

Western Montana Resource Advisory Council

Minutes

December 19, 2002

Butte Field Office

Members Present: Sue Marxer (Chair), Ted Coffman, Donna Tate McDonald, Ben Deeble, Mel Montgomery, Pat Flowers, Doug Abelin, Rob McCulloch, Susan Lenard, Roger Peters, Robin Urban, Dennis Phillippi, Robin Cunningham, and Garry Williams.

Members Absent: Richard Young.

BLM: Rick Hotaling (Butte Field Manager), Nancy Anderson (Missoula Field Manager), Tim Bozorth (Dillon Field Manager), Marilyn Krause (Facilitator) and Cheryl Dinius (Notes).

Guests: Renee' Johnson (Dillon Field Office), Bill McIlvain (Montana State Office), Dave Pacioretty (Butte Field Office), Steve Hartmann (Butte Field Office), Susie Williams (Butte Field Office), and Dave Williams (Butte Field Office).

The council convened at 9:00 a.m. with the facilitator covering introductions, ground rules, and agenda review. *Sage Grouse Plan, Future Agenda Topics, and Fuels Reduction (how it ties into President's Forest Initiative) were added to the agenda.

Sue M. introduced herself and clarified her role as Chairperson.

Welcome to the new RAC Members, Dennis Phillippi and Robin Urban.

FIELD OFFICE OVERVIEWS:

Missoula Field Office (Nancy Anderson):

- All 3 offices are working on Workforce Planning. All Bureaus and offices are required to have these plans in place by September 2003. The plans look at the current work force, future workloads, and skill needs.
- All 3 offices completed an action plan to implement the President's Health Forest Initiative.
- We will be issuing the decision on the Murry-Douglas-Yourname management projects. The assessment analyzed 22,000 acres of which 4,400 acres were recommended for treatment. It also involves stream restoration projects, will result in a net reduction of approximately 8.5 miles of road, and included 5 grazing allotments.
- We are continuing to work on the Flint Creek watershed assessment. This involves BLM lands in the Philipsburg area.

- We issued the decision on the Bear Creek Flat ACEC. This decision designates the area as day use only until watershed assessment for the area is completed in 2006.
- We implemented fuel hazard reduction projects along the Lower Blackfoot River this summer and fall.
- We have 2 key retirements at the end of the year, Delon Potter, Assistant Field Manager for Non-Renewable Resources, and Larry Newman, our Range Management Specialist.

Butte Field Office (Rick Hotaling):

- **Butte Field Office Resource Management Plan Revision:** The Butte Field Office will start a revision of our RMP this year. This revision will look at the existing RMP and determine if the decisions made in that document are still valid or need to be changed or modified. New information will be used in making the determination on changing or modifying a decision. New issues will be scoped and new decisions on land use allocations could be made based upon these issues.
- **Montana Army National Guard Withdrawal of the Limestone Hill Training Range:** The Butte Field Office is processing an application by the Montana National Guard to withdraw the Limestone Hills Training Range. The National Guard has contracted a firm to prepare the EIS necessary to process this request. The EIS will be a legislative EIS, which means that no record of decision will be issued. Instead, the BLM and National Guard will make a recommendation to both the Department of the Interior and the Defense Department. Based upon that recommendation, legislation could be crafted to be sent to congress for their consideration. This training range is the only one of its kind in Montana for use by the National Guard. In addition to current training, this area also includes unexploded ordnances (UXO). These UXO are a safety problem to the general public and they are a result of past training activities from the 1950's, 60's, and 70's.
- **Ward Ranch Exchange:** The Butte Field Office hopes to complete the second phase of the Ward Ranch exchange this spring. This phase of the exchange will complete the process of the BLM acquiring the Ward Ranch from the Conservation Fund.
- **Burned Area Restoration:** The Butte Field Office will be working on a project to restore areas burned during the fires of 2000. One of those areas is outside of Boulder in the Nursery Creek area. Nursery Creek is producing a large sediment load stemming from the fire in 2000. Nursery Creek flows into Muskrat Creek, which contains a native population of westslope cut throat trout.
- **Doghair Grazing Lease:** The Butte Field Office has received an application for a grazing permit on a parcel of land outside of Helena. This area is being evaluated for allowing the issuance of a grazing permit for a cow/calf operation.
- **Whitehall Wind Farm:** The Butte Field Office has received an application to install 25 power generating wind turbines in the Whitehall area. Some of the turbines are proposed to be located within the mine permit boundary of the Golden Sunlight Mine on reclaimed areas. Some of these areas may have to be considered for use as pit backfilling of the mine site. The State of Montana was sued in District Court and the State was ordered to consider pit backfilling of the mine site.
- **Fuels Reduction Projects:** The Butte Field Office is completing several fuel reduction projects in the Helena, Boulder, and Whitehall areas. These projects include both mechanical treatments and prescribed burning.

Dillon Field Office (Tim Bozorth):

- **RMP:** Renee' Johnson will discuss later in the agenda.
- **Lower Madison Recreation Plan:** The Dillon Field Office is looking at camping, floating impacts/facilities and trying to manage use in the area between Warm Springs Creek at the mouth of Beartrap Canyon and Blacks Ford where the highway turns towards Bozeman.
- **Axolotol Cabin:** Rental preparation, water, and toilets, like the USFS cabin rentals.

- **Watershed Based Standard Evaluations:** Working on Horse Prairie Watershed and Ruby Area reviewing and developing alternatives to improve areas not meeting standards.
- **Communications Site:** There is an increased activity from cell phone companies.
- **Ermont AML Site:** (where RAC stopped last September on Road Tour) We are reviewing the EEE/CA and proceeding.
- We have 2 vacancies, our Law Enforcement Officer is transferring to BOR and our Writer-Editor for the RMP position is open.

