWELL: That's yours to take home. Aren't you lucky?

SENATOR COOPER: 33 inches, Mary Lynn.

MS. EASLEY: Something to be aware of, Mary Lynn, that the maps, all of our maps are solely on disk. And one of the big reasons is because in order to get the detail, you would have to print it out in a huge size. And so you can zoom in very tight on the maps on the computer.

And if you have any problems with any of that --

MS. RUGWELL: We do have a set of maps in the office you can come and use.

MS. EASLEY: I'll give anybody any help that they need to understand what's in here. It's very, very important.

MS. RUGWELL: Anybody else?

Okay. You are free to stay. I know some people haven't had a chance to look at the displays. We have several specialists here to answer specific questions. Of course, Michelle, is our project lead and I haven't heard a question yet that she couldn't answer. So thank goodness she's here.

But anyway, if anyone has anything that -- you know, after you look around, if you have other questions or want to discuss things with us.

The other opportunity that you have, if you want to just give comments directly to the court reporter, that opportunity is available as well.

And remember that there are just a plethora of ways to comment. And we really are serious about getting those comments so that we can help make this a better document.

Thanks for coming. And we really appreciate it.

SENATOR COOPER: Thank you.

Thank you, Michelle, for all of this information.

(Above comments concluded at 5:46 p.m.)

(Meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m.)

REPORTER'S HEARING CERTIFICATE

STATE OF UTAH)
: ss.
COUNTY OF SALT LAKE)

I, Kelly Fine-Jensen, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Utah, do hereby certify:

That prior to being examined, the witnesses were duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

That said proceeding was taken down by me in stenotype on August 7, 2007, at the place therein named, and was thereafter transcribed, and that a true and correct transcription of said testimony is set forth in the preceding pages;

I further certify that I am not kin or otherwise associated with any of the parties to said cause of action and that I am not interested in the outcome thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL this 10th day of August, 2007.

_____
Kelly Fine-Jensen, RPR
Notary Public
Residing in Salt Lake County

Public Response Document 00007

00007

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP) REVISION DRAFT RMP and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC MEETING	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

August 7, 2007 * 3:00 p.m.

Location: Lincoln County Library
519 Emerald Street
Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101

Reporter: Kelly Fine-Jensen, RPR
Notary Public in and for the State of Utah

A P P E A R A N C E S

FOR THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT:

Mary Jo Rugwell
Michele Easley
Matthew Warren
Michael Meyer
Pauline Schuette
Wally Mierzejewski
Neil Schiche

ALSO PRESENT:

Robert Henke, SAIC
Cameron Nuss, SAIC

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Senator Stan Cooper, Wyoming State Senate
Diane Burg
Mary Lynn Corbett

-oOo-

PROCEEDINGS

(Open house preceded at 3:00 p.m.)

(Opening remarks commenced at 5:00 p.m.)

MS. RUGWELL: Good afternoon.

We're going to go through just a very brief PowerPoint presentation. This is basically the briefing that we presented to the BLM Director about -- I guess it was about six weeks ago. It just hits the highlights about what is included in the preferred alternative that we're proposing for the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan Revision.

As you know, we're at the draft stage currently. The plan was issued -- was published, I should say, on July 13th. And that marked the beginning of a 90-day public comment period. The public comment period will run through October 11th, 2007.

This is the second of a series of public meetings and open houses that we are holding to attempt to get input from the public.

We appreciate the public that has come this afternoon and we appreciate our BLM specialists that are in attendance. We'll go ahead.

These are just four different views of the Kemmerer Field Office Area. People are often

surprised at how pretty it is here. So when they say, "That can't be Kemmerer." We always say, "Yes. It is. That's Kemmerer."

As you know, the Kemmerer planning area is in the extreme southwestern corner of Wyoming. We administer 1.4 million surface acres and 1.6 million federal mineral state acres. And you will notice that 25 percent of the planning area is checkerboard. Checkerboard is where the BLM administers every other section. And the section not administered by us is owned privately. That does make managing in the checkerboard much more challenging because the management that we undertake on public lands is probably not as effective if our neighbor isn't managing in the same fashion.

The major planning issues that were identified during the scoping process and during the RMP process are energy and mineral development, big game wildlife habitat, of course the sage grouse, which is an issue that is very high profile right now, and of course we have some very good national historic trail segments in the Field Office.

This slide just talks about the cooperating agencies that we've worked with since the beginning of the process. In addition to the Bureau

of Reclamation with the Federal government, we've also been working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency on air quality issues. We've also consulted quite regularly with the Congressional staffers in the southwestern part of the state. You can see that there are several different State governmental agencies. The local County Commissioners and the Conservation Districts for the three counties that are in the Kemmerer planning area. And we've also initiated consultation with the four tribes that are shown on the slide.

In addition to consulting with the tribes, we also offered the tribes the opportunity to become cooperators, but we did not have any tribal governments that were interested in doing that.

This slide just summarizes the alternatives. Alternative A is our current management. That is the management that we started using in the 1986 Resource Management Plan.

Alternative B and C were developed with our cooperators during a series of workshops in 2004. In addition to working with our cooperators on those alternatives, Alternative B is really the resource protection alternative. And C is the resource production alternative.

Alternative D is the preferred alternative. That is what we are recommending. It is a combination of various parts of Alternatives A, B and C. And we think provides for development while maintaining and improving resource conditions in the planning area.

Alternative D was arrived at using the expertise of the BLM staff. And also we've had -- we've given our cooperators several opportunities to go through not only the alternatives table, but the draft documents and provide feedback to us. And so we've crafted that alternative with the help of all those folks.

The proposed plan -- there were several areas that the updates are very minor from the 1986 document. Those are livestock grazing, T&E special status species, water resources and fire and fuels. Those programs have just had minor updates as a result of recent changes in policy or different things that BLM has done.

The resource programs that are substantively modified: Mineral resources, land use resources, recreation and travel management, national historic trails and special designations. We're identifying three new areas of critical environmental

concern. These are very small, mainly special status plant species areas.

This particular slide is a good side-by-side comparison of the current areas of mineral production and areas where locatable minerals are currently withdrawn or are proposed to be withdrawn.

You'll notice on the left-hand side here that the mechanically minable Trona area is this area here in black on the eastern edge of the planning area. The coal leases are right north and south of the Kemmerer/Diamondville area in blue here. High oil and gas production areas are in the, I guess you would call it, fuchsia or hot pink, right there and right in here. And then moderate oil and gas production is shown in green.

