

**Bureau of Land Management  
Boise District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting  
January 25, 2017  
BLM Boise District Office  
3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Boise District RAC Members Present

Gene Gray, Stacey Baczkowski, Bill Walsh, Donna Bennett, Charlie Lyons, Tina Reay, Michael Gibson, Rochelle Oxarango, Rick Raymondi, Art Talsma, Karen Steenhof, and Joe Merrick

BLM Advisory/Staff Present

Lara Douglas, Aimee Betts, Tanya Thrift, Michelle Ryerson, Amanda Hoffman, Lance Okeson, Mike Williamson, Ben Sitz, Raul Trevino, Eric Mayes, and June Shoemaker

Guests

Bryan Ricker (Senator Crapo's Office)  
Craig Hauer

1. No additions to previous minutes, minutes then approved
2. Likely leaving early, no lunch orders

**Introductions – Lara Douglas**

- We have a quorum, great to see!
- Went around the room for introductions. First meeting for Rochelle Oxarango and Michael Gibson. Other new RAC member, Dr. Eric Yensen, could not make meeting.
- Voiced management's appreciation of the RAC's work and stressed that we do not want our meetings to be an exercise in going through the motions. It's great to work with enthusiastic people.
- New employees at Birds of Prey NCA were introduced by Amanda Hoffman.
- Previous meeting minutes approved.
- Gene Gray suggested that we work through lunch and get out early, no lunch orders made.

**Wild Horse and Burro update – Raul Trevino, Wild Horse & Burro Specialist, Boise District, BLM**

- Winter has been hard, has made things hard at the corrals.
- Adoption didn't go as well as hoped, bad weather to blame. Three horses and 3 burros adopted. Didn't move horses around due to safety issues with the ice.
- Explained TIP (Trainer Incentive Program). For trainers to come and get a horse, work with it for 10 days doing basic horse handling. The trainer is then responsible for finding an adopter.
- Tina Reay – what about water on the Herd Management Areas? Raul Trevino – the BLM is not packing water in, but is regularly monitoring the situation to make sure water is flowing and available. Will break ice if necessary.
- No big issues with horses being outside of the HMA. A couple have been seen outside of HMA. No horses seen on Rabbit Creek road.
- Donna Bennett – what about foaling? Raul Trevino – No young have been seen yet, but it generally happens around early March through April.

- There is bare ground seen in the Jordan Valley.
- Getting low on burros.
- There are 14 yearlings that are being saved for 4-H events.
- Karen Steenhof - are the mares being drugged (birth control) before going out? Raul Trevino – Yes, it is a 2-year drug.

## **Fuels Projects – Ben Sitz, Acting Fuels Program Lead, Boise District, BLM**

### Soda Fuels Break

- Decision by late next week.
- Lots of comments to process.
- Decision will be followed by 30-day appeal period.

### BOSH (Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat)

- Public meetings were good.
- Comment period closed on January 18. Lots of comments, about 90, with additional 2,000 from letters. Mainly aimed at the Wilderness alternative.
- Biggest issues folks have are with cutting in the Wilderness and impacts, otherwise mostly supportive.
- Lara Douglas stated that 45,000 acres of wilderness was considered in that alternative.
- Ben talked about Juniper issues in wilderness.
- Looking at late summer for a decision.

### Tri-State Fuel Breaks

- Jordan Valley meeting went well, after being cancelled earlier for weather issues.
- Many people seem to be familiar with the issues facing the project already.
- Received 20 scoping comments. Comment period closes on Feb. 8, which is 15 days after the last public meeting.
- Art Talsma – Did news release go out spelling out the RAC's support of the project? Lara Douglas – we did not send one out.
- RAC members were seen at public meetings.
- The area of the project is split between Vale and Boise District. Nevada section already done.
- Art Talsma – Concerns about the design of the breaks? Similar to Paradigm project? Ben – the breaks are happening on BLM and private. They are cutting and seeding. Have not heard any feedback from the public on Paradigm implementation. There was a lot of cadastral work done this summer for the Paradigm project.
- Art Talsma – is there drill seeding? Ben Sitz – No.
- Tate Fisher asking Charlie Lyons – Charlie, do you have feedback (regarding Paradigm)? Charlie Lyons – Yes, positive. Art Talsma – hearing good stuff too, like the fact it is tied in with Fish & Game.
- Ben Sitz – Have been in contact with Pheasants Forever. We've disked first 100' and mowed out to 200'. Ben then explained what went into deciding whether to disk, mow, or plant kochia.
- Art Talsma – birds liking the kochia seeds during the winter. Donna Bennett – antelope seem to like it too.
- Tate Fisher – I want to thank the RAC for their support on the Paradigm project.
- Ben Sitz – We're still filling in gaps, work continues going out towards Mountain Home.
- Charlie Lyons – Will there be more work done in the spring? Ben Sitz – Yes, we will do some re-disking, but must consider various wildlife (birds and squirrels) and fire issues. Some work will have to wait until fall.

