

**Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming
Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting**

**June 25, 2014
1 p.m.
Best Western Hotel
Kemmerer, WY**

Note taker: Jennifer Fleuret

RAC Members:

Name	City	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present	Notes
John Corra	Cheyenne	Energy/Minerals	2016	Y	
Penny Bellah	Buffalo	Energy/Minerals	2015	Y	
Don Hartley	Rock Springs	Archaeological/Historical	2016	Y	
Marshall Dominick	Cody	Wild Horses	2015	Y	
Doug Thompson	Lander	Elected Official	2016	N	
Brenda Schladweiler	Gillete	Elected Official	2016	Y	
Kevin Stowe	Casper	Public-at-large	2015	Y	

Name	Title	Office	Present
Don Simpson	Wyoming State Director	Wyoming State Office	N
Mary Jo Rugwell	Wyoming Associate State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Larry Claypool	Deputy State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Buddy Green	Deputy State Director	Wyoming State Office	N
Mark Storzer	District Manager	High Desert District	Y
Stephanie Connolly	District Manager	High Plains District	Y
Steve Dondero	District Manager	Wind River/Big Horn District	N
Mike Valle	Acting Chief of Communications	Wyoming State Office	Y

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Welcome

Presenter: Mary Jo Rugwell, Associate State Director, Wyoming State Office (WYSO)

Introduction:

- Don Simpson was unable to attend the meeting due to signing of the Lander Resource Management Plan (RMP) Record of Decision (ROD) and visit to Wyoming by BLM Director Neil Kornze
 - Steve Dondero was unable to attend due to signing of the Lander RMP ROD
 - Buddy Green was unable to attend due to a concurrent meeting of the Governor's Forest Health Task Force
 - Recommendations for three new RAC members have been forwarded to the Washington Office; however, still may take some time before a complete RAC is available
 - Introduced Don Hartley as the newly elected Chairman of the RAC
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Agenda Item: Kemmerer Field Office (KFO) Overview

Presenter: Kyle Hansen, Acting Field Office Manager

Discussion:

- 28 employees managing 1.4 million surface acres and 1.6 million subsurface acres
 - Programs managed include livestock grazing, recreation, and energy development (including oil and gas, trona, and coal mining)
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Agenda Item: Wildfires and Fuels Presentation

Presenters: Phil Lockwood, High Desert District (HDD) Fuels Specialist

Discussion:

- Past projects in the field office include large scale prescribed burns from 1999-2010
 - Goal of burns was to reduce hazardous fuels and increase forage for livestock and wildlife
 - Future projects are likely to be smaller scale and focus more on Greater Sage-Grouse and lynx habitat
 - Large wildfires in the field office do not happen very often; respond to approximately 30 fires/year
 - Approximately 150-200% more cheatgrass present this year than last year
 - Not certain why; working closer with the counties to monitor treatment (i.e. prescribed burns) impacts
 - Indicates that a change in fuel management objectives may be necessary
-

Agenda Item: HDD/KFO Greater Sage-Grouse Report (Ruby Pipeline and Habitat Dollars)

Presenter: Erik Norelius, Wildlife Biologist, KFO

Discussion:

- The Ruby Pipeline is a 42-inch diameter pipeline traveling approximately 700 miles from Opal, Wyo., to Malin, Ore.; constructed in 2010-11
- Ruby committed to support conservation efforts related to sagebrush dependent species in the form of voluntary mitigation measures and funds
 - KFO is currently using these funds to map riparian areas, ponds, and springs as indicators of suitable sage-grouse early brood-rearing habitat
- Reclamation on the pipeline has been challenging; some areas were seeded and others were seeded and planted with seedlings in biodegradable plastic containers
- In some areas the containers assisted with successful sagebrush establishment; in some areas they had no effect

Agenda Item: Cheatgrass Mapping and Prioritization

Presenter: Cara Noseworthy, Graduate Student, University of Wyoming

Discussion:

- Cheatgrass is an exotic winter annual originating in Russia that successfully establishes in disturbed sites, displaces perennial grasses, and promotes fire
- Current management practices are done on a case-by-case basis, and consist of isolated efforts that are based on management boundaries (i.e. field offices, county lines, or state lines) and are not done on a landscape scale
- Project has three objectives:
 - Develop a dataset that provides a better picture of the distribution of cheatgrass in Wyoming
 - Develop a distribution prediction model that would predict cheatgrass dominance (as opposed to presence/absence)
 - Develop a statewide prioritization model based on invasion status and overlap with critical wildlife habitat
 - i.e. are there areas in the state that are cheatgrass free that we should be spending more time and resources on to protect?
- Gathering data from agencies, local governments, private individuals, and field surveys
- Project ideally would have three phases:
 - Distribution and Modeling – provide a starting point for a statewide cheatgrass management strategy
 - Site selection and implementation of cheatgrass control on highest priority areas
 - Monitoring and follow-up; continue to track changes in extent and severity over time

Agenda Item: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Follow-Up

Presenter: Don Hartley, RAC Chairman

Discussion:

- NAGPRA subcommittee concluded that a recommendation not be made to the State Director concerning NAGPRA
- There are some deficiencies with how NAGPRA is implemented as indicated by recent events
 - However, not sure that these deficiencies are the purview of the RAC or the BLM
- There is guidance on the BLM website instructing individuals on the course of action if human remains are found on public land.

Conclusions:

- Recommendation should not be made to the State Director from the RAC regarding the NAGPRA issue
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Agenda Item: District Manager Reports

Presenters: Stephanie Connelly, Mark Storzer, Steve Dondero

High Plains District:

- Powder River Basin Restoration Project
 - Conducting performance monitoring in core areas and on invasive weeds
 - A reclamation working group for the Cato Fire has been hired
 - Converse County EIS Notice of Intent (NOI) published; scoping period is open
 - Anticipating a decision on the Buffalo RMP for this fall
 - Powder River Basin Resource Council opposed to Buffalo RMP especially regarding mineral resource allocations
- General Discussion:
 - Recent media regarding BLM's inability to inspect all oil and gas wells
 - It is true that the BLM is unable to inspect all of the wells in the state; however, probably not as bad as the media have stated
 - The Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) also inspect wells
 - There is overlap in these inspections and potential to work cooperatively
 - American Lands Council met in Nevada to discuss states' taking control of federal lands
 - This idea is not a new one
 - There are times and places when the BLM should be exchanging lands with the states; however, it is a long, complex process
 - A private landowner is unlikely to want to purchase federal land his private land surrounds (i.e. 40 acre parcel of federal land surrounded by private landowner)

High Desert District:

- NOI for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Pipeline EIS was published on June 9; public meetings will be held in July
- Sage-grouse 9 plan update:
 - received 3000 comments on the DEIS; 500 of which were unique, working on responses and incorporating changes
 - Still on track to publish the FEIS in the fall of 2014
 - General Discussion on sage-grouse:
 - It would be ideal if the 9-plan amendment and Wyoming's strategy were to become the model for other states; not sure if this is feasible
 - Wyoming has been working on the sage-grouse conservation strategy for years and there is still a lot of work to do; most of the other states with sage-grouse concerns are not as far along as Wyoming is
- HDD is planning a wild horse gather and removal for this summer in order to be in compliance with the 2013 Consent Decree
 - will be removing horses off of the checkerboard
 - no fertility control will be implemented
 - approximately 950 horses will be removed
 - General Discussion on wild horses:
 - The horses will be removed to long-term holding facilities
 - BLM is required by law to remove horses from private land if asked by landowner to do so

- If horses return to the checkerboard, BLM will be required by the Wild Horse and Burro Act to continue removing them
- Currently have 50,000 horses in long-term holding facilities; this number will continue to rise
- Complete approximately 2,000 adoptions a year.

Wind River/Big Horn Basin District: (presented on July 27)

- Lander RMP ROD was signed
- Wind River/Big Horn Basin District RMP is about 1 month behind schedule

**Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming
Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting**

**June 26, 2014
7:15 a.m.
Field Trip**

Note taker: Jennifer Fleuret

RAC Members:

Name	City	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present	Notes
John Corra	Cheyenne	Energy/Minerals	2016	Y	
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Mark Storzer	District Manager	High Desert District	Y
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Steve Dondero	District Manager	Wind River/Big Horn District	N
Mike Valle	Acting Chief of Communications	Wyoming State Office	Y

Field Trip Minutes

The group visited several locations along the Ruby Pipeline which demonstrated the relative success of reclamation in areas with different environmental conditions. Some sites were dominated by cheatgrass, others with other annual invasive species, and other sites were being reclaimed successfully with shrubs, forbs, and perennial grasses.

