

WYOMING RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

October 12, and October 13, 2011

Wednesday October 12, 2011: Tour of Anticline Vegetation Treatments

Thursday October 13, 2011: Meeting at Pinedale Field Office

Stephanie Connolly-DM HPD and Facilitator

- Rules
- Miscellaneous: Where restrooms are located, coffee, and schedule for the day.

8:07 AM: Don Simpson, BLM State Director:

- Thank you to Pinedale for hosting the meeting and the field trip yesterday to the Anticline.
- First Wyoming RAC in fifteen years.
- If you have problems with travel vouchers, let us know as soon as possible and also if they are not done within two weeks. Contact Jessica Camargo at 307-775-6001.
- Three people on the council are on one year terms-Marshall Dominick, Freddie Botur and Paul Ulrich. The Federal Register notice should be out next month if you are interested in being on the council again.
- Preparation for the next meeting: land use planning (cooperating agencies) and continue dialog on Cooperation/Planning in Casper on 1/19 and 1/20/12.
- Thank you for coming and looking forward to the meeting.

8:15 AM Paul Ulrich:

- Introduction of all in attendance: Walt Gasson, BLM RAC; Don Hartley, BLM RAC; Bruce Pendry, Public-Wyoming Outdoor Council; Tom Clayson, BLM RAC; Don Simpson, BLM Wyoming State Director; Josh Sonens, Encana; Steve Dondero, DM, BHB; Ralph Swift, Reclamation Specialist, Encana; Marilyn Mackey, BLM RAC; Chris Amoine, BLM RAC; Doug Thompson, BLM RAC; Freddie Botur, BLM RAC; Gary Cukjati, BLM RAC; Marshall Dominick, BLM RAC; Pat Aullman, US Representative Lummis office; Mike Smith, QEP; John Anderson, PAWG; Eric Decker, BLM Pinedale Field Office; Pete Stahl, Director of Wyoming Reclamation and Restoration Center, UW; Windy Kelley, WDA; Dan Stroud, WGFD; Pete Guernsey, QEP, Therese Hartman, WGFD; John Ruhs, HDD DM; Stephanie Connolly, DM HPD and facilitator; Larry Claypool, DSD Minerals and Lands; Paul Ulrich, BLM RAC; Buddy Green, DSD Resources; Mary L. Wilson, Chief Office of Communications; Shane DeForest, Field Manager, Pinedale Field Office; Shelley Gregory, Public Affairs; and Vickie Arends, HDD Secretary and note taker for meeting.

- Thinks this group can make significant difference and that they are well positioned to help Wyoming. Planning, reclamation and public education are the goals.
- Went over the agenda.
- We need to continue to define and redefine what roles we play and what the top issues are.
- Paul will get together with Freddie Botur next week on a conference call regarding the next meeting.

8:20 AM Presentation by Ralph Swift on “Reclamation of sage brush landscapes disturbed by gas drilling activities”. (Power point posted on RAC website.)

Discussion: Statement that it is amazing to see the passion that Ralph has for reclamation. Question regarding seed sources for reclamation.

9:30 AM: Break, back at 9:45

9:45 AM: Presentation by Dr. Peter Stahl, Director, Wyoming Reclamation and Restoration Center on “The Reclamation and Restoration Center and the Importance of Reclamation on Public Land”. Power point will be posted on RAC Website.

Discussion: Questions regarding the certification process of whether it could be done online or in a classroom setting. Dr. Stahl responded it could be either and that the information is on the website for WRRC. Questions regarding seeds and seed harvesting. Dr. Stahl stated that they have hired seed scientists. Discussion on emerging issue on policies for reclamation/restoration and where it should go and that landscape as a whole should be the focus. Resource groups bringing different groups together. Need for more research in soils beds in relation to habitat. Continued discussion regarding the need for a statewide seed bank as locally adaptive seeds would be good. Develop native seed industry for use in Wyoming.

10:40 Don Simpson DFO: Sage-Grouse Update

- The Bureau is moving towards a more global approach.
- A meeting was held mid-summer in Montana with the Game and Fish, the Fish & Wildlife Service and BLM to discuss west wide approach.
- The bird is going to be reviewed for listing in 2015 so we need to have our regulatory mechanism in place by 2014. This will be a priority.
- There will be a project manager for the National Policy and National Technical team.
- Divide country in half: East and West. The West team will be led by Amy Leuders (Nev.) and the East team by Don Simpson. Chuck Otto will be the interim project manager for the East team pending a permanent selection.

- The East team will consist of Wyoming, Montana, Colorado and parts of Utah, the West team will consist of the rest of the country.
- The amendment process started years ago in Wyoming, with Montana having a similar one. The West team has a start in Oregon.
- The Tech team will consist of Planning, Oil & Gas and Biologists. The Management Team will consist of State Directors, FWS Regional Director, and State Wildlife Agencies.
- We need to make sure that our RMP's are consistent with common language.
- There will be a meeting in Denver in two weeks to discuss our efforts. By Christmas we should have the project managers on board. The tech team will put together a cumulative assessment on sage-grouse and impacts. We need to map the region to show where we are in compliance efforts for the 2014 deadline. We need to put together a cumulative assessment to assure consistency across the board.
- Would like to see Wyoming's interim policy as the guide.
- Six of twelve RMP's are being amended for sage-grouse management in Wyoming.
- Buddy Green:
 1. Continuing effort to amend WY RMPs.
 2. A cumulative assessment as to where the field offices are is being prepared.
 3. Maintain decision base through use of interim management policy.

Don Simpson:

- Two things we are working on nationally to help public understand our efforts.
 1. Web page: Very interactive. Has RMP process etc. Doing in regional format and with Game and Fish.
 2. Workshops: Help the public to understand planning process, bird biology and science.
- Buddy Green: Range of alternatives needs to be completed with conservation measures ranging from preservation to conservation to full development.
- Freddie Botur: Regarding the Idaho Judge's decision, how does that affect this?
- Buddy Green: Can't say yet, still trying to digest it all.
- Paul Ulrich:
 1. Implementation-understand it is to protect the sage grouse and habitat but what about the other 73 species, (sage grouse obligate species) consider them all.
 2. What role for the RAC for Wyoming supporting core area strategies?
- Don Simpson:
 1. Advice for workshop.
 2. Outreach Plan: Advice regarding our information is it helpful to the public? If not, what can we add?
- Buddy Green: RAC subcommittee could task this.

- John Ruhs: There is nothing wrong with the RAC advising us on the Sage Grouse strategy and planning process.
- Stephanie Connolly: While advisory, you can provide opinion through the State Director (Don).
- Steve Dondero: Need to show our success stories where land use allocations/management are aiding the effort to maintain populations.
- Doug Thompson: Will it be litigated along with NEPA? Affected environment needs to be done well (Range of Alternatives). Use it and promote successes outside state.

RAC Discussion: Sage-Grouse

Paul Ulrich: RAC develop memo to DFO on frame work for development.

Paul Ulrich: Motion to form subcommittee to develop memo from RAC to DFO

Christine Amoine: Moved

Walt Gasson: Seconded

No Discussion

Vote: Yeah

Paul: Any Volunteers?

- Tom Clayson
- Freddie Botur

RAC discussion-reclamation/restoration

Paul Ulrich:

- Framework for Promotion of Workshop for Public Education component. The public needs to benefit from what the RAC learned. Can do web site, use local media contacts on reclamation, etc. How deep do we want to approach?

Freddie Botur:

- Students, staff attend and observe mitigation and reclamation efforts.

John Ruhs:

- Each member represents a different area, reach back to the folks you represent and give the information to them and get any information that they have.
- Question asked if minutes are going to be posted on web, but first approved by RAC members. Yes they are and they will be sent out for approval.

- Paul Ulrich: Discussion at 2:00 to continue this. Framework discussion for conference call.

11:34 Break, be back at 11:47

12:00 Presentation by Teresa Gulbranson-“Fertilization Project”, power point on web site.

- Discussion regarding soil sampling for baseline data, means of distributing the fertilizer, weed occurrences, ground disturbing activities, baseline monitoring data. Three year plan to do smaller areas and see if it would work on larger areas. Had comments both pro and con before started project. Watching effects on forbs, etc. Discussion of how this does not address decadent condition of sage brush. Habitat is already being used, need to go in and address. Short term solution. Have two year window to make plans for long term. Still working on long term solutions/actions.

12:35 Presentation by Shane DeForest – Habitat Assessment-power point available on web site.

- Annual Wildlife planning meeting October 26, 2011-good time for suggestions.

12:45 Presentation by Shane DeForest- Pinedale Anticline Supplemental EIS/ROD-Wildlife Monitoring and Migration Matrix.

1:23 PM-Break-back at 1:40

1:40 Roundtable:

Paul: Public Education and Involvement-Restoration

- Doug Thompson: Peaked interest with what he saw yesterday and being on RAC, but how can we externalize this to the public? RAC by design is broad base of Wyoming public. If able to verbalize what learned, capture and get to public to help them understand-would be beneficial. Web site-post minutes, but each member has a sphere of influence. Need talking points to get out to the public.
- Walt Gasson: Each person came to the table to represent part of the public. We are responsible to the people we represent. I have a blog with followers; everyone should have some form to communicate these.
- Marilyn Mackey: Media regarding RAC meetings. Follow up in media with synopsis of what happened. It is each individual’s responsibility to go back to constituents to let them know.
- Mary Wilson: We did a follow-up after the last meeting. We will do a press release again, but it is from the BLM perspective.
- Marilyn Mackey: Can a press release be done that is for the RAC separate from the BLM press release?

- Paul Ulrich: We need to develop framework about what the council has heard, discussed and planned. Develop a mechanism that members can input information into. Do today as our memory is fresh. Develop a sub-committee to develop a more robust framework to get the word out.
- Freddie Botur: Mary Wilson summarizes it great. Bev put out a press release the day after the last meeting. Paul and Freddie can review the minutes for the group.
- Doug Thompson: So Mary will do a write-up and Freddie and Paul can review it?
- Don Simpson: BLM will put together a press release. Concurrently we will develop talking points for your use.
- Marilyn Mackey: Start from same summary of information.
- Gary Curjati: Produce something that represents the RAC members, and move forward as the council.
- Don Simpson: Summarize the views of the RAC?
- Gary Curjati: yes
- Paul Ulrich: We would need all points of views on it.
- Wildlife populations expand and contract – sometimes best action is no action
- Chris Amoine: Lots of great examples on Deseret, private ranch in Utah – BLM can't not use native plants; but we should remember that Deseret is private; we should also recall that we've had a Sagebrush paradigm shift in the past 30 years – some of us remember when it was "bad."
- Don Hartley: We could also be seeing a paradigm shift with regard to threatened and endangered species. Industry is addressing reclamation;
- Care should be taken not to apply core area restrictions outside of core; mule deer impacts attributed all to industry, when that is not necessarily the case.
- Walt Gasson: When confronted with big complex problem we pick out little pieces so we feel like we're doing something, but that sometimes misses the overall context; we're diving into the weeds almost literally; we act as though the future of the world depends on wildlife on the Mesa; think/talk about broader timeframes and landscapes; world did not begin with signing of the ROD; there are a host of problems in addition to energy development; don't stop doing good stuff in short term, but think longer-term and in broader scope. Wrap heads around notion that for a while the core of mesa will be functioning at less than optimal levels; focus on Ryegrass or transitional ranges. Potential techniques pioneered on anticline can be applied in a broader temporal/spatial context.
- Marshall Dominick: Shane challenged us with a goal to think about the current system of rehab/restoration; not sure as a group we can recommend new approaches; we can go

away from this meeting with the overall picture of the Pinedale anticline as being a showcase for energy development of how BLM's Gold book is put into practice. They're trying to get it right; done a lot of good stuff; saw interesting things; commend BLM and energy groups for trying to do it right. Monitor up front – it is essential;