On the right-hand side of the slide over here, we have -- the areas that are shown in gray are currently withdrawn from locatable minerals. The only areas that are proposed for additional withdrawal are shown in the red. Those are generally -- there is a proposal from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Cokeville Meadows Wildlife Refuge and then there is just a few areas of special status plant species. They are so small that they are

pretty hard to see. There is also the Bridger Antelope Traps area. And I believe that is down right in that area right there.

Okay. This is another slide where we've done a side-by-side comparison of mineral resource constraints and the overlapping surface resources in the planning area.

You will notice if you look at the map on the right here that -- particularly this area right here of the Field Office -- there is an awful lot going on. We have crucial big game winter range for mule deer, elk. We have -- the entire planning area is habitat for pronghorn antelope. We've got some big game migration corridors in this area. The blue dots are sage grouse lets. And then we have some very significant national historic trail segments. These segments are significant both because the physical trace is still very good and also the visual area has not been compromised by modern developments. There is still a lot of the areas where we have good physical trail traces. The surroundings are still very much like they were when the immigrants came across.

If you'll notice in this area that we have all these really significant overlapping surface

resources. What we're proposing in the preferred alternative is a couple of different areas here where we would like to have them remain administratively unavailable for oil and gas leasing during the plan, during the life of the plan.

It's important to note that this does not mean that the area is withdrawn. It does not mean that the area is permanently closed. What it does mean is that we would prefer not to issue new oil and gas leases in that area.

The other important thing to talk about here is that currently there are only three leases in the area. And it is also an area of low oil and gas development potential.

We've also got on this slide -- we talk about where the areas are available for oil and gas leasing with major restrictions. That's in this blue color. With moderate restrictions, which is in this kind of khaki green color. And then with standard restrictions is the white.

The other thing to point out here is that the mechanically minable Trona area, which we talked about earlier, is not available for oil and gas leasing due to safety concerns. Trona mining is done underground and there is currently no safe way of

drilling oil and gas leases in an area that has working Trona mines.

This particular slide just compares the acreage amounts under Alternative A, which is the current management, with Alternative D, which is the preferred alternative. You can see that available under standard stipulations, that acreage has decreased. And if you look at the next row, available with moderate constraints, you'll see that that particular row has increased at almost the same amount. And that's due mainly to constraints that we think we need to be in place because of sensitive soils in the planning area. We have a lot of areas with very sensitive soils.

The next row talks about available with major constraints. That has gone down a little bit.

And the administratively unavailable under current management is just over a 100,000 acres. And under Alternative D, the preferred alternative, it goes up about approximately 80,000. But this -- it's important to note that this figure includes both the wilderness study area, which is the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area, which is currently in the '86 plan and this was carried forward. There is no leasing in a wilderness study area. That includes

the mechanically minable Trona area, which again leasing is not allowed because of safety concerns. And then also includes the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide areas that we talked about earlier that we would like to have administratively unavailable for the life of the plan.

This slide just indicates what is kind of going on in terms of the preferred alternative with wind energy and utility corridors. There is a lot of activity in the Field Office. A lot of the oil and gas production in the Pinedale area is brought through our Field Office to go to the hub and be sent to other parts of the country. So there are corridors for that. There is corridors identified for high-voltage power lines.

The wind energy, the plan tries to address the elements that have been discussed in the problematic wind energy EIS that's out there. What we did here is the areas that are shown in the dark color are basically what we are considering the preferred areas for wind energy development in the Field Office.

Currently we do not have a travel management plan in Kemmerer. And so one of the things that we are trying to do with the RMP revision

is identify some priority areas where we will start doing travel management planning. It's important to have a travel management plan in order to effectively identify open areas and closed areas. Currently what we have to do is limit travel to existing roads and trails, which is problematic because new trails can be created with very little effort by a couple of OHV riders. So we're trying to get to the point where we are able to actually designate trails in the future. But in order to do that, we've got to do the travel management planning.

This also outlines some recreation management areas that we're proposing. One is the Raymond Mountain, that we've talked about before. One is the Pine Creek Canyon, a recreation management area that's centered around the Oregon/California National Historic Trail Resource. And then Dempsey Ridge.

This slide just outlines a little bit better where the special designations that we're talking about are. Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide are these two areas right here which we've discussed earlier as in the preferred alternative being administratively unavailable to oil and gas leasing due to the fact that they are currently not

leased and there is low potential for oil and gas development. There is the Emigrant Springs Back Country Byway that is right in this area. This was a proposal that was brought to us several years ago by the Lincoln County Commissioners. It is a road that starts outside the Fossil Butte National Monument and winds its way back around toward town. And so we have it in the preferred alternative for designation as a -- it's just -- it's not going to be a developed road or an engineered road. It's just going to be like a four-wheel drive road.

Then we have two segments that have been identified as eligible and suitable for wild and scenic river inclusion. It's important to note that both of these segments are small and they are contained inside the wilderness study area.

We've got the Bridger Butte ACEC, which is down right in here. That is an area of critical environmental concern that we identified based on historic and Native-American concerns. We have -- since beginning this four years ago, we have been made aware of the development of a wind farm down in that area. And so it is possible that that ACEC will be dropped between the draft and the final because the visual intrusion of a wind farm will not allow us

to continue to protect those resources in that area.

We've got a couple of special status plant species ACECs. These are very, very small. In fact, we may not even be able to find them on the map here. They are just not big at all. As you can see, the acreage is very small there.

And then, of course, we have an ACEC inside of the -- within the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area.

This basically is just a summary of the RMP revision process. We started a long time ago, June of 2003, before Michelle and I were ever even involved in this. We have moved through the process with the help of our cooperators through where we are right now, which happens to be the 90-day public comment period. Again, the draft was published on the 13th of July. The public comment period will go through October 11th.

As you can see on the right-hand side of the slide, we still have several steps to move through. Our goal is to get to a final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision by the fall of next year.

We will be giving our cooperators an opportunity to look at a preliminary final. Right

now that looks like that will occur in January.

I believe that's the last slide.

And first of all, are there any questions? Does anyone have any questions about the presentation? Again, scenes from Kemmerer.

(No verbal response.)

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. We're going to have Michelle discuss the various ways you can comment on the draft.

MS. EASLEY: All right. I think that everybody has met me.

