

WYOMING RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

June 30 and July 1, 2011

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2011

3:00 pm:CALL TO ORDER by the Designated Federal Official, Don Simpson, State Director, BLM Wyoming

- facilitator for the meeting was introduced as Joe Meyer, Casper Field Office Manager
- miscellaneous housekeeping items were dealt with and members of the RAC were reminded they would be conducting an election prior to the day's adjournment, while all members were present

INTRODUCTIONS were called for, starting with the public

Public in Attendance:

Art Reece, Ultra/Shell/Questar, Cheyenne; Travis Deti, Wyoming Mining Association, Cheyenne; Jim Magagna, Wyoming Stock Growers, Cheyenne; Bruce Pendery, Wyoming Outdoor Council, Logan, Utah

BLM Wyoming personnel at the table in addition to the Facilitator and the DFO:

Larry Claypool, Deputy State Director for Minerals and Lands, Cheyenne; Stephanie Connolly, High Plains District Manager, Casper; Beverly Gorny, Office of Communications, Cheyenne; Ruth Welch, Associate State Director, Cheyenne; Mike Stewart, acting District Manager for the Wind River Bighorn Basin District, Cody; John Ruhs, High Desert District Manager, Rock Springs; BLM Wyoming personnel also present: Michael Valle, Renewable Energy Office, Cheyenne; Lesley Collins, Office of Communications, Casper; Mary Paxson, scribe, Cheyenne

RAC members introduced themselves, gave their location, designated interest and a brief description of their background:

Tom Clayson, Casper, public-at-large; background with US Forest Service, Petroleum Assoc. of Wyoming, currently with Anadarko's regulatory division

Gary Cukjati, Lander, outdoor recreation; Executive Director of National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

Don Hartley, Green River, archaeological/historical; retired coal miner and very active member of the Oregon California Trails Association

Freddie Botur, Big Piney, public-at-large; rancher/grazer, involved with the JIO PAPO working group

Doug Thompson, Lander, elected official; Fremont County Commissioner and a member of the NACO public lands committee, a BLM cooperator for the county and a rancher

Walt Gasson, Cheyenne, environmental; Director of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation

Marilyn Mackey, Gillette, federal grazing; a rancher involved with methane development on the land, as well as a continuing involvement in Campbell County as a former commissioner and cooperator

Christine Aimone, Evanston, state government; has a ranching background, employed at the County Weed and Pest which is an active partner with BLM to eradicate invasive species, and deals with rights of ways

Marshall Dominick, Cody, wild horse and burro; background in teaching, home construction, family dude ranching; one of the originators of a wild horse advocacy group, Friends of a Legacy (FOAL), for the Cody area

Paul Ulrich, Cheyenne, energy/minerals; has a geology and paleo background. Currently working for EnCana Oil and gas as government regulatory affairs, NRBU

3:15 ORIENTATION

Background

DFO provided a brief background of the Wyoming Resource Advisory Council in Wyoming:

- after not having a RAC for several years, Secretary of Interior expressed interest in reinstating one
- Governor Freudenthal – and later, Governor Mead – approved of the RAC as well
- Secretary approved RAC Charter October 6, 2010

Standard Operating Procedures, Charter

DFO pointed out those particular sections of the Members' binders, and quickly reviewed the following:

- purpose of RAC
- terms of service on RAC
- term of charter, which expires every two years and will have to be renewed
- ethics to eliminate conflicts of interest
- administrative duties and record keeping will be taken care of by the BLM
- description of duties, which are primarily to recommend actions and advise the DFO
- the by-laws which require members to serve in staggered terms
- election of a chair – and co-chair if desired; DFO establish subcommittees with input from the chair
- federal register requirements due to the public nature of the group
- per diem and reimbursement of expenses
- purpose of the binders and meeting notebooks as a living resource for the position on the RAC, to be handed over to corresponding incoming members as terms expire
- RAC's website provides the charter, by-laws, SOP, members, minutes, links, meeting information, etc
- members of the RAC must give permission before their email is given out
- Cindy Wertz is the RAC's point of contact and all communication should go through her

OTHER INFORMATION ESTABLISHED DURING Q/A SESSION REGARDING MEETINGS OF THE RAC:

