



Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Minutes:

May 26, 2021

10:00 a.m. meeting called to Order by Greg Larson, Upper Colorado River District Manager and Designated Federal Official, and Mike Pritchard, Northwest Colorado RAC Chair.

Attendees:

Resource Advisory Council Members:

Shannon Chollett, Category 1	Mike Pritchard, Category 2	John Justman, Category 3
Shawn Brennan, Category 1	Joe O'Malley, Category 2	Tom Jankovsky, Category 3
Kirk Daehling, Category 1	Carl Connor, Category 2	Merrit Linke, Category 3
Roy Karo, Category 2	Anthony (Tony) Vagneur, Category 2	Callie Hendrickson, Category 3

Not Present: Scott Robertson, Jeff Comstock, and Don Cook.

BLM Staff:

Greg Larson	Elijah Waters
Erin Jones	Chris Maestas
Eric Coulter	Bruce Sillitoe
Steven Hall	William (Bill) Mills
Greg Wolfgang	Kent Walter
Kate Miyamoto	Patty Luby
Larry Sandoval	Cody Walton
Whit Patterson	Kathy McKinstry

Congressional Staff:

Sarah McCarthy	Senator Hickenlooper
Janeth Stancle	Senator Hickenlooper
Michael Ritter	Congresswoman Boebert
Matt Kireker	Senator Bennet

Public/Other:

Visitor:	Representing:	City:
Melody Villard	Moffat County Commissioner	Moffat County
Scott Braden	Colorado Wildlands Project	Grand Junction
Adam Ortega	Colorado Department of Ag.	N/A
Katie Steele, Category 2 (SWD)	Observer from SWD RAC	N/A

10:10 a.m.

Housekeeping and Introductions

10:45 a.m. **Opening remarks**

10:55 a.m. **Fall 2020 District Boundary Realignment/NW RAC composition**

Greg:

- Nomination period is open; we will be using this nomination period to realign Southwest District (SWD) RAC members who reside in the area covered by the Northwest District (NWD) RAC due to realignment.
- Charter for the NWD RAC is being updated to include the SWD RAC members (Grand Junction Field Office) into the combined NWD RAC. Nominations can be submitted through the nomination period that ends June 21.
- Multiple options for working with the two RACs covering the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (DENCA); will continue to be discussed and worked on as we move forward.
- Members with terms close to expiration were highlighted.

11:05 a.m. **Upper Colorado River District Manager and Field Manager updates**

Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO)

Field Manager Larry Sandoval reviewed the office's updates (see attachments). Larry was asked about the status of the Grand Hogback trails system and replied that approximately 4.5 miles have been completed as part of phase 1, and 6 miles are planned to be opened by June 1. Mike Pritchard offered that Class 1 e-bikes for Grand Hogback trail system are being meet with some reluctance.

Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO)

Including McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) and
Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (DENCA)

Field Manager Greg Wolfgang reviewed the office's updates (see attachments). Regarding Rabbit Valley campgrounds, Joe O'Malley asked to please let him know if you have improvement projects for rabbit valley, indicating that he could help with outreach for getting the word out about events.

Following Greg's updates on Ruby Horsethief camping permits, there was discussion of CPW fees for use of wildlife areas. Kirk Daehling: "River input is happening a few miles upriver because of the license requirement in the State Wildlife Area, implemented by CPW. Are there talks happening with CWP about this requirement for the Loma Boat Launch."

Greg Larson: "Working on MOU with CPW on fee for state wildlife potentially being waved."

Mike Pritchard: "Multiple examples of this in the state, CPW is looking at getting data and information to wave state wildlife area fee requirements for these types of situations."

Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (DENCA)

Conversation followed regarding a future Gunnison River campsite designation and permit system in the DENCA.

Greg Larson: "Still working on gathering data from voluntary permits, and this will help produce the business plan to present to the RAC."

Upper Colorado River Fire Management Unit (UCR)

Fire Management Officer Tommy Hayes reviewed the unit's updates (see attachments).