There are multiple opportunities to comment during this comment period. What is important for you to know is that we will take written comments here. If you want to provide on one of the display cards here, you can just write out a comment and put it right on the display. You can take a comment form and write a more lengthy comment and deposit it in the box here. If you want to comment form home, if you want to think about it a little bit, you can fill that out and then send it back to me at the office. And the comment forms actually have the mailing address to send those. You can also comment via our website. And the website address is located on the dear reader letter that's

on the -- in the front of the draft there. And we can also provide that to you. I don't have it off the top of my head, but we can provide that to you very easily here. You may fax your comments to us.

Robert, does the comment form have the fax number on it?

We can provide you with a fax number if it does not.

MR. HENKE: No. It's not on here. I think it's the dear reader letter.

MS. EASLEY: It's probably in the dear reader letter. But we can also provide that with -- here at the meeting if you need that phone number.

We encourage you to comment. We encourage you to let us know what you think about the -- not only the preferred alternative, but the way the different issues have been handled.

What is most valuable to us is if you can give us very specific comments. If you are looking through the document and there is something that you don't understand, for example, in the analysis, if you would give us the page number, the line number or the statement that's in there. And state, "This is confusing to the public. Please give us a better explanation." Or something like that. We can handle

that. What's difficult for us is something that's so general that we can't even put our finger on it. If you give us a general statement that says, "I don't like the way you are handling managing historic trails," we don't -- we aren't able to really gauge what you don't like. We would like to know what you don't like about it and how we can do it better. If there is something that we're -- that you feel is so off the mark, we would really like to know how we can do it better. If you can give us specifics on that.

And we're -- and I am always willing to answer any questions or provide additional information.

My telephone number is common on most of these things. So if you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

MR. HENKE: Michelle, the website is in the dear reader letter, but the fax number isn't.

And we've also got the kiosk up here.

MS. EASLEY: All right. And we also have a kiosk where you can provide comments on.

The other thing we can do is if you have any oral comments that you want to make right now, we can take those. We have a court reporter here who can take them down.

MS. RUGWELL: Thank you, Michelle.

I believe that -- Robert, I think that Senator Cooper wanted to make some comments.

Has anyone else signed up to do that?

MR. HENKE: No.

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. That does not mean that you cannot do that. Even if you have not signed up to do so, you can certainly come up and provide comments now. And that way the court reporter will be able to capture those for us. Okay.

Stan, did you want to say something?

SENATOR COOPER: Okay. I just wanted to make sure in the analysis and the plan that -- and Mary Joe, you and I talked about this -- but about the ORVs -- ORHs, I guess --

MS. RUGWELL: OHVs.

SENATOR COOPER: The OHVs. Anyway, I just want to make sure we designate or provide for our recreationistists in the plan. Because, you know, as we discussed, too, if we don't, then people are going to get off and probably use other areas maybe that we may not prefer them to use. And I'm all for getting out in the open range and being able to use your ATVs. I have no problem with that. It's just that I'm a little concerned that -- I don't want to see us

close off all the areas so folks can't get out and recreate with their off road type vehicles.

So that would be my comment.

MS. BURG: Are there any rules and regulations for those vehicles? Is there a speed limit for BLM land? Or any rules or restrictions or guidelines for those people?

MS. RUGWELL: Well, currently because we don't have trails designated, the rule is that you have to use existing roads and trails. The problem with that whole concept is that it's hard to define what those are, you know. And someone going off road a couple of times can create a trail that wasn't there before. And then people will continue to use it because, you know, it's there.

MS. BURG: But do they have speed limits, like with cars?

MS. RUGWELL: You know, I'm not aware of any speed limits. I think that --

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: There is one in the oil patch.

MS. BURG: Is there? There is a speed limit?

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: In the oil patch.

But two-tracks there is none.

MS. BURG: I was just curious if they have control over that.

MR. HENKE: Mary Joe, if I could just make an announcement.

We're having a court reporter record this for BLM. So if you speak up and say your name.

Senator Stan Cooper started and obviously Mary Joe, with the BLM Field Office.

And Diane?

MS. BURG: B-U-R-G, Burg.

MR. HENKE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MS. RUGWELL: Certainly, Diane, we do have BLM law enforcement present in the Field Office. Obviously we have one person to cover the whole planning area, which is not an easy thing to do. But he is working very closely with the Land Department, Game and Fish, and they are really trying to have a presence out on the ground and to -- you know, our focus is, we first like to try to educate people.

MS. BURG: See. That's what I was wondering.

MS. RUGWELL: If we see people doing something bad, then what we do is we contact them. We educate them.

Now if we catch them the next time doing the same thing after we provided the education, then that's the point at which we would --

MS. BURG: But there is education out there for them?

MS. RUGWELL: Not enough. There needs to be more.

MS. BURG: They are so popular.

MS. RUGWELL: Yeah. I've been trying really hard to get our Public Affairs person to do some op-ed pieces for the local papers prior to the summer, prior to hunting season. But I think one of our challenges is going to be that a lot of the people that recreate in this part of the State are not from here. I mean, there are certainly some from Kemmerer, but we're getting a lot of people coming in from Utah.

So we need to probably come up with a strategy to try to reach those folks, too.

MS. BURG: Right.

MS. RUGWELL: And maybe we can do that in concert and maybe with BLM of Utah. You know, I don't know what they've got going on up there.

But certainly the first step is trying to educate people about why it's important to stay on

the roads and trails, why you don't want to take off across -- you know, just take off across the range. You know, some people may not agree that it's precious resource, but it really is. And it can be damaged by improper use.

MS. BURG: Yeah. I never heard of any speed limits. That's why I was wondering if anybody sent brochures out?

MS. RUGWELL: I'm not aware of speed limits for OHVs. You always hope people will use good common sense.

MS. CORBETT: Now there is not any requirement for helmets.

But the real big issue for off road is people not sticking to established roads.

Mary Lynn, two names, Corbett, C-O-R-B-E-T-T.

SENATOR COOPER: Stan Cooper, Wyoming State Senate, again.

I just wanted to mention, too, that there is other reasons that -- a lot of our livestock people now use those ATVs and OHVs to round up their livestock and keep track of them. So we have to be concerned about that. And if anything, I guess what we need is some sort of a thing that folks out there

using this recreation vehicles know that there is rules. And the hardest part, I think, and Mary Joe, you and I discussed this, but I'll say it publically, is where they come off the public road that now they are allowed to be licensed, if you are on a regular road, you run off into the wild, blue yonder, so to speak, and then they come back on the road and they think the same rules apply. And I think, Diane, that relates a lot to what you're saying. I think they are going by the same rules, but there probably should be a different set of rules.