- Karen Steenhof – it would be useful to have maps to show the new RAC members. Ben Sitz– will bring maps over on break and post them around the room. (Later Ben and other fire staff stood around the displayed maps of various fuel projects and answered questions for RAC members)
- Gene Gray – Why called Tri-State but only mention Oregon and Idaho? Ben Sitz explained how Nevada had already gone through the planning process and how our work will tie in to their existing work.
- Gene Gray– is Boise the lead? Ben Sitz – No
- Ben Sitz stated that there will be some controlled burns planned this spring.

### **Planning 2.0 – Eric Mayes, NEPA Specialist, BLM Idaho State Office**

- Passed around handouts containing powerpoint slides, walked through the slides.
- Amanda Hoffman (Birds of Prey NCA Manager) is working on Planning 2.0 effort as well.
- Goals of effort:
  - Shorter time periods to create resource management plans.
  - Make it more nimble for revisions, same time/money.
  - Change the way we think about the boundaries of what we do. Able to look past Field Office boundaries when necessary. For example, this is being used now for the Upper Snake, Salmon and Challis Field Offices.
- Gene Gray – How did public comment? Eric Mayes – there was some concern that making a bigger planning area may dilute the influence from local government. Joe Merrick – Concerns was that all publics were viewed equally, without weight given to those with skin in the game. Eric Mayes – Yes, that was heard in several states.
- Art Talsma – Quicker is good, landscape approach is good for animals. To me that’s good to look beyond the boundaries. Eric Mayes – If we develop an RMP, it will be at the 30,000’ level. Any activities at the local level will still have to go through NEPA and local input.
- Best change, there is still lots of public announcement and involvement, but this new rule will allow for public involvement prior to the Notice of Intent (NOI). This will go a long way towards smoothing out the upfront work, can help to avoid delays.
- Tanya Thrift – Seems like we can engage much earlier with the County. Joe, what do you think? Joe Merrick – That mindset sounds great. But what if it changes with leadership? Things change.
- Tanya Thrift – So Idaho Falls District is working with it? Eric Mayes – Yes, they just started. Had training in Salmon just the other week. Tanya Thrift – are AUMs at the broad level? Amanda Hoffman – Landscape approach is not always bigger. Example on the NCA working with Jarbidge on LEPA (slickspot peppergrass). Also regulations.
- New rule will have some different dates for comments.
- Karen Steenhof – is the lawsuit against the rule or how it is working? Eric Mayes – against the new rule. Charlie Lyons – are you able to implement even with the lawsuit? Eric Mayes – yes, as we are doing in Idaho Falls.
- Eric provided web links to other resources and talked about other upcoming trainings.

### **BREAK**

Bill Walsh came late, introduced himself as we settled in after the break.

The RAC member roster was circulated, and it was asked that everybody check to make sure their contact information was correct.

Gene Gray asked if there were any questions about the maps hung up (fuels maps as requested earlier). Ben Sitz goes through the various maps explaining what they illustrate. Donna Bennett – Is there coordinating with the State on their ground? Ben Sitz – Yes, State ground in the area is heavy with Juniper. Gene Gray – Is the State in the loop? Ben Sitz – Yes, we have a great working relationship with the State, including on Paradigm. Art Talsma – Juniper control has already gone on down in Nevada. Gene Gray then went on to explain the history of the Paradigm project to the new RAC members and about the cooperation.

#### **Gateway West – June Shoemaker, BLM Deputy State Director for Resources and Science**

- Record of Decision was signed on Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>
- Alternative 5 was selected.
- Made notification, ready for the Federal Register Notice. However, all FRNs are on hold.
- Still will have 30-day appeal period.
- Public notifications have been made.
- We worked with many internal and external partners; we know not everybody liked it.
- Rochelle Oxarango – what did Alternative 5 entail? June Shoemaker – it had the smallest amount of line going through the Birds of Prey NCA. Karen Steenhof then went on to explain more background.
- Tina Reay – We received an email about legislation proposed for a land swap? June Shoemaker – Legislative solution to his point hasn't moved forward.
- Discussion about what lands were which (NCA v. Private).
- Art Talsma – Mitigation items included? June Shoemaker – Only for where it goes through the NCA. Mitigation plans are in the framework. Art Talsma – can RAC participate in mitigation? Gene Gray – Yes. June Shoemaker – State Director would reach out to the RAC.
- Joe Merrick – It boils down to this: BLM needs to understand that the County is still the force in permitting. Landowners do not want to allow it. If the State Director signed it, it would go through the NCA.
- Gene Gray – Questions?
- June Shoemaker – We do appreciate the RAC's work on this.
- Joe Merrick – DC just thumbed their nose at us.
- Charlie Lyons – maybe it should just go down the center of the river.
- Art Talsma – Frustration by the RAC. Always wants to cite collaborative issues, earlier being the better. But DC always overrides.
- June Shoemaker – Happy to update if asked.

