

**Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming
Resource Advisory Council**

**3/9/16
Rock Springs Field Office
Rock Springs, Wy.**

**RAC Coordinator: Kristen Lenhardt
RAC Meeting Recorder: L. McKeever**

Name	City	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present	Notes
John Corra	Cheyenne	Energy/Minerals	2016	Y	
Penny Bellah	Buffalo	Energy/Minerals	2018	Y	
Marilyn Mackay	Gillette	Federal Grazing	2017	N	
Don Hartley	Rock Springs	Archaeological/Historical	2016	Y	
Doug Thompson	Lander	Elected Official	2016	Y	
Brenda Schladweiler	Gillette	Academician	2018	Y	
Truman Julian	Kemmerer	Public-at-large	2017	Y	
Julia Stuble	Lander	Environmental Organizations	2017	N	
Lyle Konkol	Casper	Public-at-large	2016	Y	
Christi Haswell	Sheridan	Environmental Organizations	2018	Y	Called in

Name	Title	Office	Present
Mary Jo Rugwell	Acting State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Larry Claypool	Acting Associate State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Buddy Green	Deputy State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Tim Wakefield	District Manager	High Desert District	Y
Stephanie Connolly	District Manager	High Plains District	Y
Kristen Lenhardt	Chief of Communications	Wyoming State Office	Y
	Acting District Manager	Wind River/Bighorn Basin District	N

Agenda Item: Welcome (note presentations attached)

Presenters: Mary Jo Rugwell, Acting State Director, Wyoming-BLM and John Corra, RAC Chairman

Opening Remarks (John Corra)

- Welcome. An email from RAC Member Julia Stuble regarding RAC priorities and process was presented to the RAC.
- The role of the RAC needs clarification.
- The BLM cannot always react to RAC recommendations.

Opening Remarks (Mary Jo Rugwell)

- No changes to the agenda were needed.
- BLM personnel updates include:
 - Tim Wakefield, High Desert District, Manager, installed 3/8/16;
 - Caleb Hiner, Pinedale Field Office Manager, installed 3/7/16;
 - Tim Wilson, Casper Field Office Manager, installed 3/11/16;
 - Mike Phillips is the new Worland Field Manager;
 - Steve Ellis, Deputy Director, BLM out as he recovers from cancer treatment.

Agenda Item: Rock Springs Field Office Overview**Presenter: Gavin Lovell, Assistant Field Manager**

- The Rock Springs Field Office includes 50 personnel, millions of surface acres, covers five counties, and a 40 mile swath of checkerboard land ownership.
- The RSFO also includes 315,000 active animal units of management, five herd management areas and hundreds of miles of trails.
- Trona production equals 76 percent of the global supply. Also, up to 80 applications for permit to drill are processed annually. There are five EISs are being worked on.

Agenda Item: Deputy State Director reports**Presenter: Deputy State Directors***Division of Resources: Buddy Green*

- The bureau is working on the Greater Sage-Grouse implementation policy with seven implementation workshop/meeting dates from March to May:
- Litigation over Sage Grouse plans include five lawsuits suits pending, focusing on the BLM's resource management plans.
- A webinar for Planning 2.0 is scheduled for March 21 for stakeholders. Planning 2.0 is a proposed rule to increase public involvement and incorporate the most current data and technology into the BLM's land use planning.
- BLM Wyoming is conducting a census on wild horses.
- A Cheyenne Frontier Days exhibition is planned, including horse adoptions and demonstrations by a group that helps veterans by training them to train horses.
- Fire: national preparedness is expected by June.
- The animal unit month grazing fee increase is being done across the BLM.
- With sage-grouse implementation, the BLM is responsible for much of the implementation actions. Involved agencies in Wyoming are trying to lead as much as possible. The Department of the Interior wanted to draft guidance to give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on implementation. Part of the discussion is the personnel needed to complete the work and "capacity" for the work. The personnel needs for sage-grouse management and implementation would require more than a 10 percent increase in personnel.
- County officials want to be involved in reviewing each of the wilderness study areas and the decisions made for those areas. Parties in Fremont County are organizing a county advisory committee to address this situation. Because resource management plans designate lands for certain uses, the RMPs also have to be part of this discussion.
- The BLM is watching to see if the data trespass law impacts the BLM.

