

**Bureau of Land Management  
Boise District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting  
November 17, 2017  
BLM Boise District Office  
3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Boise District RAC Members Present

Rick Raymondi, Joe Merrick, Karen Steenhof, Donna Bennett, Michael Gibson, Bill Walsh, Art Talsma, Rochelle Oxarango, and Charlie Lyons.

BLM Advisory/Staff Present

Lara Douglas, Tanya Thrift, Brian Thrift, Amanda Hoffman, Lance Okeson, Brent Ralston, Mike Williamson, Heather Feeney, and Chris Robbins.

**Introductions – Lara Douglas and Karen Steenhof**

- Welcomed everybody and went around the room for introductions.
- Motion to approve the agenda. Passed.
- Staff updates: Brent is now permanent Four Rivers Field Manager, Michelle Ryerson is leaving for a job as Deputy State Director for Support Services. Brian Thrift will be Acting (will look to fill ASAP), anytime the RAC has a question with staff, feel free to call and ask.
- Discussed whose terms are ending on the RAC next year. March 18, 2018 is the end of term for Bennett, Steenhof, Talsma, Merrick, McAdams and Gray. Merrick, Bennett, and Steenhof have re-applied. Deadline December 1.
- Charlie offered a suggestion that the RAC charters be amended so that the State would pick the RAC members rather than DC.
- Lunch logistics discussed.

**Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) update – Amanda Hoffman, NCA Manager**

- Mountain Home Air Force Base water project decision will be in the next couple of weeks.
  - Joe noted that he has observed work occurring on the pipeline already. Amanda explained that they are authorized to do geomorphological exploration but that construction has not begun.
  - Donna expressed concerns that water supply to cities may impact water available for agriculture. Amanda stated that the BLM does not know if the city applied for water rights, but that such applications would be adjudicated by the IWRB.
  - Karen: Is the route selected? Amanda: Exploration is occurring on BLM preferred route.
  - Amanda reported that the decision will address enhancement/mitigation
  - Art suggested blacktopping that road to address long-term maintenance needs for recreational access. Joe explained road right of ways laws.
- Amanda provided an update on Travel Management Planning. Scoping meetings for NCA West are planned for February or March. Route evaluation was just completed.
- Wrapping up comments on NCA South—no deadline yet.
- Guard trespass update was given. The trespass will be finalized next week and scoping for the project is planned for January. Questions were asked about how the mistake happened and the

- Right now we are closing the loop on comments with Owyhee County, including RS2477 assertions.
- There have been no decisions yet – the BLM needs to conduct additional internal coordination.
- Canyonlands West contains a lower density of routes. The BLM is in the final stages of reviewing the draft EA and plans to send it out next month for comments. After that will be an EA for Grand View.
- Silver City will be starting up soon. Internal route evaluation is complete and external scoping will follow soon. Public meetings are planned for late January.
- Karen asked about the timeline for NCA South. Amanda explained that it will be grouped with Canyonlands East.
- Art asked about opportunities for input on the alternatives. Tanya explained that BLM received lots of input and added routes based on the information received, e.g. from the State.
- Art asked about routes around existing ranches. Tanya explained that where possible, routes would be designated around private property rather than through it to avoid encouraging trespass.

**Four Rivers Field Office update – Brent Ralston, Four Rivers Field Manager**

- Regarding grazing, we are dealing with fire closures from 2017 fires. BLM has issued proposed decisions on Bennett Mountain North and is working through protests. For the Bennett Mountain South permit renewals, we will be starting NEPA in January.
- The Field Office recently advertised a timber sale, which was sold to a company in Emmett. Couple of other sales coming up soon.
- Looking to fill the Recreation Planner vacancy soon. Work going on with Ridge to Rivers 10-year plan. Scoping soon on some new trails.
- Working on renewing an MOU with the Forest Service concerning recreation management along the Payette River
- Bill asked about the current contact for Four Rivers recreation issues. Brent explained that Dave Draheim is currently detailed into that position.
- Lots of Right-of-Way renewals going on. FM Idaho has applied for a ROW grant for a road to allow for construction of a radio tower on private land.

