

Colorado Northwest Resource Advisory Council
March 7-8, 2012
Holiday Inn Express
Montrose, Colo

March 7, 2012

Category 1

Dave Grisso, Tom Latham, Steve Loshbaugh, Wes McStay

Category 2

Pat Kennedy, Dona Shue, Steve Smith, Terry Sweet

Category 3

Dean Riggs, Kai Turner, Barbara Vasquez, Lanny Weddle

Absent

John Potter, Cat 1; Dan Davidson, Cat 2; Jeff Comstock, Cat 3

BLM

Jim Cagney, Steve Bennett, Dave Stout, Wendy Reynolds, Kent Walter, Catherine Robertson, David Boyd

Public

Patti Williams; Brian Meinhart, Congressman Tipton's office; Doug Lempke, Tri-State Generation; Diana Leiker, Tri-State Generation; Lee Ann Hill, San Juan Citizen's Alliance

Kennedy called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

An addition to the agenda for tomorrow is considering whether to continue with the recreation fee authority under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Currently the NW RAC's authority will end Sept. 30, 2012.

Sage Grouse

Jim Cagney presented a Powerpoint on sage grouse habitat.

Wes: I disagree with the Technical Team's report about not treating areas of sage brush. You have to account for the structure of the sage brush as well. Dragging areas of sagebrush is an effective treatment. That's where we have birds right now, in areas that we treated. Education also has to be a big part of this effort. You need to summarize better. I'm also worried that this report ties BLM hands.

Dean: It's always been about many things, not just one thing. Colorado's populations are very limited. Nobody in this room benefits by the listing of the Greater Sage Grouse.

Barbara: I had always heard it was all about protecting the lek sites, but it's more than that. We need to be protecting critical areas that can vary throughout the year. Can you apply new stipulations to existing leases?

Cagney: Case law says that we can if we have a specific reason to do so. We can't just apply a blanket stipulation everywhere.

Tom: how do you define a viable population? How do you know when you have one?

Cagney: It has to be self-sustaining.

Lanny: Why does Colorado Parks and Wildlife still have a hunting season if we're trying so hard to protect them?

March 8, 2012

Category 1

Dave Grisso, Tom Latham, Steve Loshbaugh, Wes McStay, John Potter

Category 2

Dona Shue, Steve Smith, Terry Sweet

Category 3

Dean Riggs, Kai Turner, Barbara Vasquez, Lanny Weddle

Absent

Dan Davidson, Cat 2; Pat Kennedy, Cat 2; Jeff Comstock, Cat 3

BLM

Jim Cagney, Steve Bennett, Dave Stout, Wendy Reynolds, Kent Walter, Catherine Robertson, David Boyd, Hannah Schechter

Public

Patti Williams; Denise Gibbons

Riggs called the meeting to order at 8 a.m.

GJFO RMP revision

Catherine Robertson gave a Powerpoint on the upcoming Draft RMP revision, currently scheduled to be released in fall 2012.

Upper Colorado River Fee Adjustment Proposal

Hannah Schechter gave a Powerpoint background on the proposal.

Terry: When do you expect you'll need to increase the fee again?

Hannah: We hope it's enough for now. This is the first increase since the fee started in 1998. The NW RAC asked us to increase from \$4 to \$5 to ensure we had enough and wouldn't be coming right back. We are trying to leverage other sources as well, and volunteers.

Cagney: These fee increases should not be an easy process. We've done three of these recently, but don't expect any more coming up.

Dean: We don't want to get into this every couple of years for each site.

Potter: This is my second meeting, second time we're hearing fee proposals.

Shue: One reason these proposals are all together is that the RecRAC wasn't meeting. Proposals are backed up.

Barbara: Is there a 6 month waiting period?

Hannah: Yes. This would go into effect next May. Probably would last 7 to 10 years.

Smith: Not afraid of this new authority. If we need to look at fee increases, then we need to do it. Want to review. We wanted you to increase to \$5 so that you would have enough. What is policy on quiet hours camping?

Hannah: 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Need to post that at the campground.

Potter: Can you put in/take out anywhere along this stretch?

Hannah: Very difficult because of topography. Most people want to use these developed areas.

Potter: What kinds of crafts do people use?

Hannah: Rafts, drift boats. Canoes not recommended

Potter: Do costs cover search and rescue?

Hannah: Covers our rangers, who can get to river faster. Need to work out communications and agreements with county.

Barbara: Are you keeping track of rescues?

Hannah: We document serious rescues.

Barbara moves to recommend the Upper Colorado River Fee Adjustment be implemented as presented.

