

**NW RAC Nov. 29, 2012
Hampton Inn
Grand Junction, Colo.**

Attendance

NWRAC

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Steve Loshbaugh	Dona Shue	Lanny Weddle
Dave Grisso	Terry Sweet	Barbara Vasquez
Tom Latham	Dan Davidson	Dean Riggs
Wes McStay	Pat Kennedy	Kai Turner
John Potter	Stacy Beaugh, Absent	Jeff Comstock

BLM

Jim Cagney
Steve Bennett
Catherine Robertson
Wendy Reynolds
Dave Stout
Kent Walter
Heather Sauls
Chris Joyner
Garner Harris
David Boyd

Public

Dave Cesark, Mesa Energy
Kyle Littrell, XTO Energy
Bob Jenkins, citizen
Petrica Peters, Colorado Environmental Coalition
Callie Hendricks, White River and Douglas Conservation Districts
Brian Meinhart, Congressman Tipton's office
Noah Koerper, Senator Bennet's office
David Ludlam, Western Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association
Lannie Masey, Encana
Chuck Shepard, citizen
Leah Weckworth, Westwater Engineering
Ann Strieber, citizen
Sherry Schenk, Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Pat called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. Thanked GJFO staff for field trip yesterday, and Terry Sweet for hosting the dinner for the NW RAC last night.

Pat explained that the newest NW RAC member, Stacy Beagh, who represents environmental interests, is in Boliva. She regrets having to miss her first RAC meeting, but this was a previously scheduled trip.

Introductions.

Jim Cagney acknowledged the many accomplishments of both Grand Junction Field Manager Catherine Robertson and Kremmling Field Manager Dave Stout, who are retiring at the end of the year.

2013 meetings scheduled

Feb. 13-15 in Denver Statewide, will include a NW RAC-specific document

May 22 in Craig, beginning at 10 a.m. to allow same-day travel

Aug. 21, 22 in Kremmling, possible river trip for Aug. 21

Dec. 4, 5 in Grand Junction (possibly CRV)

White River Oil and Gas RMPA, Walter and Sauls

Power point presentation

73 people attended the four open house meetings.

Steve Loshbaugh said the open house format of the meetings was very effective in helping people understand the document.

Alternative A is the no action alternative, which means no changes in management. The assumed number of wells has been updated to reflect the current situation.

This plan does not make leasing decisions.

Under B and C, the entire field office is has mule deer winter timing limitations, which allows for the voluntary threshold concept..

Jeff: Although you say no new lands are closed to leasing, the Moosehead Mountain area is deferred until the sage grouse matter is addressed, so that is a de facto closure.

Heather: under B and C, deferral isn't for life of plan, it's until partners determine how to manage development and sage grouse.

Jeff: So then BLM needs to make a commitment about when they will make that decision.

Dave Grisso: Are the reclamation standards more stringent than current standards?

Heather: It is more specific, better explanation of what success is.

Loshbaugh: You need network of regional air monitoring so you can determine when an exceedance in a specific area might be due to a source other than industry, like a dust cloud. You shouldn't punish industry if they aren't the source.

Jeff: Why are you going forward with sage grouse decisions in this document when you know the sage grouse EIS will change those decisions?

Jim: Because we don't know how the sage grouse EIS change it. The sage grouse EIS was initiated well after this plan.

John Potter: But you should clearly note that in the document, that the sage grouse decisions will change due to the sage grouse EIS.

Kent: It is in there, we do acknowledge that.

Public Comment

David Ludlam, Western Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association – Just have several questions: Will the cooperators process on White River RMPA be a robust cooperators process after the public comment period closes, such as what was done for the CRVFO? What level of RAC and subrac involvement will there be?

Subracs are impotent by design because they can't reach consensus, which renders the RAC impotent. This will limit your ability to make meaningful recommendations. I think this RAC should address subrac process to allow more meaningful input.

Also, is there conflicting air jurisdictions and authorities?

Cagney: Would love to have robust discussion like CRVFO, but on tight deadline on sage grouse EIS. The WRFO RMPA has to be done first. There are not competing jurisdictions. The state of Colorado regulates air emissions and quality, but that does not exempt BLM from doing an analysis of air impacts.

Chuck Shepard: I own a company in town, am a native of the area, and hunt and fish in this area. Animals get used to activity. Doesn't bother them. Need to fence drill sites if you want to keep them out. Sage grouse don't care one way or the other. In Grand Junction it took three years to build a bridge over 29 Road to protect trash fish, it should have taken 9 months. A lot of what you are proposing is good. Lots of improvement in industry, very quiet now, pitless operations. No reason why that livestock can't be out there during oil and gas development. Industry people

are very ecologically smart. You are not going to eliminate emissions from anything, just reduce it. Ozone varies over time, nature of the planet. So don't mess up the whole world for a few weeds or animals. This focus is too narrow, take a look a broader picture. Our taxes are paying for it.

Great Americas Outdoors Initiative, Reynolds

Presidential initiative to get youth and public involved in public lands in their background. I am "quarterback" for NW Colorado, one of seven across the nation. Hunting and fishing access became part of the initiative. Yampa River legacy project group engaged in effort – many partners in that group, federal, state, local, non-profit organizations. Focus on Yampa River system. Initiative comes with no funding, have to find partners and special funding.

AGO Handout Info:

America's Great Outdoors Initiative: America's Great Outdoors Initiative has been and will continue to be one of our priorities this year and the coming years, specifically focusing on the Yampa River Basin in Northwest Colorado. The BLM has been working with the Yampa River Legacy Project (a multi-partner organization) who has identified a suite of projects to implement the initiative and is strongly supported by Interior Secretary Salazar and BLM Director, Bob Abbey. The initiative is based in conservation and focuses on reconnecting the public, specifically youth, with the great outdoors in America's backyard. The projects include:

- Duffy Mountain Recreation Area – development of trails, campgrounds and interpretive education opportunities within 30 miles of Craig, Colorado to offer an "urban" connection to local residents from both Moffat and Routt Counties to enjoy the outdoor experience closer to communities. We are using youth corps and veteran's green folks to work on the project. Engineering and design occurring now for trail system and campground layouts.
- Potential land acquisition at Cross Mountain Canyon to provide hunting and fishing opportunities on the Yampa River and acquire and conserve 2.8 miles of the Yampa River adjacent to the Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area. **New: Property is under contract through Western Rivers Conservancy and the BLM has initiated hazmat clearances, preliminary access road design, and the appraisal process has been initiated. Property to close on December 3, 2012.**

2013 AGO Project Nominations

State: Colorado

Project Title: Yampa River Basin Conservation and Restoration; Large Landscape Conservation Project

Lead Bureau: BLM

Supporting Bureaus:

US Geological Survey, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation

Supporting Non-DOI Federal Agencies:

US Forest Service,

Project Description

Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch Recreation Area

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in partnership with Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC), are nearing completion of the acquisition of the 920-acre parcel, which includes 2.89 miles of Yampa River frontage. The parcel adjoins Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and would provide some of the nation's best elk and deer hunting access. The parcel is upstream from Cross Mountain Canyon which offers angler/recreation access to fishing and world class rafting and kayaking. During FY2013, transfer of the property to BLM will be completed. A management plan for the area needs to be initiated and completed during the fiscal year. BLM acquisition of the property is to be funded through a budget line item for hunter/angler access. In addition, to the management plan, road improvements need to be made to allow better access to the parcel. A weed control program will be initiated. A 2014 BPS project for fencing of the area is being drafted.

Develop Recreation Infrastructure at Little Yampa Canyon (Duffy Mountain):

Construct infrastructure identified in existing BLM Little Yampa Canyon Special Recreation Management Area Plan (SRMA). Little Yampa Canyon SRMA is southwest of the town of Craig, Colorado (pop. 9,200) and would serve 200,000 visitors annually. In FY2013, road improvements for access to the parking areas, camp sites, and trail system need to be initiated and completed. Completion of the parking lots, camp grounds, installation of toilets and picnic facilities, and drainage improvements are also slated for FY2013.

City of Steamboat Springs Yampa River Restoration Project

The riparian, river, streambank and public access improvements within this project will enhance or support wildlife habitat while creating new and enhancing existing river access and recreation for recreationalists of all ages. The project will directly benefit the approximately 11,000 residents who live in Steamboat Springs as well as visitors to the community who account for ~2 million annual visitor days to Steamboat Springs. User groups cross all demographics and age classes and consist of City parks & open space and BLM Emerald Mountain Recreation Area visitors, fishermen, tubers, rafters, boaters, tourists, wildlife and bird watchers, youth and environmental education programmers and participants, summer campers and trail users. Fishermen are able to access the river year-round, offering some of the best fishing opportunities available – even during winter months. Outdoor recreation is an element that binds many families, friends and visitors to the Yampa Valley. Parents introduce their children to sports at a young age and are often seen tubing, kayaking, or rafting the Yampa River with their young children. In Steamboat Springs, people are able to walk and bike the Yampa River Core Trail which follows the Yampa River through town and enjoy the Yampa River year-round. In FY2013, an additional \$150,000 is sought to continue the BLM's support of work to complete this project through the existing assistance agreement.

