

Northwest Resource Advisory Council Meeting
March 2, 2017
Glenwood Springs Community Center CO

Minutes

NW RAC Present

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Jim Mattern	Connor Coleman	Tom Jankovsky
Wes McStay	Carl Conner	George Newman
Scott Robertson	Mike Pritchard	Dean Riggs
	Barbara Vasquez	

Not present: David Ludlam, Category 1; Luke Schafer, Category 2; Lanny Weddle, Category 3

BLM attendees: David Boyd, Andrew Archuleta, Shonna Dooman, Kent Walter, Bruce Sillitoe, Amy Carmichael, Heather Sauls, Lonny Bagley; Keesha Cary; Jimmy Brown; Erin Leifield; Greg Shoop.

Public: Greg Gohn, Summit Midstream; Floyd Alvey, Summit Midstream; Tracey Jensen, SMP; Michael Hanb, CVX; Soren Jespersen, The Wilderness Society; Betsy Bair, Senator Gardner's office; Jessica Donahue, Black Hills

Called to order 8:10 a.m. A quorum is present.

Introductions. Barbara reminded the group that the NW RAC has always been able to work together despite differing political views, listening actively to and learning from one another, and that she hopes that will continue to be the case

David Boyd reviewed the NW RAC openings in 2017. BLM will be filling six positions to replace positions vacated last year following the NW District and RAC restructuring as well as 2017 expiration of current member terms. Two category 1 positions, one category 2, and three category 3 positions will be open. Current members whose terms are up are encouraged to reapply, and members are encouraged to let folks who would be good candidates know. The nomination period should be open in March, and David will make sure to keep the group posted.

David Boyd explained that the State Office has scheduled a statewide RAC meeting for June 19-21 in Gunnison. More information to come, but expect travel time the morning of the 19th and afternoon of the 21st. The separate meeting for the NW RAC will be the morning of the 21st.

As a result of the Statewide RAC meeting, the June NW RAC meeting that had been scheduled for May 31 and June 1 in Meeker will be canceled.

Election

Jim moves for Barbara to remain chair. Carl seconds. Passes unanimously.

Barbara Nominates Mike as vice chair. Scott seconds. Passes unanimously.

Charter

Andrew reviewed the charter with the group, highlighting that DOI/BLM is part of the executive branch, and the NW RAC advises DOI/BLM through the designated federal officer. As a group, the NW RAC can't comment on legislation nor lobby Congress. The designated federal officer (Andrew) sets agenda, but will always ask for feedback.

Wes asked if a unanimous vote is needed to forward something to the Secretary of the Interior.

David said that had not been explained correctly in the past. The regulations state that all formal votes need three people in each category to vote yes. Any resolution that passes is forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior through the designated federal officer and state office. However, if the RAC feels that BLM is not responsive or ignoring their advice, they can only forward that concern to the Secretary of the Interior if the vote is unanimous.

Multiple use presentation – David Boyd

David started his presentation with a question: How would you define Multiple Use? The responses from the RAC came close to his final definition.

Tom: Appreciates this presentation and thinks FLMPA is a good thing because it was passed by Congress. In addition to the specific definition of multiple use in FLMPA, there is also one for "sustained yield," which is also part of BLM's mandate.

Mike: Doesn't seem to be clear guidance on what can and cannot happen in Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. Can the mountain bike trail or road remaining in Thompson Creek be maintained, for instance?

Dave: The goal is to maintain the existing wilderness character, so it really depends on what kind of maintenance, and how that maintenance would impact those characteristics. But there isn't a set of specific rules that lands with wilderness characteristics carry, (unlike designated wilderness areas), which gives BLM more flexibility.

Tom clarified that most of the wilderness characteristics in Thompson Creek were on the Pitkin County side, but that Garfield County said they could support the area being

managed for wilderness characteristics if the road and mountain bike trail currently existing remained.

Barbara asked Carl Conner whether the presentation had addressed concerns raised at the Dec RAC meeting regarding public access on oil/gas leases. Lonny Bagley had stated at the last meeting that public cannot be denied access to leased lands. Carl said his questions had been answered.

PRESENTATIONS:

The notes below highlighting questions and discussion pertain to the information materials presented at the meeting and posted on the NWRAC portion of the BLM website.