MS. RUGWELL: And there really is, I think, misconception out there that there are no rules on BLM-administered public lands. And that is not true.

But obviously we need to do a better job of educating people about that. Certainly the ability to designate in the RMP would be very helpful, but again, before we can do that, we have to do the travel management planning. So we're going to have to -- it's like a huge elephant. We're going to have to start, one bite at a time, and try to get at the areas we know there is a lot of use and start there.

SENATOR COOPER: Stan Cooper, again.

One thing is we have to understand, too, that these off road vehicles are now taking all kinds of shapes and forms. If you can imagine, they have these things now called "mules" and things almost as big as a pickup truck. So it's not necessarily that little, small four-wheeler out there now. We're dealing with all kinds of issues.

The reason I say that is because in the Legislature in the last couple of years we've actually been dealing with that same issue and the same problems. We've got everything from guys who want to ride dirt bikes out there to guys who want to ride big, six-wheeled outfits.

MS. RUGWELL: Sure.

MR. SCHICHE: Mary Joe, are they clear that there is an opportunity for public participation in the travel management plans?

MS. RUGWELL: We probably haven't talked about that much, but you are absolutely right.

When we start working on the travel management plans, that's when it's going to be critical to have -- I mean, very critical at this stage of our RMP that it's going to just as critical, if not more so, because the travel management planning we need feedback from the people that are

out there running their livestock and the people that want to be out there recreating. Because that helps us to focus on what areas we really need to be concerned about and what areas are more important to address earlier than later.

So that's a very good point, Neil, that public participation will be critical.

MR. SCHICHE: And which roads and trails will be opened and which ones could be closed. So there could be existing ones that could be closed during this process.

MR. HENKE: That's Neil Schiche, with the BLM.

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. Do we have anyone else that would like to say anything?

MS. CORBETT: Well, I really probably shouldn't even open my mouth on this. Just quickly looking over this, what you are doing for sage grouse?

MS. RUGWELL: Well, we do have -- we have lots -- we've had lots of things in place for a long time in this Field Office in terms of buffers for nesting and habitat.

I believe that we're continuing a lot of the same types of stipulations as we've used in the

past.

The other things that we are doing, Mary Lynn, which doesn't really -- well, it certainly dove-tails with the RMP, but it's a little bit different focus is you've probably heard of the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, where, as part of the President's Healthy Land Initiative, funding is coming down from the Department of the Interior to southwestern Wyoming to start doing some landscape-scale projects for wildlife, not just sage grouse, but certainly sage grouse is a huge issue right now. And this is kind of -- I guess I would call it separate, but parallel process that we're embarking on that we are going to need, again, help from the general public, the Safe Grouse Working Groups, you know, all the folks that are -- the Game and Fish Department, other State agencies, our local government cooperators, in trying to figure out what kinds of projects make sense, what kinds of things we can get the biggest bang for our buck doing right now.

So while that's not directly related to the RMP, it is related in terms of, you know, our overall goal to try to protect the resources.

MS. EASLEY: And I'll add a little bit

more to that, Mary Lynn.

Michelle Easley.

If you look in the preferred alternative, under the sage grouse, which you would find under "Sensitive Species," in the "Biological Resources Alternatives Table," we've also added in there considerations and stipulations for winter habitat areas for sage grouse.

You'll also find in the "Biological Resources" section, large, contiguous blocks of sage brush, mountain shrub and I think aspen habitat are -- we have some additional requirements there as far as if there would be development in those areas, we're asking for a much smaller footprint of development where we have contiguous habitat areas.

The other opportunity we have for protecting some good quality sage grouse habitat is in the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide area where we have, under the preferred alternative, the unavailable for the life of the plan oil and gas leasing. Because we have a lot of habitat in that areas that's not just sage grouse, but it's also big game.

So those are some new things that are in this particular plan that provide opportunities for

helping protect sage grouses.

MS. RUGWELL: Michelle, do you remember what number in the alternatives table the "Biological Resources" is located?

MS. CORBETT: Is it -- I have chapter three --

MS. EASLEY: It would be under -- go under chapter two.

MS. CORBETT: 3.4 is biological resources.

Chapter two?

MS. EASLEY: The alternatives table is actually table 2-3.

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: 2-3. Page -- go to page 2-62 and 63.

MS. EASLEY: I think under the preferred alternative also we have some language in there that we would be -- that we could have additions or changes to the sage grouse stipulations based on information that we get and recommendations from Sage Grouse Working Groups. Because we know that those are -- you know, that people are in place to try to do things that are even better than what we have right now.

MS. CORBETT: Okay. Because -- okay.

The other thing that concerns me is water.

And I think we're going to try to work with that landscape thing and see if we can't funnel some of those dollars into -- into some water stuff. That will benefit sage grouse, but also -- because the issue -- you know, sage grouse makes a good poster child. But what we're really talking about is sage brush habitat. You know, there are all these possible -- you know, everybody is throwing money at sage grouse right now.

SENATOR COOPER: What about the Wildlife Trust Fund?

MS. CORBETT: The trick is to figure out where -- which ones of these things you want to attempt to get the maximum. Well, yeah. And so we get -- we're not duplicating efforts. And we're getting this spread out so we do the most that we can with the available dollars.

But, you know, right now we've got groups on top of groups and funding on top of funding.

MS. RUGWELL: I know what you're talking about.

Anyone else have anything they would like to --

MS. CORBETT: Well, of course, I -- you know, I understand why you don't do these in paper

copies, but I will not read them on a disk, on a computer.

MS. RUGWELL: That's yours to take home. Aren't you lucky?

SENATOR COOPER: 33 inches, Mary Lynn.

MS. EASLEY: Something to be aware of, Mary Lynn, that the maps, all of our maps are solely on disk. And one of the big reasons is because in order to get the detail, you would have to print it out in a huge size. And so you can zoom in very tight on the maps on the computer.

And if you have any problems with any of that --

MS. RUGWELL: We do have a set of maps in the office you can come and use.

MS. EASLEY: I'll give anybody any help that they need to understand what's in here. It's very, very important.

MS. RUGWELL: Anybody else?

Okay. You are free to stay. I know some people haven't had a chance to look at the displays. We have several specialists here to answer specific questions. Of course, Michelle, is our project lead and I haven't heard a question yet that she couldn't answer. So thank goodness she's here.

But anyway, if anyone has anything that -- you know, after you look around, if you have other questions or want to discuss things with us.

The other opportunity that you have, if you want to just give comments directly to the court reporter, that opportunity is available as well.

