

**BLM Idaho Falls District – Resource Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Day 1**  
June 16, 2015

**Opening**

The new member orientation meeting of the BLM Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on June 16, 2015 in the BLM Pocatello Field Office conference room by Sarah Wheeler, BLM Idaho Falls District RAC Coordinator.

**Present**

John Goode, Jerald Raymond, Coby Tigert, Blaine Newman, Matt Woodard, Stephen Bauchman, Louise Stark, Kevin Poor, Babette Thorpe, Garth Blanchard, Mike Kuyper, Sarah Wheeler, Dave Pacioretty, Arn Berglund, Jeremy Casterson, Deena Teel, Dan Isaak, Linda Price, Todd Kuck, Karen Price

**New Member Orientation - Informational**

*Sarah Wheeler, Idaho Falls District RAC Coordinator*

New members of the Idaho Falls District RAC were in attendance for the morning session. The agenda focused on introducing new members to the Idaho Falls District and detailing the purpose and function of the RAC and administrative requirements for RAC members.

**Introduction to BLM**

*Jeremy Casterson, Acting Idaho Falls District Manager*

An overview of the BLM and IF District included discussion of:

- National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) created in 1924
- Idaho Falls District:
  - 3.7 million acres
  - 130 employees (250 during the summer season)
  - Field Offices    Approx. Acres    Manager

Challis	799,000	Todd Kuck
Salmon	493,000	Linda Price
Pocatello	603,000	Dave Pacioretty
Upper Snake	1,854,000	Jeremy Casterson (Deena Teel – acting)

**Introduction to RAC**

The Idaho Falls District RAC provides advice and recommendations to the BLM on resource and land management issues for federal public lands in central and southeast Idaho. General duties include advising on implementation of Land Use Plans (LUPs) and providing recommendations on ecosystem management. In addition to general advisory roles, the RAC specifically advises on land use planning, recreation and travel planning and use fee increases (including USFS managed lands within the District boundaries).

The RAC can provide recommendations or comments on actions within the Idaho Falls District.

- Recommendations require a RAC quorum
- Comments can be provided without a quorum

RAC subcommittees can be formed to address specific issues in more depth. Subcommittees can include non-RAC members.

Further discussion and general information was provided on a number of topics including sage grouse, right-of-ways, wildfire and wild horses.

The Idaho Falls RAC meets three to four times each year. All meetings must be noticed in the Federal Register 30 days in advance.

### ***Per Diem/Reimbursement, How it works –Informational***

*Wesley Devall, Idaho Falls District Property Management Specialist*

Wes provided a thorough overview of the BLM reimbursement process and forms. Per Diem rates are \$46/full days and \$34.50/first and last days. Mileage rate is \$0.575/mile. Any questions should be direct to Wes at (208) 524-7515 or [wdevall@blm.gov](mailto:wdevall@blm.gov).

### ***Introduction to Government Process - Informational***

*Jeremy Casterson, Acting Idaho Falls District Manager*

Jeremy presented an overview of the BLM process for land management. In simple terms, this is a 3-tier process created by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) in 1976. The 3 tiers are:

1. Law - FLPMA governs the way in which the public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management are managed and requires land use planning;
2. Land Use Plans(LUPs) - used by managers and the public to:
  - a. Allocate resources and determine appropriate multiple uses for the public lands
  - b. Develop a strategy to manage and protect resources
  - c. Set up systems to monitor and evaluate status of resources and effectiveness of management practices over time;
3. Implementation - identifies the work associated with LUPs and creates the actions to implement the LUP.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) must also be considered in BLM land management. A determination of the level of NEPA involvement is required for all actions.

Levels of NEPA consideration include:

- CE or CX – Category Exclusion – similar with other approved actions
- DNA – Designation of NEPA Authority – the decision has already been made
- EA – Environmental Assessment – requires a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) to proceed
- EIS – Environmental Impact Statement – will have significant impact. Need, alternatives and analysis required

All NEPA actions (CE thru EIS) require public participation.

***Introduction to Field Office Jurisdictions - Informational***

*Deena Teel, Acting Upper Snake Field Office Manger*

*Todd Kuck, Challis Field Office*

*Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello Field Office*

*Linda Price, Salmon Field Office*

Each of the Field Office Manager provided an overview of their areas. Highlights include:

Challis: 14 campgrounds, 7 WSAs totaling approx. 18,000 acres, no fire response based in Field Office, 65 grazing allotments with 74 permittees, 93% of FO available for grazing, 363 miles of fishable streams, large percentage of sage grouse habitat.

Salmon: 18 recreation sites, large portions of the Lewis & Clark and Nez Perce trails, 87 grazing allotments with 128 permittees, large percentage of sage grouse habitat, north half travel plan completed in 2011 – south half travel plan in revision process.

Pocatello: made up of mostly noncontiguous lands scattered amongst private lands, 14 recreation sites, 450 grazing allotments with 370 permittees, Resource Management Plan completed in 2012, three current timber sales, phosphate mine management and permitting a major function.

Upper Snake: recreation areas include the South Fork, Henry's Fork and Main Snake River and Sand Dunes, 700 right of ways, 361 grazing allotments with about 25% sheep, 85% of the field office is sage grouse habitat, Resource Management Plan(RMP) revision began in 2008 and is still in process awaiting the sage grouse EIS Record of Decision.