- members may select any location desired for meetings
- locations and agendas will naturally be based on issues of interest and goals
- there are a required minimum of two meetings a year, but no limit; consensus that anything less than two meetings would render the group ineffective
- context of the meetings are wide open and will be based on what the DFO and members of the RAC want to accomplish
- DFO and Chair will set up the meetings and agenda; BLM will handle the logistics
- meetings can be held in a variety of formats, including bringing in experts, to having field trips
- the members agreed meetings should be moved around to different parts of the state to better serve Wyoming and the RAC purpose
- minutes of the meetings will be submitted to Cindy Wertz, who will circulate among BLM in attendance for accuracy; that version will be sent to the chair/vice-chair to circulate among the RAC members for their changes and approval; final document then agreed upon by all

Expenses and Reimbursement

Donna Nye, BLM travel specialist, gave the RAC a brief tutorial

- provided the members with their point of contact for travel
- reimbursement payments are made through automatic deposit
- travel authorizations are made through their travel point of contact
- when booking lodging, always ask for the federal government rate
- travel authorizations must be done prior to a meeting and be in hand at check-in
- in Wyoming the full day per diem rate is \$42 per day; travel days are paid at three-fourths of the full rate
- no per diem is incurred unless overnight lodging is incurred (no per diem if meeting is in a member's home town)
- if a meal is provided during the meeting, the cost will be deducted from the per diem
- required receipts for lodging; not required for meals
- use of personal vehicle is reimbursed at the current IRS rate, which includes gas
- during travel authorization process, the mileage should be estimated and then verified with receipts
- each overnight location should have a corresponding mileage record
- all receipts are to be sent to the travel point of contact in a timely manner for timely reimbursement

DFO: concluded the session and thanked the RAC members for their interest and time; recognized per diem is not sufficient payment for their contributions, which are much appreciated.

3:45 ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- DFO explained the role of the chair, who works closely with the DFO to set meetings, determines what issues the RAC works on, and act as the business administrator for the RAC
- a vice-chair is allowed if the RAC desires; RAC agreed a vice-chair would be useful for continuity of operations and could provide some flexibility
- it was also noted that subcommittees are allowed to be formed as the RAC conducts its work
- DFO called for volunteers to be chair:
 - ✓ Paul Ulrich and Freddie Botur both volunteered
 - ✓ each are serving one year terms which was not an issue with the members

UNANIMOUS by a raise of hands: Paul Ulrich elected as chair; Freddie Botur as vice-chair

It was immediately noted that Paul Ulrich had prior commitments which prevent him from attending the second day of the meeting and that Freddie Botur will chair day two.

WRAP UP:

- DFO provided a quick review of the next day's agenda, highlighting the afternoon session on the sage- grouse, which is a big issue in the West. Wyoming is at the forefront of the management effort to keep the bird off the Endangered Species List. DFO believes it necessary the RAC be given all the latest information about this effort as soon as possible.
- RAC members:
 - some have participated in the sage-grouse process and noted that as more research results are known the direction for action will become more defined
 - request for all to have a copy of the USFWS letter in response to Governor Mead's new Executive Order for the sage grouse

- ✦ also some discussion of the process for ideas, proposals, positions from the members to be introduced in the formal RAC setting, wherein RAC members will communicate with their chair, vice-chair, who will then communicate with the DFO
- ✦ DFO noted that any time the RAC wanted, conference calls could be arranged for discussions

4:15 MEETING ADJOURNED FOR THE DAY

FRIDAY, JULY 1, 2011

8:00 CALL TO ORDER by Vice-Chair Freddie Botur

Brief opening remarks followed by introduction of the members of the public present:

Ken Hamilton, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, Cheyenne; Bruce Pendery, Wyoming Outdoor Council, Logan, Utah; Art Reese, USQ, Cheyenne; Trevor Brown, Cheyenne; Travis Deti, Wyoming Mining Association, Cheyenne; Jim Magagna, Wyoming Stock Growers, Cheyenne

All RAC members present with the exception of Chair Paul Ulrich

All BLM personnel from the previous day also in attendance

8:15 BLM WYOMING OVERVIEW floor turned over to BLM for power point presentations

[Wyoming State Office](#) (WYSO) presented by Associate State Director Ruth Welch

- discussed areas of jurisdiction, managers locations, resource issues and income generated