In addition to pipeline disturbance, the group also visited areas that had been treated with prescribed fire in the previous ten to fifteen years. Some of the locations, such as Bridger Basin, were recovering successfully with enhanced habitat for sage-grouse and mule deer, while other sites were exhibiting a significant cheatgrass component.

**Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming
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**June 26, 2014
1:30 p.m.
Best Western Hotel
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Note taker: Jennifer Fleuret

Meeting Minutes:

Don Simpson called into the RAC meeting to discuss the successful signing of the Lander RMP ROD. The Lander RMP is the first RMP in the state to incorporate a Master Leasing Plan. The Director discussed the balance of the plan between grazing, oil and gas, and uranium, among other land uses, and mentioned that 22 cooperating agencies participated in the planning process.

Agenda Item: State of Wyoming's Approach to the Greater Sage-Grouse

Presenter: Tom Christiansen, Sage-Grouse Program Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).

Discussion:

- The 1952 book, *The Sage Grouse in Wyoming* (Robert Patterson) called for the preservation and maintenance of contiguous stands of native vegetation to conserve sage-grouse
 - This concept is the cornerstone of Wyoming's sage-grouse conservation policy
- Wyoming:
 - Is participating in the largest conservation effort ever for a single species
 - has 25% of the current rangewide habitat occupied by 37% of the rangewide population
 - 90% of historic range in Wyoming is still occupied; compared to 56% rangewide
 - 48 million acres of historic range within Wyoming; 43.5 million acres still occupied
 - 25% of the state is core habitat; 83% of Wyoming's sage-grouse population is in core
- 2010 listing decision indicates that existing regulatory mechanisms have not effectively addressed threats to sage-grouse
 - However, the USFWS supports the core area policy as a potentially effective regulatory mechanism if implemented as planned
- In 2011, Governor Mead issued his own EO to clarify core area details
 - Captures 83% of males on leks and associated nesting habitat on 25% of the surface area of the state; also addresses winter habitat, late brood rearing habitat, and habitat connectivity
- DDCT: Density and Disturbance Calculation Tool used to manage disturbance in core areas
- Wyoming Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups exist around the state to implement sage-grouse conservation projects such as:
 - Habitat manipulation: weed control, juniper removal, spring protection
 - Habitat restoration: wildfire, other disturbances
 - Grazing: workshop, grazing plan implementation
 - Applied research: energy development, habitat treatment effectiveness, West Nile Virus impacts, reclamation, raven ecology and management
 - Education: schools, publications, landowner workshops

- BLM should continue to:
 - implement regulatory mechanisms i.e. sage-grouse 9-plan
 - Control cheatgrass encroachment on sage-grouse habitat
 - Control juniper encroachment on sage-grouse habitat
 - Ensure successful reclamation and restoration of disturbances
 - Engage in SGIT and local working group efforts

Agenda Item: Greater Sage-Grouse Habitats and Habitat Treatments

Presenter: Dr. Jeffrey Beck, Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, University of Wyoming

Discussion:

- Greater Sage-Grouse is considered an umbrella species, whereby protection of habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse would provide protection for other species
- Sage-grouse life cycle:
 - breeding → nesting → early brood rearing → late brood rearing → winter
 - Different food sources during different life phases:
 - early broods eat large amounts of insects (>75% of diet consists of insects)
 - later broods eat more grasses and sage brush
- Biggest threats to sage-grouse habitat include fire and invasive plant species
- Sage-grouse habitat treatment options include the use of:
 - Reseeding and soil treatments to change an entire community
 - Burning, fertilizing, grazing management, herbicides, and mechanical treatments to change a portion of the community
- State and Transition Model for Sagebrush:
 - Wildfire and improper range management can result in transitions between states:
 - State 1: sagebrush perennial herbaceous state (most desirable, healthy, excellent habitat)
 - State 2: perennial herbaceous state (still healthy, provides some habitat)
 - State 3: exotic annual grasses (e.g. cheatgrass dominated, no habitat)
 - State 4: degraded sagebrush (decadent sagebrush with minimal habitat)
- Research around Jeffrey City being conducted to determine if certain treatments (mowing and spike applications) could be used to positively influence nesting and early brood rearing habitat
 - Conclusions:
 - Sage-grouse require large landscapes and often migrate to access seasonal habitats
 - Large continuous sage brush habitat with areas of high cover are critical to all life stages
 - Sage-grouse habitat management can be conceptualized with state and transition models and should be contextualized by soil moisture and temperature gradients reflective of system resistance and resilience.

