



United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
3028 East Main Street
Canon City, Colorado 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC) MINUTES January 18, 2012

RAC MEMEBERS PRESENT

Category 1

Bill Dvorak
Ed Neilsen
Stephen Oswald

Category 2

Jay Heeter
Tom Olson
Michael Nelson
Greg Labbe
Ted Hoefler III

Category 3

Laura Benjamin
Dean Sandoval
Al Trujillo
John Stevenson
Christopher "Kit" Shy

ATTENDEES

Greg Shoop, Designated Federal Officer (Front Range District Manager); Andrew Archuleta (San Luis Valley Field Manager); Keith Berger (Royal Gorge Field Manager); Denise Adamic (Front Range Public Affairs Specialist / RAC Coordinator); and Shelley Freer (Front Range RAC Administrative Assistant)

GUESTS

Dwight Gardner, U.S. Senator Bennet's Office; and Joe Rall, Congressman Lamborn's Office

INTRODUCTIONS AND OLD BUSINESS

All RAC members, attendees and guests introduced themselves after the meeting was called to order by Greg Shoop at 9:10 a.m. There was no old business.

Greg Shoop, *Front Range District Manager (Designated Federal Officer)*

- Greg welcomed new members Stephen Oswald, Greg Labbe, Ted Hoefler III, and Dean Sandoval, and gave a short overview of the responsibilities of the RAC. He then gave a synopsis of the ethics rules that apply to Resource Advisory Council members. RAC members are representatives and individuals who are specifically appointed to an advisory committee, serving as the voice of groups or entities with stakes in a particular matter. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) dictates that any FACA member may not participate in any advice or recommendation concerning a license or permit in which such a member has a direct or indirect interest. When in doubt about ethics rules, please ask the Designate Federal Official.
- A hand out was distributed listing the RAC quorum and voting requirements, and a PowerPoint presentation was given about ethics.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS, *Greg Shoop*

- A nomination to select Mike Nelson as Chairperson was carried over from the last meeting. Al Trujillo nominated Kit Shy as Chairman, seconded by Jay Heeter. Mike asked to withdraw from the nomination and moved to select Kit as Chairperson. This motion was seconded by John Stevenson and the motion was carried after a unanimous vote.
- Kit opened the nominations for Vice-Chairperson. Ed Neilsen nominated Mike Nelson, seconded by Bill Dvorak. John moved that the nominations be closed, Ted seconded, and the motion was carried after a unanimous vote.
- Ed asked for copies of the Rio Grande Natural Area Commission meeting minutes which Denise distributed to the RAC members.

MANAGERS UPDATE

Greg Shoop, *Front Range District Manager (Designated Federal Officer)*

- Greg explained that there is no longer a San Juan Public Lands Center with three separate BLM offices in the San Luis Valley (SLV). Organizationally, there is now one office named the San Luis Valley Field Office with the employees housed at three locations. Prior to this change, there was a dual delegation of supervisors (Dan Dallas was the Forest Service Supervisor with delegated BLM authority as Center Manager, and Andrew was the BLM Saguache Field Manager with delegated USFS authority as the District Ranger); now there are single delegations with Andrew Archuleta as the BLM Supervisor and Dan Dallas as the U.S. Forest Service Supervisor.
- Greg introduced Leah Quesenberry as the newly appointed Associate District Manager.

Andrew Archuleta, *Field Office Manager, San Luis Valley Field Office*

- Andrew explained that although there is now only one BLM named Field Office in the SLV, the three locations still share resources and staff throughout all the offices. Paul Tigan will report to work on January 31 as the Associate Field Manager.
- A public meeting was held in Alamosa, January 11, 2012, regarding the solar supplemental environmental impact statement. The most consistent public comment or question was: How would the community profit/benefit?
- A programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being completed for geothermal development. The Front Range District's Renewable Energy Team (RET) is completing an Environmental Assessment (EA) and plan amendment. A public comment period is forthcoming.
- The SLVFO is a planning to expand the Blanca Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern. A public scoping meeting will be held in February.

- Three meetings of the Rio Grande Natural Area Commission were held in 2011. The committee is working on organizing the group and discussing how to build a management plan for the private lands in the area.

Keith Berger, *Field Office Manager, Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO)*

- Mike Nelson complimented the RGFO on keeping up with the office's minerals web site; he feels it is a great example that other offices can utilize. Keith said he will pass on the compliments.
- The RGFO is working on a National Natural Landmark (NNL) designation for the Garden Park Fossil Area. The EA is currently out for public comment, and the information is posted on the RGFO web site.
- An EA is on-going for the Destiny Mine project which is an application for a gold mining claim and sand/gravel production near Fairplay.
- The public attendance at Guffey Gorge in Park County has skyrocketed in the last couple of years. RGFO is completing planning surveys to deal with this issue.
- The RGFO is asking for additional guidance regarding the new oil and gas leasing reform rules. The next lease sale will be in November 2012 and will include local parcels. The parcel list is due to be out Jan. 27 after which public comments will be solicited. A draft EA should be out in mid-May with a final EA scheduled for mid-August. A list of parcels to be sold will be posted by August 10, 2012, and followed by a 30-day protest period.
- The Record of Decision (ROD) has been completed on the *Over The River* project. The decision was appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, and a stay was requested. The final decision on the stay should be received in February.