Yampa Headwaters Conservation

Partner with Yampa Valley Land Trust (YVLT) to pursue acquisition a 500-acre conservation easement on a private ranch which will include approximately 1.5 miles of frontage on both sides of the Yampa River, protecting riparian habitat and wildlife, including nesting bald eagles and sandhill crane, deer, mountain lion, bear, raptors, waterfowl, migratory songbirds, a variety of other animal species and breeding grounds for mountain whitefish. In FY2012, the YVLT received funding through GOCO to secure the conservation easement for this important piece of the Yampa River Headwaters watershed. Additional funding is need to complete the transaction for land surveys, title work, and closing costs. It is estimated that \$50,000 is needed to complete the transaction. In FY2013, the Yampa River System Legacy Partnership (Partnership) wishes to initiate a new project to acquire a 43 acre private inholding property at the headwaters of the Yampa River to complete conservation initiatives for the area. The inholding is surrounded by either public lands or the soon to be completed conservation easement in the area. Acquisition of this last remaining parcel would insure protection of the many resources found in the area and alleviate local concerns over commercial development in the area. Although the property is currently listed at \$1.4M, local appraisers familiar with river properties estimate the true value to be in the \$500K to \$700K range. The Partnership is requesting the remainder of the funding in the 2013 budget line item for Hunter/Angler access to acquire the property. At minimum, the Partnership would seek a commitment from the BLM and our other federal partners for future funding in order for a non-profit entity such as the Western Rivers Conservancy to place the property under contract. This project is fully supported by the Routt County Commissioners, Trout Unlimited, and the local community.

Environmental Education

Engage youth in outdoor experiences by expanding implementation of environmental literacy curricula in northwestern Colorado though leadership of the nonprofit, Yampatika. In FY2012, the BLM provided \$12,500 through an assistance agreement to Yampatika to support outdoor and environmental literacy programs for youth in Moffat and Routt Counties. Continued funding of this important program at the same level is necessary to educate local youth on the importance of conservation and protection of resources and the environment.

Willow Creek Stream Restoration, Trail, and Day Use Area

Willow Creek, a tributary to the Elk River and Yampa River, is not currently meeting properly functioning condition. Past mining activities, livestock grazing, and other factors have contributed to the decline of this stream. Restoration is needed to improve water quality and to restore the local fishery in the area. The Willow Creek restoration area would begin at the outfall of Steamboat Lake and continue to past point of entry into the Routt National Forest where the stream enters a steep canyon. Funding for planning and surveys is needed in FY2013 to continue the process of assessing stream damage and to assemble an interagency NEPA ID team to begin

survey work for public scoping and further planning. Longer term plans are to construct a day use parking and picnic area with adjacent dispersed camping and toilet facilities and to construct a connector trail to the Pearl Lake trail above the stream. Completion of the project will not only increase access to the forest, but will also provide additional recreational opportunities in the form of fishing, hiking, biking, and camping. Of utmost importance is restoration of the stream to properly function condition which will improve the water quality in the Elk and Yampa rivers.

Anticipated AGO 2013 Accomplishments

- Completion of the management plan for the Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch
- Road improvements completed at Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch and Little Yampa Canyon
- Submittal of the request for 2014 BPS funding for fencing at Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch
- Completion of recreational facilities at Little Yampa Canyon
- Completion of additional erosion control, stream improvements, and access within the City of Steamboat Springs
- Finalize acquisition of the conservation easement in the Yampa River Headwaters
- Obtain a contract for purchase of the Yampa Headwaters private inholding through a third party
- Fund environmental literacy programs in the Yampa Valley
- Complete planning and public scoping for the Willow Creek project

Major Project Partners

The following partners have shown their continued support for this project through their participation in the Yampa River System Legacy Partnership:

Moffat County, Routt County, Town of Hayden, City of Craig, City of Steamboat Springs, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Dinosaur National Monument, Medicine Bow- Routt National Forest, Brown's Park National Refuge, The Nature Conservancy, Western Rivers Conservancy, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Veteran Green Jobs, Northwest Colorado Watershed Partnership, Yampa Valley Land Trust, Friends of the Yampa, Yampatika, Yampa Valley Alliance, Colorado Youth Corps, Trout Unlimited

Funding and Project Management

The Hunter/Angler 2013 budget line item to fund acquisition of the Cross Mountain Canyon property by BLM is dependent upon final approval by congress. Additional commitments of Hunter/Angler access funding is sought for acquisition of the private inholding at the Yampa River Headwaters.

0.5 FTE is needed to complete the Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch management plan for the area funded by LLCON0100.1220.DA with additional funding needed to offset this labor cost.

0.25 FTE required under 1220.IP to oversee road improvements at Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch. Additional funding under this code is needed to issue a contract for this road construction.

0.25 FTE required under 1220.IB to oversee road improvements and other facility construction at Little Yampa Canyon. Additional funding under this code is needed to issue contracts for these improvements.

0.25 FTE required to administer assistance agreements with Steamboat Springs, Yampa Valley Land Trust, and Yampatika under 1010.JG, 1010.JH, 1040.JG, 1040.JH, 1120.JG, 1120.JH, 1220.AL and 1220.PM

1.0 FTE for project scoping and planning for the Willow Creek project under 1010.BP, 1010.BV, 1040.BP, 1040.BV, 1120.BP, 1120.BV, 1220.DA, and 1220.DF

AGO Priority Alignment

Land Protection, Restoration, and Increasing Recreational Access; this category includes land

Fire restrictions – Harris

Garner Harris give a Powerpoint presentation

Barb: What about just saying no open fires? That would be easier to understand.

Wes: As a landowner with my private lands interspersed public lands, I appreciate restrictions. They are complex, but it is a complex situation, with varying conditions and elevations.

Dean: No uniform policy among the land agencies on what is included in restrictions? Need to make those consistent.

Cagney: So I am hearing that we need to spend the winter doing our best to make these restrictions consistent among the field offices and agencies.

Sage Grouse -- Cagney

Cagney shares the Habitat Zone map, preliminary data of disturbance acreage

Barb: Are you including disturbance on private land in this?

Jim: Not inventorying private lands, but if we know of big disturbances, like a wind farm or pipeline that crosses private, we include it.

Jeff: Need to include population exception criteria when you talk about disturbance caps. It's not just the disturbance caps. What about when the population is doing well?

Drought situation

Wes: What is going to happen regarding grazing and the drought this spring?

Cagney: We have two situations: a forage drought and a hydrologic drought. We didn't get much forage growth this past year.

Catherine: Sent a letter in June talking about drought issues explaining if situation didn't improve, we might not be able to allow turning cows out this fall/winter. We had to send letter out saying unless they can show us why there should be an exception, they wouldn't be able to turn out. We haven't gotten much push back. The permittees understand the situation when there's no forage.

Cagney: It varies across the District. GJFO is winter grazing. In Jackson and Moffat it's more spring and summer. We could still get moisture in those areas in time. What is appropriate response if we don't get moisture in these areas? Give them heads up early?

Tom: You have to let them know early, can't wait until April to hit them with it. Monitor it, but keep communication lines open.

Wes: You want to know before you calf so you can make adjustments. We need plenty of lead time.

Steve Loshbaugh: Catherine sent the letter 6 months out. Could you do that now in these other areas, similar letter about if situation doesn't change, we might see reductions?

Dean: Range cons need to be having that conversation all along.

Kent: In WRFO, we are primarily permitting for seasons in between summer and winter. First letter went out from our office already, looking at second letter. Permit by permit basis. But those letters are a formalization of the conversations that have already taken place, shouldn't be a surprise.

Jeff: Does CPW have ability to issue more elk tags in response to drought?

Dean: Wildlife managers can issue tags for specific problems. Larger issue would need to go commission probably.

Kai: Lack of late cow tags in my area. Not seeing numbers on public land, but close to carrying capacity on private land. Also, you need to be careful when you reduce numbers, because it hard to build back up once you do that.

Tom: When and how would decisions be made about wild horses? Day by day, month by month?

Cagney: That situation is coming to a head. People are starting to understand this issue since the situation is getting so bad. Lately the dialogue is changing and the complexity of the issue is being understood by the public. There is also the issue of sage grouse on wild horse land. Don't know what is going to happen with that.

Subgroup updates

Kennedy: Subrac was put together so that this group would not have to deal with field office specific issues. Subrac needs to reach consensus, let us know where they didn't.

Grisso: At the last meeting, there were clearly items in the CRVFO subgroup report that weren't consensus. Let's talk about it at next meeting.

KFO update, Stout: We held a meeting a number of months ago talking about proposed plan. We will have another subrac meeting about the proposed plan.

WRFO update, Walter: Not planning on using the subgroup anymore. We've received significant feedback already from them. It's unfair to members to expect them to digest all that material to craft proposed alternative.

Kennedy: Once task for subgroup is done, they should be disbanded.

McInnis, Katie Stevens: Haven't met for 1 ½ years. We will have meeting in December to update them and the public about how the first season of permitting went, and to get feedback. We implemented the permit system last year, fees will start in 2013. Permit system has been very successful, reduced a lot of conflicts. We issued 955 private permits, 145 commercial trips. Camping permit required went May 1 thru Sept 30.

Field Manager Updates

Jeff: Where is travel management in WRFO office?

Kent: RMP Revision ready to begin 3 to 5 years. Need to start getting the route inventory together. Talking to user groups, identify priority areas.

Wendy talked about the increasing problem of agricultural trespass on BLM lands in the LSFO.

Public comment

Callie Hendrickson, White River and Douglas Creek conservation districts – our conservation districts are working with permittees for additional monitoring due to the drought. Encourage that you work with permittees one-on-one, not just blanket decision. My understanding is it is beneficial to graze with 18 month, then 9 month, then 18 month rotation. I have heard that trend in BLM in my areas is to go to just fall, not a spring/fall rotation. Also, we are concerned about the amount of land acquisitions going to federal. We think you should sell other lands so there is no net gain of federal land. Also, given the drought, we really need to see the West Douglas horses gathered to the level BLM has said it is managing for, which is zero.

