



Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

10 a.m., Sept. 19, 2024

(All notes and conversations are paraphrased for clarity and brevity)

Members Present

Category 1

In-Person	Virtual
Preston Larimer	
Josh Gillespie	
Chris Cooper	
Curt Howell	

Category 2

In-Person	Virtual
Loretta Mitson	
Irene Shonle	
Mick Daniel	
John Sztukowski	
Kelly Collins	

Category 3

In-Person	Virtual
	Kent Wood
Arthur Koepsell	
April Estep	
Gina Lucrezi	

BLM Employees Present

In-Person	Virtual
Cathy Cook	
Levi Spellman	
Doug Mayes	
Kalem Lenard	
	Sean Noonan

In-Person	Virtual
Kirby Shedlowski	
	Panchita Paulete
	Carrie Richardson
	Jeff Christensen
	Jacque Achziger

Public Present

In-Person	Virtual
Patrick Ortiz	
	Erin Minks

Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping

Levi Spellman, RAC Coordinator, introduced himself and called roll. Sitting members also introduced themselves to the new members joining the RAC.

Agenda Item 1: Field Office Updates

Royal Gorge Field Office

Doug Mayes introduced himself as the new field manager for the Royal Gorge field office, and then briefed the RAC on the geographical area of the field office, mission basics, staffing levels, and budget.

He then discussed staffing shortages in critical areas: realty specialists, geologists, archaeologists, oil and gas personnel, and administrative assistant staff. He told the RAC he expects a reduction in the operational budget as part of a trend that has held steady in recent years.

He discussed the importance of seasonal and summer staff, and explained their roles in relation to the budget, highlighting the challenges posed by budget constraints on employing seasonal help.

He discussed the achievements of the field office: the Eastern Colorado resource management plan was signed in January, the Hard Rock Mine expansion decision was signed in August, the Three Peaks travel management plan was signed in May, the expansion of the Sand Gulch campground was completed over the spring, fee increases will soon be implemented and will hopefully allow the field office to hire a campground host, and campground kiosks now can process credit cards.

Cathy Cook asked about utilization of the expanded campground. Kalem Lenard explained that summer isn't the peak season because of the heat, but they expect increased use as temperatures cool. However, there wasn't a lot of complaints about the increase of fees, which was raised to \$20 per night.

Preston Larimer asked if the BLM was taking cash anymore. Leonard said no. There was an issue with theft and property destruction, and there is an additional regulatory burden for collecting cash. Cook thanked the RAC for supporting that change. Leonard expanded on that, saying the additional funding sources from this and Chaffee County would likely ensure there would be no staffing reductions for recreation.

Mayes continued by discussing achievements in plugging abandoned wells, restoration efforts in riparian areas and partnering with universities in that effort, work with youth corps, community partners on helicopter treatments of invasive and noxious weeds, wildlife surveys, trail rerouting and construction at Penrose Commons, and outreach and recruiting efforts at job fairs.

He highlighted some ongoing projects, including the 31 Mile travel management plan, the Wild Horse Reservoir proposal, HAMET right of way application with Fort Carson, and working with Chaffee County for camping and travel management.

Kent Wood asked if the RAC would receive notes on what was discussed at the meeting. Spellman replied that the meeting minutes would be made available online.

Loretta Mitson asked if the current 25 percent vacancy rate was due to a lack of qualified candidates. Mayes responded that a typical vacancy rate is about 15 percent, and that fluctuations have been a little more dramatic in recent years. He said there is likely no sole reason for that. Mitson asked if the BLM reaches out to any universities outside of local ones. Cook explained there is a new state office employee who is tasked with recruiting. Mitson asked if they should contact him directly or through the district if they have questions. Cook said they could go either way, then highlighted the relationships being built with Adams State in the San Luis Valley, and the efforts being done locally at the university and even the high school and junior high school levels. The recruiter will be able to help in those efforts significantly, and will be able to also

recruit from the military. Gina Lucrezi asked if the BLM had a way to help with housing. Cook said no, acknowledging the issue of the housing shortage across the state.

San Luis Valley Field Office

Sean Noonan provided the RAC with field office updates, explaining that Dale was busy with an interagency Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act meeting.

Noonan said the field office was having a meeting to discuss travel management planning that afternoon, and he is working on an update to the TMP for the management area, starting with an environmental assessment.

The field office is working with San Luis Valley Great Outdoors on a regional recreation partnership initiative. He believes it will aid in revising the resource management plan in the future. He highlighted Inflation Reduction Act-funded projects being completed in the Valley, including kiosks, moving boulders, trailhead rehabs, Southwest Conservation Youth Corps, and National Public Lands Day projects. The recreation staff is also working on the Lobatos Bridge project with partners to build boat ramps, provide rec site enhancements and interpretations, apply for grants, and is working with the Great Outdoors Fund in a pilot program to help raise funds. He discussed the La Jara Creek land acquisition, noting that the endangered species act inventory for the acquisition is complete, and they are working on Land and Water Conservation Fund funding, which they are on target to have the funding close by Nov. 2025.

The field office is working on land health assessments along the Rio Grande.

Agenda Item 2: RAC Primer

Kirby Shedlowski introduced Carrie Richardson, the national advisory committee coordinator, and explained she would be offering some information on RAC fundamentals.

Richardson thanked everyone for their time and willingness to help the BLM make good decisions. She explained the roles and responsibilities of the RAC, and that they are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to help advise the BLM. Expectations are that the RAC attends meetings and contribute their perspective. She encouraged the RAC to review materials between meetings. She advocated exchanging views and perspectives since they represent very diverse interests. Between meetings, she suggested working on any committee assignments. But she said all real work needs to be done in full view of the public, meaning during meetings. If there's a question of conflict of interest, she said it's important for RAC members to recuse themselves. The BLM succeeds by getting recommendations from the RAC, and then building decisions using that input. That's the ultimate goal. Building a consensus.

When the RAC meetings take place, we are taking minutes. If you decide you want to make a recommendation and have a vote, that is captured in the minutes and recorded there, and is considered a recommendation. You can propose a formal resolution. But it's not necessary. The minutes will suffice.

I want to open the floor to questions from the RAC and BLM employees. As a reminder, these meetings are built around our RAC members. The BLM presents information. RAC members discuss, deliberate, and make recommendations. A public comment period is offered at every meeting to allow people who aren't on the RAC to pose questions or comments to the RAC.

Preston Larimer asked how the RAC should move forward for setting goals for what they can do to be more effective. Richardson said the BLM brings big issues to the RAC. But for RAC members, the important thing is to be abreast of what's happening on a local level. An example is fee proposals. A lot of our fees are outdated. The RAC is crucial in making fee recommendations. I believe there's a business plan for fees for this RAC. Business plans for fees, or Resource Management Plans are ideal topics to make recommendations on. Any action that will have a direct impact on the public are the things we want the RAC to weigh in on.

Cook asked for an explanation of the purpose of a sub-committee. Richardson said there has to be a few items in place for a subcommittee to be formed. One RAC member must be on the subcommittee and it can have people on it who aren't on the RAC. The Designated Federal Officer must be at every meeting. The subcommittee doesn't make recommendations. They do the research and bring potential solutions before the full RAC for consideration. It helps save time. There can be no government travel paid for subcommittee members who aren't on the RAC. Subcommittees also tend to have a specific purpose and only exists for a set amount of time. It really depends on the BLM's ability to manage a subcommittee and have the funding and staffing to do it. It must be open to the public. Minutes must be taken. A notice in the Federal Register must be published.

Cook asked what kinds of topics have been addressed by subcommittees in the past. Richardson said Idaho had one on an energy project. The subcommittee went out to the site. But there were also people on the subcommittee who would be directly impacted by the project, either through personal or financial means. Sometimes, there can be a business plan or set of fee proposals that's so expansive that a subcommittee would examine each of those and present their findings to the full RAC. In Montana, there was a subcommittee for a river corridor development plan. Most subcommittees don't meet for eight hours. They're often more frequent, but shorter.