Sue Marxer's update on the RAC Teleconference:

Director Kathleen Clarke met with all RAC Chairs from the Western States and gave insight on President Bush's plan and emphasized BLM's Multiple Use and Gail Norton's 4 C's. I have the new BLM Mission Statement and President Bush's National Initiatives to give out. Director Clarke also emphasized using the RAC's in a greater capacity to get community based input and advice, which was mentioned in the live broadcast. A lot of ideas and issues came out of the broadcast. The Director mentioned she would like to have a follow-up meeting with the RAC Representatives in Washington D.C. in April so they can get more direct interaction. The Director is also talking about developing a National RAC Web Site and a National RAC Coordinator.

"Fewer plaintiffs and more partners"

Director Kathleen Clarke

Follow-up Discussion on Standards and Guidelines Report (Bill McIlvain):

When the 1995 grazing regulations were published in the Federal Register, BLM needed to establish Resource Advisory Councils and involve them with the development of Standards and Guidelines (S&G's). S&G's is a measure of Rangeland Health and has become a communication tool.

Mining Districts and the Relationship of Travel Planning (Rob McCulloch):

Rob McCulloch discussed his concern that the maps left with BLM worked on by the travel subgroup did not consider all the areas of mineral potential. His constituents are concerned about being shut out of mineral areas. Rob has been working with staff from BLM to try to identify some of his areas of concern, but has not been able to get a full GIS road coverage to overlay on the minerals information.

Renee responded that Rick Waldrup is finalizing the GIS coverage that the RAC Travel Management Subgroup had worked on and that was presented to the RAC at the last meeting. The decision was to use the maps as a starting point to be used in an Alternative as well as to consider the principles agreed to by the RAC when refining and developing other Alternatives. Bob Gunderson (Dillon geologist) and others would definitely look at this and include these concerns in some other Alternatives that we are developing.

Someone asked if the RAC would be able to see the alternative maps once they were developed. Renee stated that if the RAC wants to see the Travel Management Alternatives prior to the release of the Draft RMP that BLM would accommodate that request. If the RAC wanted to then advise us on some changes to the alternatives as long as the RAC could meet BLM's timeframes. Renee emphasized that there will be public workshops in February where RAC members can bring up ideas and/or possible changes and respond to the focus questions at the workshops.

AGENDA ITEM ADDITION:**Sage Grouse Planning (Tim Bozorth):**

There is an effort with State, BLM, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and FS to avoid the listing of Sage Grouse on the endangered species list. The comment period ends January 20th. The BLM needs to have comments internally by January 13th. Director Kathleen Clarke met with the FWS Director in November regarding what it would take for the sage grouse not to be listed. FWS Director said we should have a management plan, so the Director has tasked the BLM to develop a management plan and have it in place by February 2003 to be consistent with other states.

Tim asked if the RAC wanted to get involved to look at the statewide plan so we can address comments to FWS/FWP? If RAC members are interested, they could input individually but would be best do that by January 13th.

LUNCH**Dillon RMP Update (Renee' Johnson):**

At the last RAC meeting, we were in negotiation with the WO to get an extension on the whole planning schedule for the RMP and we have received a formal approval for the extension. The additional 6 months will be used to accommodate additional public involvement before we finalize alternatives and release the draft. For the new folks, we initiated the planning process in August 2001, released a scoping report and identified 8 major issues. We have completed a Wild Scenic River study and have released a draft and final report. We utilized a RAC subgroup to provide some recommendations on "suitability" to use in the plan alternatives. We also used a RAC subgroup to assist in the evaluation of 63 ACEC nominations. We released an ACEC report the week of November 25th and everyone should have already received a copy. The Planning Team has been working on Management Situation Analysis and with the extra 6 months in the extended schedule, we are going to release a publication called the RMP Digest that will include: Chapter 1 (Introduction), a portion of Chapter 2 (Description of Alternatives), Chapter 3 (Description of the Affected Environment); it will not include a Chapter 4 (Environmental Consequences) or Chapter 5 (all consultation and coordination). Starting in February Focus Question Workshops will be convened at several locations (tentative locations were provided to the RAC). The BLM is not running these workshops; the counties are taking the lead along with assistance from the Montana Consensus Council. Madison County recently signed on to the RMP as a local cooperating agency. They have decided to have the same representative that attends our interdisciplinary team meeting on behalf of the Beaverhead County.

Renee commended the RAC and Subgroups for their help on all three of the issues subgroups dealt with, especially ACECs. As a result of the ACEC work, 14 areas have gone forward as potential ACECs. The February workshops have focus questions geared to get feedback on the management.

BLM has convened a smaller internal group to look at the travel maps provided by the subgroup and take into consideration some of the resources. We are still trying to get some county road information to make sure our GIS information is coordinated with the county. We have an internal deadline of January 17th and then we will go from there to look at other alternatives. Renee also mentioned that she wanted the RAC to be thinking about how they might be involved in the RMP review when the formal Draft RMP/EIS is released in March 2004. BLM would like future involvement with the RAC when the draft RMP is released.

Renee indicated that the Montana Consensus Council would like to know how the RAC wants to be

involved in the workshops. The workshops will consist of a brief introduction and will focus on the following issues:

- Vegetation Management
- Riparian
- Forest
- Travel Planning
- ACECs
- Wild Scenic Rivers
- Noxious Weeds

After discussion, the RAC requested that they be provided a copy of the report the MCC and Counties will be putting together on responses to the focus questions to review. The RAC then will meet in Dillon on April 16th at 9:00 a.m. to see if they can reach agreement on any of the public's recommendations. They will divide into 5 groups (1 each category) and each look at 4 focus questions; work through input, and try to come to a consensus and share with RAC-at-large and see if the group can come to an agreement.