**Fire and Fuels update – Lance Okeson, Boise District Fuels Program Coordinator**

- 2017 Fire Season Summary
  - This year Boise District experienced a higher than average number of fires, but none went big and total acreage burned was lower than average. Average is 102 fires, 8,600 acres. This year we had 118 fires burning 30,000 acres.
  - 60% of fires in the district this year were human-caused. However, most of the total acreage lost was due to natural ignition.
  - Donna asked whether the RFPAs were helpful this fire season. Lance noted that our RFPAs are a tremendous help and are functioning very well.
- Fuel Break Strategy
  - The District is currently implementing the Soda Fire fuel breaks.
  - On Paradigm, 101 miles of disking has already occurred.
  - The Bruneau fuel break has been implemented; that project area is also within the proposed Tri-State fuel break project area.

are unlikely to be completed before spring. She noted that there is no work planned for the North side of Crutcher's.

#### **Wild Horse & Burro update – Chris Robbins, BLM State Office Wild Horse & Burro Specialist**

- Chris presented a slide show of the BLM's Wild Horse & Burro program nationwide, including population estimates, and provided an update on the return of horses removed from the range during the Soda Fire.
- There are 177 HMAs in 10 western states. The overall AML is 26,715; as of March 2017, there were 72,674 on the range plus 45,517 in holding.
- BLM spends \$80 million per year on wild horses and burros; 2/3 of the budget is spent off-range
- Estimated populations in Boise District:
  - Black Mountain 48 AML – 30-60
  - Hard Trigger 5 AML-66-130
  - Sands Basin 6 AML 33-64
  - Four Mile 134 AML 37-60
- Lara clarified the timeline for Soda Horses to return to the range and the reasoning.
- Art asked if Soda horses would be released after treatment with birth control. Chris explained that mares will have it for 2 years. Chris reported that PZP injections cost \$100-200 per dose.
- Art asked about the selection process for horses that are captured. Chris explained that conformation is big, also ratio of studs to mares.
- Jill Haunold (a member of the public) asked whether there are areas where HMA's are self-sustaining? Chris explained that there are no such areas.
- Rochelle asked for an update on gathering the Four Mile HMA, which is currently over AML. Chris explained that we have to compete with other states for resources to conduct a gather.
- Chris reported that there is an administration proposal to amend a rider so as to allow BLM to sell without limitation and euthanize unadopted animals.

Break - Call for lunch orders

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

- Three members of the public signed in and were present. No comments given.

#### **Gateway West update – Heather Feeney, BLM State Office Public Affairs Specialist**

- Heather gave an overview of where the Gateway West project and where it was on the Environmental Assessment timeline. The Notice of Intent was out in August, the scoping period ended in late September. Heather provided a handout with timeline details.
- Issues of concern brought up included the acreage involved in the Right-of-Way, grazing on BLM land received in the exchange, and mitigation (resources & rules).
- The RAC would like to be informed if there is any way to provide input on mitigation actions. Much of that will depend on what is outlined in Appendix K.
- Cultural impacts were brought up in scoping. As were some other issues.

#### **Four Rivers Field Office Resource Management Plan update – Brent Ralston, Four Rivers Field Manager**

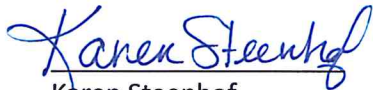
- This RMP will replace several older RMPs.
- Brent provided a short recap of the September field trip for members who were not in attendance.

**Action items**

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

1. Look into U of Idaho researchers to possibly present.
2. Send out website for planning document page (ePlanning)
3. Find RAC subcommittee documents on RMP, make available.
4. Make BLM ownership maps for Art.
5. Send out Doodle Poll for January and April RAC Meetings.

Minutes certified by:



Karen Steenhof  
BDO RAC Chairman

4/4/18  
Date



Lara Douglas  
Manager, BDO

4/4/18  
Date