Kent asked about the City of Aurora's Wildhorse Reservoir project, explaining he sees it as an issue. He wanted to know how to approach that, assuming the field office would provide more information and then it would get rubber stamped without due deliberation. Richardson said it seems like a RAC issue, recommending that the RAC ask for more information on it. It's a great opportunity to make some recommendations. Just get some more information.

To make a formal recommendation, you must take a vote. For a vote to have the power of a recommendation, there needs to be a majority positive vote in every category.

Mick Daniel said he asked about subcommittees because of the NCA conversation in the Valley, but he hasn't heard back from Anna Lee Vargas, the chair of a working group on the issue. He thought it dovetailed nicely with the Valley's planned RMP revision and could present an opportunity to bring in people who might not be typically involved in that process.

A discussion then ensued regarding whether volunteer work constituted an ethics breach if it overlapped with an issue under deliberation by the RAC. Richardson said she doesn't believe it constitutes a conflict of interest. Levi Spellman then elaborated on the legalities surrounding what constitutes a conflict of interest.

Cook summarized the discussion on subcommittees. Richardson agreed and explained the eligibility rules for non RAC-member participation on subcommittees. She then offered her personal contact information if RAC members had any questions they didn't feel comfortable discussing in this forum.

A brief discussion ensued regarding RAC subcommittee membership and formation requirements. Shedlowski clarified that a sub RAC must have at least one member of the parent RAC and include the DFO of the parent RAC, and the DFO would be reviewing resumes for applicants.

The topic turned briefly to the Wildhorse Reservoir, where Mayes explained the process was still in its earliest stages and initial information was still being gathered.

Conversation turned to the gathering and distribution of information as it pertains to RAC recommendations, and then landed on the progress made in the San Luis Valley regarding grazing trespass and feral animals, where Mitson commented she had been in the area twice and had not seen trespass or feral animals on either location – a first for her in 20 years.

Cook thanked her for that recognition, and then highlighted the exceptional teamwork in the San Luis Valley field office and the work they did to curb the issue.

Wood asked for a way to quantify progress on the WHR and to get a timeline. Cathy said John Smeins will be on later and may be able to answer questions.

Larimer asked whether national policies were something the RACs has the ability to impact. Shedlowski said she would clarify with Richardson on what the RAC can do.

Agenda Item 3: Budget

Spellman asked Jacque Achziger, the state budget officer for the Colorado state office, to introduce herself then turned it over to Cook. She outlined the main subject areas that will explain how the BLM budgetary process works. She began with a high-level overview.

Chris Cooper asked if there was a rush to spend money in the 4th quarter. Cook said not anymore. The BLM doesn't have that kind of funding. Fluctuations are expected and must be explained. But, if the office isn't achieving its spending targets, money could be taken.

The whole process is about 18 months from start to finish. Cook outlined the roles of various levels of federal government as funding trickles down to the district. She then explained that the district tries to keep about 2 percent of the budget unspent so, at the end of the year, that money can carry over and possibly fund bigger projects for the next year. Achziger explained that at the state office level, they almost always get that money back the next year. It can often range from \$1.7M - \$1.8M.

Cook explained that funding was once allocated to the field offices directly from the state office. But now, the process is changing and the funding is being sent to the district and distributed through that office. She explained that funding is often allocated within specific operational areas, which forces that money to be spent only on certain

programs. So, some accounts are somewhat flexible. Others are not.

She explained that budget requests start at the field offices and make their way to the top. She then showed a graphic explaining the budget cycle. Achziger helped explain that the budget cycle is always shifting because the federal budget has not been approved on a regular cycle. Cook explained that there may be shifts in funding and work emphasis within programs, as well as resources being reallocated between programs.

Cook then explained the phases of the budget planning process plays out, starting with planning target allocations that the districts send up to the state office. These are estimates of what funding will be available to the district, which are based on previous funding levels. It gives the district an opportunity to negotiate before the finalized funding is awarded through the annual work plan. The numbers in the PTA may or may not line up with the numbers in the AWP.

Achziger explained that the BLM engages in tentative planning based on the PTA, knowing full well there can be changes based on what ends up funded in the AWP. The planning is often based on the numbers from the previous year. Cook then explained that labor calculations can be problematic for planning. Because management needs and priorities often change, labor needs aren't consistent, and labor is approximately 80 percent of the budget. Then, if there is a federal pay raise, Congress doesn't always include an increase in funding to compensate for that. She then highlighted the partnerships, grants, and relationships with various foundations that often enable the BLM to complete its mission.

Cook then explained the impacts of national priorities on state office budgets, and then on districts and field offices. Achziger discussed the ways various goals and targets are assessed and managed in light of progress and shifting priorities.

Cook then told the group about a recent change to how funding was categorized,

awarded, and determined to expire. Achziger explained the details of the changes and how it shortened the window for spending before the money expires and gets returned to the U.S. Treasury.

Cooper asked if the funding expired in August, or at the end of the fiscal year. Achziger said the BLM had through the end of the fiscal year, then detailed the complexities of managing three or four fiscal year budgets at once, due to the old expiration dates from years past. Cook highlighted how labor intensive this part of managing land can be. She then opened the floor to questions.

Lucrezi asked what happens to the two percent budget holdover once the new fiscal year began. Achziger explained that money initially gets swept up by the state office. Then, headquarters looks at how the state spent their budgets and can give the money back to serve as a reserve for the next fiscal year. Lucrezi followed up by saying it sounds like continuously carrying that money over means you don't ever really get to spend it. Cook explained that it really just serves as a savings account and a safety net for unanticipated expenses.

Mitson asked about the consequences of a government shutdown. Cook said it means federal employees get sent home. Mitson asked if that impacted the time the BLM had to get their work done or to spend their budget. Cook said it does not affect those things. Achziger explained that a shutdown just stretches or compresses the timeframe the BLM operates on because the fiscal year still ends on the same date.

Kent commented that the budget is complex and it seems that RAC actions through recommendations were likely to cause problems. He asked if there was a way for the RAC to make recommendations that won't cause problems, and how continuing resolutions complicate the issue.

Achziger explained that continuing resolutions make things more difficult because of the way money is allocated, and that spending is extremely cautious until the full budget

comes through. Then, everything hits all at once. Until that point, you're really just trying to fund labor and not much else. Then, it's difficult to get things done once the money comes because the time to get it done is shortened.

Wood asked if there was a way for the RAC to be helpful if their recommendations can cause serious budgetary problems. Achziger and Cook explained that there is very little room to influence the budget or impact the bottom line over the resources available to the BLM. She apologized for delivering depressing news.

Coper asked if it was possible to mix funding from different pots to fund operations. Cook and Mayes explained that there is occasionally some very limited overlap where funding could justifiably be used in multiple areas.

A brief discussion ensued about how RAC members could leverage their networks to advocate for bettering public land management. The distinction was made by BLM staff between what RAC members did as private citizens vs. what they did as RAC members. Cook offered that their expertise about what the BLM could be doing better or be doing differently would be of great value to the BLM and put her in a stronger position to fight for the funding to address those issues, and to prioritize issues.

Gillespie asked whether grazing permit delays were because of funding shortfalls. Cook said it was possible. Achziger explained that there is also a delay between when the BLM knows what their budget will be and when the BLM actually gets it. Cook then offered to extend more proactive communications on the issue.

Kirby followed up on how the RAC can comment on national-level efforts. If they want to draft a letter, it must be done during a RAC meeting, and it must be relevant.

Agenda Item 4: Land Use and Travel Management Planning

Cathy opened the topic of resource planning and travel management planning, how it matters to the district, and then introduced the guest speaker, Panchita Paulete.

Paulete explained the purpose of planning, and introduced the process for how the BLM approaches multiple-use management. She explained the steps from a high-level viewpoint and told the RAC they can make an impact in each of these steps as they represent citizen's interests, ultimately resulting in better decisions. Paulete highlighted the role of the RAC in helping the BLM understand a wider range of alternatives and acting as a vital partner in the planning process.

She explained the value of early engagement, data and inventory collection, and scoping using a slide presentation. She then turned to engaging the RAC in conversation about those topics.

Cook asked how a RAC subcommittee can make an impact. Paulete said there are multiple viable options for making an impact. But the same documentation, announcements, and logistical requirements apply to sub committees as they do for the full RAC.

John Sztukowski asked how the new public lands rule could impact planning. Paulete explained that it means the BLM will likely need to begin planning sooner. New planning efforts will need to put in some effort to strike a balance. But a lot of it is just a reinforcement of the work we are already doing. It just makes it a little more structured, which is better when you're looking at larger landscapes.

Kalem Lenard said it would be helpful for the RAC to understand what types of decisions fall under a land use plan, considering how different the types of decisions can be. Cook agreed, asking how to merge older plans and new amendments under the public lands rule. Paulete explained the unchanged version of the older plan would probably fall under the "no action" alternative. The other alternatives are likely to be small tweaks to adjust to the new regulations in place. Small adjustments may also need to be made to adapt a larger plan to a specific area.

Mitson asked how it may be possible to facilitate a partnership with History Colorado regarding management initiatives along the Rio Grande corridor. That group has money and are looking for projects in underserved communities. She then extended an offer to Cook to join them for one of their meetings, who said it seems like a great opportunity and that the BLM would like to be involved.

Wood asked whether early engagement bullet point on slides refers to BLM staff only, or to RAC members as well. He used the Wildhorse Reservoir project as an example, where Spellman had stated it was still in the early stages of development. He asked if it made sense to get other people involved in the planning at this point. Spellman offered to put together a briefing for the RAC to help them get a better understanding of how early in the process the project actually is. He then refocuses the conversation on how the RAC can be an asset in each phase of the planning process, starting with early engagement.

Paulete offered some tips for how RAC members can help the BLM in this process. She recommended getting an understanding of community interest on an issue, get a sense of what the public knows and doesn't know, identify the community's needs and the economic impacts to people. She suggested the RAC could also help gather data if they have access to data the BLM doesn't have. She said another vital contribution the RAC can make to management is as communicators to their communities and the constituencies they represent.

Spellman asked John Smeins if there were any ways the RAC members could provide support from a more localized perspective. Smeins said there is a lot the RAC can do and it depends on how much time they want to devote to that task.

Cook said the Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan used a novel approach called human eco regions to approach planning. She then asked Smeins how his team came up with that approach, and how a project manager might start off the scoping process. Smeins said there have been some changes in the approach to land use

planning since the ECRMP began. But there is an important process of interacting with communities and getting their input on how they use public land and what their expectations are. The team conducted seven or eight public meetings to help them understand how the public was actually using the land and what their concerns were. They then produced a report that analyzed and summarized that feedback.

Larimer asked whether a management plan as an omnibus document, covering everything regardless of probability, or it was more limited to what was the most probable course of action. Cook said the BLM plans for every conceivable situation. She then asked Smeins to explain the shelf life and lifecycle of a management plan. Smeins said it is often a function of how the land is being used. If special considerations need to be made for a use case on any kind of consistent basis, a revision or amendment may be needed. But doing so also depends on the funding available to design and implement a revision.

Cook said the BLM looks at a lot of overlapping designations that can impact how we consider managing a piece of land, and which decisions might be appropriate for it. She asked Smeins to expand on that. Smeins highlighted wild and scenic river designations and areas of critical environmental concern, explaining those can require special management considerations as opposed to areas without those designations.

Spellman then invited the RAC to view the full decision for the ECRMP as a way to help them understand the immensity of the planning process and the complexity of considerations applied to planning efforts.

Cooper asked about the frequency of planning. Cook explained the state office conducts an evaluation every five years to assess whether a revision is needed for the different management plans on the books. The BLM hopes for a plan to be serviceable for a period of 20 years. But it really depends on the changes that need to be accounted for. She then asked Smeins how much change is necessary to revise a plan. Smeins said that if a sound decision ends up deviating from the plan in place, that discrepancy

between management necessities and the management plan can be a barometer for knowing when a plan may need updating.

Cook asked if the new national solar plan amendment would impact his work. Smeins explained that the ECRMP didn't account for slope restrictions as a potential issue for designating sites for solar development. The national amendment does. Sometimes it can come down to advancements in technology since a plan is in place that may require deviations. One common area where this happens is in oil and gas.