Budget – Amy Carmichael

This second presentation on budget was provided by Amy as a followup requested by the RAC at the end of the Dec 2016 meeting.

A question about which money BLM can carry over from one year to the next. Answer: Washington decides whether money can be carried over. Congress decided how that money was to be used. Not every agency can carry over, but BLM has that flexibility. Doesn't happen ever time, though.

Tom: How does BLM fund its administrative support? Do programs pay for salaries?

Amy: Specific program employees get paid through that program or programs. Admin and other support people charge across programs.

Kent: In other words there is no "administrative bucket" for administration. Those positions charge across programs

Tom: Currently no budget from Congress for this year, so how does that work?

Amy: Continuing resolution that allows us to spend at last year's level.

Stephanie: It can make it hard to do projects if we're under a continuing resolution because the funding can be different from year to year

Barbara: What money collected locally by a field office stays with that field office?

Amy: Some realty actions, recreation fees, some grazing fees

Mike: Your labor looks higher than your budget for 2017. How do you manage that?

Amy: Cut costs, partnerships, help from State Office.

Andrew: District is responsible for field office budgets. We work with field managers to resolve issues. We can move money from one field office to another, keeping within the same bucket (program). If we can't balance it, we go to the State Office. If we still can't balance it at the State level, we then go to Washington.

Mike: Of the 50 buckets, can we see pie chart or how they are distributed at district level?

Amy: I can pull that together today (included in the presentation materials posted).

Barbara: A request to David: Please post presentation materials on-line as they are available. It doesn't have to wait for the approved meeting minutes.

Carl: You need to be thinking about how to generate money from the bottom up if you are getting less money from higher up

Barbara: Yes, public/private partnerships are key

Mike: We (mountain bike group) paid \$15,000 for cultural resource surveys, but that doesn't show up in these numbers.

Kent: We count the accomplishments that money helped create, which helps with funding the next year.

Mike: The mountain bike group paid directly for the surveys to get the maximum benefit for the funds. It avoided the BLM administrative cut off the top.

Stephanie – It helps us get more money if we have more accomplishments

Barbara: So do the increased accomplishments from the partnerships create financial momentum?

yes

Public comment

Soren Jespersen – I live in Steamboat and work for The Wilderness Society. Good to hear discussion of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. It's nothing new. Wilderness Act was passed in 1964. FLPMA requires BLM to inventory for LWC. It's a resource just like oil and gas or wildlife habitat. BLM has to consider LWCs in their RMPs.

Naturalness, opportunity solitude or primitive recreation, etc. An area doesn't have to be "pretty" to be wilderness, it just needs to have wilderness characteristics. It can be PJ, flat playas, whatever the landscape. There can be trails within LWC, and you can have vegetation treatments in LWC. The question is how do you do it? Have to look at whether maintenance or actions impact the wilderness characteristics identified in the inventory. Not one size fits all, which is the beauty of them.

Pipelines – Keesha Cary, Lonny Bagley

This second set of presentations on oil and gas issues was provided by Lonny and Keesha as a followup requested by the RAC at the end of the Dec 2016 meeting.

Keesha passed around several books of regulations pertaining to pipelines.

Wes: Explain how eminent domain works for pipelines

Lonny: FERC has to show it is in the public's interest. Not BLM's decision.

Mike: How do you make the decision to for an above-ground or below-ground pipeline?
Does an abandoned pipeline need to be removed?

Keesha: Pipelines are authorized for 30 years. Abandoned lines that are buried are left – it will likely cause more damage to remove. The surface facilities are removed. Depends on type of line for above or below. Short-term may be above ground to reduce surface damage. May protect sensitive resources with an above ground line. Fire and other stipulations come into play.

Barbara: Is there a central database for leaks and failures?

Lonny: Look at state sites

Kent: When we issue rights of way, it could be water, gas, oil. You need a ROW for each one.

Barbara: Please include links to these handouts on website (books, etc)

Tom: Jordon Cove – will BLM be involved?

Lonny: USFS and private, so BLM should not be involved

Tom: FLPMA mentioned for ROW aspect?

Yes

Tom: One issue we hear a lot about from our constituents is gathering lines through pinyon juniper, which cause scarring and take a long time to come back. Each company has its own gathering lines, and the public asks why can't they be one ROW?

Lonny: BLM looks at visual aspects, tries to collocate along existing ROWs

Barbara: Do reservations own mineral rights?