Limestone Hills Withdrawal (Steve Hartmann):

The Montana Army National Guard has a training site near Townsend that has been under a right-of-way grant since 1984. Due to unexploded ordnance (UXO) and safety issues, the BLM would like to withdraw it, which takes congressional action. A withdrawal is a transfer of an administrative jurisdiction.

Over the past 10 years people have stumbled upon UXO's because freezing and thawing has left UXO exposed which has been a big safety issue. The BLM issued an Emergency Closure west of the Old Woman's Grave Road in 1993 to public access.

We would like RACs support to develop a stakeholder working group or subgroup of the RAC to complement the public involvement process and assist the BLM and National Guard in the decision making process. The subgroup could assist in crafting reasonable management alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS and ultimately a preferred alternative. The BLM and the Guard are agencies with distinctly different missions and assistance in developing management scenarios by a RAC subgroup could prove beneficial.

The RAC endorsed the idea and several RAC members volunteered to participate on a possible subgroup:

- FWP – Tom Carlsen (3)
- DNRC (3)
- Rob M. (1)
- Dennis P. (2)
- Doug A. (1)
- Robin U. (2)

The RACs positive response will be conveyed to the National Guard during the January 16 BLM/Guard meeting.

NEXT MEETING: March 13, 2003 – meeting at Missoula FO starting at 9:00 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TOPICS:

Fuel Reduction (how it ties into President's Forest Initiative)

S&G Update (Dillon)

Dillon's RMP

Limestone Hills Sub-group

Sage Grouse Plan

Summer Field Trip

MEETING ADJOURNED

Western Montana Resource Advisory Council
Minutes
September 5, 2002
Dillon Field Office

Members Present: Sue Marxer (Chair), Ted Coffman, Dick Young, Donna Tate McDonald, Ben Deeble, Mel Montgomery, Pat Flowers, Doug Abelin, Rob McCulloch, Susan Lenard, Bruce Farling, Roger Peters, and Robin Cunningham.

Members Absent: Garry Williams, (Katie Deuel, resigned August 8)

BLM: Steve Hartmann (Assistant Field Manager, Resources), Nancy Anderson (Missoula Field Manager), Tim Bozorth (New Dillon Field Manager), Jon Raby (Acting Dillon Field Manager), Marilyn Krause (Facilitator), Cheryl Dinius (Notes).

Guests: Mark Goeden (Dillon Field Office), Renee' Johnson (Dillon Field Office), Kathy VanHook (Montana Consensus Council), John McCarthy (MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks).

The council convened at 8:00 a.m. with the facilitator covering introductions, ground rules, and agenda review. *Selection of RAC members and the process were added to the agenda.

A survey from the Consensus Institute in Massachusetts was given to all RAC members to return by the end of the meeting.

Sue M. introduced herself and clarified her role as Chairperson.

This will be Bruce Farling's last RAC Meeting, Thanks Bruce!

FIELD OFFICE OVERVIEWS:

Butte Field Office (Steve Hartmann):

- The Butte Field Office chose Alt. #2 in the Whitetail-PipestoneEA. This was the alternative developed by the subgroup and endorsed by the RAC. There were no protests and the next step will be a Decision Record, which will be done in a week or two.
- The BFO will be revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) this coming Fiscal Year and we are considering contracting the planning process. We will be looking at how Dillon has done theirs, and we will emphasize public involvement.
- A major project for Butte is the Prescribed Fire Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) EA, which hasn't received any appeals.

Missoula Field Office (Nancy Anderson):

- The Missoula Field Office has had several personnel changes. The Wildlife Biologist, Dave McCleerey has retired and Jim Sparks will be replacing him in October.

- Dick Fichtler has taken the Lewis and Clark Coordinator position; we will be advertising his position.
- S&G Update: We had 4 assessments scheduled this year and have completed fieldwork on three.
- Watershed assessments: The public comment period on Murry-Douglas EA closes September 23rd. George Hirshenberger is the project lead. The bid for the Lower Blackfoot corridor timber sale closes today; we did not receive any protests.
- Fuels Projects: We weren't able to complete any of our planned prescribed burns.
- The Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EECA) is complete for the Linton Mine. Will be issuing a decision in the next few months.

Dillon Field Office (Jon Raby and Tim Bozorth):

- The bids were opened last week on the Beaverhead acquisition Ducks Unlimited project. Construction could begin as early as the next 2-3 weeks.
- We have finished construction on Klutes Landing Day-Use area on Ennis Lake.
- We completed another release of bugs in the Beartrap area for the noxious weed problem. We have had some success with the leafy spurge control.
- We are working on the S&G assessments on the Upper Horse Prairie watershed. The ID team should complete the field work in the next week or so.
- The Dyce Creek Timber Sale is progressing and the results look good. This is the vegetation/fuels management project that the RAC toured last year.

Renee' Johnson's update on the RMP:

Renee reported that the planning team is continuing work on the analysis of the management situation and has recently been meeting to finalize a table describing the "No Action" alternative that will become part of the Draft RMP. The "No Action" alternative describes that continuation of current management rather than no management. Specialists have also begun to work on the Affected Environment chapter (Chapter 3) for the Draft RMP/EIS that describes the existing resources, condition and trend. To stay on schedule, the team will start developing other alternatives in October. However, the Field Office has requested an extension to the schedule in cooperation with Beaverhead County, which, if approved, would allow for some additional public involvement opportunities related to alternative development. The Field Office has been coordinating this with the Montana and Washington BLM offices. We will need to know whether this extension is approved or not by mid-October in order to determine the next steps we take.