Recreation Fees

Jack Placchi, *Outdoor Recreation Planner, Colorado State Office (COSO)*

Jack gave an overview of the Colorado Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RECRAC). The purpose of this group was to act as a citizens' advisory committee and make recommendations on standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and special recreation permit fees. Standard amenity fees include National Conservation Areas, visitor or interpretive centers or an area with significant opportunities for outdoor recreation. Expanded amenity fees include boat launches, cabins and shelters, RV hookups, dump station, interpretive sites, reservation services, transportation services, and developed campgrounds and swimming sites. Special recreation permits fees include permits issued for non-commercial, individual or group use of special areas. The RECRAC has dissolved so a resolution was passed for the BLM RACs to complete the RECRAC duties for one year. RACs will complete their review process and then provide one of three recommendations: affirmation (proposal can be implemented), modifications (a proposal can be implemented or withdrawn), or no affirmation (the State Director must decide to either withdraw or pursue the proposal).

Sean Noonan, *Outdoor Recreation Planner, San Luis Valley Field Office (SLVFO)*

Kalem Lenard, *Outdoor Recreation Planner, Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO)*

- Sean gave a summary of the proposed recreation fees at the Zapata Falls and Penitente Canyon campgrounds. The Zapata Falls site is a new location and fees would be newly established. BLM proposed to raise fees at Penitente Canyon site from \$5 to \$11 per night for an individual site and from \$15 to \$20 per night for a group site. Cost comparisons were done with over 40 other locations to create this fee structure.
- Kalem gave a summary of the proposed raise in recreation fees at the Shelf Road campground. These fees would increase from \$4 to \$7 per night for an individual site and \$8 to \$14 per night for a group site. The original proposal was to raise the fee to \$10 for an individual site. BLM received many comments that this would be too high so it was amended to \$7.
- Costs to maintain all three sites have risen due to greater use of the areas; toilets need to be pumped and roads need to be graded more often.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no responses.

RAC ACTION ON FEE PROPOSALS

- Bill Dvorak moved that the Zapata Falls fees be established at \$11 for an individual site and \$20 for a group site; motion was seconded by John Stevenson and passed after a unanimous vote.
- Ed Neilsen moved that the Penitente Canyon fees be raised from \$5 to \$11 per night for an individual site and \$15 to \$20 per night for a group site; motion was seconded by John Stevenson and passed after a unanimous vote.
- Mike Nelson moved that the Shelf Road fees be raised from \$4 to \$7 per night for an individual site and \$8 to \$14 per night for a group site; motion was seconded by John Stevenson and passed after a unanimous vote.

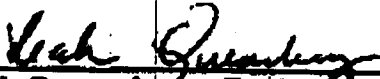
CLOSING DISCUSSIONS

Before adjourning the meeting, Chairman Shy asked if any RAC members had further questions about anything discussed at the meeting. A question was raised about the next step in the OTR process. Keith Berger explained that BLM is continuing to develop the event management plan with assistance from local entities such as the Fremont and Chaffee County Sheriffs, local EMTs, and local, state, and federal agencies. Vince Hooper, the BLM Project Manager for OTR, will most likely monitor the process throughout its inception. Greg Shoop stated that he is confident that BLM's EIS will be upheld. Some permits are still needed before the project can be implemented. Kit reiterated his concern from a previous meeting that the Rio Grande Commission needed to address its duty to provide a clear and definable definition of the boundaries of the natural area. Greg Shoop agreed and will pass the concern on to the Rio Grande Natural Area Commission.

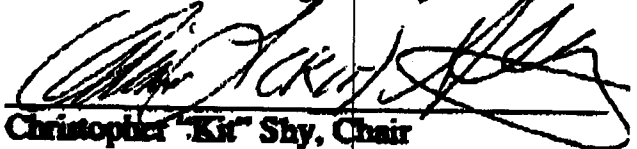
NEXT MEETING DATES

The next RAC meeting dates are as follows: March 6, 7, 8, 2012: Montrose; May 9 -- Alamosa; August 8 -- Salida; November 14 -- Cañon City. Topics are needed for the March meeting break-out sessions and the group decided to discuss Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

Ed moved to adjourn the meeting and Al seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20p.m.



**Leah Quesenberry, Designated Federal Officer
Acting Front Range District Office
Bureau of Land Management**



**Christopher "Kit" Shy, Chair
Front Range Resource Advisory Council**