Shue: Seconds

Cat 1: All present vote yes

Cat 2 All present vote yes

Cat 3 Riggs, Turner, Vasques vote yes. Lanny votes no

Motion passes

Public comment:

Patti Williams of Rangely. There have been cyanide poisonings of dogs in Rio Blanco County. Where is the law enforcement for this? You can't take your dog into the hills anymore.

Dean: That's more of a Parks and Wildlife issue than a BLM issue. I will get with you to discuss.

Patti: Also, RAC committees meet four times a year. Is that enough? There is an area that is supposed to be a restoration area outside of Rangely and the cattle are tromping all over it. Why? Some ranchers are overstaying their lease and causing damage. How do you enforce that?

Kent: The locations you bring up are in the field office I manage. If you have specific information, you should call us and we will look into it.

Patti: I have no problem with the money you need at BLM to run your programs. Yesterday no one asked me if I wanted a sandwich. That would have been a nice courtesy. We need to have different viewpoints at meetings like this. There was no warmth just because I am a wild horse advocate. Someone mentioned yesterday that advocates are not educated. That's not necessarily true. A lot are very educated. Both sides need to do some mending. BLM needs to get into the helicopters at the round-ups to make sure horses are treated humanely.

Recreation fee authority discussion:

The authority in the NW RAC charter to make recommendations on recreation fee proposals under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act expires Sept 30, 2012. It was a trial run for one year. Does the NW RAC want to continue with this role?

Barbara: We need to make the authority indefinite, without an expiration.

Lanny: Another Jackson County Commissioner was on the RecRAC. That group was not run well. No minutes, for instance. Things are much more efficient with this group. I'm personally opposed to fees, and Jackson County is opposed to fees, but as a group of private citizens advising BLM, the NW RAC should make the recommendations for BLM.

Cagney: Again, it should not be easy for us to implement fees. We had several that were backed up, but that's now clear. We probably won't have any for the NW RAC for quite a while. Do we have any other recreation fees in the works in NW Colorado?

Bennett: We may need to look at the Colorado River with the new Eagle County acquisitions. But this would be at least 2 or 3 years down the road.

Stout: We could see something for the North Sand Hills, but not without lots of discussions with the county and others first. Also would be several years away.

Dona moves that a resolution be drafted that states the NW RAC wants to continue with its recreation fee recommendation authority (under FLREA).

Lanny seconds.

Dave Boyd will work with Barbara to draft the resolution. The group will formally vote on it at the May meeting.

MISC topics:

Dean asks Kai to give recap of national association of counties in DC

Kai: Biggest topic was how to get more control back to counties and local field offices, forest districts. Local collaboration should lead to the best decision that wouldn't be challenged. PILT is diminishing. Resolution passed to have logging money shared with state and local similar to mineral leasing to deal with decrease in PILT. A lot of discussion about bill for retiring grazing allotments, passed resolution against that bill. Discussion about there being a difference between formal cooperation and coordination. Clean coal discussions for Colorado. Recommendation that sage grouse plans be made by the specific field offices, they know best

Dean: I also want to make sure the new proposed camping rule gets ample public review. When the new rule is out for public comment, Dave Boyd will make sure he get sit to all the NW RAC members.

Grisso: We heard the presentation on hydraulic fracturing and water use yesterday. I just want to make it clear that since 2003 industry has made great strides in using recycled water for fracking. At EnCana, for instance, we have enough water rights to use 100 percent new water for fracking. Since we recycle our water, we only use 13 percent new water. So the numbers you see about water use per well can be misleading.

Statewide Meeting wrap-up:

The group agreed that these statewide RAC meetings are valuable and worth doing. Several members mentioned that February would have been a better time.

Some suggestions:

- Needed name tags as well as the place cards. Could color code the tags by RAC.
- Last time we were given contact information for the other RACs. We want that again.
- The room set up was not the best. Should set up with a square or u-shape rather than classroom style.
- Needs to be a clear place for the public to sit. We had public in attendance and we didn't know they were public and didn't acknowledge them like we should.
- Might think about introductions each day because attendance changed.
- First day's agenda was pretty light, but the second day was good.
- The break-out pods were a good thing to do. Be sure to give topics out in advance.
- Maybe have a mixer before and/or after dinner, not just a dinner. We had two hours between the meeting and dinner
- Should assign seating at dinner somehow to ensure we met new people

Topics for next meeting:

May 9, 10 in Silt

Feature new innovations in oil and gas. Unlike anything like we've had before, requires year-round.

Want water quality/treatment component. Wildlife habitat requirements

Coal program

Sage grouse update

Fee resolution vote

August 22, 23 in Meeker

WRFO RMPA is out showing how we are going to deal with those changes