Lonny: BIA handles that

Tom: Tribe gets royalties back

Connor: How are abandoned lines cleaned and can they be recommissioned?

Keesa: They are flushed under state standards. Lab sampling is required to ensure contaminants are below standards. They could be re-commissioned, but since the ROW is abandoned with the pipeline, they would need to apply for a new right of way.

Barbara: Are double-walled pipelines required by BLM?

Lonny: Double-walled pipelines are used primarily at water crossings, which most often are tunneled under a waterway.

Scott: You identify transmission corridors. Does that come through Field offices? Do they try to keep ROWs to specific corridors?

Keesha: Corridors are identified in RMPs for each office. We try to consolidate locations as much as possible

Carl: What are the regulations about plastic pipelines vs metal? Much less environmental impact from plastic lines from what I have seen.

Lonny – ROW requirements don't specify. We evaluate each proposal.

Wes – I agree, encourage plastic lines

Barbara: Is there a central depository for data on pipeline failures/leaks that includes NW Colorado?

Keesha: You need to look to the states for such data.

Barbara: Can you please add links to the various regulations and authorities you have referenced in your presentation?

Barbara: How are oil and gas leases handled on Indian reservations?

Lonny: The BIA is the agency responsible. BLM works for BIA in managing O/G leases. Royalties on reservations are usually higher than on BLM lands and part of the royalties flow to the tribes or the individual owners, depending how the reservation ownership is constituted.

Question: Who has responsibility of safety inspection?

Keesha: PHSMA (Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration) is the federal agency in Department of Transportation and sets minimum standards for state safety regulations. PHSMA has only 188 inspectors who much cover over 3000 companies and 2.7M miles of pipelines. Only 8% of their budget is spent on failure inspection.

NW Oil and Gas lease map – Lonny

Barbara: Thanks for coming to present this followup to your Dec presentation, especially since you'll be leaving very soon for a detail in D.C.

Barbara: What are the timeframes allowed for wells to be considered 'exploratory' as opposed to 'producing'?

Lonny: Companies can hold a well as 'exploratory' for up to 5 years and can be extended by up to 2 years. A minimum of six months of production data (could be up to a year) are needed to determine whether a well is 'paying'. One 'paying' well in a unit can hold the rest of the leases in the unit 'under production' for ___??

If a lease is approaching expiration, the operators may try to rush the formation of a unit to hold such leases 'under production'. After a unit is formed, the operator has a limited time (*how long?*) to demonstrate production or the lease, even though in a unit, may expire.

Barbara: What is the difference between 'extension' and 'suspension' of a lease?

Lonny: Federal oil and gas leases are good for 10 years unless the leaseholder produces oil and/or gas in 'payable' quantities, or the lease becomes part of a unit. In that case the lease term is "extended" until the leases are no longer producing. We say that the leases are "held by production" in that case. Leases can be suspended at the leaseholder's request, and this stops the 10-year clock. Suspensions are typically granted when the leaseholder is awaiting action from the agency on the lease.

Cultural resources presentation – Erin Leifield (BLM), Carl Connor (DARG)

Barbara: How do you determine which tribes to consult? Prehistory is not always clear.

Erin: The tribes often determine that. We use standard maps. Out here it is mostly the three Ute Tribes. Field Offices maintain standard lists.

Mike: After you find the sites, can you release location or do you have to hide them?

Erin: We don't release specific locations of sites.

Dave: We might identify sites for public visitation in the RMPs. Steps are taken to "harden" these sites to reduce impacts from visitation.

Barbara: How long are surveys valid? Tools and techniques change over time, and I imagine criteria or emphasis may change from RMP to RMP.

Erin: The general rule in our area is about 20 years. Northern Utes use a 5 year rule.

GPS really helps now. Over time you can have erosion, fire, etc. It also depends on quality of the original inventory.

Barbara (to Carl Conner): Are the presentation materials on petroglyphs and pictographs you have shown us available on your DARG website?

Carl: We are days away from releasing our new website. I will provide a link to David to post with the minutes.

Comment from State Office:

Greg Shoop: Ruth wanted me to stop in to say hello. Thank you for being on the RAC, we need your advice. You serve an important function. Ruth and I greatly appreciate your time and service.