And remember that there are just a plethora of ways to comment. And we really are serious about getting those comments so that we can help make this a better document.

Thanks for coming. And we really appreciate it.

SENATOR COOPER: Thank you.

Thank you, Michelle, for all of this information.

(Above comments concluded at 5:46 p.m.)

(Meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m.)

REPORTER'S HEARING CERTIFICATE

STATE OF UTAH)
: ss.
COUNTY OF SALT LAKE)

I, Kelly Fine-Jensen, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Utah, do hereby certify:

That prior to being examined, the witnesses were duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

That said proceeding was taken down by me in stenotype on August 7, 2007, at the place therein named, and was thereafter transcribed, and that a true and correct transcription of said testimony is set forth in the preceding pages;

I further certify that I am not kin or otherwise associated with any of the parties to said cause of action and that I am not interested in the outcome thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL this 10th day of August, 2007.

_____
Kelly Fine-Jensen, RPR
Notary Public
Residing in Salt Lake County

Public Response Document 00008

00008

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP) REVISION DRAFT RMP and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC MEETING	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

August 7, 2007 * 3:00 p.m.

Location: Lincoln County Library
519 Emerald Street
Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101

Reporter: Kelly Fine-Jensen, RPR
Notary Public in and for the State of Utah

A P P E A R A N C E S

FOR THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT:

Mary Jo Rugwell
Michele Easley
Matthew Warren
Michael Meyer
Pauline Schuette
Wally Mierzejewski
Neil Schiche

ALSO PRESENT:

Robert Henke, SAIC
Cameron Nuss, SAIC

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Senator Stan Cooper, Wyoming State Senate
Diane Burg
Mary Lynn Corbett

-oOo-

PROCEEDINGS

(Open house preceded at 3:00 p.m.)

(Opening remarks commenced at 5:00 p.m.)

MS. RUGWELL: Good afternoon.

We're going to go through just a very brief PowerPoint presentation. This is basically the briefing that we presented to the BLM Director about -- I guess it was about six weeks ago. It just hits the highlights about what is included in the preferred alternative that we're proposing for the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan Revision.

As you know, we're at the draft stage currently. The plan was issued -- was published, I should say, on July 13th. And that marked the beginning of a 90-day public comment period. The public comment period will run through October 11th, 2007.

This is the second of a series of public meetings and open houses that we are holding to attempt to get input from the public.

We appreciate the public that has come this afternoon and we appreciate our BLM specialists that are in attendance. We'll go ahead.

These are just four different views of the Kemmerer Field Office Area. People are often

surprised at how pretty it is here. So when they say, "That can't be Kemmerer." We always say, "Yes. It is. That's Kemmerer."

As you know, the Kemmerer planning area is in the extreme southwestern corner of Wyoming. We administer 1.4 million surface acres and 1.6 million federal mineral state acres. And you will notice that 25 percent of the planning area is checkerboard. Checkerboard is where the BLM administers every other section. And the section not administered by us is owned privately. That does make managing in the checkerboard much more challenging because the management that we undertake on public lands is probably not as effective if our neighbor isn't managing in the same fashion.

The major planning issues that were identified during the scoping process and during the RMP process are energy and mineral development, big game wildlife habitat, of course the sage grouse, which is an issue that is very high profile right now, and of course we have some very good national historic trail segments in the Field Office.

This slide just talks about the cooperating agencies that we've worked with since the beginning of the process. In addition to the Bureau

of Reclamation with the Federal government, we've also been working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency on air quality issues. We've also consulted quite regularly with the Congressional staffers in the southwestern part of the state. You can see that there are several different State governmental agencies. The local County Commissioners and the Conservation Districts for the three counties that are in the Kemmerer planning area. And we've also initiated consultation with the four tribes that are shown on the slide.

In addition to consulting with the tribes, we also offered the tribes the opportunity to become cooperators, but we did not have any tribal governments that were interested in doing that.

This slide just summarizes the alternatives. Alternative A is our current management. That is the management that we started using in the 1986 Resource Management Plan.

Alternative B and C were developed with our cooperators during a series of workshops in 2004. In addition to working with our cooperators on those alternatives, Alternative B is really the resource protection alternative. And C is the resource production alternative.

Alternative D is the preferred alternative. That is what we are recommending. It is a combination of various parts of Alternatives A, B and C. And we think provides for development while maintaining and improving resource conditions in the planning area.

Alternative D was arrived at using the expertise of the BLM staff. And also we've had -- we've given our cooperators several opportunities to go through not only the alternatives table, but the draft documents and provide feedback to us. And so we've crafted that alternative with the help of all those folks.

The proposed plan -- there were several areas that the updates are very minor from the 1986 document. Those are livestock grazing, T&E special status species, water resources and fire and fuels. Those programs have just had minor updates as a result of recent changes in policy or different things that BLM has done.

The resource programs that are substantively modified: Mineral resources, land use resources, recreation and travel management, national historic trails and special designations. We're identifying three new areas of critical environmental

concern. These are very small, mainly special status plant species areas.

This particular slide is a good side-by-side comparison of the current areas of mineral production and areas where locatable minerals are currently withdrawn or are proposed to be withdrawn.

You'll notice on the left-hand side here that the mechanically minable Trona area is this area here in black on the eastern edge of the planning area. The coal leases are right north and south of the Kemmerer/Diamondville area in blue here. High oil and gas production areas are in the, I guess you would call it, fuchsia or hot pink, right there and right in here. And then moderate oil and gas production is shown in green.

On the right-hand side of the slide over here, we have -- the areas that are shown in gray are currently withdrawn from locatable minerals. The only areas that are proposed for additional withdrawal are shown in the red. Those are generally -- there is a proposal from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Cokeville Meadows Wildlife Refuge and then there is just a few areas of special status plant species. They are so small that they are

pretty hard to see. There is also the Bridger Antelope Traps area. And I believe that is down right in that area right there.

Okay. This is another slide where we've done a side-by-side comparison of mineral resource constraints and the overlapping surface resources in the planning area.

You will notice if you look at the map on the right here that -- particularly this area right here of the Field Office -- there is an awful lot going on. We have crucial big game winter range for mule deer, elk. We have -- the entire planning area is habitat for pronghorn antelope. We've got some big game migration corridors in this area. The blue dots are sage grouse lets. And then we have some very significant national historic trail segments. These segments are significant both because the physical trace is still very good and also the visual area has not been compromised by modern developments. There is still a lot of the areas where we have good physical trail traces. The surroundings are still very much like they were when the immigrants came across.

If you'll notice in this area that we have all these really significant overlapping surface

resources. What we're proposing in the preferred alternative is a couple of different areas here where we would like to have them remain administratively unavailable for oil and gas leasing during the plan, during the life of the plan.

It's important to note that this does not mean that the area is withdrawn. It does not mean that the area is permanently closed. What it does mean is that we would prefer not to issue new oil and gas leases in that area.

The other important thing to talk about here is that currently there are only three leases in the area. And it is also an area of low oil and gas development potential.

We've also got on this slide -- we talk about where the areas are available for oil and gas leasing with major restrictions. That's in this blue color. With moderate restrictions, which is in this kind of khaki green color. And then with standard restrictions is the white.

The other thing to point out here is that the mechanically minable Trona area, which we talked about earlier, is not available for oil and gas leasing due to safety concerns. Trona mining is done underground and there is currently no safe way of

drilling oil and gas leases in an area that has working Trona mines.

This particular slide just compares the acreage amounts under Alternative A, which is the current management, with Alternative D, which is the preferred alternative. You can see that available under standard stipulations, that acreage has decreased. And if you look at the next row, available with moderate constraints, you'll see that that particular row has increased at almost the same amount. And that's due mainly to constraints that we think we need to be in place because of sensitive soils in the planning area. We have a lot of areas with very sensitive soils.

The next row talks about available with major constraints. That has gone down a little bit.

And the administratively unavailable under current management is just over a 100,000 acres. And under Alternative D, the preferred alternative, it goes up about approximately 80,000. But this -- it's important to note that this figure includes both the wilderness study area, which is the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area, which is currently in the '86 plan and this was carried forward. There is no leasing in a wilderness study area. That includes

the mechanically minable Trona area, which again leasing is not allowed because of safety concerns. And then also includes the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide areas that we talked about earlier that we would like to have administratively unavailable for the life of the plan.

This slide just indicates what is kind of going on in terms of the preferred alternative with wind energy and utility corridors. There is a lot of activity in the Field Office. A lot of the oil and gas production in the Pinedale area is brought through our Field Office to go to the hub and be sent to other parts of the country. So there are corridors for that. There is corridors identified for high-voltage power lines.

The wind energy, the plan tries to address the elements that have been discussed in the problematic wind energy EIS that's out there. What we did here is the areas that are shown in the dark color are basically what we are considering the preferred areas for wind energy development in the Field Office.

Currently we do not have a travel management plan in Kemmerer. And so one of the things that we are trying to do with the RMP revision

is identify some priority areas where we will start doing travel management planning. It's important to have a travel management plan in order to effectively identify open areas and closed areas. Currently what we have to do is limit travel to existing roads and trails, which is problematic because new trails can be created with very little effort by a couple of OHV riders. So we're trying to get to the point where we are able to actually designate trails in the future. But in order to do that, we've got to do the travel management planning.

This also outlines some recreation management areas that we're proposing. One is the Raymond Mountain, that we've talked about before. One is the Pine Creek Canyon, a recreation management area that's centered around the Oregon/California National Historic Trail Resource. And then Dempsey Ridge.

This slide just outlines a little bit better where the special designations that we're talking about are. Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide are these two areas right here which we've discussed earlier as in the preferred alternative being administratively unavailable to oil and gas leasing due to the fact that they are currently not

leased and there is low potential for oil and gas development. There is the Emigrant Springs Back Country Byway that is right in this area. This was a proposal that was brought to us several years ago by the Lincoln County Commissioners. It is a road that starts outside the Fossil Butte National Monument and winds its way back around toward town. And so we have it in the preferred alternative for designation as a -- it's just -- it's not going to be a developed road or an engineered road. It's just going to be like a four-wheel drive road.

Then we have two segments that have been identified as eligible and suitable for wild and scenic river inclusion. It's important to note that both of these segments are small and they are contained inside the wilderness study area.

We've got the Bridger Butte ACEC, which is down right in here. That is an area of critical environmental concern that we identified based on historic and Native-American concerns. We have -- since beginning this four years ago, we have been made aware of the development of a wind farm down in that area. And so it is possible that that ACEC will be dropped between the draft and the final because the visual intrusion of a wind farm will not allow us

to continue to protect those resources in that area.

We've got a couple of special status plant species ACECs. These are very, very small. In fact, we may not even be able to find them on the map here. They are just not big at all. As you can see, the acreage is very small there.

And then, of course, we have an ACEC inside of the -- within the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area.

This basically is just a summary of the RMP revision process. We started a long time ago, June of 2003, before Michelle and I were ever even involved in this. We have moved through the process with the help of our cooperators through where we are right now, which happens to be the 90-day public comment period. Again, the draft was published on the 13th of July. The public comment period will go through October 11th.

As you can see on the right-hand side of the slide, we still have several steps to move through. Our goal is to get to a final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision by the fall of next year.

We will be giving our cooperators an opportunity to look at a preliminary final. Right

now that looks like that will occur in January.

I believe that's the last slide.

And first of all, are there any questions? Does anyone have any questions about the presentation? Again, scenes from Kemmerer.

(No verbal response.)

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. We're going to have Michelle discuss the various ways you can comment on the draft.

MS. EASLEY: All right. I think that everybody has met me.

There are multiple opportunities to comment during this comment period. What is important for you to know is that we will take written comments here. If you want to provide on one of the display cards here, you can just write out a comment and put it right on the display. You can take a comment form and write a more lengthy comment and deposit it in the box here. If you want to comment form home, if you want to think about it a little bit, you can fill that out and then send it back to me at the office. And the comment forms actually have the mailing address to send those. You can also comment via our website. And the website address is located on the dear reader letter that's

on the -- in the front of the draft there. And we can also provide that to you. I don't have it off the top of my head, but we can provide that to you very easily here. You may fax your comments to us.

Robert, does the comment form have the fax number on it?

We can provide you with a fax number if it does not.

MR. HENKE: No. It's not on here. I think it's the dear reader letter.

MS. EASLEY: It's probably in the dear reader letter. But we can also provide that with -- here at the meeting if you need that phone number.

We encourage you to comment. We encourage you to let us know what you think about the -- not only the preferred alternative, but the way the different issues have been handled.