- Marilyn Mackey: Thanks for all the work on presentations and tour, I feel like I learned a lot; when we left the last RAC meeting I had notion that we were focusing on energy development but first saw fuels treatments from years ago, thought we'd see more regarding energy development and restoration; It would be helpful before the tour to gather and set out objectives and framework - where we're going what's expected of us; then I can give informed opinion back. Short term/long term – monitoring will guide where to go;
- Tom Clayson: One word comes to mind is patience; this is the problem with single species management; takes away flexibility to mitigate that operators thought they had to begin with; take a longer view and decide what the landscape needs;
- Gary Cukjati: people are trying; could succeed; Saw that sense of personal responsibility on part of BLM and energy company; want to support people who are trying;
- Paul Ulrich: Core vs. non-core; Landscape approach – but how is that defined and approached; migrate from landscape; How can anticline work be replicated in areas without these financial resources? Utilization and monitoring data; when do we see the species utilization data such as winter conservation areas – how many years of data do we need;
- Evaluating surface water resources to avoid future mitigation;
- Seed – need help with the native seed issue;
- Don Simpson: common theme we've already learned a lot – I heard LANDSCAPE. Keep trying – how do we export this? 5 years from now may have information on whether or not to fertilize and that is valuable.
- Multispecies picture is important;
- Temper landscape size with management reality; watershed or upper Green River Basin;
- Ask BLM to provide bigger definition of what landscape is
- Landscape = State of Wyoming?

- Don Hartley: looking at energy production in this area and what BLM is trying to adaptively manage; Every ill in the landscape is being transferred onto the operators; actions have to be taken in the context of correcting discreet actions;
- Paul Ulrich: Are we prioritizing correctly; have a clear understanding of how to get it done w/o \$60 million
- Chris Aimone: Urban, urban sprawl and other forms of development are also impacting habitat;
- Stephanie Connolly: next meeting talks about RMPs – perhaps best groundwork for understanding landscape – but that varies by resource too. Help understand roles and responsibility of BLM.
- Paul Ulrich: where would most bang for the buck be? Reclaiming in 5 vs. 10 years could money be more wisely spent elsewhere.
- Tom Clayson: landscape approach – what does it take to change existing decisions;
- Marilyn Mackey: this area is mostly public land, in Campbell County it is private land;
- Need to consider cost with types of treatments;
- Need to work as partners to create diverse vegetative communities;
- Need careful consideration of vegetative treatment within core;
- Need to talk about broader landscape and greater periods of time (without stopping short-term projects). Long-term transitional habitats focus;
- Be aware of unintended consequences of single spp management (have patience as core area strategy evolves);
- Some impacts from development may be temporary-patience;
- At least we are trying something, may have failures but also successes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bruce Pendry, Wyoming Outdoor Council

- The past two days were enjoyable. The presentations were educational. Talking with the RAC and the BLM has been valuable.
- Terminology of reclamation vs. restoration, there is an additional component of avoidance of impact. We are now seeing 50 wells per pad and it used to be 32, maybe

with more wells there is less impact on the land. We need to avoid more impact. Continuing attempt to avoid impact of drilling operations. Do need to worry about reclamation/restoration-do not ignore but avoidance should be considered. Appreciate the last two days of field trips and meetings.

LAST COMMENTS:

- Paul and Freddie will be point of contact for the press releases. Document from Mary Wilson to point of contact and then on to the rest of the council for member review before it is sent out. Put a deadline on it, so it can get circulated quicker and a reminder that it is due.
- Schedule conference call for preparation for 1/19 and 1/20/12 meeting.
- Don Simpson: Work on tomorrow and out on Monday. (Rough draft on talking points and press release.)
- Third meeting –public education meeting in Laramie April 2012. Finalize meeting date in Casper in January.

Meeting Adjourned

Approved: _____ Paul Ulrich _____

Date: _____ 11/3/11 _____

RAC Chairperson