11:30 a.m. **Lunch**

12:25 p.m. **Reconvene**

12:30 p.m. **Northwest Colorado District Manager and Field Manager updates**

Northwest District (NWD) Fire and Aviation (Craig)

Fire Management Officer James Michels reviewed the unit's updates (see attachments).

Little Snake Field Office (Craig)

Field Manager Bruce Sillitoe reviewed the field office's updates (see attachments).

Tom Jankovsky: "Surprised by the number of horses within the HMA. Staffing levels seem inadequate for handling the management of the HMA."

Greg Larson: Previous Resolution -

<https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/NW%20RAC%20Resolution%202019-001.pdf>

Here are the meeting minutes:

<https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/NW%20RAC%20minutes%204-25-19.pdf>

These are all available and helpful for RAC members and BLM, new and seasoned, here:

<https://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/colorado/northwest-rac>

White River Field Office (Meeker)

Field Manager Kent Walter reviewed the field office's updates (see attachments).

Kremmling Field Office (Kremmling)

Field Manager Bill Mills reviewed the field office's updates (see attachments).

Blue Valley Land Exchange:

Mike Pritchard: "Any organized proponents?"

Bill Mills: "There is one group in Colorado that opposes any exchanges by the federal government, do anticipate some opposition but have taking some mitigation steps to address concerns. No other know opposition at this time."

Other NWD Topics:

Mike Pritchard: "Can you speak to any changed actions we may need to take because of current drought conditions? Fire bans, restrictions, grazing, or other."

Elijah Waters: "Fire bans are coordinated with Northwest Fire personnel, County's, and private landowners that then dictate the fire bans or restrictions based on the current conditions."

Grazing/other:

Bill Mills: "Following drought condition policies and procedures. Some permittees have taken an off year because of current conditions."

Bruce Sillitoe: "For wild horse and burros, water is the biggest issue. There is a set of criteria that triggers action. Hauling water for horses is one option; the other is an emergency gather to reduce the number of horses."

Kent Walter: "We have very responsible grazing permittees, they are adjusting or taking off years because of the current conditions."

Mike Pritchard: "Want to draw your attention to the resolution approved 25 months ago for wild horse and burros. NWD RAC opposes the hauling of water and feed for Wild Horses."

Feedback from RAC:

Elijah Waters: "Would like to get feedback from the RAC on the office updates."

Mike Pritchard: "Format does work."

Tom O'Malley: "In person would be preferred, this format does work."

Kirk Daehling: "Really liked receiving Field Office updates ahead of time it allows us to focus on those "hot" issues and topics. Zoom or in person works. Really do like getting the information upfront."

Shawn Brennan: "Having office reports is very helpful."

Future agenda items or trips:

Mike Pritchard: "Filed trip recommendation to a HMA to visit the Wild horse areas."

Tom Jankovsky: "Garfield County concern is going to be 30x30 going forward. This will be something that Garfield County will be watching and something that could be coming our way."

Greg Larson: "Potential topic for once the guidance and policy does come down."

John Justman: "What does this look like for East of Denver, not very much public land. Same concerns as Tom about what the 30x30 will mean for Mesa County."

Mike Pritchard: "The 30x30 is something that the RAC may not have as a topic because there may be no action the RAC can take."

Carl Connor: "Rec use/demand has increased, and the public is pushing the BLM for more options. Need to do better at assessing cultural impacts due to increased use. Feel like we should reassess some old methods for preserving cultural resources. My suggestion is to create a sub committee to review some of these cultural resources projects."

1:30 p.m.

Public comment period

Scott Braden: Enjoying conversation. Now running a group called the Colorado Wildlands Project based in Grand Junction. Main objective is look for ways to increase conservation on public lands. Plan on applying to this RAC and look forward to working with this RAC in the future.

www.cowildlands.org

Adam Ortega: Colorado Department of Agriculture. We follow along with NEPA projects and make sure people in the agricultural community are informed about what is going on. Please reach out if you have any questions.

No further public comments

Additional interdictions:

Janeth Standle: Central mountains regional representative. Congressional staff for Senator Hickenlooper.

Matt Kireker: Central mountains regional representative. Congressional staff Senator Bennet.