Division of Lands and Minerals: Mike Valle

- Oil and gas work continues to be very busy with many issues requiring attention.
- Oil and gas lease sales occur four times a year. Protesters were at the November lease sale. The February lease sale was postponed because of a snow storm and was combined with the May 6 lease sale, which will have more than 100 parcels.
- BLM Wyoming plans to hire more petroleum engineering technicians and natural resources specialists.

- The coal directive of Jan. 15, 2016, caused the BLM to further examine coal resources. There are a variety of issues, including the fair return on coal.
- Transmission planning for renewable energy has been difficult, affecting other proposed projects. Several large energy transmission projects (multi-state) are still being worked on.
- The Chokecherry wind development project is the largest wind farm on public lands in the U.S.

Action Item: Provide RAC members the district manager summaries, the quarterly planning Hot Sheet and the deputy state director reports to RAC members prior to the meeting.

Agenda Item: District Manager Reports

Presenters: District Managers

High Plains District: Stephanie Connolly, District Manager

- The district is working three major environmental impact statements and thousands of APDs and notices of staking.
- Tim Wilson, new field manager for the Casper Field Office introduced himself.
- Increased bonding for drilling occurs through federal rule making. Bonding equaled \$15 million in 2015.

High Desert District: Tim Wakefield, District Manager

- Tim Wakefield introduced himself as one of the newer district managers in Wyoming.

Wind River/Big Horn Basin District: Not represented

Agenda Item: Presentation from the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center

Presenter: Chris Wilkinson, NHTIC Director

- NHTIC annual visitation numbers have declined.
- For every \$1 collected \$1 is spent in labor.
- The purpose of the center is to recognize historic trails and share history.

Agenda Item: Identifying RAC priority topics

Presenters: John Corra

- The BLM is working on strong relationships with constituents.
- Litigation on many matters is crippling for land management. Trust and relationships are key.
- RAC members questions include: What is the RACs role? How should RAC members communicate recommendations to the BLM? Is the issue timely? Is it suited to RAC involvement?
- RAC priority topics include:
 - Invasive species,
 - Recreation/tourism,

- Land Restoration (monitoring, vegetation management),
- Collaborative monitoring,
- Rangeland health metrics consistency; watershed management,
- Outreach/marketing/education,
- Wild horses,
- Minerals industry coordination,
- Planning/processes/coordinating.

Action Item: Table the discussion until March 10, 2016.

Agenda Item: Presentation of the update for the RSFO RMP (Green River RMP)

Presenters: William West, project manager, and RSFO staff

Summary: The RMP revision covers the 2.4 million acres of the RSFO. RMP was put on hold as the sage-grouse RMP amendment was being finished. The former RMP was finished in 1997.

**Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming
Resource Advisory Council**

**3/10/16; 8 a.m.
High Desert District,
Rock Springs, Wy.**

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Lyle Konkol	Casper	Public-at-large	2016	Y	
Christi Haswell	Sheridan	Environmental Organizations	2018	Y	Called in

RAC Facilitator: Kristen Lenhardt

Name	Title	Office	Present
Mary Jo Rugwell	Acting State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Larry Claypool	Acting Associate State Director	Wyoming State Office	Y
Buddy Green	Deputy State Director	Wyoming State Office	N
Dennis Carpenter	Acting District Manager	High Desert District	N
Stephanie Connolly	District Manager	High Plains District	Y
Kristen Lenhardt	Chief of Communications	Wyoming State Office	Y
Duane Spencer	Acting District Manager	Wind River/Bighorn Basin District	N

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Cathy Purves, Trout Unlimited, gave a presentation about the Greater Little Mountain Coalition, which is concerned about the Little Mountain area, including BLM managed lands. Trout Unlimited sent a letter to the BLM providing the “conservation alternative” for consideration during the RSFO RMP revision, now taking place. The coalition includes TU, Muley Fanatics, Unions, Bow-hunters of America and others, sporting a membership of 2,500. The coalition was formed in 2008 when the BLM began its planning for the area. Cathy said the group was not advocating for any change to livestock use in the area.