Work is also being done on a report that will be released this fall to document the ACEC evaluations. This report is for information purposes rather than to solicit comment. Comments on ACECs along with everything else are accepted during the 90-day comment period after the Draft RMP/EIS is released.

S&G Assessments

RAC members would like a report for this year and look at S&G compliance at the next RAC meeting. All RAC members will receive the S&G summary by November 1. (Addition to next RAC agenda).

AGENDA ITEM ADDITION:

Marilyn - RAC selection process:

WO puts out a notice in the Federal Register in March for RAC nominations. There is a 45-day window for RAC nominations.

- A Press Release is sent out from the FO/SO announcing the nomination period and a letter is sent to all interest groups.
- 5-member's term will expire each year
- Names of interested individuals are given to the RAC coordinator, the RAC coordinator then

makes the calls and sends an application to potential applicants

- Nomination period usually ends in April and by the end of May BLM managers look at each position and selects a primary and an alternate
- The list goes to the SO for concurrence and then it is sent on to the Governor's Office.
- The Governor's office often tasks the Director of DNRC to look at the nomination packet, which is then sent back to the SO.
- This year the Governor's office sent their nominations directly to the DOI.
- Secretary of Interior makes the appointments, which should be about the 19th of September.

In September 2002, terms expire for:

Roger Peters

Dick Young

Bruce Farling (2 consecutive 3-year terms)

Robin Cunningham

Ted Coffman

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SUBGROUP:

8 RAC members participated in the field trip yesterday.

Dick Young handed out the recommendations developed by the Travel Management Subgroup. Gerald Mueller of the Montana Consensus Council facilitated their subgroup and they met 8 times between March and August. The subgroup reviewed current roads using a 1996 map and they divided the field office into 8 geographical areas and marked what they wanted to keep open to motorized travel.

Doug Abelin explained that the group didn't get involved with resource considerations such as ACEC's and wildlife issues. Maps developed by the group were provided to DNRC and the Forest Service for their input. The group only focused on BLM roads. Rick Waldrup mentioned that the Forest Service had reviewed the maps and provided BLM with a map of their system roads. Non-motorized routes were not specifically identified because those routes not designated as open to motorized use would remain open to non-motorized uses, including cross-country travel. Enforcement issues were not part of the discussion because the group thought this was a major problem and was beyond the scope of the task identified. Look at the 2nd page in the hand out regarding the outcome.

Rick Waldrup identified roads on BLM lands that the subgroup felt should be designated open to motorized use. Rick envisions making 2 sets of maps, one for land-use plan purposes which would identify all routes on BLM lands that could be designated open without further plan amendment, and the other for public purposes (i.e. – the Interagency Visitor/Travel Map, which would not show routes as open on public lands if there is no public access to them across non-BLM lands.)

Rick's maps identified all the routes the subgroup felt should be left open. The group made the effort to have access to public lands wherever possible. The current status is that more than 2/3 of the BLM lands in the Dillon Field Office is open to cross-country travel, pending the final decision on the January 2001 OHV/EIS, which would limit motorized wheeled vehicle travel to existing routes. Other lands within the Field Office are either closed or limited in some way (i.e. seasonally, or to designated routes). The percentage of roads left open according to the sub-group's recommendations would be at least 85-90% of existing routes.

The RAC agreed to the principles with one revision. The last principle now reads: BLM roads not accessible to the public should be closed except for BLM and lessee administrative and emergency use. The RAC also endorsed the maps as a starting point with the caveats that 1) there is a review of access with State and private landowners, 2) changes may be made for resource concerns, and 3) the designated

“play area” is removed. Several of the RAC members also requested copies of the maps to review prior to the next meeting.

Renee asked is she was correct in hearing from the RAC that the maps are a starting place and that the planning team should then apply the principles as they refine the proposal into the preferred alternative. The RAC agreed generally; certain members wanted to see a set of maps and respond back to the BLM. Pat Flowers wanted to share these maps with the field biologists. Because of the schedule to release the Draft RMP by September 30, 2003, it was agreed that Rick Waldrup would provide maps to RAC members requesting them and that any feedback would be due to the BLM by October 18 so the BLM could move forward with alternative development.

Follow-up note: Since the RAC meeting, the Forest Service, FWP, and DNRC along with the RAC members who requested maps have been sent copies for review.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Rob McCulloch gave all RAC members and guests a copy of the subgroup’s report.

The subgroup was asked to evaluate 8 rivers or river segments. The subgroup agreed that Bear Creek, the Beaverhead, two segments of the Big Hole, and Big Sheep Creek were unsuitable. The subgroup couldn’t reach consensus on three segments of the Madison River; all but one member of the subgroup could agree on the recommendations. There was discussion on the suitability criteria that the subgroup considered to come to their recommendations. The criteria is established in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, but the subgroup put it into their own words in order to work through the evaluation of the eight river segments. After discussion and consideration as to whether the RAC should try to come to agreement on the Madison segments, it was decided that the RAC would forward the recommendations to the BLM as presented by the subgroup rather than tackle the Madison segments. The RAC came to consensus agreement that the five segments found not suitable should be presented as such in the BLM’s preferred alternative, and that BLM would take into account the subgroups discussions when considering the suitability of the Madison segments in the alternative development. The RAC agreed and passed the information gathered by the subgroup onto BLM.

LUNCH

John Raby handed out certificates of appreciation to: Ben Deeble, Sue Marxer, and Mel Montgomery for their work on the ACEC subgroup.

SAGE GROUSE PRESENTATION (Guest Speaker, John McCarthy, FW&P):

Brief Overview:

Started as a petition to add the Sage Grouse to the endangered species list. John gave RAC members a handout of a summary.

In 1998, fish and wildlife agencies talked about the decline of the sage grouse, and they did a MOU to coordinate conservation efforts. In 2000, another MOU was developed that said the State would take the lead on the conservation plan. (Another handout was given of a summary of the draft). It will come out for public review, and will have to go through a planning process. Hopefully we will have it done by the first of the year. Montana’s biggest issues are:

- Fire management
- Grazing management
- Harvest management

- Managing other wildlife
- Noxious weed management
- Mining and energy development
- Outreach and education
- Power line generation facilities
- Predators
- Recreational disturbance
- Roads and motorized vehicles
- Vegetation

We are looking at each issue and will develop conservation actions and implement each action. FWP will send a draft out to the public when it is complete, get public review, and ask for a commitment from each agency to implement the plan. It will be a lot of work now and in the future.

John was asked about FWP's perspective on changes anticipated as a result of sage grouse management. John responded that it is FWP's view that across the state habitat in Montana is in good shape or we wouldn't have the birds we do, so they don't see a lot of major changes. Montana's goal should be to maintain what we have. FWP doesn't necessarily think that listing of the sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act is warranted based on what we have in Montana but the petition was for the birds' range wide.

Marilyn

A bureau-wide teleconference will be held November 20 in Phoenix for RAC chairpersons. Sue will be attending for Western Montana. Would like to have input from other RAC members of what is working and what isn't and how the RAC can be more effective. Since we are not having a RAC meeting that day, RAC members are invited to watch from their nearest BLM office.

NEXT MEETING: December 19, 2002 – meeting at Butte FO starting at 9:00 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TOPICS:

Report on S&G (send S&G Updates by November 1 to RAC Members)

Report from Sue M. on the bureau-wide teleconference

Status of RMP (Dillon and Butte)

Discussion on Fuels Management (possibly a speaker)

Additional items: Sue thanked John Raby for filling in as the Acting Dillon Field Manager since May.

Mel Montgomery thanked Bruce Farling for his dedication and work on the RAC.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Western Montana Resource Advisory Council
Minutes
June 10, 2002
Butte Field Office

Members Present: Sue Marxer (Chair), Ted Coffman, Dick Young, Donna Tate McDonald, Ben Deeble, Mel Montgomery, Pat Flowers, Doug Abelin, Rob McCulloch, Garry Williams, and Robin Cunningham.

Members Absent: Roger Peters, Katie Deuel, Susan Lenard, Bruce Farling.

BLM: Rick Hotaling (Butte Field Office Manger), Nancy Anderson (Missoula Field Office Manager), Scott Powers (Former Dillon Field Office Manager), Jon Raby (Acting Dillon Field Office Manager), Marilyn Krause (Facilitator), Cheryl Dinius (Notes).

Guests: Mark Goeden (Dillon Field Office), Renee' Johnson (Dillon Field Office), Kathy VanHook (Montana Consensus Council).

The council convened at 9:00 a.m. with the facilitator covering introductions, ground rules, and agenda review. Commercial Use and Wild and Scenic Rivers subgroups were added to the agenda.

Marilyn briefed the group on the RAC nomination process and the status of the nominations for this year. Gale Norton, Secretary of Interior, makes the appointments, which should be announced in September.

Acting State Director Sherry Barnett is in route to Butte and will attend part of today's meeting.

Sue M. introduced herself and clarified her role as Chairperson.

FIELD OFFICE OVERVIEWS:

Butte Field Office (Rick Hotaling):

The Butte Field Office will have the final Whitetail/Pipestone EA out today. Starting FY2003, the Butte Field Office will be revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) that was written back in the 1980s. Major projects for Butte include: Prescribed Fire Fuels Program in the Helena Valley, and the Travel Management Plan in Scratchgravel Hills.

Missoula Field Office (Nancy Anderson):

The Missoula Field Office is working on the following:

- 1) We have been using a Watershed Analysis process as a tool to determine project work. We have completed 3 analyses and are in various stages on the fourth and fifth ones. After completion of the analyses, we have been moving into our NEPA process. We are currently implementing projects recommended in our first two analyses (Elk Creek and the Lower Blackfoot Corridor). We've completed approximately 1,400 acres of aerial weed spraying in the Lower Blackfoot Corridor. We will also be offering a timber sale in July (600 acres).
- 2) Murray-Douglas-Your name – the Watershed Analysis is completed and the final EA should be done at the end of June.
- 3) Flint Creek – We will be assessing approximately 8600 acres under this watershed analysis. We haven't finalized the schedule yet.

Update on S&G Assessment: hasn't changed for this field season.

Garnet Ghost Town Day is scheduled for July 27.

Dillon Field Office (Jon Raby and Scott Powers):

The Dillon Field Office has been working on the following:

- 1) Axolotl Land Exchange – has been finalized
- 2) Beaverhead Land Acquisition – has been finalized; starting work near Daily's
- 3) Lower Beartrap – doing weed spraying; it has been 80 to 85% effective
- 4) Dice Creek (fuels) – now being implemented and looking good
- 5) Grasshopper fuels project – initial stage of planning (HRP)
- 6) Muddy Creek Settlement (Mark Goeden provided background information) – 1992 project re-issued in 1999, the hearing was in March and was settled ready to do evaluation, very pleased with settlement. Agreed to implement what they originally wanted. Dean Welborn (son/permittees) were supportive

Nancy A. also mentioned to the RAC members that Associate State Director, Roberta Moltzen, has accepted a new job and will be leaving at the end of July.