Public comment

Michael Hobb: I work for a pipeline company but am just speaking as an individual. You all had a question about fiberglass pipelines. There are advantages of steel pipelines in some cases. There are lots of things to consider. I would encourage you to give operators the flexibility to use what they deem best.

Follow-up budget questions – Amy

Conner: Who pays for land exchanges?

Dave: The proponent mostly pays through a cost-recovery account.

Tom: Who pays for the Colorado River Valley Office's oil and gas work for other offices, like Grand Junction and Montrose?

Amy: The District give CRV the money to do that work.

Manager Updates

Northwest District, Andrew Archuleta

Northwest Colorado Vegetation Treatment Programmatic EA – The Northwest District is writing a programmatic environmental assessment to streamline approval of projects designed to improve Greater Sage Grouse and big game habitat, as was presented at the Dec. 2016 NW RAC meeting. The BLM received 10 scoping comment letters from a variety of agencies and organizations. A wide variety of issues and concerns were raised. In general there was support for the habitat work and the programmatic EA, although that was not unanimous. Specific concerns included ensuring that pinon-juniper

being removed is actually encroaching into sage grouse habitat and ensuring that there were specific habitat objectives. Several suggested that BLM conduct an EIS-level analysis. One letter was concerned that the treatments also benefit livestock grazing. BLM will address the scoping comments in its preliminary EA, which is anticipated to be released for public review in late May.

Greater Sage Grouse update – The Northwest District and its field offices continue to implement the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Management Plan. A five-year plan of work was developed for projects planned to benefit grouse. The sage grouse team has been working to ensure BLM staff understands the national guidance (Instruction Memoranda) issued for sage grouse. A cooperating agency meeting was held in Silt Feb. 12. The national guidance was discussed, and cooperators expressed interest in meetings for specific stakeholders such as oil and gas operators and livestock permittees.

Dave will send link to IM on greater sage grouse. Mail to Wes

Northwest District oil and gas update – The Dec. 8, 2016 oil and gas lease sale generated \$1.59 million, 49 percent of which went to the State of Colorado. The 24 of the 28 parcels sold were in the Northwest District, all in Mesa and Garfield counties. The Northwestern Colorado parcels totaled 18,349 acres and netted the majority of the revenue generated -- \$1.58 million. The highest per-acre price was for an 80-acre parcel in Garfield County, sold to Chevron U.S.A. for \$260 per acre. The next lease sale that includes parcels from Northwest Colorado will be June 8, 2017. The final sale notice will be announced March 10, initiating a 30-day protest period. The BLM analyzed more than 100,000 acres in the White River, Little Snake and Kremmling field offices for this lease sale. Scoping for the December 2017 lease sale ends March 8. The BLM is considering 28 parcels totaling about 29,600 acres in Garfield and Mesa counties for the December 2017 lease sale. The BLM has moved entirely to an online bidding system for its competitive oil and gas lease sales.

Transwest/Gateway South Records of Decision issued – The BLM issued Records of Decision for the TransWest Express and Gateway South Transmission Lines Projects on Dec. 13, 2016. The transmission projects will deliver electric power mostly generated from wind projects in south-central Wyoming to southern Nevada. The powerlines pass through the Little Snake and White River field offices. The selected routes avoid the Tuttle Ranch Conservation Easement in Moffat County, which was a concern raised at a NW RAC meeting and in public/cooperator comments. The routes largely avoid Greater Sage Grouse habitat. Where they do cross grouse habitat, specific mitigation is required to minimize avian predation and bird strikes, such as self-supported tubular monopole structures. The companies are now working on their requirements for their Notices to Proceed, which include surveys, soil surveys and other requirements.

Guidelines for Quality Trail Experience update – As was mentioned in an earlier NW RAC meeting, the BLM is working with the International Mountain Biking Association

on a report that can be used at a local level when communities are working with BLM representatives to plan new trail systems or ensure their trails are meeting user expectations. The document also includes synopses of existing trails on BLM land in Fruita and Grand Junction, Colo.; Moab, Utah; and Hailey, Idaho to provide examples of how a community can use the guidelines to examine existing trails and judge whether they meet that community's objectives. Draft guidelines were released in November, with final guidelines expected this summer.