Agenda Item: Follow up questions/discussion from the tour

Presenters: Phil Lockwood, Erik Norelius

The only suggestion was that perhaps field office employees would benefit from the same tour.

Agenda Item: Transparency Discussion

Presenter: Don Hartley, RAC Chairman

Discussion:

- Potential edits to the Draft Recommendations to the Wyoming BLM on Federal Planning Transparency within the NEPA process were discussed
 - Goal of the subcommittee's recommendation is not to elongate the NEPA process but rather to increase public participation through open cooperating agency meetings
 - Some editing still needs to be completed on the document
 - RAC members will review document and be prepared for a vote on June 27.
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Mark Storzer	District Manager	High Desert District	Y
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Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Deputy State Director Report

Presenter: Larry Claypool

Discussion:

- Minerals and Lands Division has had eight retirements in the past several months; is affecting how the work is being completed
- Just finished hosting a delegation from Iraq as part of the International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP); briefed them on U.S. oil and gas regulations and framework
- Inspection and Enforcement Program is critically important; Dickinson, ND is unable to keep up with inspection requirements
 - BLM Wyoming and other states are sending inspectors to assist Dickinson
- Draft hydraulic fracturing rule proposal received over one million comments
 - Expect final rule sometime soon
- 3809 work group update:
 - The RAC asked the BLM to put together a working group to address concerns regarding 3809 Plans of Operations

- The working group met on June 12 and consisted of John Cache (UR-Energy, uranium), Dale Nuttal (Wyo-Ben), Mark Storzer, Steve Dondero, Joe Meyer (ADM, High Plains District), Larry Claypool, George Varhalmi (Geologist, BLM Wyoming State Office), and Jonathon Downing (Executive Director of the Wyoming Mine Association).
 - Identified 6 areas with potential for streamlining
 - Pre-scoping meeting to discuss the proposed Plan of Operations should occur
 - Improve coordination and communication between the BLM and DEQ-Land Quality Division (LQD)
 - Improve Federal Register notice process to the extent practicable
 - Clarify the Section 106 process for the Operators
 - Refine NEPA documents to include only necessary information
 - Training on 3809 procedures for Operators and BLM staff
 - Next steps include brainstorming ideas on how to implement how these 6 areas could be addressed; another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the path forward
 - Increased salaries for Petroleum Engineers and Petroleum Engineering Technicians to encourage and improve retention of employees
-

Agenda Item: BLM Planning 2.0

Presenter: Caleb Hiner, Resource Advisor, High Desert District

Discussion:

- The goal of Planning 2.0 is to build a dynamic, durable, and efficient planning process
 - Revamping the planning process so that the BLM can be more flexible and respond to issues sooner
 - The RMP is the mechanism for how BLM lands are managed; designed to
 - transcend administration changes
 - last 20-25 years
 - identify land use allocations
 - Land use planning is often confused with and/or overwhelmed by NEPA
 - Planning 2.0 recognizes these issues and will:
 - Revise the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H1601-1)
 - Revise the regulations in order to have a more flexible planning process; would not change the existing laws
 - Not affect existing plans; would only affect new plans
 - Website available at: www.blm.gov/plan2
 - Email comments to: blm_wo_plan2@blm.gov
-

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Discussion:

- Kent Connolly – Lincoln County Commissioner and Chairman of the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG)
 - Concerns regarding land locked federal land ownership, especially the potential mineral value of these parcels
 - Counties are struggling to keep Fire Districts functioning because they do not have the income to support these efforts
 - Attended the American Lands Council meeting in Nevada; representation from local government and State government of Wyoming present
 - Concern appears to be growing among private landowners in the west regarding federal ownership
 - Also expressed concern regarding BLM’s management of wild horses

Agenda Item: Old Business; carry over from June 25-26

Discussion:

- NEPA transparency recommendation document:
 - Minor edits were submitted to the document, including clarifying that the intent of the subcommittee was not to elongate the NEPA process
 - Further edits and clarifications will need to be made to the document following the vote
 - Document was approved by a unanimous vote; document will be finalized with minor edits and the subcommittee will send the final recommendation to the State Director.
 - Edits will be incorporated by RAC coordinator
 - RAC will be updated as to the status of implementation of the document by the BLM
 - BLM can implement some or all of the recommendations

Action Item	Person Responsible	Deadline
NEPA transparency edits incorporated into final document	RAC coordinator	ASAP

Agenda Item: New Business

Presenters: Don Hartley, RAC Chairman

- The next meeting is scheduled for Casper or Wright, September 24-26, 2014.
 - Discussion topics include:
 - NEPA 101 presentation, including pre-decisional information, cooperating agency responsibilities, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
 - Implementation of the Lander RMP ROD
 - Follow up on 3809 work group, including a presentation by George Varhalmi on the 3809 regulations
 - Uranium at Pumpkin Buttes and the Christiansen Ranch
 - Converse County Oil and Gas project overview
 - Update on Wild Horse and Burro management and issues

- The November meeting has been tentatively scheduled for either November 18-20 or 19-21, 2014 in conjunction with University of Wyoming events
 - Potential discussion topics include:
 - Update on the sage-grouse 9-plan amendment
 - Discussion on how the Lander RMP is addressing the sage-grouse EO
 - Discussion on the Master Leasing Plans within the Lander RMP
 - Overview of what the University’s School of Energy Resources is accomplishing
 - Energy Test Center Concept and the Alberta Industrial Heartland Complex
 - What these could mean for Wyoming

Follow Up/Action Items:

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
NEPA transparency edits incorporated into final document	RAC coordinator	ASAP
Contact George Varhalmi for presentation on 3809 regulations	RAC coordinator/DSD Minerals	Prior to next meeting
Coordinate with BLM solicitor for FACA and NEPA presentation	RAC coordinator/ASD	Prior to next meeting
Coordinate with UW for November meeting	RAC coordinator	Prior to November meeting



Bureau of Land Management Wyoming Resource Advisory Council

Location: Kemmerer

Date: 6/25/14 Time: _____

**RAC Member/
Agency**

MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET (PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)

NAME	AFFILIATION	CONTACT INFORMATION (Optional) <small>This document will be attached to the meeting minutes and posted as a public record.</small>
Don Hartley	R.A.C	
Penny Bell	RAC	
John Correa	RAC	
Kyle Hansen	BLM	
PHILIP LOCKWOOD	BLM	
Mary Jo Rugwell	BLM - WSO	(307) 775-6001 mrugwell@blm.gov
ERIK NORBERT	BLM - KFO	
Marshall Dominick	RAC	
Kevin Stone	RAC	
BRENDA SCHWABWEILER	RAC	
MARK STORER	BLM - HOO	
Larry Claypool	BLM - WSO	
Jennifer Fleuret	BLM	
Mike Valle	BLM	

Stephanie Connolly HPD



Bureau of Land Management Wyoming Resource Advisory Council

Location: Kemmerer

Date: 4/26/14 Time: _____

RAC Member /
Agency

MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

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NAME	AFFILIATION	CONTACT INFORMATION (Optional) This document will be attached to the meeting minutes and posted as a public record.
Mike Valle	BLM	
Kyle Hanna	BLM-KFO	
Steph Connolly	BLM HPDO	
Karl Stue	RAC	
Brandi Schludermann	RAC	
MACK STORZER	BLM-HDD	
Dan Nantley	RAC	
John Corra	RAC	
JUNA SUBE	WY resource council	



Bureau of Land Management Wyoming Resource Advisory Council

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RAC Member /
Agency

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Marshall Dominick	RAC	
Man Jo Rogwell	BLM - WYSO	
Kevin	BLM - KFO	
Stephanie Connolly	BLM-HPD	
Steve Daders	Blm - WRBBD	
Ken Stone	RAC	
Brenda Schlauender	RAC	
MARK STORZEN	BLM - HPD	
Don Amity	RAC	
John Corral	RAC	

