

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Boise District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting
November 9, 2016
Boise District Office (BDO)
3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705**

MEETING MINUTES

Boise District RAC Members Present

Gene Gray, Karen Steenhof, Donna Bennett, Dr. Neil Rimbey, Stacey Baczkowski, Tina Reay, Ric Raymondi, Bill Walsh, Joe Merrick

BLM Advisory/Staff Present

Lara Douglas, Tanya Thrift, Michelle Ryerson, Amanda Hoffman, Lance Okeson, Seth Flanigan, Mike Williamson, Ben Sitz, Justin Boeck, Brent Ralston, Raul Trevino

Guests:

1. We do not have a quorum
2. No additions to previous minutes
3. Likely leaving early, no lunch orders
4. Karen Steenhof asked about travel vouchers – to be completed after the meeting

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

Paradigm

- Implemented this fall – 1,400 acres
- No seeding and no chemical treatments were conducted in 2016
- Discussion about miles vs. area treated – Donna Bennett had questions
- Working next to private, lots of cadastral work done to ensure treatments were not conducted on private land without permission
- Problems: Presence of rocks made disking difficult in some areas
- Private landowners are about 1.5 years ahead of BLM on planting

BOSH (Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat)

- Draft EIS will be available Nov. 18 for 45 day comment period
- Once comment period over, there will be internal review of comments
- Decision planned in summer 2017, with implementation in fall 2017
- Public meetings to be held in Boise and Murphy
- Douglas: BLM will send News Release announcing public meetings to RAC members

Tri-State Fuels Break

- NOI anticipated very soon

Soda Fuels Break

- Decision anticipated by December 7
 - Staff noted that they were working through the comments on the Soda Fuel breaks EA. Karen Steenhof suggested that the Issues and Criteria identified by the Tri-state subcommittee be applied to the Soda Fuel Breaks as well. Staff assured the RAC that it had already been done.
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2016 Fire Season Summary – Lance Okeson, Acting Fire Management Officer, Boise District, BLM

- Slow fire season in general
- 70 fires burning 13,000 acres (10 year average about 90 fires burning 90,000 acres)
- 62 fires were human caused, 8 by lightning
- Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs) on 6 fires, are very engaged
- 1,150 Cooperators and RFPAs members, there is a desire for more advanced firefighting courses
- Donna Bennett: Are RFPAs getting people on the ground faster? Okeson: Yes! Especially in Owyhee
- Gene Gray: How many RFPAs do you have? Are there going to be new ones? Okeson: We have 4 RFPAs on the District now. They're getting their feet under them; need to get them equipment.
- Karen Steenhof: Is BLM doing any prescribed fires? Okeson: Some prescribed fires are being conducted on state lands and BLM is pile burning.
- Lance also provided an update on prescribed fires planned for next spring

Gateway West – Lara Douglas, District Manager, Boise District, BLM

- On October 7th, EIS Alternative 5 was identified as the proposed action. This alternative would minimize the number of miles through NCA
- Next step will be protest resolution
- Decision is likely in late December or early January
- Governor's consistency review ongoing
- Karen Steenhof: Will the incoming new administration reverse the decision to choose a different alternative? Douglas: We don't know

Joe Merrick: There will be some tours of the Soda Fire on Nov. 16 & 22? Douglas: Yes

Travel Management Plans – Tanya Thrift, Field Manager, Bruneau Field Office, BLM

- Ready to release NCA and Canyonlands East TMPs
- Looking for input from the RAC subcommittee on the future Grandview Travel Management Plan
- Owyhee Field Office will start on route evaluation for the Silver City TMP next year
- News Release announcing the comment period for the NCA and Canyonlands East EAs expected very soon
- Tanya and Amanda are the main contacts
- BLM will continue to conduct Scoping and Environmental Analysis separately for each of the 6 areas

RAC Charter

- Gene Gray: Is the charter set in stone? Douglas: Pretty much
- Tina Reay: I'm still getting items sent to my old physical address, can somebody change that? Williamson: Will follow up on that.