WRAP UP LOOSE ENDS:

Scott Powers:

Distributed a copy of a letter that was sent to Senator Burns from a member of the public in Dillon and wanted to share with the RAC Members. It is a cultural site that hunters trashed and Mark Goeden cleaned up.

COMMERCIAL USE DISCUSSION:

Donna Tate McDonald:

The committee (Donna, Mel Montgomery and Robin Cunningham, BLM Rep. Rich Maggio) met in the Dillon Field Office on March 11th. Identified information needs but decided they needed to have a balance of interests on the subgroups before they could go further.

A discussion followed on the Commercial Use Subgroup, timeline, and usefulness for the Dillon RMP. The subgroup was authorized by the RAC at the January meeting, but the group felt meeting coordination would be a problem to provide recommendations by August 15. A suggestion was made to have the group tasked with reviewing that portion of the Draft RMP when it is released.

The Draft RMP is scheduled for release by the end of September and any suggestions or recommendations would be needed no later than mid-August. The following members volunteered to serve on the subgroup: Pat Flowers, Donna Tate McDonald, Garry Williams, Doug Abelin, Rob Cunningham, Ben Deeble, and possibly Bruce Farling.

The group will review the Commercial Use portion of the RMP and begin work on their recommendations with the understanding their efforts will be used to provide guidance on a larger scale (i.e. Western Montana Zone) rather than only for the Dillon RMP.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SUBGROUP:

A handout of the Travel Management Subgroup recommendations was given to the RAC members and guests.

Dick Young handed out the recommendations developed by the Travel Management Subgroup. Their subgroup was facilitated by Gerald Miller and they met 7 times. They reviewed current roads using a 1998 map and they divided the field office into 8 geographical areas for discussion.

Doug Abelin explained that the group looked at such things as: duplicate routes to the same site and routes that traversed both public (BLM, FA, or State) and private land. The group recognized and spent much time discussing the enforcement problem and the problem of not having trails as part of the discussion. Non-motorized routes were also not part of the discussion.

Rick Waldrup reported that GIS work is continuing on the 8 different regions. Trail information is being collected by a seasonal employee this summer.

Dick and Doug stated the subgroup would like to have more time for data collection this summer, checking with constituents, and allow time to share information with the State of Montana. Dillon FO has less than 25 miles of designated trails, would like to separate motorized/non-motorized use.

Renee mentioned that any information the group has put together so far would be helpful for the ID Team, even if it is preliminary. Since the group has a meeting scheduled for July 24th, the group will try to come to consensus on as many roads as possible and provide that information to the ID Team.

Through a round-robin polling of the council, the RAC agreed to give the subgroup more time and Sue Marxer asked for a summary that RAC members could review after the July 24th meeting.

LUNCH

Acting State Director Sherry Barnett:

Purpose of the visit was shared with the RAC members and what the transition period will be. Making sure that the authority from Managers is still the same and is getting the support needed. We will know who the State Director for Montana is within a month or so.

ACEC SUBGROUP UPDATE:

Mel Montgomery provided summary information for the ACEC subgroup. The group met 7 times with Kathy VanHook as facilitator and Mark Goeden representing BLM. Besides Mel (Category III), other subgroup members are:

Jim Hagenbarth and Sue Marxer, Category I
Jack Kirley and Ben Deeble, Category II
Ted Coffman, Category III

See handout for summary of ACEC nominations that the group reached consensus on. Of the 57 nominations received, the subgroup agreed on 37 (30 not recommended & 7 recommended); 10 were reviewed but consensus could not be reached; on the remaining 10, the review was not completed because the subgroup realized they probably would not come to agreement.

The ID Team will evaluate the 20 remaining ACEC nominations and make a recommendation for the Draft RMP where it will be reviewed by the public along with the other ACEC nominations.

Decision: RAC members in attendance voted unanimously to recommend the ACEC nominations as proposed by the subgroup. Since there is not a quorum in Category II, Marilyn will contact the absent members and provide them with a response card for this issue.

Supplement to minutes: On June 26, a response card was received from a Category II member that allows the subgroup recommendation to be forwarded to the Designated Federal Official (Dillon in this case).

Other issues such as the lynx, sage grouse, and weeds were raised during the RMP presentation and those issues will be topics for discussion at future meetings.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Renee Johnson provided an overview of where the field office is in the Wild and Scenic River review process. Dillon released the Draft Eligibility Report for Wild and Scenic Rivers in March. We received 37 written responses from the public. Many of the comments related to concerns that are addressed during the suitability study rather than during the eligibility phase. We have read all the comments and will be addressing the ones we can in the Final Report, which we hope to have completed in the next few weeks. We are still looking at a few additional changes, but anticipate not more than 10 rivers or river segments would move forward.

The RAC then discussed the formation of a subgroup to assist in the suitability study that is the next step in the Wild and Scenic Rivers process. It was noted that BLM would have to come up with funding to provide assistance from the Montana Consensus Council with the subgroup. The subgroup will have all the comments regarding suitability available to them to work with. RAC members on the subgroup are:

Rob Cunningham

Sue Lenard

Rob McCulloch

Lynn Anderson, Outdoor Recreation Planner in Dillon, will likely be the BLM liaison to the group. The RAC gave permission to Sue Marxer to work with Jon Raby in convening the remainder of the subgroup. Sue did indicate if any RAC members of a particular category had any suggestions that they should let her know. Sue will inform the RAC of the subgroup selections when they are completed.