**Afternoon Session – General Meeting**

***Welcome - Informational***

*Jeremy Casterson, Acting Idaho Falls District Manager*

*Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello Field Office Manager*

The regular meeting of the BLM Idaho Falls District RAC (RAC) was called to order at 1:00 p.m. on June 16, 2015 in the BLM Pocatello Field Office conference room by Jeremy Casterson and Dave Pacioretty.

***Introductions /Housekeeping items - Informational***

*Sarah Wheeler, Idaho Falls District RAC Coordinator*

Introduction of new members and general housekeeping discussion of status of the sage grouse EIS and how BLM implementation of NEPA projects was discussed. Questions included timelines for implementation and costs.

***Election of RAC Officers - Action Item***

Elections for open offices were held. New officers for the coming year:

Chairman - Matt Woodard  
Vice-Chairman - Kevin Poor  
Secretary - Coby Tigert

### ***Public Comments***

Louise Stark – White Cloud Outfitters: Outfitters operating within Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are experiencing inconsistent stipulations on their use permits within some Field Offices. Outfitters have received use permits stating that they are not authorized to guide for hunting and fishing in WSAs within the area of their permit. Louise requested that the BLM develop a programmatic EA or CE to cover commercial activities within WSAs. Not being able to guide within WSAs could put some outfitters out of business.

Linda Price pointed out that some within the wilderness community believe that no commercial activity is allowed in WSAs, but that actually commercial activity that is allowed in wilderness areas can be allowed in WSAs. Guiding and outfitting is allowed in wilderness areas. Linda recommended a presentation for the next RAC meeting.

Jeremy recommended discussing the situation with Cody Martin in the Shoshone FO.

### ***Approve Meeting Minutes - Action Item***

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### ***Pocatello Project Updates - Informational***

*Blaine Newman, Pocatello Field Office, Assistant Manager*

### ***Twin Lakes Canal Company/Oneida Narrows Dam on Bear River - Informational***

FERC is expected to release the Environmental Impact Statement soon. The proposal for this dam by the Twin Lakes Canal Company began in 2004. Issues related to the dam from the public, other agencies and the BLM include:

- Existing dam has a significant commitment to restoration that would be disrupted
- Loss of multiple resources within the impact area – wildlife, cultural, recreation, others
- One of the last remaining undammed stretches of the Bear River
- Flooding of the Oneida Narrows RNA
- Bonneville Cutthroat habitat
- Potential NWSR status
- Recreational and public access
- Northwest Power Council statement that a reservoir should not exist here
- Generally, not in the public interest
- Water rights in the Bear River have been denied to the applicant
- Idaho Department of Water Resources has turned this down

Babette Thorpe asked if the RAC can provide a comment letter to FERC. Chairman Matt Woodard stated that he believed that the RAC should comment on the EIS.

### ***Soda Hills Management - Informational***

The Soda Hills are managed primarily for Mule Deer winter range in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. It is a high value recreational area and provides winter habitat for mule deer from a large area of southeast Idaho. Four thousand acres of private inholdings were purchased with funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Bonneville Power Administration and Safari Club International in 1998 and transferred to the BLM and the state of Idaho resulting in over 9,300 acres of public lands to be managed for mule deer.

Major projects have included:

- Weed control
- Travel management revision
- Riparian area damage control and restoration
- Wildlife habitat restoration
- Juniper encroachment reduction
- Grazing management to benefit wildlife
- Targeted timber sales for habitat restoration

### ***Climate Change Discussion - Informational***

*Dan Isaak, U.S. Forest Service Fish Research Scientist*

Dan presented a wealth of information about climate change and ongoing efforts to develop a data base that will aid in predicting its future impacts on the landscape and wildlife. Building this data base began around 1990 and shows promise in predicting conditions 50 to 100 years into the future. Trends indicate that change is real and are resulting in serious issues including increasing water temperatures and larger wildfires.

Among the challenges that climate change presents is that we cannot 'save it all', so developing good information will allow for strategic site level protections to protect the most resilient resource areas. The good news is that we are developing a lot of tools to address change. The amount of change is the "unknowable unknown".

Q&A followed with Kevin asking how accepted is this climate change data and is it being incorporated into land use planning. Dan, Jeremy and Arn commented on how it is beginning to be used in planning. Stephen asked about how to address the question of whether climate change is man caused or not and how we can use the information. Jeremy noted that NEPA requires the BLM to consider greenhouse gasses, so climate change is already being considered in the planning process.

### ***Meeting adjourned***

With no other business, Matt adjourned the meeting at 4:40 after reviewing meeting locations for the field trip on day two.

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***Tour of the Soda Springs Hills - Informational***

Discussion of cooperative partnerships, wildlife habitat improvements, water systems and riparian improvements, travel planning, livestock grazing management and fire and fuels management detailed BLM actions in the Soda Hills.

***Bear River Dam Tour and Discussion - Action Item***

The Oneida Narrows section of the Bear River was toured with discussion of the impacts of the proposed dam. This is an outstanding landscape within an already heavily developed watershed. Many of the potential impacts to recreation, landscape and resources were viewed and discussed.

At the end of the discussion, Chairman Matt Woodard again stated that he believed that the RAC should comment on the EIS when it is released. Follow up is needed.

***Schedule fall meeting - Action Item***

Discussion was held regarding the fall meeting. A consensus was reached that the meeting will be held in Challis with a tentative date of September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Recommendations for the next meeting agenda are to be sent to Sarah Wheeler.

***New Business***

There was no new business.

***Meeting adjourned***

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45 by Matt Woodard, BLM Idaho Falls District RAC Chairman.

Minutes submitted by: Coby Tigert, BLM Idaho Falls District RAC Secretary

Approved by: