

**Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Wednesday May 4th, 2005
Building 54 at Ft. Meade**

Attendance

Ron Ness
Rich Brauhn
Bob Paulson
Larry Nelson
Rod Landblom

Dave Piper
Ron Ness
Mary Buchholz
John Hoganson
Lyndon Bucher

Jay Grantier
Andrea Stomberg
Jerry Kobriger
Marian Atkins
Lonny Bagley

SDFO Employees

Dennis Bucher
Chuck Berdan

Guests

Stan Micheals
Eric Hunt

Wednesday, May 4th

Welcome and Introductions - BLM, FS and RAC – Ron Ness and Mary Ramsey

Best Management Practices Award – Internal Award nominate NDFO for Cedar Hills Oil & Gas. Ron suggested nominating the office Facility. Dan Hutt moved to nominate the North Dakota BLM for the internal Award and Burlington Resources for the external Management Plan. Rich seconded. M/C

Chairman Election - Rod moved to nominate Ron Ness. Jerry seconded. M/C

Field Manager Comments - BLM Montana State Director, Marty Ott, sends his greetings and sent messages through Marian and Lonny

Marian Atkins, South Dakota Field Manager – The Mushroom book for each person was provided by Black Hills State University. SDFO BLM provided some funding for the project and received some copies to share with the RAC.

The President's agenda has been in news lately with Homeland Security issues, the War in Iraq, Increased Budget Deficit and, No new taxes equaling decreased budgets for executive branch. This includes BLM and others, which relates to potential for decreased services, are looking at what we can do to assist in decreasing spending. Marian asked the RAC members for any ideas about "optional" issues done to decrease spending.

Lonny Bagley, North Dakota Field Manager – On the National level, OMB and others are working on Cost Recovery. BLM is looking to work more with partners and cooperators since we can't offer the level of service that we may have offered in the past. The Weeds Program is a good example. Actual dollars for weeds have stayed the same but other funds have also put in money for weed work and now with the potential decreased funding we won't be able to accomplish as much as we have in the past.

We - BLM Montana/Dakotas - are aggressively developing a strategy to deal with the budget issue. We don't know for sure yet what the Fiscal Year 2006 budget will be. BLM is working on a strong cost recovery program. One of the more controversial cost recovery issues is related to Oil & Gas. Lonny reviewed some Bonus Bid situations. O & B is cutting our budget. BLM is carefully looking at vacancies and concentrating on our core mission

Since RAC is our citizen advisory board - do they have any suggestions?

Implementation of New Recreation Fees - Dennis Bucher, SDFO Dennis went through a PowerPoint presentation on the new recreation fee implementation.

We do charge a fee at the Alkali Creek campground. Dennis reviewed the campground's amenities. He also reviewed some new examples of implementing these fees. There are different categories and guidelines for charging fees. Jerry asked about charging entrance fees. The Implementation program provides for that. Larry asked if it wouldn't be a good idea to have one advisory council to take care of both venues. Jay reviewed congress and their budget implementations. Bob asked about fees charged for Mountain Bike Racing. Dennis said we do charge \$4 per participant per day, which covers management of the event. Dave said in some areas the public receives the program positively IF they see the dollars funneled back into the program. This won't be a major issue for the Dakotas in the future.

Rich moved to provide oversight for recreational use of BLM lands in accordance with the federal lands recreation enhancement act. Jay seconded. MC

Point of Order - Bob asked that agenda items that require a vote or discussion be included on the agenda.

Brief overview of the Forest Service lands - Dave Piper, USFS. New plan went into effect three years ago. Plan included reviewing the Livestock grazing plan. The Forest Service is also looking at their budget closely. They have recently moved their administrative functions to Albuquerque, NM. They may be closing campgrounds in the future. Dave reviewed the four identified threats in their agency. Oil and Gas activity has picked up in the Grasslands. They are expecting more activity in the future. They are also focusing on invasive species. Lyndon asked if they are seeing any Salt Cedar. Dave said there is some, but they are working to stay on top of it. John said he read there will be a 54% decline in the minerals budget. Dave hadn't heard that number but thought there would be more effect on leaseables than locatables.