FIELD TRIP OPTIONS

Council members offered the following field trip suggestions:

- Look at some of the ACEC's reviewed by the subgroup
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Commercial Roads

Dillon staff will plan a half-day field trip and inform all RAC members.

NEXT MEETING:

September 4th - half-day field trip. September 5th – meeting at Dillon FO starting at 8:00 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TOPICS:

Updates on Wild and Scenic River/Travel Management

Report from Commercial Use Subcommittee

Information on Sage Grouse Conservation Plan Implementation (Pat Flowers will invite Jeff Herbert or John McCarthy from FW&P to come)

MEETING ADJOURNED

Western Montana Resource Advisory Council

January 15, 2002 – Meeting – Butte, Montana

Members Present: Sue Marxer (Chair), Robin Cunningham, Doug Abelin, KatieDuel, Garry Williams, Bruce Farling, Roger Peters, Pat Flowers, Susan Lenard, MelMontgomery, Richard Young, Ben Deeble, Ted Coffman, Rob McCulloch, DonnaMcDonald.

Members Absent: None.

BLM: Marilyn Krause (Facilitator); Rick Hotaling (Butte Field Manager); NancyAnderson (Missoula Field Manager); Scott Powers (Dillon Field Manager); Laurie Haasand Cheryl Dinius (Notes); Dave Pacioretty, Steve Hartman, Huey Long, Mike Browne(Butte Field Office) attended portions of the meeting. Renee' Johnson (Dillon FieldOffice, presentation to RAC Members on RMP).

Members and attendees introduced themselves and shared an expectation for the council.

- represent constituents and use RAC to get voice heard
- help public toward common goals
- hearing different perspectives
- broad understanding of common issues
- continue advisory mission
- balance professional activities
- represent FWP/sportsmen/parks
- "high"
- be effective/meaningful use of time
- heard by BLM/WO

- dialog with others/learn from others
- polite discussions/find common grounds
- reach consensus/be heard
- high expectations for BLM
- good feed back from RAC
- getting advice from members liaison with groups
- take issues out of political arena/best for resources

Role as Chairperson (Sue Marxer) - work with Facilitator to keep things on track. Certify meeting minutes. Appoint Chairperson for subgroups. Call for votes after issues are discussed. Help put together meeting agendas.

The agenda and ground rules were reviewed and agreed upon.

Scott Powers - Each field office for the Western Zone will do a 10 minute briefing.

Katie Deuel - Wants an update on Range Standards and Guidelines assessments. **Attached to minutes.**

Pat Flowers - What works and doesn't work, would like advice/suggestions from previous members.

Garry Williams - Would like major accomplishments the RAC has done in the past.

Overview of the RAC Charter (Sue Marxer and Marilyn Krause) - Officially designated to advise BLM and provide opportunity for meaningful input. Develop and make recommendations to BLM but the RAC does not provide advice on personnel or funding allocation. (See Charter)

The RAC was established in 1995 as part of Rangeland Reform. Members represent 3 areas of interest to advise on across-the-board issues.

Group 1 - Mining, grazing, timber, outfitters/OHV

Group 2 - Environmental organization, dispersed activities, archeological interest, Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) interest group

Group 3 - State or County elected officials, state agencies, tribes, university, public-at-large.

Item 8 in the Charter - member qualifications

- must live in Montana
- 3 year terms
- if you miss 2 consecutive meetings, you can be removed
- can't be on 2 RAC councils at the same time
- can be on RAC and 1 or more subgroups
- Rangeland Ecosystem Course - not offered recently

Subgroups - Due to time constraints, subgroups may meet to tackle issues and make recommendations

for the RAC to consider. Subgroups must have a balanced representation. Their meetings are not normally publicized.

Technical Review Teams - only Federal Employees or paid consultants to review scientific data.

Item 11, Council Officer is Chairperson - Sue Marxer

Does the group want a vice-chair? All council meetings are open to the public and media. Notice of meetings is published in papers. Agendas approved in advance. Three members of each category must be present in order to vote.

The minutes are certified by the Chairperson.

Whitetail/Pipestone Subgroup (example) - Rick Hotaling

- 3 years ago asked RAC to assist with travel management
- RAC recommended working with the Forest Service
- Started planning with FS
- 2 years ago, FS put travel management plan on hold
- RAC wanted to move forward
- Polarized - issues wilderness alliance vs motorized users
- RAC formed subgroup - time limit developed, all 3 categories represented
- hired facilitator
- 13 meetings - formed joint recommendation/agreement
- presented this to RAC
- RAC reviewed, passed motion to consider this as preferred alternative for Travel Management Plan
- will present this to public as joint agreement from RAC
- RAC recommendations carry a lot of weight
- Travel Plan in NEPA now, will be an EA

FIELD OFFICE OVERVIEW

Missoula Field Office (Nancy Anderson) - Mission Statement. 2 Tier organization, Field Office and State Office. 4 Zones in Montana/Dakotas. Each Zone has a RAC.

Question - Doug Abelin

Is there going to be a need for all 3 other RAC council groups to agree?

Answer - Rick Hotaling

Could happen, has in the past for example the OHV proposal.

Nancy continues - The Missoula Field Office covers Missoula, Powell and Granite Counties. 90 percent is forest. Forestry is the main program. 10 miles of land on Blackfoot River - which the Recreation Program handles. We have the Garnet Ghost Town. Bull Trout listing affects only our office. All 3 offices affected by the Lynx. The Range program is small - we have 60 allotments.