Jeff: Moffat County agrees there should be no net gain in federal lands.

David Ludlam – I came to the NW RAC a year ago to discuss the Lake Ridge Unit Proposal asking the NW RAC to write a letter telling BLM to make a decision (didn't say to support or not, just make a decision). Still don't have answer from BLM. It's political, nothing in regs that forces time line. This is forcing the company to develop leases individually rather than as a organized unit. I again urge the NW RAC to write a letter urging decision.

Jeff Shepard: Need to include ATV, round-hounding in these updates. Need to have CPW grow and release birds like they do fish. Need better fishing access for older people. Can coleect rare plants in pots and have people take care of them.

RMP Video

Chris Joyner demonstrated the GJFO RMP video designed to help people understand how to navigate the document that will be available once the RMP released.

Colorado River Valley Field Office, Steve Bennett

Resource Management Plan Revision: The Field Office team is currently developing the environmental consequences for the final proposed plan. Then the document will be prepared for internal reviews by our State Office, Washington Office and Office of the Solicitors. Those reviews are scheduled to be completed by April 2013.

Colorado Department of Natural Resources has recently requested an additional Cooperating Agency meeting prior to the Governors Consistency Review, which occurs after the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, is published. As a result we have planned to schedule a Cooperating Agency meeting prior to the State Director and BLM Director briefings. This will be for briefing the Cooperating Agencies on what is included in the final RMP/EIS and will be scheduled for late April or early May 2013.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is scheduled for publication in September, 2013. The Record of Decision would be published in June of 2014. This schedule will still provide for the NW Sage Grouse Amendment to amend the Proposed RMP/Final EIS as may be appropriate.

One of the more controversial issues in the Draft RMP/EIS was associated with air management actions being considered for oil and gas operations. The Preferred Alternative proposed conversion of drill rig and frac engines to natural gas fuel sources. There were also other management actions that exceeded those required by EPA and the State of Colorado (CDPHE/COGCC).

The Field Office is proposing changes to the air quality section of the Proposed Final RMP. Changes are driven by public comments, input from the cooperating agencies and coordination with the BLM State Office. The changes include not choosing the preferred alternative in the

DEIS that required natural gas conversion. The proposed alternative would be within the range of alternatives and include an adaptive management approach to upgrading diesel engines and making other management actions more consistent with what is currently required by EPA and the State of Colorado. The adaptive management approach would utilize thresholds in oil and gas development to trigger mitigations and an associated air resources management plan. In 2004 the EPA adopted legislation to reduce emissions from diesel powered equipment by introducing a phased or tiered approach to gradually upgrading and replacing outdated engines by 2015. Tier 4 engines utilize clean diesel technology to further reduce emissions beyond tier 2 engines.

The proposed draft air quality mitigation changes were based on air modeling results. The modeling showed no adverse impacts in Alternative A through the Air Resources Technical Support Document (ARTSD) assuming the use of Tier 2 non road diesel engines for 2,664 wells. The modeling showed no adverse impacts in Alternative D of the ARTSD assuming the use of Tier 4 non road diesel engines for 4,198 wells. Based on these results BLM can track the number of wells and equivalent emissions and notify the operators of a plan to phase in the use of Tier IV engines. The air resources management plan will be an adaptive plan to incorporated advances in technology, air quality trends and new modeling efforts to manage air resources. BLM at the state level is looking at air resources management and modeling at the western region scale. A regional model will be completed by the state office. We are tracking new EPA, COGCC, CDPHE requirements as they change through the RMP process. These changes are reflected in the Proposed Plan where specific language has been added to cite these regulations and clarify BLMs requirements.

At the BLM State Office level all Field Offices are heading toward emissions level monitoring and modeling. We will be modeling and monitoring air quality in cooperation with local and state agencies in the future.

Sutey Ranch Land Exchange public comment period: The field office is working with a consultant to prepare an environmental assessment of the proposal. The next opportunity for public involvement will be when the environmental assessment is drafted, which we currently anticipate will be in late February or early March. We are also preparing an appraisal of the lands involved as well as a mineral report. We currently expect a final decision about whether or not to approve the exchange in early 2013. If the decision is to go forward with the exchange, closing on the exchange would follow shortly after that. Land exchange evaluations are complex, and it is not unusual for the process to take longer than first anticipated.

BLM would develop a site-specific management plan for these lands if they were acquired. Public participation would be a key part of developing that management plan.

The proponents would donate \$100,000 specifically for BLM to develop the site-specific management plan, and \$1 million for the area's long-term management. BLM is exploring options for how to manage the \$1 million donation to ensure the best return for the public and management of the area.

Land exchange acreages are based on land value. An appraisal of all proposed parcels will be conducted as part of the evaluation process. If the appraised value showed inequity in favor of the proponent, BLM could suggest additional acreage be included. However, it is likely the land appraisals for this proposal will show the exchange to favor the public, even without the \$1.1 million donation. It is unlikely that additional lands would be considered as part of this proposal.

BLM manages a number of small, isolated parcels across the West that has little or no public access. These are typically very difficult for BLM to manage and have little benefit for the public. BLM considers opportunities to exchange these difficult-to-manage areas for areas that would potentially offer more benefit to the public. The long, extensive process to evaluate such proposals is in place to ensure land exchanges that are approved are indeed in the public's interest.

The BLM would exchange three parcels totaling 1,268 acres in Pitkin County south of Carbondale that are mostly surrounded by private land and are difficult for the public to access. These parcels would be transferred to the Two Shoes Ranch. In Eagle County, BLM would exchange three parcels totaling 195 acres on Horse Mountain southwest of Eagle which have little public access. The parcels would be transferred to the Lady Belle Ranch. Conservation easements that would prevent development from occurring on the lands that would become private would be placed simultaneously at closing by Two Shoes Ranch and Lady Belle Ranch.

BLM and the public would gain the 557-acre Sutey Ranch adjacent to the popular Red Hill Special Recreation Area in Garfield County, including the historic water rights from the ranch, along with 112 acres in Pitkin County along Prince Creek Road near the Crown. This private parcel is a highly popular area with mountain bikers and is used to access BLM roads and trails.

Thompson Divide oil and gas issues: SG Interests recently filed three Application for Permit to Drill (APD) and three Notices of Staking for 6 well pads on their leases in the Thompson Divide area west of Carbondale, Colo. SG Interests holds valid existing oil and gas leases under U.S. Forest Service lands in this area that give them legal rights to the oil and gas resources under their leases, subject to the terms of those leases. Before any drilling could take place, SG Interests would need an approved APD for each well. BLM will not approve any APDs on U.S. Forest Service lands without a signed NEPA document from the U.S. Forest Service (such as a Decision Record on an Environmental Assessment) approving that action.

In May 2011 SG Interests submitted a proposal for the Lake Ridge Unit, which would encompass 32,406 acres within the Thompson Divide: 28,410 acres are federal leases, about 4,000 acres would include private (fee) surface and minerals. SG has 16 leases in the proposed area; EnCana holds two (totaling 4,483 acres). BLM, in consultation with the U.S. Forest Service, is still reviewing that unit proposal. Decisions about whether or not to place leases in a unit is a BLM decision, even for leases on U.S. Forest Service lands.

The most recent decisions that made the White River National Forest lands in the Thompson Divide available for leasing are in the White River National Forest's 1993 Final Oil and Gas Leasing EIS Record of Decision. These decisions were carried forward in the 2002 White River National Forest Plan Record of Decision. Those documents made the decision that the Forest Service lands in the Thompson Divide area were appropriate for oil and gas leasing, and under what restrictions.

Since these are National Forest Service lands, the U.S. Forest Service made the decision about whether or not these lands would be available for oil and gas leasing. BLM is the agency that conducts federal on-shore oil and gas lease sales. Parcels in oil and gas lease sales have been nominated by industry or others to be offered in a lease sale. Nominated Forest Service parcels are offered after being nominated only after BLM gets concurrence from the Forest Service.

In July 2012, Antero Resources submitted a proposal for the Wolf Springs Unit, which would encompass 11,700 acres within the Thompson Divide. Unitization is one method to manage a group of leases efficiently and reduce impacts.

On August 2, 2012, Senator Bennett released a Draft Thompson Divide Bill and has requested comments. It presents an option that would withdraw unleased public minerals in the area from future oil and gas development while also preserving existing private property rights for current leaseholders. The bill also creates an opportunity for existing leases to be retired should they be donated or sold by willing owners. The legislation was drafted at the request of local governments and following a series of conversations Bennett held with elected officials and community leaders.

Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Litigation: In August, 2012 the interveners (the lessees) and plaintiffs filed appeals of the District Court Judge Marcia Krieger decision to remand the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment Record of Decision. Judge Krieger ruled that BLM was deficient in analyzing air quality impacts and in failing to analyze an alternative that would have required the natural gas under the top of the Plateau be accessed from areas below the plateau through directional drilling. The Judge did not overturn or invalidate existing leases, and upheld BLM's interpretation of the "Transfer Act," stating that a

significant part of the Roan Plateau should be leased for oil and gas development under the law. BLM is awaiting direction from the Court regarding the appeals.