Agenda Item: Old Business - Continued discussion from March 9, 2016, of RAC priority topics

Presenter: John Corra

- Collaborative monitoring: quality assurance and quality control needs to be done and it is important to communicate with permittees before major changes.
 - The RAC charter clarifies the RAC’s role. RAC members provide different perspectives and possibly solutions to the BLM.
 - RACs originally formed to discuss guidelines to rangeland health.
 - Specific agendas for meetings may help provide better guidance for issues for the RAC to address. The RAC needs to meet 3 times each year.
 - State Director’s priorities:
 - Invasive species
 - Rangeland Health Metrics & Monitoring
 - Outreach, marketing and education
 - Developing subcommittees within the RAC will help to address the priority issues.
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Agenda Item: Old Business – RAC Transparency Recommendation

Presenter: John Corra

- The RAC’S recommendation for transparency and the involvement of the RAC remains an issue as RAC members believed the information bulletin BLM Wyoming released did not reflect the RAC’s recommendations for BLM transparency.
 - Some RAC members said that RAC recommendations were getting “lost.”
 - BLM staff are concerned that disclosure of predecisional information may inhibit participation by cooperating agencies issues.
 - Some topics may not be considered as planning moves on, which disclosing the information may result in the public reacting to items that won’t occur.

Action Items: A draft revision of Information Bulletin WY2015-007 will be completed by May 15, 2016.

Agenda Item: Old Business – RAC Nominations

Presenter: John Corra

- Four RAC terms are expiring in March.
- BLM Wyoming anticipates the national call for nominations will occur in the next month. Members can watch for a news release about reapplying for additional terms.

- Nominations require Wyoming's governor to concur. The applications and recommendations are forwarded to the Washington Office for the White House and Department of the Interior approval.
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Agenda Item: New business – Next RAC Meeting

Presenter: John Corra

- Next RAC date, Aug. 2-4, possibly in Worland.
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Agenda Item: Invasive Species presentation

Presenter: Ken Henke, BLM Wyoming State Office

- BLM manages about 18 million surface acres, which more than 2 million acres have weeds.
- Eventually, but not in our lifetime, nature would recover and create balance.
- Invasive species germinate more prolifically than other plants and outcompete native species. Some invasive plant seed is viable for up to 80 years.
- Invasives are toxic for livestock and wildlife. Wyoming has 26 designated noxious weeds.
- The RAC can help through public education, working with cooperating agencies (using certified hay, weed free seed, etc.). Cheatgrass, for instance needs to be addressed now. Fighting cheatgrass is an overwhelming task.
- Sagebrush canopy is the desired habitat. Current BLM actions include: a survey of where cheatgrass is, prioritizing treatments and working with all land ownership.
- Attacking noxious weeds is done on a case-by-case basis.
- The RAC can help network with other organizations to assist in fighting invasives. Groups to possibly contact include the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, the University of Wyoming, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, contacts in eastern Nevada, neighboring states, NREX, other state agencies that do air surveys
- Invasives will impact the sagebrush habitat, in turn affecting sage-grouse habitat
- Mission statement: The RAC is working on a "state of the situation with weeds", in order to advise the BLM State Director on future actions to address this issue.

Action items:

- 1. Developing a priority area map**
- 2. Gathering information for weeds and invasives; by 5/15 a 1 pg. summary to John Corra (chair). By 6/15, meet with the BLM, and ID a RAC working group possibility (all before next RAC meeting)**
- 3. Contact SGIT**
- 4. Obtain info from BLM employees (Sam Cox) who may be familiar with other agency aerial surveys**