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#### **General Public Comment Period**

- Two present, but no comments given.

#### **Travel Management Plans (TMP) – Tanya Thrift, Field Manager, Bruneau Field Office, BLM**

- Explained the background of doing the TMPs on BLM lands to new RAC members.
- Lots of work went into inventory.
- First step, analyze all the uses and consider resource issues.
- Amanda Hoffman – updated folks on the process dates.
- Tate Fisher – explained Four Rivers RMP more. The goal is not the Plan, but the implementation.
- We would look to the RAC for implementation ideas.
- Karen Steenhof – who is on the subcommittee? Bill Walsh, Amanda Hoffman,
- NCA West is wrapping up inventory. There will be two sets of scoping meetings.

- Discussion about others who could help. Art Talsma – What about Steve Stuebner? Have concern if land being cut off to sportsman? Access YES?
- About ½ the people we hear from say there are too many roads, the other ½ seems to think there are too few.
- Karen Steenhof – Can the BLM use Authorized Use? Tanya Thrift – Yes, we have an alternative that has authorized use as an option mentioned.

#### **Bill Walsh – RAC Member, Public-at-large, Southern Idaho Desert Racing Association (SIDRA)**

- We received a grant from Yamaha to purchase an ATV and rake to groom trails from 2011. This year we won't have a 4-wheeler, but we do still have the trail rake. Other grants are in for a new ATV, but we won't have it in hand until later summer. With the moisture this year, it will be a great opportunity to rake and seed.
- Can the BLM work something out to make one of their ATVs available?
- Gene Gray – Is the grooming you're doing on the Owyhee front? Bill Walsh– Yes.
- Gene Gray – I'll guess there are liability issues?
- Michelle Ryerson – We have an option, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to utilize our equipment. Another is that we are phasing out our ATVs, so maybe there is something to be picked up in surplus. Work with Ridge to Rivers model to use equipment.
- Bill Walsh explained past efforts to work through an MOU.
- Michelle Ryerson – We do thank you for all the work your organization has done. Another option is a volunteer agreement. Tate Fisher – we've used a volunteer agreement in the past, worked well with us.
- Rick Raymondi – Why groom trails? Bill Walsh talked about the various races, but also pointed out the trails are used by many other users. Trail work includes maintenance through drainage, trash pickup (eyesores), and seeding.
- Michelle Ryerson – With 300 miles of trails on the Owyhee Front, we really appreciate Bill's help and others.
- Art Talsma – Are the ATVs on the GSA sales page? Michelle Ryerson – If they are surplus, other federal agencies get to pick them up. If they do not, then they are up for sale.

#### **Spring Field Tour**

- Members discussed the idea of a Field Tour. Several target areas/subjects were brought up, including:
  - Bruneau Horse Corrals
  - Fuel Breaks Projects
  - Juniper removal areas (before and after examples)
  - Travel Management
- While no plan was finalized, it was agreed we would try to cover more than one by doing a loop. Expected to be a very long day, but everybody seemed fine with that. Gene Gray and Mike Williamson will start to logistically plan something with the help of BLM specialists. Will keep RAC members in the loop as something comes together.
- Members settled on the date of June 14, 2017.

#### **Future Agenda**

- Discussion was had regarding the process for setting the RAC agendas. Because agenda topics often require participation from various BLM specialists, the agenda should be set with enough time for people to make time on their schedules.

- Some topics were discussed to have regular updates to the RAC. These included:
  - Wild horse and burro program
  - Field Office summaries
  - Fire status
  - Soda Fire rehab efforts
- Gene Gray and Mike Williamson will work on outlining a standard procedure for settling on future RAC agendas.
- Tate Fisher asked that the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan be put on the next RAC meeting agenda.

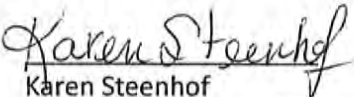
**Next RAC Meeting – April 5, 2017**

**Action items**


The following items from the meeting were requested by the RAC Chair and or RAC members:

1. Mike Williamson will update RAC member contacts sheet and email to Gene Gray to distribute to all of RAC.
2. Mike Williamson and Gene Gray will work out standard procedure for setting meeting RAC agendas.
3. Mike Williamson will put together 'Welcome Packets' (includes rules and charter) for new RAC members.
4. Michelle Ryerson will work on arrangement to help Bill Walsh with equipment use for trail grooming.
5. Mike Williamson will find a map of the Boise District to send to new RAC members.
6. Mike Williamson and Gene Gray will start logistical planning for Spring Field Tour.

Minutes certified by:

  
 Karen Steenhof  
 BDO RAC Vice Chairman

4/5/17  
 Date

  
 Lara Douglas  
 Manager, BDO

4/5/17  
 Date