Lonny said the ground breaking date for the Dickinson BLM/Forest Service building is June 1, 2005.

Review and Approval of RAC Charter

Larry moved to recharter the charter. Jerry Kobriger seconded. MC

Subcommittee appointed: Andrea, Rich and Jerry, Marian and Lonny.

Break

Ft. Meade issues – Dennis Bucher, SDFO gave a Powerpoint presentation on the history of Fort Meade.

National Guard Withdrawal – Marian Atkins, SDFO – The guard is largely responsible for the upkeep of many of the building at Fort Meade. Currently the guard has their equipment scattered around the Fort Meade/Sturgis area. They approached BLM for a portion of land to help consolidate their property. The area they are interested in is where organizers hold the National Sheep Dog Trials. The city of Sturgis is interested in continuing doing Dog Trials after the National Trials aren't held in this area. If and when this issue is brought forward again the RAC will be notified.

National Cemetery, Chuck Berdan, SDFO – BLM land is located south and west of the Interstate. The National Cemetery organization has come forward with a letter asking for 90 acres to expand the cemetery. The new county road interchange seemed to precipitate this request. Chuck has asked the author of the letter to tell us where the acres are. We're looking at the process being a withdrawal. The National Cemetery is under the VA. Marian reviewed how the proposed Highway 79 Extension would affect the BLM land. Since the Cemetery expansion is mentioned in the Land Use Plan this would not involve an EIS. At this point, there is no potential timeline.

Prairie Dogs, Chuck Berdan, SDFO. The Prairie Dog town the RAC visited has occupied 10 -15 acres for many years. Recent environmental conditions have caused the town to grow. It had increased to over 50 acres and has grown another 10% so it is now 60 acres. The private land owners are expressing concern that the federal dogs may move on to private property. A National Policy is due to come out sometime in the future.

The current ACEC does provide for the town extending to private property. We would look at lowering the population, not exterminating it. We go through a site specific EA to address the situation. If the land owner is going to deal with the dogs, then we look at dealing with them as well. BLM is familiar with the current South Dakota legislature. We only have a plan for Fort Meade. We will look at redoing our Land Use Plan in 2008, until then we would look at situations case by case.

Jay pointed out that we have to look at all concerns, including interrupting food chains, and should look closely and cautiously at responding to every situation. At this point, we don't have an action in place for the RAC. Rich said he'd like to see some

sort of action in place. John Hoganson felt that the reflection of this discussion in the minutes will suffice for now.

SD Highway 79 Extension, Marian Atkins, SDFO – The expansion has been talked about for over a decade. Marian explained the proposed expansion plans using a hand drawn map. Our Land Use Plan prohibits the road going across BLM land. The DOT is aware of the plan and will consider it. Bob asked if there was other federal land involved in this expansion.

Sage Grouse Conservation Plan Review - Jerry Kobriger – Jerry handed out copies of the new (second) draft. North Dakota and South Dakota agencies contracted with writer John McCarthy in Montana. Jerry can email a copy to anyone who wants it. Jerry hopes to have a final out by this summer.

There is a SDSU master's student working on trapping birds this spring. There is a plan in place for a number of students to continue this study. This affects quite a bit of BLM land in North Dakota. Ron reported that he (NDIC) has reviewed the plan along with representatives of a number of agencies. At this point, the South Dakota plan is on hold.

Lyndon asked how the BLM National Strategy works with the current ND plan. Chuck said it ties back to the ND plan. The BLM considers Sage Grouse a 'Sensitive Species'. Many entities have money to move forward with this project. Ron said we will continue to have updates as this project continues. Lonny invited RAC members to observe and participate in this project as it continues. Members can contact Lonny or Tim Zachmeier (North Dakota Wildlife Biologist).

ND Game and Fish is also doing a Pronghorn Antelope study,

Paleontology Bill & MOU w/BLM - John Hoganson - RAC members received a nicely paper clipped copy of the MOU between the North Dakota Geological Survey and BLM. John summarized the MOU. This document re-established the agreement to help provide Paleontological work for the paleontologically understaffed BLM. This is a good example of how state and federal agencies can interact.