What is most valuable to us is if you can give us very specific comments. If you are looking through the document and there is something that you don't understand, for example, in the analysis, if you would give us the page number, the line number or the statement that's in there. And state, "This is confusing to the public. Please give us a better explanation." Or something like that. We can handle

that. What's difficult for us is something that's so general that we can't even put our finger on it. If you give us a general statement that says, "I don't like the way you are handling managing historic trails," we don't -- we aren't able to really gauge what you don't like. We would like to know what you don't like about it and how we can do it better. If there is something that we're -- that you feel is so off the mark, we would really like to know how we can do it better. If you can give us specifics on that.

And we're -- and I am always willing to answer any questions or provide additional information.

My telephone number is common on most of these things. So if you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

MR. HENKE: Michelle, the website is in the dear reader letter, but the fax number isn't.

And we've also got the kiosk up here.

MS. EASLEY: All right. And we also have a kiosk where you can provide comments on.

The other thing we can do is if you have any oral comments that you want to make right now, we can take those. We have a court reporter here who can take them down.

MS. RUGWELL: Thank you, Michelle.

I believe that -- Robert, I think that Senator Cooper wanted to make some comments.

Has anyone else signed up to do that?

MR. HENKE: No.

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. That does not mean that you cannot do that. Even if you have not signed up to do so, you can certainly come up and provide comments now. And that way the court reporter will be able to capture those for us. Okay.

Stan, did you want to say something?

SENATOR COOPER: Okay. I just wanted to make sure in the analysis and the plan that -- and Mary Joe, you and I talked about this -- but about the ORVs -- ORHs, I guess --

MS. RUGWELL: OHVs.

SENATOR COOPER: The OHVs. Anyway, I just want to make sure we designate or provide for our recreationistists in the plan. Because, you know, as we discussed, too, if we don't, then people are going to get off and probably use other areas maybe that we may not prefer them to use. And I'm all for getting out in the open range and being able to use your ATVs. I have no problem with that. It's just that I'm a little concerned that -- I don't want to see us

close off all the areas so folks can't get out and recreate with their off road type vehicles.

So that would be my comment.

MS. BURG: Are there any rules and regulations for those vehicles? Is there a speed limit for BLM land? Or any rules or restrictions or guidelines for those people?

MS. RUGWELL: Well, currently because we don't have trails designated, the rule is that you have to use existing roads and trails. The problem with that whole concept is that it's hard to define what those are, you know. And someone going off road a couple of times can create a trail that wasn't there before. And then people will continue to use it because, you know, it's there.

MS. BURG: But do they have speed limits, like with cars?

MS. RUGWELL: You know, I'm not aware of any speed limits. I think that --

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: There is one in the oil patch.

MS. BURG: Is there? There is a speed limit?

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: In the oil patch.

But two-tracks there is none.

MS. BURG: I was just curious if they have control over that.

MR. HENKE: Mary Joe, if I could just make an announcement.

We're having a court reporter record this for BLM. So if you speak up and say your name.

Senator Stan Cooper started and obviously Mary Joe, with the BLM Field Office.

And Diane?

MS. BURG: B-U-R-G, Burg.

MR. HENKE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MS. RUGWELL: Certainly, Diane, we do have BLM law enforcement present in the Field Office. Obviously we have one person to cover the whole planning area, which is not an easy thing to do. But he is working very closely with the Land Department, Game and Fish, and they are really trying to have a presence out on the ground and to -- you know, our focus is, we first like to try to educate people.

MS. BURG: See. That's what I was wondering.

MS. RUGWELL: If we see people doing something bad, then what we do is we contact them. We educate them.

Now if we catch them the next time doing the same thing after we provided the education, then that's the point at which we would --

MS. BURG: But there is education out there for them?

MS. RUGWELL: Not enough. There needs to be more.

MS. BURG: They are so popular.

MS. RUGWELL: Yeah. I've been trying really hard to get our Public Affairs person to do some op-ed pieces for the local papers prior to the summer, prior to hunting season. But I think one of our challenges is going to be that a lot of the people that recreate in this part of the State are not from here. I mean, there are certainly some from Kemmerer, but we're getting a lot of people coming in from Utah.

So we need to probably come up with a strategy to try to reach those folks, too.

MS. BURG: Right.

MS. RUGWELL: And maybe we can do that in concert and maybe with BLM of Utah. You know, I don't know what they've got going on up there.

But certainly the first step is trying to educate people about why it's important to stay on

the roads and trails, why you don't want to take off across -- you know, just take off across the range. You know, some people may not agree that it's precious resource, but it really is. And it can be damaged by improper use.

MS. BURG: Yeah. I never heard of any speed limits. That's why I was wondering if anybody sent brochures out?

MS. RUGWELL: I'm not aware of speed limits for OHVs. You always hope people will use good common sense.

MS. CORBETT: Now there is not any requirement for helmets.

But the real big issue for off road is people not sticking to established roads.

Mary Lynn, two names, Corbett, C-O-R-B-E-T-T.

SENATOR COOPER: Stan Cooper, Wyoming State Senate, again.

I just wanted to mention, too, that there is other reasons that -- a lot of our livestock people now use those ATVs and OHVs to round up their livestock and keep track of them. So we have to be concerned about that. And if anything, I guess what we need is some sort of a thing that folks out there

using this recreation vehicles know that there is rules. And the hardest part, I think, and Mary Joe, you and I discussed this, but I'll say it publically, is where they come off the public road that now they are allowed to be licensed, if you are on a regular road, you run off into the wild, blue yonder, so to speak, and then they come back on the road and they think the same rules apply. And I think, Diane, that relates a lot to what you're saying. I think they are going by the same rules, but there probably should be a different set of rules.

MS. RUGWELL: And there really is, I think, misconception out there that there are no rules on BLM-administered public lands. And that is not true.

But obviously we need to do a better job of educating people about that. Certainly the ability to designate in the RMP would be very helpful, but again, before we can do that, we have to do the travel management planning. So we're going to have to -- it's like a huge elephant. We're going to have to start, one bite at a time, and try to get at the areas we know there is a lot of use and start there.

SENATOR COOPER: Stan Cooper, again.

One thing is we have to understand, too, that these off road vehicles are now taking all kinds of shapes and forms. If you can imagine, they have these things now called "mules" and things almost as big as a pickup truck. So it's not necessarily that little, small four-wheeler out there now. We're dealing with all kinds of issues.

The reason I say that is because in the Legislature in the last couple of years we've actually been dealing with that same issue and the same problems. We've got everything from guys who want to ride dirt bikes out there to guys who want to ride big, six-wheeled outfits.

MS. RUGWELL: Sure.

MR. SCHICHE: Mary Joe, are they clear that there is an opportunity for public participation in the travel management plans?