[High Desert District](#) (HDD) presented by District Manager John Ruhs

- Oregon California Trails Association will be meeting in Rock Springs in August of this year
- fire fighting is an interagency effort and that in the HDD, they work closely with the state, counties and local fire districts
- expects the Continental Divide – Creston EIS to be out at end of the year
- of the three wind generation projects, Sweeney Ranch is on hold until it has the power sold; White Mountain's EA is nearly complete and will go to the Washington Office in a few months; and Chokecherry is the longest project in the nation
- Gateway West transmission line coal resources not as large as Powder River Basin but has been active in southern Wyoming since early 1860s; trona is another major resource and mining generates large employment
- WLCI is an award-winning partnership made up of many federal, state, local government and private landowner participants to protect and improve wildlife habitat
- Two wild horse gathers this year: White Mountain and Little Colorado in late August; Divide Basin/Red Desert Complex late fall
- work is being done to monitor horse movement and to make sure the Herd Management Areas recognize how various herds interact with each other

[High Plains District](#) (HPD) presented by District Manager Stephanie Connolly

- District staff have a great deal of longevity, bringing a wealth of experience to the table
- split estates for land and mineral ownership are prevalent and create on-going issues
- Nebraska lands and minerals are managed by the District out of the Newcastle office
- 2011 will see four coal lease sales; two have already been done; coal mining employs around 7000 people
- interest in uranium is growing; there is also growing oil and gas development interest, largely from the Niobrara Formation where horizontal drilling techniques will be used
- PRB Initiative is a partnership effort taking lessons learned from WLCI to protect and restore sage grouse habitat; BLM needs the help of partners to accomplish; goal is to send a strong message to Fish and Wildlife Service there is a coordinated and concentrated effort on behalf of the sage grouse and that it is being done well
- implementation of RMPs is where the real work begins; RMPs are to be living documents which are used to guide/measure day to day work

- work on the North Platte River access has created great benefits to the public and become an integral part of the local economy
- the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, located in Casper, is the centerpiece for the pioneer trails in Wyoming and is another partnership success story

Wind River Bighorn Basin District (WRBB) presented by acting District Manager, Mike Stewart

- noted the imminent retirement of District Manager Eddie Bateson and incoming new field manager for the Lander office, Rick VanderVoet
- while there is oil and gas interest, including split estate issues, the real economic driver for the district is mining bentonite
- home to nine wild horse HMAs: one in Cody, one in Worland and the balance out of the Lander office; especially excited about the PZP darting program and the potential to eliminate further horse gathers; the program is new and the small herd size makes it ideal for testing; the Lander Field Office contains some of the Red Desert wild horse gather to occur in the fall and these herds are too large for the darting program as it now stands
- uranium mining and interest is growing in the WRBB
- the Lander Field office is host to the majority of the sage-grouse population; and in addition, also contains premier historic trail routes; all issues combine to create extremely complex management issues
- expect the draft EIS for the Bighorn Basin RMP revision out for public comment by the end of July

WRAP UP by DFO, addressing members of the RAC:

- multiple use management of public lands is complex
- much of what Wyoming has been and is doing in management is groundbreaking, leading the way for other states
- regulatory certainty for the sage-grouse must be in place for FWS to not list; however, must continue with the mandate of multiple use – energy production, recreation, etc
- Wyoming also has unique aspects: the Homestead Act and resulting homesteading process which created complex ownership of minerals are the root of the split estate issue; likewise the checkerboard pattern of land ownership in southwest Wyoming makes it more difficult to deal with issues such as the wild horse
- BLM is committed to working with everyone in a partnership to provide the best benefit for all
- BLM will require the highest standards possible under the multiple use mandate
- Cooperating agency process for NEPA documents is important. Wyoming has the highest numbers of cooperators in the planning process; The process is a bit unwieldy but it is worth it to have so many involved; RAC can help with that by cutting across the lines of communication
- Wyoming is light years ahead in mitigation technology and process; have learned how tolerate short term impacts and plan for longer ones
- Wyoming has approximately 30 major on-going EIS actions
- major factors involved with most projects are air quality, wildlife and water impacts
- It may be the lowest population state, but Wyoming has highest high national interest when it comes to multiple use of BLM lands