John included a copy of the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act that is currently in congress. It provides for the protection of Paleontological resources on Federal lands, and for other purposes. Dan said he would like to see more MOUs established. Bob asked what John was looking for from this group.

Rich Brauhn moved that the Dakota's RAC supports S.B. 263 and that the resolution written by John Hoganson be sent to the Secretary of Interior and the congressional representatives from North and South Dakota. Jay Grantier seconded the motion.

There was some concern expressed that potentially a Paleontological survey could be required for everything. Currently there are some areas that a paleo review is required. Lyndon asked for an explanation of section 12.2 of the bill. Rod pointed out that the bill doesn't define "person". The bill refers to (sec 7) conflicting penalty amounts. Rod indicated that \$500 is too low.

Andrea felt that the RAC supported the concept of what John brought up and wondered if we could construct some language that indicates that without opening a Pandora's Box. Ron asked how much area around a site we need to protect since Paleo sites are often able to be mitigated out. Lyndon felt he still had concerns with section 12 and section three.

Roll call vote -

Jay Grantier - yes	Dan Hutt - no
Rich Brauhn - yes	Andrea Stomberg - no
Jerry Kobriger - yes	Mary Buchholz - no
John Hoganson - yes	Larry Nelson - no
	Rod Landblom - no
	Lyndon Bucher - no

Bob Paulson - absent
Motion Defeated.

Rod moved that the Dakotas RAC support protecting fossil resources on federal lands and for other purposes. Dan seconded. MC

Send a resolution to the secretary and representatives.

Lonny presented an award to Mary for her work on organizing the meeting. The resounding round of applause that accompanied the award overwhelmed her.

MDU plant – Lonny Bagley, NDFO – The North Dakota Health Department has issued a draft permit; all the regulatory departments are on line, now they're waiting for investors. There is a transmission line issue at the Gascoyne area. There is a coalition looking at about five different areas. The permit has been issued for the smaller plant. Andrea added supplementary information regarding the plant(s) and conditions surrounding the decisions. At this point MDU is still looking at choosing sites.

Bowman County road – Lonny Bagley, NDFO – The County was issued a grant from the Oil Impact Fund and wants to put in a road. Brose has submitted an application for the southern Cedar Ridge area. We are looking at working with the oil company to close the road during lek activity. We will use it as a case study to see if there are benefits to closing the road during that time .

An oil company agreed to not use their facilities during active lek use. However the Sage Grouse developed another lek a quarter of a mile down the road. We'll work with the company with that as well. We are working with the company to develop alternate roads.

We're also doing a public OHV review in that area.

ND Grasslands fire damage and rehabilitation grazing wildlife and other resources-Dave Piper. Dave sent around a copy of the MOU on the Deep Creek Fire

assessment and rehabilitation plans. The document addresses Burn Intensity, Burn Severity and rehabilitation plans. Approximately 30% of federal lands were affected.

They are looking at conducting some prescribed fires in the Pines Area. They have cooperation with the land owners. They completed the NEPA process in one area.

Rich asked about burning coal veins. Dave said there are some in the area that they working on putting out. They are looking at recoverable timber in the area, as well.

Prairie Grasslands Council, Dave Piper – Rich distributed a Partners for Grasslands Stewardship History and Purpose document. Dave reviewed the history and purpose of the consensus group. He said they were looking at a Grass Banking Program. They are looking at providing forage at an interim basis. They are looking at a number of different options.

Dave reviewed the process that developed with the Ebert Ranch. They are running into some opposition with the grazing associations. They funded two CRMs. One CRM is almost completed while the other is just starting.

Fall Meeting – From a BLM budget standpoint we need to look at having a meeting in August or November in North Dakota. Tentative date: August 24 – 25.

Ron asked RAC members to forward any issues to Mary.

Public Comment -

Marian reviewed Rangeland Health Evaluations with assistance from Stan Michals, Wildlife Division Energy and Minerals Coordinator, SD Game, Fish & Parks.

Rich moved to adjourn. Larry and Jerry seconded. MC