Upper Colorado River Interagency and Northwest Fire Management Units – Both fire units in the Northwest District have begun the process to hire summer seasonals and other fire personal. UCR is working with the Grand Junction and Garfield County airports regarding future facilities. Northwest is working with the Craig Airport regarding a single engine air tanker base. The fire units have good working relationships with all three airports.

Conner – Did hiring freeze affect hiring firefighters?

Andrew – We are able to hire seasonals now.

White River Field Office, Kent Walter

Buffalo Horn Land Exchange – The White River Field office received about 50 comments during the public scoping period for the proposed Buffalo Horn Land Exchange. About 25 people attended a public open house in Meeker. WRFO has not yet completed a detailed comment analysis, but comments included concerns about the exchange being in the public interest, concerns about management of split estate that could result, and some specific concerns about fence lines. A draft EA of the proposed exchange is anticipated this fall. The proposed exchange of surface estates only would convey 16 parcels of Federal lands totaling approximately 3,806 acres in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties for two non-Federal parcels in Rio Blanco County and one parcel in Moffat County totaling 4,036 acres.

Travel Management process continues – With the NW RAC forwarding the recommendations of its subgroup on the White River Travel Management Plan regarding area designations, the White River Field Office has incorporated the recommendations and is working on the impacts analysis for each alternative. A preliminary EA with a preferred alternative should be available for cooperating agency review in the summer and available for public review in the fall. The Field Office staff this summer completed a three-year effort to inventory all the BLM travel routes within the Field Office. The Field Office will hold a public meeting in Dinosaur in March for the public to review the data. After the public review, the data will be combined with the 2014 and 2015 inventory data and the entire data set will be part of the travel management plan amendment. Ideally, the final travel route inventory public products will include: hard copy maps, geo-referenced pdf maps, KML Google Earth files, ArcMap Online, and a geodatabase for ArcGIS users.

Wes – Travel mgt – trails designated open and closed. What happens if you make a mistake? What is process to correct? Can you use adaptive management?

Kent – Would depend on issue. Hopefully only small amount of NEPA would be needed.

Andrew – This would be covered under RMP plan maintenance in many cases.

Kent – That's why we are doing our next meeting in Dinosaur, close to the proposed decisions.

Wild horses to be gathered from private land – The White River Field Office is planning to gather about 70 wild horses from private lands near Cathedral Creek, outside the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area in late fall or early winter. A preliminary environment assessment is anticipated to be available for public review in June. The Field Office is also working with private organizations to improve a short section of fencing to alleviate horses moving onto this private land.

Ute Tribe proposes direct sale purchase -- On December 27, 2016, the White River Field Office received a proposal from the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation to purchase, through direct sale, 2,452.73 acres of BLM-administered lands near Dinosaur, Colorado. The lands are adjacent to the Colorado/Utah State Line. Because the lands proposed for purchase are adjacent to Tribal lands in Utah, the Tribe believes the purchase will help them meet the requirements to develop a casino. The Tribe believes that acquiring this land will help them meet the requirements of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which allows casinos to be built on tribe-owned lands adjacent to Indian reservations. WRFO met with the Tribe last week to get more information about their proposal, and also coordinated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A number of questions about the proposal and the larger process will need to be answered before WRFO would begin a formal evaluation through an EA or EIS. If the BLM decides to formally evaluate the proposal, the public will have multiple opportunities for review and comment.

Little Snake Field Office, Bruce Sillitoe

Sand Wash Basin Wild Horse Bait-trapping – The Little Snake Field Office and Northwest District have been working closely with the Sand Wash Advocacy Team (SWAT) and the Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary (GEMS) since November to bait trap wild horses in Sand Wash Basin. Currently the herd numbers more than 600, although the appropriate management level is between 162 and 362 horses. BLM and its partners hope to remove up to 50 wild horses, many of which would be placed at GEMS, and treat up to 75 mares with the fertility treatment PZP. Bait-trapping involves setting up a temporary corral with attractants such as hay and water. At a strategic point the gate on the corral is closed. It is a less-controversial technique, but it can be difficult. To date 157 horses have been gathered: 115 have been released including 14 mares treated with PZP. Forty-two horses have been removed and shipped to the Canon City facility. All are in good

condition. We are continuing to assess operations and are currently planning to continue as weather permits.