Anvil Points Clean-up Update: Transfer of the Anvil Points Oil Shale Site (the Site), located near Rifle, CO, from the Department of Energy (DOE) to the Department of the Interior (DOI) was mandated by the 1997 Transfer Act. The Act transferred the Naval Oil Shale Reserves numbers 1 and 3 to the BLM and required that all receipts from oil and gas leasing from within the Oil Shale Reserve be deposited into a Treasury account until the Secretaries of the Interior and Energy certified to Congress that sufficient funds were collected to cover environmental cleanup costs and to pay back the Treasury for costs previously invested when the site was under DOE jurisdiction.

On August 7, 2008, the Secretaries of the Interior and Energy certified to Congress that sufficient funds had been collected. At that time, the BLM obligated \$24 million to pay for the cost of cleanup, construction of a repository, and maintenance and monitoring. Since then, no additional monies have been deposited into the account and royalties from the site have been distributed according to the requirements of the mineral leasing act. After certification, there remained \$76,665,508 in the fund, which included the \$39,435,387 reimbursement for previous site development by DOE. The fund accumulated royalties far more quickly than had been expected and therefore exceeded the amount needed for cleanup. Since the original transfer legislation which established the fund never contemplated there being a surplus, there is no provision that allows for the distribution of the remaining funds. Legislation will be necessary before any of the remaining funds can be distributed.

The BLM used its delegated authority under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Liability and Compensation Act (CERCLA) to perform cleanup activities at the Site. The original remediation project contract was awarded in August 2008 and work was completed in July 2012. A contract for long-term maintenance and monitoring is now in place. Approximately 270,000 cubic yards of retorted shale and ash have been placed in three on-site repositories. 90,000 cubic yards of ash was transported to an approved landfill near Denver, and an additional 20,000 cubic yards of petroleum-containing material was transported to a land farming disposal facility near Delta, Colorado. The former mine adits have been closed to human access due to the extreme instability of areas both inside and outside the mine. Bat access was installed where safe working conditions allowed. Demolition and restoration of the former Anvil Points water treatment facility adjacent to the Colorado River has also been completed. Now that all actions are complete, a CERCLA Final Site Report is being prepared by BLM personnel. Actions at the Site are being performed in coordination with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE); however, a disagreement exists with CDPHE over the need for an environmental covenant to be placed on the property. It is the

position of BLM that it is inappropriate and not within the State's authority to encumber Federal land with any sort of covenant.

Kremmling Field Office, Dave Stout

Outdoor Education: The KFO staff continues to focus significant energy on outdoor education, which highlights the BLM's mission and programs, develops BLM contacts and mentors, provides opportunities to identify possible future employees, and provides services to the BLM, among other benefits.

West Grand High School Flex Period – We are continuing this school year with the "half-hour of power" class at the West Grand High School. At the end of the class day, students who do not need extra help in their studies come to the class. Kremmling Field Office employees are hosting many of these classes, teaching things such as college preparedness; paths to natural resource degrees and professions; recreation, range, fire, and other resource management; and geographic information systems (GIS) awareness. A main goal is to present professional adults and careers from the Kremmling community and stress education and self-motivation. An additional goal is to present a positive view of the BLM, its employees, and some of the management challenges on public lands with which the students may be familiar.

GIS Day -- Sue Valente and Teri Parvin taught three classes at West Grand High School as part of the GIS Day event. Each class consisted of two lessons. The first half of the class taught students how to read topographic maps, including how to read the scale; the contour lines (i.e. determine the slope); latitude and longitude; and townships, ranges, and sections, as well as subdividing sections. Students were asked to find objects on the map based on location and elevation based on contour lines. Students were asked to design a trail based on land characteristics of the map. The second half of the class was a Jeopardy game with questions regarding the items learned in the first half of class, as well as local geographic questions about Grand County and the western hemisphere. All students were given a "prize" donated by ESRI, such as a "GIS Day" water bottle, notebook, or T-shirt.

Kremmling RMP Revision: The writer/editor has completed work on the Final Wild and Scenic River Suitability Report (which covers the Colorado River Valley and Kremmling Field Offices), and is working on the various chapters of the Kremmling RMP revision. Work on the Kremmling PRMP/FEIS is being done in-house by the Kremmling Field Office staff. We hope to have a document ready for the public sometime next spring.

Fuels Treatments: Fuels treatments using prescribed fire were suspended nationwide in the BLM, due to drought conditions. The suspension has been rescinded. A prescribed fire project on Independence Mountain west of Walden and one in the Gore Pass area west of Kremmling will be conducted in November and December. Both projects are pile burns of hundreds of slash piles remaining from forest management treatments. An environmental analysis is underway for removing hazard trees on public lands in Grand County.

Forestry: Sale preparation work (marking boundaries, cruising, etc.) continues on Owl Mountain, southeast of Walden, with the expectation of a 400-acre sale in the summer of 2013. The Parsons West sale in Jackson County was purchased last August (97 acres, 600,000 board feet). The Grouse Mountain sale continues in Grand County, which removes hazard trees along roads (58 acres, 1,700 tons of biomass). Harvest operations continue on the Reed Creek Sale about 4 miles southwest of Granby, where about 47 percent of the work has been completed (207 acres, 2,008,000 board feet). Three sales have been offered recently and purchased, all in Grand County: Spruce Creek (48 acres, 480,000 board feet); Black Mountain (65 acres, 500,000 board feet); and Gore Lakes, a combined fuels and forestry project offered through a stewardship contract (200 acres, 975,000 board feet and 1,060 tons of biomass). Sale preparation is nearly complete on Walden Hollow, about 4 miles northeast of Granby; the sale likely will be offered for sale this winter (152 acres). A poor timber market continues to somewhat affect our ability to dispose of lodgepole pines killed by Mountain Pine Beetles.

Minerals: Silver Spur 3D Geophysical Seismic Survey –The survey that covered approximately 15,400 acres located in Jackson County, South and West of Walden, around Johnny Moore Mountain has been completed. The entire project used vibroseis units to generate the necessary energy source. Wellstar Corporation, a local operator, funded this project.

Four parcels totaling 3,611 acres were nominated for leasing in the May 2013 oil and gas lease sale. Three parcels are in Larimer County, totaling 3,452 acres, of which 167 acres are on split-estate. The fourth parcel is in Jackson County, totaling 159 acres, entirely on split-estate. Following review of comments from the public during scoping, and preparation of an environmental analysis, three parcels will be offered for sale. Two parcels are in Larimer County, encompassing 2,164 acres; one parcel of 80 acres is in Jackson County. The 30-day posting period for the EA began on November 14, 2012.

Kremmling Field Office staff is also working on updating an EA for the May/August 2010 oil and gas lease sale. Four parcels, all in Jackson County, were sold but never issued due to protests. The update will address specific protest comments submitted by the public.

We have one pending APD, submitted by EOG, although our work on the APD is on hold. An on-site was completed, which highlighted a problem with the proposed location. There is a conflict, also, with the surface owner regarding the failure to agree to a surface use agreement.

National Public Lands Day: The Kremmling Field Office participates in the annual Grand County Interagency National Public Lands Day event, in cooperation with the USFS Sulphur Ranger District, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Grand County Headwaters Trails Alliance. The Grand County Interagency NPLD event is one of the largest NPLD events, and the longest continuous event site, according to the National Environmental Education Foundation, the main

NPLD program coordinator. The Kremmling FO hosted two projects as part of the 18th Grand County Interagency NPLD event.

Kinney Creek Stream Protection: A user-created spur route short-cutting a bend along the BLM's Kinney Creek Road crosses Kinney Creek, damaging the stream banks and creek corridor. This section of stream is being considered for expansion of Cutthroat Trout populations from upstream. The project stabilized the stream bank along Kinney Creek to prevent further erosion and sedimentation in the creek. Work included moving rocks, stabilizing banks, scarifying and seeding disturbed areas, and constructing fences to protect completed work. Sixteen volunteers (many were turned-away and sent to other projects due to limits on capacity) re-contoured, scarified and seeded 800 square feet of disturbed area; constructed three drainage swales and a rolling dip/water bar drainage; installed six check dams; re-established one natural drainage and a 50-foot stretch of the Kinney Creek channel in its natural channel; and removed debris and sediment in the 50 foot section. This work would take a crew of three seasonal employees 75 hours or approximately 3 days to complete, resulting in a savings of approximately \$1125 in labor costs.

4th annual Colorado River NPLD clean-up: This project was the fourth consecutive year for collecting and removing trash in and along a 15-mile stretch of the Upper Colorado River, beginning at the Pumphouse Recreation Area. The National Sports Center for the Disabled is a past and present partner for this project. A new partner is the East Grand High School, which incorporated volunteering for the NPLD as part of its annual Sophomore Class river trip. In this project, 69 volunteers collected and removed 27 bags of garbage and approximately 600 lbs. of assorted metal and debris from the Colorado River corridor. The work was concentrated along the river's banks, within the river channel, and at campsites along the river. The work accomplished by volunteers would have taken a crew of three seasonal employees 675 hours or approximately 28 days to complete by themselves, resulting in a savings of approximately \$5175 in labor costs.

White River Field Office Program Updates, Kent E. Walter

White River Oil and Gas RMP Amendment

The BLM White River Field Office (WRFO) continues work to develop an Oil and Gas Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (Oil and Gas RMPA/EIS). The four Alternatives look at a range of development from 550 multi-well pads up to 2,550 multi-well pads, with an average of 8 wells per pad. The Draft RMPA/EIS was posted on the WRFO website on 8/22/12 and the 90-day comment period officially began with publication of the Notice of Availability on 9/14/12. Four public meetings were held the week of 9/24/12 in Meeker, Rangely, Silt, and Grand Junction. The end of the comment period is January 28, 2013.