MS. RUGWELL: We probably haven't talked about that much, but you are absolutely right.

When we start working on the travel management plans, that's when it's going to be critical to have -- I mean, very critical at this stage of our RMP that it's going to just as critical, if not more so, because the travel management planning we need feedback from the people that are

out there running their livestock and the people that want to be out there recreating. Because that helps us to focus on what areas we really need to be concerned about and what areas are more important to address earlier than later.

So that's a very good point, Neil, that public participation will be critical.

MR. SCHICHE: And which roads and trails will be opened and which ones could be closed. So there could be existing ones that could be closed during this process.

MR. HENKE: That's Neil Schiche, with the BLM.

MS. RUGWELL: Okay. Do we have anyone else that would like to say anything?

MS. CORBETT: Well, I really probably shouldn't even open my mouth on this. Just quickly looking over this, what you are doing for sage grouse?

MS. RUGWELL: Well, we do have -- we have lots -- we've had lots of things in place for a long time in this Field Office in terms of buffers for nesting and habitat.

I believe that we're continuing a lot of the same types of stipulations as we've used in the

past.

The other things that we are doing, Mary Lynn, which doesn't really -- well, it certainly dove-tails with the RMP, but it's a little bit different focus is you've probably heard of the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, where, as part of the President's Healthy Land Initiative, funding is coming down from the Department of the Interior to southwestern Wyoming to start doing some landscape-scale projects for wildlife, not just sage grouse, but certainly sage grouse is a huge issue right now. And this is kind of -- I guess I would call it separate, but parallel process that we're embarking on that we are going to need, again, help from the general public, the Safe Grouse Working Groups, you know, all the folks that are -- the Game and Fish Department, other State agencies, our local government cooperators, in trying to figure out what kinds of projects make sense, what kinds of things we can get the biggest bang for our buck doing right now.

So while that's not directly related to the RMP, it is related in terms of, you know, our overall goal to try to protect the resources.

MS. EASLEY: And I'll add a little bit

more to that, Mary Lynn.

Michelle Easley.

If you look in the preferred alternative, under the sage grouse, which you would find under "Sensitive Species," in the "Biological Resources Alternatives Table," we've also added in there considerations and stipulations for winter habitat areas for sage grouse.

You'll also find in the "Biological Resources" section, large, contiguous blocks of sage brush, mountain shrub and I think aspen habitat are -- we have some additional requirements there as far as if there would be development in those areas, we're asking for a much smaller footprint of development where we have contiguous habitat areas.

The other opportunity we have for protecting some good quality sage grouse habitat is in the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide area where we have, under the preferred alternative, the unavailable for the life of the plan oil and gas leasing. Because we have a lot of habitat in that areas that's not just sage grouse, but it's also big game.

So those are some new things that are in this particular plan that provide opportunities for

helping protect sage grouses.

MS. RUGWELL: Michelle, do you remember what number in the alternatives table the "Biological Resources" is located?

MS. CORBETT: Is it -- I have chapter three --

MS. EASLEY: It would be under -- go under chapter two.

MS. CORBETT: 3.4 is biological resources.

Chapter two?

MS. EASLEY: The alternatives table is actually table 2-3.

MR. MIERZEJEWSKI: 2-3. Page -- go to page 2-62 and 63.

MS. EASLEY: I think under the preferred alternative also we have some language in there that we would be -- that we could have additions or changes to the sage grouse stipulations based on information that we get and recommendations from Sage Grouse Working Groups. Because we know that those are -- you know, that people are in place to try to do things that are even better than what we have right now.

MS. CORBETT: Okay. Because -- okay.

The other thing that concerns me is water.

And I think we're going to try to work with that landscape thing and see if we can't funnel some of those dollars into -- into some water stuff. That will benefit sage grouse, but also -- because the issue -- you know, sage grouse makes a good poster child. But what we're really talking about is sage brush habitat. You know, there are all these possible -- you know, everybody is throwing money at sage grouse right now.

SENATOR COOPER: What about the Wildlife Trust Fund?

MS. CORBETT: The trick is to figure out where -- which ones of these things you want to attempt to get the maximum. Well, yeah. And so we get -- we're not duplicating efforts. And we're getting this spread out so we do the most that we can with the available dollars.

But, you know, right now we've got groups on top of groups and funding on top of funding.

MS. RUGWELL: I know what you're talking about.

Anyone else have anything they would like to --

MS. CORBETT: Well, of course, I -- you know, I understand why you don't do these in paper

copies, but I will not read them on a disk, on a computer.

MS. RUGWELL: That's yours to take home. Aren't you lucky?

SENATOR COOPER: 33 inches, Mary Lynn.

MS. EASLEY: Something to be aware of, Mary Lynn, that the maps, all of our maps are solely on disk. And one of the big reasons is because in order to get the detail, you would have to print it out in a huge size. And so you can zoom in very tight on the maps on the computer.

And if you have any problems with any of that --

MS. RUGWELL: We do have a set of maps in the office you can come and use.

MS. EASLEY: I'll give anybody any help that they need to understand what's in here. It's very, very important.

MS. RUGWELL: Anybody else?

Okay. You are free to stay. I know some people haven't had a chance to look at the displays. We have several specialists here to answer specific questions. Of course, Michelle, is our project lead and I haven't heard a question yet that she couldn't answer. So thank goodness she's here.

But anyway, if anyone has anything that -- you know, after you look around, if you have other questions or want to discuss things with us.

The other opportunity that you have, if you want to just give comments directly to the court reporter, that opportunity is available as well.

And remember that there are just a plethora of ways to comment. And we really are serious about getting those comments so that we can help make this a better document.

Thanks for coming. And we really appreciate it.

SENATOR COOPER: Thank you.

Thank you, Michelle, for all of this information.

(Above comments concluded at 5:46 p.m.)

(Meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m.)

REPORTER'S HEARING CERTIFICATE

STATE OF UTAH)
: ss.
COUNTY OF SALT LAKE)

I, Kelly Fine-Jensen, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Utah, do hereby certify:

That prior to being examined, the witnesses were duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

That said proceeding was taken down by me in stenotype on August 7, 2007, at the place therein named, and was thereafter transcribed, and that a true and correct transcription of said testimony is set forth in the preceding pages;

I further certify that I am not kin or otherwise associated with any of the parties to said cause of action and that I am not interested in the outcome thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL this 10th day of August, 2007.

_____
Kelly Fine-Jensen, RPR
Notary Public
Residing in Salt Lake County