Little Snake coordinates with CDOT regarding horses near Highway 318 – In early February the field office began getting reports of wild horses on Highway 318 next to the Sand Wash Basin. The field office has seen this in the past when snow is deep in the Basin. The BLM and its partners contacted CDOT, which placed temporary warning signs alerting motorists to the possibility of horses on the highway. One horse was struck and killed, with no injuries to the people in the car. The right-of-way fence in this area is on the southern side of the highway, which allows horses from Sand Wash to get onto the highway. This has been a temporary problem that does not occur every year. The Little Snake Field Office will continue discussions with CDOT, who have jurisdiction over right of way fencing and highway signs.

Travel Management effort continues to progress -- The field office is undertaking a comprehensive, multi-year look at the roads and trails that it manages. In January LSFO hosted an all-day open house about roads and trails in what's called travel Management Inventory Area 2, which includes parts of the Powder Wash, Big Gulch, Seven Mile and Great Divide areas. LSFO received very specific, helpful information from the 39 people who attended. The field office will use this information to develop preliminary alternatives for route-by-route designations for public review. Concurrently, the field office is working on an environmental assessment for Travel Management Area 1, which includes Hiawatha, Vermillion Basin, Sand Wash and Bears Ears near Craig. The field office hopes to have a preliminary EA on TMA1 out for public review this summer.

LSFO working to educate antler hunters about minimizing disturbance – Late winter/early spring is antler hunting time in northwestern Colorado, and people come from a wide variety of places hoping to find large shed antlers from deer and elk. Both BLM and Parks and Wildlife have been working to educate antler hunters about minimizing their disturbance of wildlife while antler hunting. Big game are still on their winter range and very sensitive to disturbance when antler hunters begin heading to the hills. LSFO is also working to reduce illegal, off-road motorized use associated with antler hunting. In addition to disturbance to wildlife, off-road travel this time of year can cause significant resource damage because of the moist soil.

Kremmling Field Office, Stephanie Odell

Blue Valley Land Exchange – The draft EIS for the Blue Valley Land Exchange is currently anticipated to be released for public review in June. Under the proposed land exchange, the BLM would trade nine parcels totaling 1,489 acres in Grand County for nine parcels totaling 1,832 acres of mostly private lands in Grand and Summit counties. BLM is conducting the EIS to determine whether the exchange is in the public's interest to complete and what the potential impacts of the exchange would be. The exchange could increase public access and increase publicly-held big game winter range, while the proponent would consolidate its holdings. Approximately 300 acres of the 1,832 acres gained by the public would be acquired by the U.S. Forest Service, with the remainder

going to BLM. More than half of the BLM acreage (792 acres) that would be exchanged is surrounded by private land and has no public access. The majority of other BLM lands being considered for exchange are small, isolated parcels that receive little public use.

Colorado River Recreation Plan anticipated to get underway in April – The Kremmling Field Office anticipates public scoping to update the Recreation Area Management Plan for the Upper Colorado River to begin in April. Public meetings are anticipated in Kremmling, Summit County, and Denver. This plan will include a user capacity study and will examine how to manage the river for the benefit of the public while conserving natural resources.

Interagency coordination continues at the North Sand Hills – The Kremmling Field Office is working closely with the Colorado State Land Board and the Colorado State Forest State Park in managing the North Sand Hills. Restrictions to motorized travel are in place along Government Creek and the ephemeral tributary of North Sand Creek due to resource impacts from unauthorized trails as well as some trespass issues. The BLM is considering additional restrictions to alleviate sedimentation and is still gathering information and coordinating with Parks and Wildlife and the Land Board. An environmental assessment is anticipated to begin this spring looking at alternatives. The process will include a formal public comment opportunity. The BLM is also preliminarily discussing a possible fee structure for North Sand Hills with the two state agencies. The field office will continue to keep Jackson County informed. A business plan will need to be drafted, and any recreation fee proposals in the BLM Northwest District would need to be approved by the NW RAC.

Bark Beetle mitigation work continues but was impacted by Beaver Creek Fire – The Kremmling Field Office is currently administering 10 timber and biomass sales encompassing approximately 1,565 acres. Three sales encompassing 311 acres were offered for sale in 2016. Field work for future timber sales began or continued in several areas during the summer and fall of 2016. Three of these 10 sales were impacted by the Beaver Creek Fire, with two areas being burned to the point that no more timber will be salvageable. Damage was lighter in most of the 3 Mile Sanitation Salvage Sale, where logging operations began this fall to salvage the remaining timber. In addition, another timber sale within the Beaver Creek Fire perimeter had been prepared and was in the process of being offered for sale. That process was put on hold until the sale area can be assessed early this summer to determine what can be salvaged.