Cultural Resources

The cultural program has been very busy working on surveying the entire WRFO system of livestock trails, in order for these to be able to be permitted this next year.

WRFO archaeologists made more rock art sites along the Dragon Trail, southwest of Rangely, interpreted for the public similar to the BLM recreation sites in Canyon Pintado Historic District. At the end of summer of 2012, the final interpretive panels were installed and trailwork completed. The cultural staff has now developed a new visitors guide brochure for Canyon Pintado, which includes these Dragon Trail sites. In 2012, WRFO archaeologists also studied several rare Fremont granaries located within the Skull Creek Wilderness Study Area.

Energy Program

Oil Shale RD&D

WRFO approved American Shale Oil, LLC's (AMSO) Plan of Development (POD) on Sept. 3, 2009. Construction of the facilities at the site location began in spring 2010 and is complete. Heater installation occurred in January 2012 with heater failure within one week of power-up. Complications with heater design continue to delay re-installation of the heater and initiation of the shale oil recovery process. Start-up is projected for the fourth quarter 2012. AMSO has initiated design of an alternative heat source as a backup to the downhole electric heater. Shell Frontier submitted a POD for COC 69166 (East Lease) on Jan. 3, 2011. This is a two-step process where sodium minerals are extracted prior to recovery of the shale oil. BLM approved Shell's East Lease POD in August 2011 and dirt work for the facility site was completed in late 2011. Construction of operating facilities and drilling of the production, heater, and observation wells began in May 2012. A total of 21 wells are directly involved in the extraction process. The final well is in the process of being drilled and should be completed by the first of December 2012. Commencement of sodium leaching operations late 2012 or early 2013. Previous construction on the lease consisted of an access road, two pads (one hydrology pad and one core-hole pad) and drilling of five hydrologic monitoring wells and one core hole in late 2009 and early 2010 on Shell's East Lease. An additional appraisal well was drilled April 2011. Chevron has announced in February 2012 they are not proceeding with their RD&D project and there has been no determination of the future status of their RD&D lease. Two additional RD&D leases were awarded to ExxonMobil Exploration Corp. and Natural Soda Holdings Inc. These leases were signed in November 2012 and become effective December 01, 2012. Each company is required to submit a Plan of Development for approval by the BLM within nine months of the effective date of the lease.

Oil Shale PEIS

In 2008, the BLM published a Final Oil Shale and Tar Sands PEIS that amended the White River Resource Area Resource Management Plan (WRFO RMP) lands available for oil shale leasing from approximately 295,000 acres to approximately 341,000 acres. In 2011 BLM agreed to take

a fresh look at commercial oil shale and tar sands leasing in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming as part of a legal settlement. A new PEIS was initiated. The new Draft PEIS was released for a 90-day public comment period, which ended May 4, 2012. The final PEIS was made available November 9, 2012 and commenced the 30 day appeal period. This amends the lands available for oil shale development in WRFO to 26,800 acres. The current RD&D with identified Preference Right Lease Area (PRLA) contain an additional 21,906 acres in addition to the available 26,800 acres. If the RDD are relinquished the acres in the PRLA would not be available for leasing.

Coal

Blue Mountain Energy's (BME) Deserado underground coal mine produces approximately 2 million tons of coal annually. Deserado is a captive mine where all coal production is shipped, via electric train, and utilized by the Bonanza Power Plant in Bonanza, Utah. BME has seven federal coal leases that are contained in a logical mining unit (LMU). In early 2011 BME applied for an exploration license and a 3,154 acre federal coal lease (COC 74813). WRFO is in the process of writing the EA for the coal lease. A preliminary EA was available for 30 day public comment in September 5, 2012 and ended November 20, 2012. A public meeting is scheduled for November 28, 2012. Timing of the coal lease issuance is critical to avoid loss of recoverable reserves.

Non-Energy Minerals Program (sodium)

Natural Soda Inc. produced more than 130,000 tons of sodium bicarbonate from their existing in-situ solution mining operations in 2011. Upgrades to the facility including a higher capacity, more efficient boiler and an increase in production capabilities have begun. Completion of the construction is scheduled for early 2013.

American Soda well field is expected to remain idle in 2012. No production from the well field has occurred since 2004.

Fire and Fuels Program

In 2011 the BLM, Rio Blanco County Sheriff's Department and local landowners south of Rangely completed a Memorandum of Understanding to allow the BLM to efficiently manage natural ignition fires for ecological benefits where this option exists.

The Field Office has attempted one prescribed burn this Spring and the conditions were not favorable for the prescribed to achieve the desired results. The Dragon Trail Compressor Station project is 75 percent complete but due to the warm winter conditions we were unable to complete. The current plan is to finish work on pile burning during the winter months of 2012/2013.

Geographic Information Systems Program

Priorities for the GIS Program include developing data and processes to support the RMP, the travel management plan, and Threatened, Endangered, and BLM Sensitive (TES) plant management. Specific data layers include (1) well pads, right-of-ways, and other surface disturbances, (2) updated road centerlines (to match 2011 aerial photography); and, (3) TES plants including the addition of all current field surveys. In addition to data development, through the RMP and the FO will be working with the USGS on the Data Management System, which is a web-based GIS/Disturbance Tracking tool that will allow BLM staff, Oil & Gas Operators, and the Public to access near real-time updates of surface disturbance and reclamation activities in the WRFO. WRFO is also updating GPS systems to keep up with current technology. GIS is being moved to CITRIX or enterprise GIS to use corporate state data.

Range Program

The WRFO is continuing to monitor rangeland conditions throughout the Resource Area. With the anticipation of the continuation of drought conditions the FO is looking at its alternatives dealing with these conditions. In addition, the WRFO has planned to complete the necessary environmental review and processing of 12 expiring grazing permits as well as completing the necessary field work for the 2013 grazing permit renewals. In addition, the range staff will also complete the necessary trailing analysis to allow for spring trailing permit issuance in 2013.

Weed Management

WRFO has completed several weed spraying projects in 2012, including spraying ~300 acres of leafy spurge using a helicopter. In 2012 the WRFO has had had one crew working in the field completing herbicide treatments on multiple weed infestations that include houndtongue, knapweeds, leafy spurge, thistles, and hoary cress. WRFO is on track to complete 300 acres by the end of the field season with hand crews.

In 2013, the WRFO anticipates that that it will be able to continue to provide support for the leafy spurge treatments as well as maintaining its ongoing field work and herbicide treatments throughout the Resource Area.

Riparian Program

Weed treatment evaluation, initial treatment, and inventory has been completed on approximately 20 miles of riparian emphasis on the Olive Garden and Divide Creek Reservoir sites. One new enclosure was installed on Moosehead to protect a wet meadow for sage grouse and surrounding riparian.

Wildlife Program

The WRFO continues to work collaboratively with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to address the overall impacts of Oil and Gas in the Piceance Basin. The staff works with CPW in an effort to improve the Wildlife Mitigation plans within the Piceance Basin. The staff has

recently completed laying out phase two of a CPW P/J encroachment project meant to mitigate some of the impacts of development on Magnolia Bench and will be monitored as part of several study projects being completed by CPW.

The WRFO biologist will be working in coordination with the District in the development of the District Sage Grouse EIS.

The WRFO will also be completing a multi-year habitat modeling project to model potential habitats within the FO for midget-faded rattlesnakes, a BLM sensitive species.

In 2012, the FO will be installing several exclosure fences for the improvement of wildlife and fisheries habitats within the FO.

Recreation Program

WRFO has recently hired Aaron Grimes as the new Outdoor Recreation Planner, who began in late October of 2012. Aaron worked for the WRFO as a Visitor Information Assistant in 2006-2007.

We are continuing with road signing, including signing dead ends road in the field office in attempt to improve wayfinding. We are also continuing ongoing work with the Rangely Rock Crawlers to install carsonites to delineate the boundaries of the rock park.

WRFO has partnered with the Eastern Rio Blanco Metropolitan Recreation and Park District (ERBM) in the completion of Phase 1 of a non-motorized trail from Dorcas Jensen Park to China Wall and is working on planning for Phase 2; design has been completed. Phase 1 included a trail to the top of China Wall from Jensen Park. The construction of this trail has been completed through a partnership with ERBM and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) at no cost to the BLM. ERBM has also agreed to pay for and construct Phase 2, leading from China Wall to Ute Park, site of the world famous Meeker Sheepdog Trials. WRFO will begin planning for Phase 3 in 2013, which will involve a looped trail system on top of China Wall.

The WRFO continues to manage its Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program; now totaling more than 54 SRPs. Current SRPs include big game hunting, wilderness therapy, the Rangely Rock Crawlers, and higher education. New applicants for SRPs this year have included guided White River float trips, mountain lion hunting, commercial trapping, and an OHV poker run. We continue to move forward with planning steps towards completing a travel management inventory and plan for the WRFO. WRFO continues on-going coordination with the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) and other partners to accomplish this goal. The WRFO recently submitted a grant to the State OHV committee to continue travel management efforts, specifically route inventories of the WRFO. Related to travel management, the WRFO is continuing participation on the newly formed committee, the Rio Blanco County Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Committee (Wagon Wheel Trail Pilot Program), intended to promote OHV tourism in the county primarily using public lands.