Tri-State Fuels Break Project – Justin Boeck, Fire Planner, Boise District, BLM

- Gave background of cooperation with Vale BLM and RAC subcommittee
 - Gene Gray provided an update on the progress of the joint RAC subcommittee in identifying criteria and complimented Lance and crew
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- Justin went through GIS data used to assess the different criteria and showed map of routes identified or potential vegetative fuel breaks based on the criteria developed by the RAC subcommittee
- Fuel breaks will need to be regularly maintained to be effective
- RAC members asked questions about road maintenance, which will be addressed in NEPA through travel management planning, roads through wilderness areas, and how things tied in with existing Nevada fuel breaks
- Notice of Intent is not out yet, Scoping will happen in the months to come
- Gene Gray: What help do you need from the RAC? Consensus: Write up a statement of support for Tri-State Fuels effort by the BLM and have it approved by the RAC. Statement will be written up and sent to the members. Neil Rimbey will draft language of support. Email proxy vote to approve? Support likely. Karen Steenhof: Let's move to send documents to all RAC members - Agreed
- Karen Steenhof: What about water sources? They will be identified and analyzed using similar criteria as used for the Soda Fuels Breaks.
- Karen Steenhof: Are the tribes involved? Tribal consultation is ongoing.
- Ric Raymondi: Schedule for the EIS? Okeson: Hope to begin formal scoping this winter

Sage Grouse Implementation – Brent Ralston, Sage Grouse Project Manager, Idaho State Office, BLM

- Explanation of Sage Grouse RMP revisions and amendments nationally
- We have amended 30 plans in Idaho, 21 BLM and 7 Forest Service
- Loss of habitat is the biggest threat – in Idaho this is caused by fire and invasive plants
- The process included assessments of issues in Great Basin
- Record of Decision was signed in September 2015 at the same time as the listing determination from the USFWS, which found no need to list, but reassessment will occur in 2020
- 1.3 million acres needed to be treated each year for 10 years to get to desired conditions in Great Basin
- Joe Merrick: Why is Gateway West exempt from 10%? Ralston: Lines are considered nationally significant. Merrick: Not a good answer, we are going to be seeing the effects of this for 20+ years. Steenhof: If the line was so important, why did BLM delay?
- Donna Bennett: What about when there are population gains? Ralston: Since early 2000, populations have fluctuated. Went on to explain baseline determination.
- Other questions discussed included fire suppression plan and how to improve habitat.
- FIATs, soft trigger thresholds and adaptive management were also brought up.
- There are currently 7 litigation actions pending.

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

- Soda Fire horses are still being held in corrals
 - Black Mountain herd brought down to AML
 - Hard Trigger HMA - BLM successfully gathered most of the herd, but there are still 5 left out there.
 - Emergency gather in Sands Basin was minimally successful, so BLM used traps to gather most of the remaining horses. Plan to get the rest this winter when conditions allow.
 - Four Mile looking good, has about 100 horses. Needed water management.
 - Black Mountain HMA boundary gates not respected
 - Ric Raymondi: When will horses be introduced back into Soda country? Trevino: That will be figured out this winter. We have every intention to return these horses back to the range.
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- Neil Rimbey: Use caution when introducing back, horses can put pressure on improvements. Trevino: we will be aware
- Bill Walsh: Will all horses be released? Trevino: Will be brought down to the minimal AML. Bruneau holding studs.
- Are domestic horses released into wild herds a big problem? Trevino: Not often. Hay is cheap and so not an issue now.

Additional notes

- Steenhof mentioned there was a discussion about the Crutcher’s Crossing and other road maintenance near the 45 Ranch that was not reflected in the original minutes submitted.

Next meeting?

Mike will send out a Doodle poll for the next meeting. Make it a Tuesday or Wednesday in January.

Proposed wording for Tri-State Fuels proxy support from RAC:

“The Boise District Resources Advisory Council (RAC) accepts the report of the Boise & Vale Tri-State subcommittee on criteria and issue identification and strongly encourages the BLM to pursue development of the EIS posthaste.

The RAC also commits continued support of the subcommittee to assist the BLM in Issue Identification, scoping and other aspects of the upcoming EIS process.”

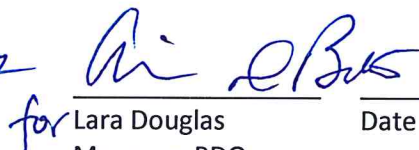
Action items – The following items from the meeting were requested by the RAC Chair and or RAC members:

- 1.) List of RAC group members with contact information.
- 2.) Expense report of operating costs for RAC members.

Minutes certified by:


Gene Gray
BDO RAC Chairman

01-25-2017
Date


for Lara Douglas
Manager, BDO

1/30/2017
Date