Vice-Chair Botur expressed appreciation for all that Wyoming provides and noted the presentations gave a solid overview of land management issues faced by the BLM and people of the state, of which he is very proud

10:00 BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Led by the Vice-Chair, facilitator, and DFO, the group spent considerable time discussing

- what the RAC wanted to accomplish as a group
- what role(s) could it play to assist the BLM in its management efforts
- what issues and topics were of greatest interest and/or concern

The discussion resulted in the development of a list of items to be considered, which was the product of all members' contributions:

- planning and implementation process: develop guiding principles for public involvement in public meetings as well as in the implementation of the RMPs, how to measure for success
- sagebrush habitat and obligate species and energy development
- wild horses, a system of management
- invasive species/reclamation/ restoration.. defining success
- split estate...impacts to private lands
- uranium resurgence
- renewables
- stewardship.. taking the long view; keeping families on the land and not subdividing, giving people a tie to the land
- trail management ... energy/transmission expansion impacts
- wild lands/WSAs/ACECs .. how those areas are managed differently from others
- county road maintenance and Transportation Management Plans
- transmission and pipe lines
- access
- education of public regarding the federal land planning process
- adaptive management and non-measurable goals
- identify problems related to monitoring: lack of data, how success is measured, what is the beginning point
- development mitigation via conservation easements with agriculture

RAC members then selected the top three items to begin focusing on:

- planning process – the what why and how
- ag energy development
- public education

The members felt they could be a good communication tool between BLM and the public for all the issues named, with communication going both ways –effectively providing public education among their constituencies. To do that, they requested an intensive tutorial of the planning process. In addition, because energy and sage-grouse issues touch on everything, participation in the process rated highest of the issues. It was noted that all of the listed items are interconnected and that any one meeting of the RAC will touch on several, even though there may be an overarching topic to the agenda.

11:15 SETTING FUTURE MEETING DATES

Following some discussion of logistics, weather/seasonal related factors, and timing, the following dates and locations were selected:

- 1) 2nd meeting of the RAC will take place October 12-13 in Pinedale; in general, topics to be covered: mitigation, restoration, monitoring, stewardship
- 2) 3rd meeting will take place in Casper, January 19-20, 2012, tutorial re planning, implementation, public involvement
- 3) followed by another meeting in Gillette area in the spring, details to be made at a later date

12:15 GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

Introduction by the DFO, this session is intended to act as a 'data dump' of all that has transpired and currently exists with the sage grouse in relation to BLM – and state – land management planning. DFO expressed a desire to get the input of the RAC regarding what they are hearing and thinking about the issues.

Presentation made by Chris Keefe, BLM Wildlife Biologist, Wyoming State Office
SAGE-GROUSE POWERPOINT As the presenter went through the PowerPoint, he referred to various documents which are listed below. Members of the RAC freely discussed and asked questions during the presentations

core areas version 3

multistate science doc

wy2010-012

wy2010-013

Sage Grouse EO 2011_5

In addition, all members were given a copy of the June 24th letter from USFWS to Governor Mead.

Following Chris's presentation, members of the RAC requested a presentation from Lisa Solberg, BLM wildlife biologist, Pinedale, and coordinator of the six RMPs currently being done by BLM Wyoming Field Offices:

sage-grouse RMP Amendment RAC

2:30 PUBLIC FORUM Vice-Chair Botur declared the public comment period open and invited those wishing to speak to come forward

Bruce Pendery, Wyoming Outdoor Council, Logan, Utah:

- encouraged members of the RAC to stay engaged
- noted the lack of public involvement in issues and encouraged RAC to act as cooperators
- RAC should submit comments to RMPs
- RAC could facilitate public comment by holding their own public meetings
- urged members to get involved in the air quality issues and the MOU with EPA
- urged members to invite Wyoming's DEQ Air Quality Specialists to a meeting because they are great experts

Jim Magagna, Wyoming Stock Growers Association, Cheyenne:

- as chairman of the original RAC he commended members for their interest and service, and trusts things will go better this time
- noted USDA now has 10.5 million dollars to be used on the land for sage-grouse work, to keep families on the land
- above all, what is needed is consistency across the state in sage-grouse management

There being no further business or public comment, the Vice-Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Approved: _____

RAC Chairperson

Date: _____