The WRFO continues to actively inventory various parcels of land in the Field Office that potentially contain wilderness character.

The WRFO attended the Fall Rangely Rock Crawlers Competition in early September to monitor the event which continues to grow in popularity. We also regularly attend their monthly membership meetings.

The WRFO completed construction of the Willow Creek OHV trail in August 2012 and it is now open to motorized use by the. This trail will provide access to approximately 21,000 acres of BLM lands currently inaccessible to the public. In Spring/Summer of 2013 we will construct the 2nd phase of this trail, Horseshoe Bend, which will further provide additional access.

The Yampa River Trail Runners OHV group took possession of a new trail dozer in September of 2012. Per a forthcoming MOU, WRFO will have access of this vital piece of equipment for trail construction purposes. The dozer will be jointly shared between WRFO, LSFO, Blanco Ranger District and the Yampa River Trail Runners.

Soil, Water, and Air Program

FY2013 Budget constraints may put a severe restriction on water monitoring starting in calendar year 2014. Without annual support for the surface streamflow monitoring network, BLM would lose conductivity probes on the White River, Piceance Creek and Yellow Creek maintained by the USGS. If this occurs, it could severely limit BLM's ability to detect changes from oil and gas development in the Piceance Creek Basin and decrease the value of the baseline dataset that represents an investment of over a million dollars of BLM funds over the past eight years. Two BPS projects, one funded by the Colorado Salinity and one from Oil and Gas have funds have made this unique and extremely valuable program possible over the last eight years. Monies in these two BPS projects are in danger of being redirected to meet shortfalls in base funding. Future monitoring is in serious danger.

Due to the decrease of funds in FY2012 one USGS streamflow station along the White River was dropped from the surface water system (Crooked Wash), further decreases in FY2013 would not sustain a viable surface water quality monitoring network. Without additional funding the annual sampling event for our 15 well groundwater monitoring network will not be possible. To maintain the value of this groundwater monitoring system, we should be resampling the wells annually at a minimum. The Piceance Basin Data Repository group continues to move forward with plans to coordinate with the Colorado Data Sharing Network for future data storage, but due to funding restrictions BLM may not be able to participate in this group in the future, this would put in danger the 50 thousand dollars of BLM investment in this program.

An investment over the last four years for seasonals to inventory BLM springs has completed the Piceance Basin representing over 400 springs. The next step is to identify trends in inventory data in order to develop a spring monitoring network. A BPS project submission will be completed that would detail this work. There are also about 100 to 200 springs that need to be

inventoried in the rest of the field office to complete the inventory for the White River Field Office. Current funding would curtail this effort significantly for FY2013 and not allow the completion of this inventory project. The last inventory was completed in the early 1980s, with most of the sites not visited since this last inventory. It is unlikely that BLM water rights at non-inventoried springs would be looked at favorably by the Colorado Water Court, if contested in the future.

Based on past funding (FY2010 and FY2011), two USGS reports will be released this year detailing results from water resource monitoring. One study will describe results of the 15 well groundwater network that was established to monitor oil and gas development in Piceance Creek. Geophysical information was collected from existing monitoring wells for the selection of the 15 permanent sites. The first sampling of the full fifteen well networks was in August 2011, these wells were sampled quarterly and now on an annual basis. Anthropogenic contaminants have been detected at some of the monitoring wells, causes and potential effects will be scientifically described in this baseline report. One of the most important reaches in the oil and gas development is Piceance Creek below Alkali Flats. This reach has a very complicated interaction with surface and groundwaters and is the longest continuous reach on BLM administered lands. This interaction and connections with past studies will be detailed in this report.

The BLM continues to support the air quality data collection at the Rangely and Meeker which are Federal Reference monitoring sites. Effort has begun to identify a new air quality monitoring site in the Piceance Basin. In addition, in 2012 the BLM was able to add two new sites to our existing precipitation network (13 total). Macroinvertebrates were sampled at the 7 BLM streamflow monitoring sites this last year to compliment the water quality and streamflow information at these sites.

Wild Horses

In 2012, the extreme drought conditions left approximately 40 to 50 wild horses on the east side of Texas Mountain of the West Douglas Herd Area without enough available water to supply their requirements, requiring immediate action to ensure that wild horses remain in good health. The area was immediately closed to avoid additional stress on the animals most affected. Although BLM placed water in the general area with tanks, the water needed to be piped to troughs at the actual water seeps in order for the wild horses to utilize the man-made sources, which made it simply too costly to provide reliable water to those horses in this area for the remainder of the summer. A contract for the gather and removal of 40 to 50 wild horses was awarded to Warner Livestock. Gathering of horses through the use of water trapping began on July 15. Twenty wild horses were quickly gathered and removed with 19 of them transported to Canon City, and one colt was adopted. The colt was determined to be an orphan. The wild horses were photographed at all times of the day and night using the water point during gather

activities. Ten days into the gather, a suspension of work was issued by the BLM. The area has received precipitation of late to temporarily give relief to the area, which allowed the wild horses to disperse. The gather equipment has remained in the area in the event that the gather needs to be resumed.

Additionally, BLM monitored the conditions for the wild horses in both the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (HMA) as well as the North Piceance Herd Area. The WRFO also placed supplemental water within the HMA, as well as working with a livestock permittee who allowed BLM to keep the trough full even after the cattle had left the area.

In 2013, the WRFO will begin to prepare a gather plan and the necessary NEPA analysis to complete a gather of the West Douglas Herd Area. As well as continue to monitor drought conditions throughout the wild horse herds.

Lands and Realty

WRFO's lands group is currently working on three interstate electric transmission line projects: The Trans West Express, which will transport renewable energy based power from central Wyoming to Nevada, the Energy Gateway South transmission project which will transport electricity from central Wyoming to Utah, and the newly proposed Zephyr line.

The permits have been issued and construction has been completed on the first phase of the Rio Blanco County Road 5 improvement projects and construction is nearing completion on a parcel of public land for Rangely District Hospital. The FO will be working on two additional county projects this year including the County Road 5 bridge replacement and County Road 5 stock passes.

Expansion of the Enterprise Meeker Gas Plant is out for public comment and review which closes on 12/5/2012. Proposals for construction of oil and gas infrastructure have been approved or are pending to multiple companies for construction of natural gas and water pipelines.

Catherine Roberstson, Grand Junction Field Office

Resource Management Planning

We are awaiting permission from the Washington Office to post a notice in the federal register, and make the Draft Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/DEIS) available for public review for a 90 day comment period (exact dates to be determined). We will be conducting extensive public outreach leading up to the release of the DRMP/DEIS to help people prepare for the comment period. We welcome your suggestions on how to best conduct this outreach. We would like to meet with all interested user groups and help them understand the format of the document, to facilitate their efficient review.

There will be four alternatives available for review and comment to each proposed action in the DRMP/DEIS. We are also required to have a Preferred Alternative identified in the DRMP/EIS. It is important to note that the Preferred Alternative is the BLMs first attempt at balancing resource uses and protection. We need comments from the public to help us continue the development of the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP will likely include elements of all four alternatives.

Natural Resources

Restoration— The Pine Ridge fire near DeBeque burned nearly 14,000 acres in late June into July. We have applied an annual cover crop to help reduce runoff events by slowing overland flow and increasing infiltration on site. Recent reports are that germination was far from optimal due to dry conditions. If this seed will germinate in the spring, it will help with the spring runoff as well as perennial seed establishment. Two radar gauges were installed following the fire to help alert interested entities of significant runoff events that are entering the Colorado River from the main drainages affected by the fire. Clifton Water and Union Pacific Railroad will receive notification if significant runoff events are detected by the radar gauges. Fortunately, no events have been recorded to date.

We also have developed a long term restoration plan that includes planting native seeds and construction and maintenance of several silt control ponds. Native seeds have been purchased and we are working on the contracts for application. The Wild Turkey Federation, Encana, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and High Lonesome Ranch have contributed to the plan which will be implemented over the winter.

Drought – At the beginning of the summer we sent a letter to those with grazing permits asking them to plan for a possible reduction of livestock use or for resting areas in case the drought conditions continued over the summer. Unfortunately, since that June 7 letter, we have received little moisture on the public lands managed by this office, and rangeland conditions are continuing to deteriorate.

Currently the U.S. Drought Monitor categorizes the intensity of the drought in this area as severe to extreme. As an example, as of September 18, Grand Junction received 2.77 inches of precipitation in 2012. Our average for that span is 6.5 inches. Although we saw some green-up early this spring, by early summer the drought conditions caused cool season grasses, such as Indian ricegrass; bottlebrush squirrel tail; needle and thread grass; wheat grasses and rye grasses to stop growing and go into dormancy. They never had the opportunity to complete their growth and seed out.

We still held hope that the summer monsoons would bring enough moisture for both the warm season grasses (galleta and sand dropseed grasses) and higher elevation grasses to compensate for the poor spring. But thunderstorms this year have been scattered, resulting in very isolated green-up in localized areas at best. Overall there has simply not been enough moisture for sufficient grass growth and production to accommodate livestock grazing. Rangelands may take multiple seasons to recover from a drought of this magnitude, and much longer if they are grazed. Because of these extreme conditions and general lack of available forage, if an area has been grazed in the last year, we will be requiring non-use (rest) at a minimum from November 1, 2012 to June 1, 2013 for that area, with few exceptions.