Beaver Creek Fire rehab update – The initial rehabilitation of suppression impacts such as water bars and re-seeding fire lines was completed in the fall. Some salvage logging continues this winter. The field office anticipates completing an environmental assessment to implement additional rehabilitation actions this spring. The field office is starting to develop monitoring plans for the fire and hopes to hire seasonals to complete this work. The Beaver Creek fire was declared 100% contained on October 13, 2016. On June 19, 2016 the Beaver Creek Fire was detected 24 miles northwest of Walden, CO. The fire burned a total of 38,380 acres in Jackson County and Carbon County (Wyoming).

Colorado River Valley Field Office, Shonna Dooman

BLM acquires Dotsero Landing – In early February the BLM completed its purchase of the Dotsero Landing Recreation Site in the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area. The BLM, in cooperation with The Conservation Fund, used \$526,000 from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire the property from Eagle County Open Space. Eagle County Open Space originally purchased the area in 2011 with the intention of the BLM eventually acquiring it. The BLM is also slated to purchase the Two Bridges (in CRVFO) and State Bridge (in KFO) access points from Eagle County. All three provide key access to the Colorado River. The BLM has been working closely with Eagle County to manage these areas. Eagle County has been charging access fees matching the fees BLM charges in the Upper Colorado River SRMA in the Kremmling Field Office. The BLM will work with the NW RAC in the coming months as it pursues the continuation of the fee program on the newly acquired parcels. NW RAC approval is required for BLM to charge recreation use fees.

Stay issued on Sutey Ranch Land Exchange – As the BLM was moving to close on the Sutey Ranch Land Exchange in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin counties, the Interior Board of Land Appeals granted a temporary stay through March 27 in response to a petition from Colorado Wild Public Lands. Responses to the IBLA were due February 24. The IBLA denied the group's original request for a stay in March 2015 but did not rule on the appeal itself. With that original stay denied, the BLM's decision to complete the exchange was in effect. The exchange is supported by all three counties involved, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Town of Carbondale, and the majority of the public who provided comments. Some local Pitkin County residents and Colorado Wild Public Lands have been opposed to the exchange, mostly citing a net loss of public land in Pitkin County. Under the exchange, BLM would acquire:

- The 557-acre Sutey Ranch adjacent to the popular Red Hill Special Recreation Area in Garfield County, including the historic water shares from the ranch.
- 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.
- A \$100,000 donation from the proponents to develop a site-specific management plan for the newly acquired land, and a \$1 million donation from the proponents for the long-term management of the newly acquired land.

BLM would exchange:

- Three parcels totaling 1,268 acres in Pitkin County south of Carbondale. These parcels are mostly or entirely surrounded by private land and extremely difficult for the public to access. They receive little to no public use.
- Three parcels totaling 195 acres on Horse Mountain southwest of Eagle, which have little public access and had previously been identified for disposal.

Oil and gas projects – The Colorado River Valley field Office continues to have the lead for oil and gas projects in the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices. Under the consolidation agreement, the CRVFO Energy Team conducts the permitting and inspection work. While the CRVFO Energy Team writes the environmental assessments and other documents, the actual decision approving projects rests with the GJFO and UFO field managers. CRVFO just released an EA for a five-well pad proposal in UFO and are working on several EAs for GJFO expected to be released this spring. This fiscal year (beginning Oct. 1, 2016) the Energy Team has approved 49 applications for permit to drill – 37 in CRVFO and 12 in GJFO.

Hubbard Mesa education efforts – The Field Office is continuing its meetings with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and other stakeholders such as shooting and OHV enthusiasts regarding education efforts about recreational target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa Off-highway Vehicle Open Area. This area has long been a popular area for target shooting, but it has seen significant increase in OHV, mountain biking and other recreational use over the past decade, creating potential user conflicts.

Next agenda items

Fee proposal FYI for Dotsero Landing (draft business plan)

Statewide RAC

George – planning 2.0 revisiting – better process to move forward

Scott – Excess wild horse numbers, managing wild horses