

BLM Resource Advisory Council

Final Minutes

May 20-21, 2014

Idaho Falls, ID

In attendance: Aaron Swift, Garth Blanchard, Kevin Poor, Todd Kuck, Joe Kraayenbrink, Linda Price, Dave Pacioretty, Matt Woodard, Karen Rice, Sarah Wheeler, Jeremy Casterson, Chad Colter, Babette Thorpe, Stephen Bauchman, Shane Rosenkrance, Louise Stark.

Guests: Coby Tigert - TRCP and Chris Bauer - Agrium

Round Robin Discussion

Roundtable introductions were made by all in attendance. Jeremy Casterson welcomed everyone to the Upper Snake FO and thanked everyone for travelling to Idaho Falls, ID. Joe Kraayenbrink presented a brief overview of ongoing activities on the Idaho Falls District including budget and staffing positions. Youth employment projects are ongoing and BLM permittees have been asked to take voluntary reductions in AUM's. Wild Horse update – nationwide there are approximately 48k horses accounted for and BLM management level is 27K. 64% of BLM's Wild Horse and Burro budget is spent on short and long term holding facilities. This year nationwide 2300 horses will be gathered and placed into holding facilities. Due to the nature of BLM lacking places to house the horses' roundups are for the most part on hold. Joe K. wants Bob Cope (Lemhi County Commissioner and Veterinary) who has been named to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory committee to speak to the RAC at a future date. BLM is coordinating a "planning 2.0" tool to improve the land use process and is seeking the publics' involvement. Construction on the Hot Shot facility in Pocatello is underway.

Public Comments

None

Field Office Updates

Jeremy Casterson, Upper Snake

- Jeremy updated the group on the Fisher Bottoms project. The University of Oregon will be participating in helping restore the old home site on the property this summer.
- The Upper Snake FO has asked permittees to voluntarily reduce AUM's due to drought management. Thus far all permittees have done so voluntarily.

- The Upper Snake FO is involved in 2 court cases Big Desert Sheep and WWP v USFWS and USFS regarding bull trout in the Little Lost River Valley.
- Kevin Poor asked for an update on shooting in the Menan Butte area. Jeremy responded saying the area was closed to all shooting but now after coordination with IDFG the area is only closed to target shooting NOT hunting.

Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello

- Travel Management Planning is ongoing.
- Ongoing conflict in the City Creek area with multiple users.
- Working with Onieda County to fund road maintenance.
- Bids have gone out on timber sales for the “State Fire” area and “Soda Hills” area fires, both are salvage logging.
- Prescribed burns taking place this Spring in the Soda Hills area.
- Crews performing post fire rehab.

Todd Kuck, Challis

- Draft EIS for Thompson Creek Mine out for public comment thru June 18th, 2014. 2 open houses have been held in Boise and Challis. BLM has received 305 comments from the public, most comments are in favor of the mine expansion. Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued in February of 2015. Stephen Bauchman asked about public comments on the land exchange and what the public was most concerned about. Todd K. responded the public is mostly concerned by government taking ownership of the land and that it may result in a loss of a working ranch.
- “Wild Love Preserve” has been given title to 85 horses they adopted a year ago. Louise Stark asked if the horses will go to private ranches eventually. BLM stated that is the ultimate goal of “Wild Love Preserve”.
- Challis FO will not be holding a Wild Horse gather this year.

Linda Price, Salmon

- Staff working on watershed assessments.
- Awaiting decisions on grazing appeals.
- Seasonal staff on board.
- High Divide and partners moving forward with private land parcels.
- TMP ongoing.

Chad Colter – Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

Chad presented a slide show of Native American traditions and ongoing tribal work to improve tribal resources throughout the district.

Big Desert Tour Discussion – Jeremy Casterson – USFO Manager

Jeremy Casterson presented a slide show on the Big Desert and the resources it provides, including Sage-Grouse, forage reserve, cultural, fire and fuels history. Ongoing work involving Upper Snake FO staff includes fuels reduction and fuels break work.

Bobcat Cave Discussion – Marissa Guenther - Archeologist

Marissa provided the group with a description of Bobcat Cave and cultural resources.

Bat Discussion – Justin Frye – Wildlife Biologist

Justin provided an overview of bats on the Big Desert and their habitats.

Day 2

RAC members toured Big Southern Butte and had discussions about BLM's work on fuel breaks. RAC members toured Bobcat Cave.

Meeting Adjourned

Future Meetings

September 9th and 10th, Salmon, ID – Topics TBD.