Lucrezi asked if there are specific triggers that mandate a revision. Smeins said there are different levels of amending a plan. It is situational. But an evaluation is conducted to determine whether a small amendment is needed or whether it merits a complete rewrite. Paulete agreed, explaining the types of things taken into consideration when evaluating that need. Are we still implementing the plan? What is the effectiveness of what we are actually doing to manage the land? Are our projections, estimates, and expectations holding true? Ultimately, a state director must make a decision regarding the realities we see on the ground. In some places, they're working on plans that have been around since the 80s, and those don't even make sense anymore.

Cook asked Paulete if she knew the costs of revising a plan. Paulete estimated a cost of \$3.5M on the lower end, and \$5M on the upper end. Some take as much as \$10M or more. Ideally, it takes about four years to complete one. But it all hinges on staff, budget, and capacity. It's such a big process. It's important not to bite off more than we can chew. It's better to get some things done than to start everything and finish nothing. RACs can be very helpful as we try to get the information and the community engagement we need. It can help us keep from getting stalled out.

Agenda Item 5: Travel Management Planning

Jeff Christensen, the state recreation planner for BLM Colorado, discussed travel management planning as a tool for ensuring appropriate access to public lands. He explained the three main reasons to plan travel are commercial through ways for utility

lines, the routes needed to access those lines, and recreational trails. Historically, the planning for these has been managed with a light touch. But how people traverse the landscape has changed. Travel planning is multi-disciplinary and a function of range staff, recreation planners, and those who need access to other sites or to avoid travel across a resource. The BLM tries to involve partners and various user groups.

Christensen said communication is vital to successful planning. It's important to provide accurate information early and often, build trust, and to come up with an answer everyone can live with. He then gave an overview of terminology used in travel management planning, the differences between off-highway vehicles and non-off-highway vehicles, with a brief overview on e-bikes.

Lenard discussed some of the basic modes of transportation, before moving on to the importance of deciding what land should fall under a specific travel management planning effort. He then explained that process is how travel management areas are designated.

Larimer asked for some clarification between a decision, a route, and a travel management area. Lenard explained a travel management area is not a decision in and of itself. It's a collection of routes where it makes sense to coordinate management. The routes themselves, and their individual designations, are the decision. Larimer asked how the BLM manages a stock highway. Lenard said he wasn't familiar with those and asked Gillespie if he knew more about those. Gillespie said he didn't know of any. Spellman asked Sean Noonan if he had any of those in the San Luis Valley. Noonan said the Valley had some stock driveways. They're more of a corridor and are captured in a separate assessment. They're not in any of the field office's recreational documentation.

Daniel said he was having a little trouble wrapping my head around the differentiation between a TMP and how the decisions on the routes are determined. Lenard explained that a TMA is just an administrative grouping. The determination on what a route is

open to is the official decision. He then discussed the difference between open, limited, and closed areas and what kinds of things are considered when making those determinations. He explained where OHVs fall in those designations. He also offered that most of BLM land is limited use.

Upon a new resource management plan, a route is evaluated for its role, its use, its impact to other resources, and then its designation must be justified. The RMP and TMP process was once a combined effort. But it turned out that separating them was a better way to get decisions made.

Routes are extensively scrutinized, and then are subject to the NEPA process. In the Salida area, the BLM had a contractor go out to collect data and inventory routes. The BLM then sent that information out to the public to get feedback on if routes were missed, what the purpose of routes are, and to get comments on them. From that, decision alternatives are developed.

Mitson asked if grazing permittees have restrictions on access to roads closed to motorized traffic. Lenard explained they have the ability to get a use authorization. Mitson asked if it was safe to assume a lack of signage means that something is open. Howell added that signs come and go. Lenard said they try to put signs up whenever a decision on a route has been made.