If dry conditions continue preventing recovery of rangelands, livestock reductions and non-use will be extended beyond June 1, 2013, until recovery occurs. If conditions improve due to increased moisture this winter and spring, livestock reductions and non-use will likely still be needed to allow plants time to recover. We understand that conditions vary from allotment to allotment, and livestock management will be considered on a case-by-case basis. We will consider exceptions on allotments that have large areas that haven't been grazed over the last year or couple of years, or if enough regrowth for this year has occurred.

If an agreement cannot be worked out between the BLM and permittee a decision will be issued by the Authorized Officer to modify livestock use or close the allotment(s) as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs). If livestock use is authorized, a 40% utilization threshold for winter use (dormant season) and 30% utilization threshold for spring use (growing season) will be enforced.

The GJFO staff understands the seriousness and difficulty the drought is causing for permittee livestock operations. Many BLM areas need to be rested to ensure long-term health of the

rangeland conditions. Resting these areas now will allow them to recover more quickly when moisture returns.

Recreation

The fees initiated at **18 Road Campground** in the North Fruita Desert on September 1, 2012 were met with positive sentiment from users. To date, BLM has collected about \$2,500 of fees. The campground improvements and increased management will hopefully decrease user conflicts and resource damage in this popular area that continues to provide personal, community and economic benefits to the Grand Valley. The fee will only pay for a portion of the maintenance and management of the area, but the off-set will is significant in that it allows the Agency to provide more frequent and consistent services to the public.

National Public Lands Day, celebrated on September 29, 2012, was a huge success for the BLM and our partners this year. The event was celebrated with seven projects that engaged the public, provided service projects and experiential learning opportunities for youth. The events which are listed below were well attended, with positive feedback from both participants and partners.

Project Name	Number of Participants and/or Partners	Achievements
Western Slope ATV Desert Clean-up of 25 Road	33 Members, 1 partner organization	15 cu. yds of garbage, 60 pounds of electronic waste, 13 tires
Shooting Ranges Cleanup	20 Volunteers	8 cubic yards of garbage
COBMOBA Palisade Rims Trail Construction	15 Volunteers, 1 partner organization	200 feet of trail construction and fine tuning the new trail
Colorado River Tamarisk Project	19 volunteers, 2 partner organizations	Created 36 slash piles of tamarisk, averaging 8-10 feet tall and 20 feet wide
Public Lands Day Festival	100 youth and adults, 13 partner organizations	Educational outreach to youth and adults
Jouflas Trail Project	12 volunteers, partner organization	Trimmed trees, brush, and constructed rock cairns and did minor reroutes along 3 ½ miles of trail
Rock Garden Cleanup, Unaweep Canyon	21 Volunteers, 2 partner organizations	5 cubic yards of garbage

Bangs Canyon Environmental Assessment on Multiple-Use Trail Development was available for a 30 day public review period starting October 17th, 2012. The comment period was extended an additional 30 days and is available for review through December 22. The document is available from BLM's website. Following is more specific information on the proposal.

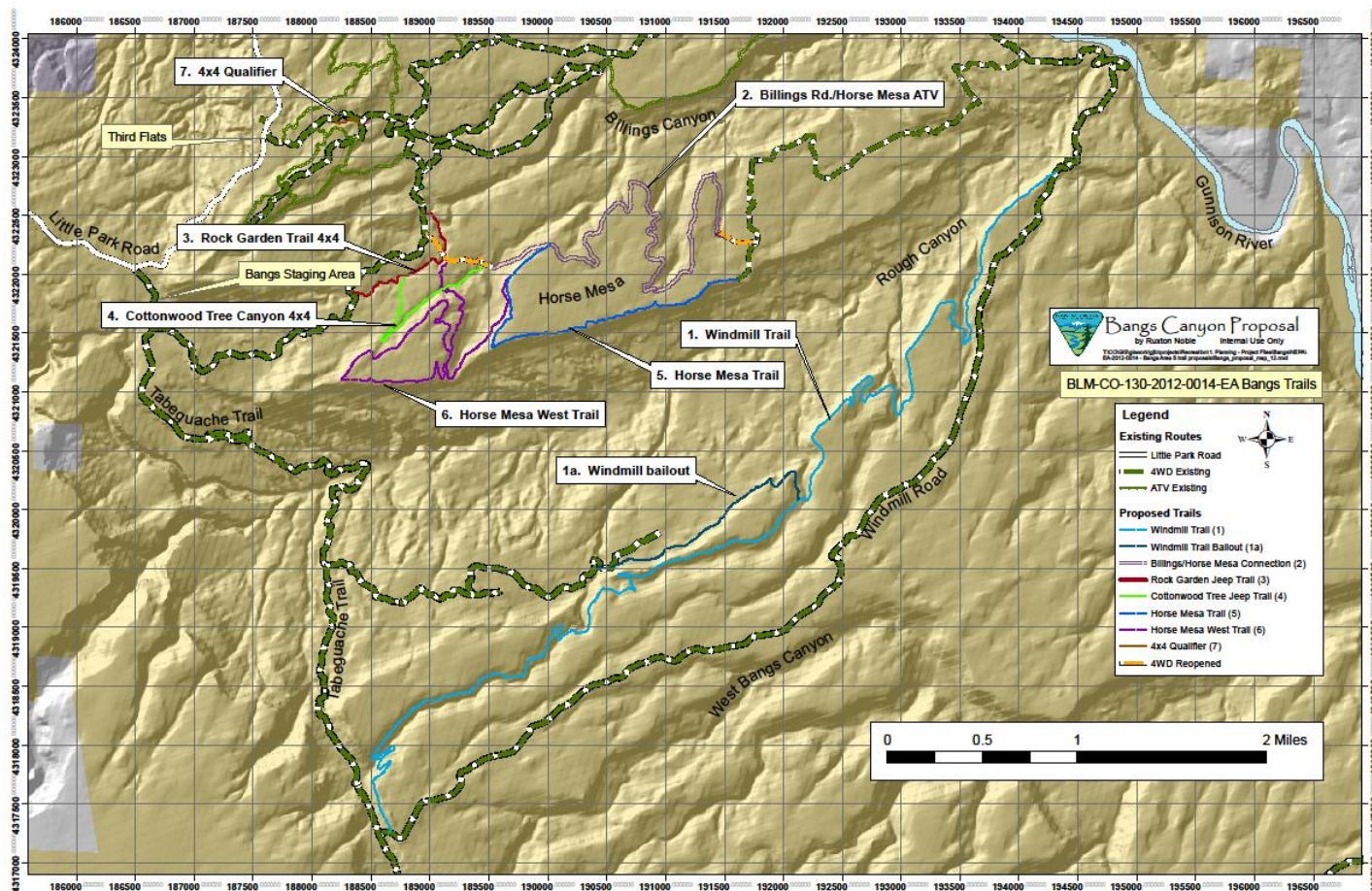
Responsible Recreation Foundation, in cooperation with BLM Grand Junction, has proposed to design and construct 8 trails totaling 21.1 miles. The trails were proposed by RRF **in priority order**:

Trail Name	Trail Type	Proposed Action	Length
Trail 1 (Windmill Trail)	Single track	Construction	8.0 mi.
Trail 1a (Windmill Bailout)	Single track	Construction	1.5 mi.
Trail 2 (Horse Mesa to Billings Rd)	ATV	Construction Reopen Existing Route	3.5 mi. 0.3mi.
Trail 3 (Rock Garden Trail)	Jeep / Rock Crawling	Construction	1.0 mi.
Trail 4 (Cottonwood Tree Trail)	Jeep / Rock Crawling	Construction	1.4 mi.
Trail 5 (Horse Mesa Trail)	Single track	Construction	1.7 mi.
Trail 6 (Horse Mesa West Trail)	Single track	Construction	3.5 mi.
Trail 7 (4x4 Qualifier)	Jeep / Rock Crawling	Construction	0.2 mi.

Total

Singletrack (18-24 inches): 14.7 miles
 ATV (50 inches): 3.5 miles
 4x4 Rock Crawl (96 inches): 2.6 miles
Existing Reopened: 0.3 miles

21.1 miles



Lands and Minerals

McClane Coal Lease Modification: The BLM Colorado State Office (CSO) and Washington Office approvals to release the preliminary EA for public comment took a few weeks longer than originally anticipated. The preliminary EA for the proposed 317 acre lease modification is currently out for 30 day public comment. The public comment period will end on November 9. Any public comments that are received will be reviewed and addressed in the final Environmental Assessment. A decision on the lease modification is anticipated to be made in the mid-December.

Book Cliffs Lease by Application: CAM's proposed Book Cliff lease by application (LBA) will be processed in a separate NEPA document from CAM's pending ROW applications for their proposed rail road, conveyor belts, waste rock pile and other support infrastructure for the Red Cliff Mine. The LBA will be analyzed under an environmental assessment (EA) instead of an environmental impact statement (EIS). The decision being analyzed under the EA is whether or not to lease the coal. No site specific analysis will be conducted under the EA because the coal would be leased under a competitive process. The future lease and their plan of development are currently unknown. If the coal is leased then the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) and the Colorado State Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (DRMS) will oversee the environmental review and permitting for the development of the coal.

The BLM GJFO has begun internal scoping of the proposal and will hold a cooperator kick-off meeting shortly. Public and cooperator scoping is planned to begin in January and to go through February. Alternative development will commence once public scoping is completed and preparation of the EA will follow. A decision on the proposal is expected to be made within 18 months.

