



Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2023

Location: Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO)

RAC Members:

Name	Location	Cat.	Interest Represented
Shawn Brennan	Glenwood Springs	I	Energy and Minerals
Jeff Comstock	Craig	I	Rights-of-Way Interests
Scott Robertson	Rangely	I	Federal Grazing
Shannon Chollett	Rifle	I	Energy and Minerals
Kirk Daehling	Battlement Mesa	I	Energy and Minerals
Mike Pritchard	Aspen	II	Dispersed Recreation
Roy Karo	Grand Junction	II	Dispersed Recreation
Scott Braden	Grand Junction	III	Public-at-Large
John Justman	Fruita	III	Public-at-Large
Absent: Carl Conner	Grand Junction	II	Archaeological and Historical Interests
Absent: Joe O'Malley	Eagle	II	Dispersed Recreation
Absent: Tony Vagneur	Woody Creek	II	Dispersed Recreation
Absent: Callie Hendrickson	Meeker	III	State Agency
Absent: Tom Jankovsky	Glenwood Springs	III	Elected Official
Absent: Merrit Linke	Granby	III	Public-at-Large
Absent: Katie Steele	Grand Junction	III	Public-at-Large

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Staff:

Name	Title	Office
Elijah Waters	District Manager	Northwest District
Erin Jones	Associate District Manager	Upper Colorado River District
Eric Coulter	Public Affairs Officer	Upper Colorado River District
Stacey Colón	NEPA Coordinator	Upper Colorado River District
Ryan Snyder	Assistant Field Manager	Colorado River Valley Field Office
Greg Wolfgang	Field Manager	Grand Junction Field Office
Zack Kelley	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Grand Junction Field Office
Steve Leonard	Field Manager (Acting)	Kremmling Field Office
Valerie Baxter	Assistant Field Manager	Little Snake Field Office
Janell Corey	Realty Specialist	Little Snake Field Office
Bill Mills	Field Manager	White River Field Office

Congressional Staff Attendees:

Name	Office
Hilary Henry	Senator Bennet
Janeth Stancle	Senator Bennet
John Whitney	Senator Bennet
McKenna Farley	Representative Boebert
Raven Finegan	Representative Boebert

Public Attendees:

Name	Office
Adam Ortega	Colorado Department of Agriculture
Soren Jespersen	Colorado Wildlands Project

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Housekeeping, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

Presenters: Elijah Waters, Northwest District Manager and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the Northwest (NW) Colorado Resource Advisory Council (RAC); Mike Pritchard, NW RAC Chair; BLM staff, RAC members.

Elijah Waters and Mike Pritchard welcomed the attendees, facilitated introductions, provided an overview of the agenda and discussed logistics and “housekeeping” items for the hybrid meeting.

Agenda Item: Review and Discuss the Land Tenure Field Tour

Presenters: Greg Wolfgang, Grand Junction Field Office Manager; BLM staff; RAC members.

Greg Wolfgang reviewed topics discussed during the RAC field trip on January 25, 2023, which took place at the Grand Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area at 27 ¼ Road in Grand Junction, and the Rabbit Valley campground and motorized area and Devil’s Canyon trailhead in the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area. The discussion included a variety of land tenure topics, including disposals, acquisitions, and exchanges, and their historic, planned and potential applications in the Northwest District (NWD) and Upper Colorado District (UCRD).

Agenda Item: Gunnison River Update

Presenters: Zack Kelley, Grand Junction Field Office Outdoor Recreation Planner; Greg Wolfgang, Grand Junction Field Office Manager; BLM Staff; RAC Members.

Zack Kelley presented an overview of historic and current management of the Gunnison River segments within the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, which falls under the management of the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices. Data collected by the BLM over the last three river seasons shows an increase in private and commercial use, and competition for the most desirable sites under the self-service registration system. The BLM is considering an on-line reservation system under a business plan that is under development; additional sites and fee structure will also be considered. Public comment will be solicited through the associated NEPA process.

Agenda Item: Presentation/Discussion on Land Acquisition in Colorado

Presenters: Janell Corey, Little Snake Field Office Realty Specialist; Valerie Baxter, Little Snake Field Office Assistant Field Manager; BLM staff; RAC members.

Janell Corey presented on the process for Federal land acquisitions in Colorado. Discussion included challenges (timelines for assessments and surveys, staffing, bottlenecks), opportunities (funding, partnerships), NEPA, and success stories from western Colorado.

Agenda Item: Field Manager Updates

Presenters: Greg Wolfgang, Grand Junction Field Office Field Manager; Ryan Snyder, Colorado River Valley Field Office Assistant Field Manager; Valerie Baxter, Little Snake Field Office Assistant Field Manager; Steve Leonard, Acting Kremmling Field Office Field Manager; Bill Mills, White River Field Office Field Manager; RAC members.

Field Management and the RAC discussed current events in the field across the spectrum of land management programs. Success stories included a number of land tenure actions, business plan updates, facility improvements and collaborative efforts across. For the complete report, see Attachment 1: Northwest Resource Advisory Council Field Manager Updates, January 26, 2023.

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Hilary Henry and John Whitney (Sen. Bennet's Office) provided updates from Sen. Bennet's Office, including the 2023 budget, information and pilot studies concerning coal mine methane capture, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal, and the Dolores River National Conservation Area proposal.

Agenda Item: Closing Remarks and Open Discussion

Presenters: Elijah Waters, Northwest District Manager; Mike Pritchard, RAC Chairman; BLM staff, RAC members.

Elijah Waters facilitated a discussion on upcoming RAC events, including the statewide RAC scheduled for March 29-30 in Glenwood Springs, and potential locations and topics for future Northwest RAC meetings. Other topics included public access in Glade Park; attendance by current RAC members; and appreciation for the field trip, briefings and discussion. BLM staff and RAC members discussed the process and timelines for appointing RAC members, projected vacancies that have not been filled on the RAC, and potential impacts to the RAC's ability to provide direction without a quorum. The RAC stressed to BLM 1) the relevance of the RAC; 2) a desire for action on pending appointments; and 3) possibility of appointing the RAC as a whole, rather than rolling expirations/appointments. Mike Pritchard thanked RAC members, BLM staff, and members of the public for their engagement.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Mike Pritchard at 2:43 pm.