Cook then asked Noonan whether the Valley was amending the existing travel plan in the field office. Noonan explained they had amended their RMP in 2010 for open, limited, and closed designation. For the most part, with the exception of wilderness study areas, the routes in the field office are almost entirely in the limited category. They are working on an update to a TMP in the form of an environmental assessment. The field office is always modifying and updating their travel management plan. They sometimes find that when they update an area and put up signage, it will provoke a lot of discussion about whether the BLM's decisions were right. Usually the BLM is right. Sometimes they find they made a bad call. But they often find that when they designate routes according to modern standards, updating from the old standards can incite

feelings that the BLM is closing everything. None of these decisions are taken lightly. It's a constant process.

Shonle asked about the lack of restrictions on foot or horse travel. She provided an example of where hikers visiting a dinosaur fossil area are going through a patch of an endangered species of buckwheat. She asked if there was a way to address it. Lenard said yes, and they should talk.

Kelly Collins asked when the BLM expected to come to final decisions on e-bikes on trails. Lenard acknowledged a decision must be made. Currently, if mountain bikes are allowed, then e-bikes are allowed. Each office is in a position where they must make those decisions for the trails in their management area. Collins asked when to expect a decision for Chaffee County. Lenard explained the field office's strategy is to utilize a special recreation management area designation and to create a special recreation management plan for each of those areas. The intent is to use a systematic approach and they are waiting on some data to come from a trails and conservation plan. He estimated a timeline of approximately two years, adding that the eventual goal is to have every acre of BLM land under a travel management plan.

Daniel recognized Sean Noonan and his work preventing destruction of trail signage in the San Luis Valley.

Cook presented a print copy of the ECRMP and the Big Game management plan to the RAC to illustrate the size and scope of the work involved, inviting them to review it while they opened the meeting to public comment.

Larimer then asked about easements through private land to reach public lands that are surrounded by private land. Some private land owners are blocking access to public lands. Lenard explained that it is perfectly legal for private landowners to block access to their land, even if it's to reach public lands. A discussion ensued on easements, deeds, and the Dingell Act,

Agenda Item 7: Public Comment

Cathy opened the meeting to public comment.

Minks: We are navigating a lot of the same areas as the RAC on these issues. I wanted to let you all know that Jacob is the new staffer out of our Pueblo office. On the RAC side, we appreciate being able to listen and plug ourselves in.

Gina: what do you feel is the most common request of the public, or the demand on public lands?

Cook: This office is pretty developed and balanced between recreation, minerals, and grazing.

Kalem: At the front desk, we get a lot of general calls and questions about mining, camping, firewood, and other lands and realty.

Minks: We get a lot of travel management questions and land access casework from our constituents.

Sztukowski: The BLM takes public comments for scoping on an issue and then publishes them. They're broken down by category. I remember seeing the issues of fracking, special designations, and recreation as the top three.

Agenda Item 8: Call for Agenda Items

Spellman then called for topics for the next RAC meeting.

Shonle: the possibility of constructing a trail to the dinosaur quarry to protect the endangered buckwheat.

Daniel: an overview of the new public lands rule and how it will impact the field offices and play into the future.

Mitson: an overview of grazing fee history, how often they change, and how they are managed.

Daniel: an update on the De Tilla Gulch solar lease. Is this something the RAC can impact?

Lucrezi: Can we get user statistics or visitor metrics on BLM lands?

Cook: Wild Horse Reservoir update.

Patrick Ortiz: I'm the new SLV and Chaffee County rep for Sen. Hickenlooper. I have a background in recreation, have worked with the BLM and the Forest Service. I'm ready to dive into solution finding and follow the senator's lead. Thank you all for taking time to represent your communities. Public lands are important to all of us. If I can help in any way, I'll do what I can. Hoping to join the field tour tomorrow.

Preston: If you have anyone looking for speakers, we have a former park ranger and superintendent of public lands who is an expert on the history of public lands. He does it for free. He's always looking to give this talk. He's a good friend of mine and I can reach out to him.

Closing Remarks

Spellman thanked the group for their attention and participation in service to their communities and closed the meeting.

Presentation Materials

- Funding and Budget Overview
- Land Use and Travel Management Planning
- Why Do Travel Planning presentation
- BLM Colorado Travel Management Plans (mileage by designation) website
- Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan
- Big Game RMP Amendment
- Gunnison Sage Grouse plan amendment

RAC Recommendations

- None.