Public Service Company of Colorado (Xcel) Power Line Amendment: Public Service Company received a ROW amendment that authorizes access routes and extra workspace to necessary complete maintenance activities and long-term monitoring of the power line. The power line provides service to the community of DeBeque and the requested work is necessary because of aging infrastructure. Construction activities on this project were completed this fall.

Mountain Island Land Exchange - The Draft EA went out for public review in September and the comment period closed on September 26. We are currently responding to comments and finalizing the EA. Once the EA is finalized, the draft decision package will be sent to the National Land Exchange Team and Washington Office for review and approval to issue a notice of decision. If the final decision is to approve the land exchange, title transfer is expected in January or February.

Dominguez-Escalante NCA Land Acquisitions: We are working with a third party facilitator, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC), to purchase private inholdings.

Upchurch Property, Gunnison River (135 acres) - WRC is in negotiations with the landowner. Closing anticipated in March 2013.

American Mountain Men Property, Upland (160 acres is Gibbler Gulch) - WRC is in negotiations with the landowner. Closing anticipated in March 2013.

Black Hills – DeBeque Exploratory Plan – A Programmatic Biological Assessment is being prepared for BLM to review and submit to the USFWS in mid-November 2012. This will provide information regarding possible project impacts of the development project (which includes 24 wells on 12 pads) to two T&E plants.

The Preliminary EA was submitted to BLM on October 15, 2012. BLM will review and comment on the EA within 60 days, then finalize it and make it available for public comment for 30 days in early January. Following receipt of comments and any revisions that might result, the EA will be finalized and the BLM will make a Decision regarding the proposal. The Decision is anticipated around the end of first quarter 2013.

Fram Whitewater Unit Development Plan - Based upon comments received during the scoping process, Fram has consulted with CPW to integrate a Wildlife Mitigation Plan into their proposal, agreeing to consider the use of an existing access route from the north to minimize seasonal impacts to wintering wildlife. Federally listed plant species in the development area will again require preparation of a Biological Assessment for consultation with the USFWS, who will respond to the BLM within 90 days. Following review by BLM and USFWS specialists, a Preliminary EA will be available for public comment for 30 days, in February 2013. Following review of the public's comments, the EA will be ready for the BLM to make a Decision regarding Fram's proposal. Such Decision is anticipated around March or April 2013.

Genesis Oil and Gas – The Breaks Well Development: Genesis has completed coordination with the BLM for site specific surface siting to reduce impacts to visual resources and surface disturbance. Genesis has also finalized their access planning through private and public lands to reach their proposed sites. New construction on public land is proposed for both the east and west sides of the Genesis project.

Genesis and BLM are currently in the process of preparing for public scoping of the proposed action and comment collection before BLM begins impact analysis. There will be a comment period on the Environmental Analysis when it is completed

Transwest Express Transmission Project – The DEIS Corridor map was released to the public in July, 2012. This map can be found on the BLM project website. The TransWest team is currently finishing the Draft EIS and the BLM expects an internal review to begin in November.

Enterprise WEP II - Pipeline to carry fluids from Dragon, near Vernal, UT through Rio Blanco, Garfield and Mesa Counties to Cisco, UT. The Decision Record approving the project was signed on 9/12/12 and the ROW Grant and Temporary Use Permits were issued. Enterprise has notified us that they are going to begin construction in the spring of 2013.

Energy Gateway South Transmission Line – Internal work on the Draft EIS, as well as route refinements to avoid sensitive resources is on-going.

Zephyr Transmission Line - The Zephyr project is another large transmission line originating in Wyoming and terminating near Las Vegas, NV. It is in the early stages (pre-scoping). A national project manager has been identified (Lorraine Salas, out of Las Cruces, NM). Alternatives cross all field offices in Colorado with the exception of Royal Gorge, San Luis Valley and Gunnison.

Cultural

GJFO Cultural staff was awarded the Secretary of the Interior's **Partners in Conservation Award**, in recognition of the outstanding contributions of the Ute Learning Garden as an educational project developed through a partnership with the Ute Indian Tribe, Colorado Master Gardener and Native Plant Master Programs and Colorado State University Extension. Mesa County hosts the garden, and the Colorado Department of Transportation and local businesses in Grand Junction that provided materials and resources to develop and manage the site. The programs many projects were designed to involve and reconnect Native American youth with traditional cultural practices through ethnobotany, to engage elders in the recollection of traditional practices and native plant uses, and interpret the knowledge through an urban garden in Grand Junction, which also introduces diverse audiences to the Tribe's relationship to the landscape on the public lands in Mesa County that were their traditional homeland until 1881.

Fire Program - Upper Colorado River Fire Management Unit – West Zone

The 2012 Fire season is winding down and has been a very busy and safe one. Several large fires occurred in the West Zone. The Pine Ridge Fire was the notable fire that burned west of Debeque. This fire burned 12,948 acres and is the largest fire in history on the Grand Junction Field office.

Western Colorado Began its fire season in April after one of the driest winters in recorded history. The dry winter fuels and grasses never were compacted by snow and normal spring green-up was short-lived and gave way to summerlike conditions by early May. Typical hot and dry desert weather spiked ERC'S, and by June the West Zone was charting all-time record values for fuel dryness. The West Zone had two Type 1 IMT Fires and three Type 3 IMT fires. The 2012 season was busy locally and especially in support of the regional and national large fires suppression effort. The West Zone staffed about 120 fires, and had firefighters and respond to fires in Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Utah, Idaho, Montana, California, and Nebraska. West Zone EFF program

The UCR West Zone EFF program was honed this year to meet the needs of the unit. Recruiting and interviews took place to select a group of 13 EFF firefighters. These firefighters are both new and returning to the program. Training was provided for those new to the program. This group is essential to West Zone to function during periods of high activity. This group of firefighters filled in on engines, were grouped as a squad for initial attack, mobilized with the Colorado River Crew on both local and out of area assignments, and helped in many different ways with logistical needs moving supplies and staffing the Mobilization center in Grand Junction this summer.

Outlook - Rocky Mountain: Cold frontal passages will become more frequent over the Rocky Mountain Area which is typical for this time of year. Very dry fuel conditions are still a concern for above normal significant fire potential early in the month across northern portions of Wyoming into western South Dakota. An anticipated moderating trend is expected to gradually alleviate these conditions through early to mid-October. Overall, the threat for fire activity across the Area is expected to decrease as cooler and occasionally moist conditions develop and natural ignition triggers diminish. On average fire activity in October is limited to the grasslands ahead of cold fronts where wind becomes a major influence. These fires are typically short lived. The trend of normal significant fire potential is anticipated to continue during the November through January period. During a typical El-Niño fall and winter, precipitation and mountain snowpack trends toward average to above average in southern portions of the Rocky Mountain Area, while in northern portions of the Area an average to below average moisture trend is typical. Normal significant fire potential during the November through January period typically indicates little if any fire activity.

National Conservation Areas-

McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area-NCA staff supported several successful National Public Lands Day and river restoration events in September. Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and Centennial Canoe fielded 23 volunteers to complete tamarisk eradication on the Cottonwood Camps bench upstream of Salt Creek on the Colorado River. Adventure Bound Outfitters and Colorado Canyons Association supported a trip during which 25 area high-schoolers assisted in cottonwood restoration efforts and learned about astrology-only one student had previously been on an overnight camping trip. Finally, the Grand Mesa Backcountry Horsemen assisted with trail development on Wild Horse Mesa in Rabbit Valley.

Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area- Cooperating Agencies recently completed their review of the preliminary draft Resource Management Plan, and the plan will now undergo additional policy review prior to begin released for public review (anticipated late this calendar year).

While final travel management planning will not be complete for another year or so, NCA staff may need to begin road maintenance discussions with Mesa County for several segments that need maintenance attention in the meantime, especially for key access points.

Little Snake Field Office, Wendy Reynolds

Personnel changes for Little Snake Field Office:

Tim Wilson, presently Assistant Field Manager, is in a 120-day detail as Associate Field Manager vice Matt Anderson who has left the BLM. Delissa Minnick is detailed into Tim's

position for a 60-90 day detail as the Assistant Field Manager. New archeologist is starting in January and new Range Con starts December.

Sagegrouse EIS: #1 Priority. Staff is working with the NW District Manager Jim Cagney on amending the LSFO Resource Management Plan for sagegrouse habitat protection affecting all the resource areas.

Transmission EISs: Gateway South and TransWest transmission line projects are also keeping many of the staff occupied with data requests and meetings. Both of these projects are being coordinated out of Wyoming and the final decision on the rights-of-ways will be made by the Wyoming BLM State Director.

Wild Horses: The Sandwash Basin wild horse herd has experienced a drought last summer and has so far, fared pretty well in terms of herd health. We saw some foaling but the mare birth control efforts seemed to be making a little bit of difference. Lots of interest in the herd from local horse group and this National Public Lands Day included a wire and fence cleanup in the Sandwash Basin and attracted around 60 participants. **New: Wild horse gather being considered for 2013.**

Oil and Gas Activity: Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs) for gas drilling are slowing due to the low natural gas prices. Currently, we are processing 11 APDs in the Little Snake Field Office and 1 in Kremmling. Operators are being very cooperative in siting well pads to avoid impacts to sage grouse leks and habitat.

Travel Management: Staff of the LSFO is being trained on ATVs to begin inventorying our existing roads for travel management consideration. We are advertising a position that will help us with our travel management planning and inventory. **New: Position has been filled and employee is on board to begin our travel management process.**

Next meeting agenda items

Subrac process, roles

GJFO RMP

DMS presentation, Walter

Sage grouse update

Provide written field manager updates