Additional Conversation:

Tony Vagneur: "In person meetings would be preferred. Carl's comments on cultural recourses could be combined into a field trip. Clarification from Bruce on hauling water for horses."

Bruce Sillitoe: "We are getting pressure to haul water, not hauling water currently."

John Justman: "Discussion on advertising for BLM. Public education for cleaning up after yourself on the public lands."

Eric Coulter: "We have discussed that in the past some on the SWD RAC. We are working on campaigning about illegal dumping and responsible use. Something that the State is working on with education."

Carl Connor: "John's comments are good to discuss for a future meeting."

Mike Pritchard: "Public comment is open until 2 p.m. is there any other comments from the public. Other comments ideas from RAC members?"

Greg Larson: "Public education is something to consider for another RAC meeting. We can continue onto Sarvis cabin discussion."

Break until 1:55 p.m.

2 p.m.

Sarvis Cabin fees

Bruce Sillitoe, Little Snake Field Office (LSFO): Introductions – Tim Finger Colorado State office, Kathy McKinstry LSFO Associate Field Manager, and Whit Patterson Outdoor Recreation Planner LSFO. We came to RAC in 2019 and held a field trip to the Sarvis Cabin. Comments and tips from RAC were incorporated into the new business plan; the plan was finalized in summer of 2019. We are looking for the RAC recommendation/approval on Sarvis Cabin Business Plan/fee proposal.

Presentation for Sarvis Cabin Business Plan/fee proposal via PowerPoint (see attachment).

Tom Jankovsky: "Are we looking for a resolution today?"

Mike Pritchard: "Yes, let's get questions and comments first before we hold a vote."

Roy Karo: "12V solar power lights would be recommended to include."

Bruce Sillitoe: "Is not on current plan but will be."

Katie Steele: "Has there been any consideration for higher rates during peak season use? Would summer prices be higher than the winter prices?"

Whit Patterson: "We came up with the cost from averaging cabins within the region. We are planning on doing the \$120 for 2 years to see how the reservations go. If the summer is fully booked, a higher fee could be considered during the peak season."

Merrit Linke: "Tents being allowed is a good idea because it allows for increased capacity for families with children. Would also recommend tent pads or an area for a tent to be set up. Mixed use would also be a recommendation but maybe try it for a month during a non-peak season. Also think the \$120 price is a bit low, would recommend \$150."

Tom Jankovsky: "\$150 would be good from June to October, then reduce for November to May. Agree the price may be low. Don't recommend mixed groups."

Mike Pritchard: "Seems to be agreement about having a tent pad. Mud season – clarification on mud season road closure dates."

Whit Patterson: "The operations plan would be where this could be developed further in coordination with Routt County."

Mike Pritchard: "Only topic that has come up multiple time is the price per night."

Mike Pritchard: "I make a motion to approve plan as is with the caveat that a fee increase, and winter rental proposal would come back to the RAC."

Merrit Linke: "Second the motion. Could we allow flexibility or modification to the motion to approve as presented but modified to allow to increase the price up to 150 a night?"

Mike Pritchard: "Accept Merrit's amendment."

Mike Pritchard: "Motion is now – Approve the business plan as is but allow BLM the flexibility to increase the price up to \$150 a night, as necessary by BLM staff."

Merrit Linke: "Second the motion."

Greg: Roll call vote

Shawn Brennan – yea

Kirk Daehling – yea

Roy Karo – yea

Mike Pritchard – yea

Carl Connor – yea

Anthony (Tony) Vagneur – yea

John Justman – yea

Tom Jankowsky – yea

Merit Linke – yea

Callie Hendrickson – yea

Shannon Chollett – yea

2:45 p.m. **Closing remarks**

Mike Pritchard: "Thank you for bearing with technology. Unclear on when the next meeting."

Greg Larson: "Thank you for facilitating the meeting Mike. Thank you RAC members; we are very grateful for the conversation. We are unsure about next meeting, defer until after the nominations period is closed."

3 p.m. **Adjourn**

Mike Pritchard: "I make the motion to adjourn."

Kirk Daehling: "Second the motion."

Meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.