The projects we are working on this year are:

- Murry Douglas Assessment (all RAC members will get a letter) - George Hirschenberger is the project leader. We have an open house on January 17th in Helmville.
- Fuel Hazard Reduction around Garnet Ghost Town
- Lynx Conservation Strategy - all 3 offices are involved

- Fire use plan for Wilderness Study Area
- Implementation of 1st and 2nd assessment in Elk Creek
- Cramer Creek Lead Mine Reclamation

Butte Field Office (Rick Hotaling) - The Butte Field Office has a large geographical area. Large tracts of land that are scattered. The biggest resource program is the Recreation Program. Holter Lake has 3 campgrounds: Toston 1 campground; Hauser Lake has a new campground called the Devil's Elbow; Canyon Ferry no longer will be managed by the BLM as of the end of January and will go back to the Bureau of Reclamation. The BFO also manages the Humbug Spires Wilderness Study Area and the Big Hole River Sites above the Maiden Rock Bridge. The BFO manages the Whitetail/Pipestone area, Elkhorns Wildlife Management Unit (agreement with Forest Service (FS) and Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and the National Guard Training Range. The BFO has approximately 200 allotments in the Grazing Program. The Abandoned Mine Land Program handles all 3 field offices with mine reclamation. One of our projects is the Boulder/Basin area. Our Fire Fuels Program is proposing reduction in 3 areas: the South Elkhorns, Clancy-Unionville, Scratchgravel Hills/Boulder. The Wildlife program handles health and big game species. Amend management plan for the Lynx.

Dillon Field Office (Scott Powers) - The Dillon Field Office manages land in Beaverhead Co., which is the largest in the state and the largest hay and livestock producer and also Madison Co., which is growing fast. We work closely with both counties. The Recreation Program has developed and dispersed recreation sites along the Madison River. We are working with FWP to develop a new Management Plan. We also manage the Beartrap Canyon which the RAC visited a year ago. We have 40 Outfitter/Guide Permits, 10 Wilderness Study Areas, 150,000 acres of dispersed land, and 25 miles of the Continental Divide Trail. We have a large range staff which is complex because of water and wildlife - 250 permittees and 425 allotments. Management strategies will be done on watershed basis, first one Horse Prairie. We work with the BFO and MFO in our Land Exchange Program. 100,000 acres of commercial timber. Our Timber Sales is the Dyce Creek (Fuel Reduction) and Mussigbroad Fire Salvage Sale. Forty genetic pure west cutthroat trout streams. Our Minerals Program handles mining claims, sand and gravel and 1 talc mine.

*Continue to highlight each Field Office activities (10 minutes) each meeting.

Question - Richard Young
Are all FO's doing an RMP?

Answer - Scott Powers
Butte will start revision next year.

Question - Dick Young
What issues prompt the Butte RMP?

Answer - Rick Hotaling
Time (18 years old), Oil and Gas leasing, and the Humbug Spires area is not in current RMP (it is in Dillon's old MFP) needs to be addressed.

Dillon RMP (Scott Powers and Renee Johnson) - Dillon is the only office that doesn't have an RMP. We want the RAC to be meaningfully involved. Today we will discuss how the RAC might be involved and give an orientation on the RMP. Introduced Renee Johnson, the RMP Project Manager. We will dedicate time for discussion.

Renee Johnson - 3 handouts (briefing paper, Power Point presentation, Appendix C Planning Manual).

Power Point Presentation

- what is an RMP - Broad Plan 15/20 years
- provides overall guidance
- identifies goals and objectives
- allocates lands, public and commercial
- constraints

Steps

Draft RMP/EIS

Propose RMP/Final EIS

Record of Decision (ROD)- approves RMP

Preferred alternative identified in Draft (BLM requires this). Comments received inscoping can be tracked thru the plan.

Issues

- identify issues
- develop planning criteria
- issue NOI/start scoping
- compile data and information
- analyze management situation

Schedule

2001 - scoping

2002 - management situation analysis

2003 - impacts/draft

2004 - proposed RMP/Final EIS

2005 - Issue ROD

Public Involvement Strategies

- newsletters
- website
- 1-800 number
- Montana Consensus Council advice
- Information Fair
- subgroups (RAC)

RMP Level Decisions

- soil, water, air
- vegetation
- weeds
- cultural resources
- paleontology
- visual resources
- special status species
- T&E sensitive
- fish and wildlife
- fire management and fuels
- forestry
- livestock and grazing

- recreation (includes travel management)
- lands and reality
- fluid minerals
- locatable minerals
- special designations
- wilderness
- Wild Scenic Rivers
- ACEC's (Areas of Critical Environmental Concern)

Advice to new members - Successes and what worked

Doug Abelin - most productive thing, realize that each person has opinion. We need to find common ground; important to be open-minded.

Katie Deuel - missed last two meetings, deciding what to do next.

Bruce Farling - BLM has been open and sincere. Disputes - same data (information) base furnished - that base info is good. Standards and Guidelines process very successful. Maybe large scale planning not suitable for RAC.

Roger Peters - Appreciate work of local BLM. Disappointed in National level support/acceptance. Good for RAC to have a job (Dillon RMP).

Mel Montgomery - Be patient with the process. Good that local BLM government is "within reach". Ask yourself why are we here, what is the vision- is it realistic? Try to be open-minded, work out solutions.

Ted Coffman - Field trips have been great! Like to see one this year.

Sue Marxer - It is important to represent your interest but don't exclude other opinions. Consider the resource, need factual information.

Questions - Pat Flowers

Will there be land allocations other than ACEC - i.e. timber, rec.?

Answer - Scott Powers

Objectives vary by location - primary goals. Some specific allocations will be made.

Renee Johnson - allocations to show restrictions.

Pat Flowers - concerned if plan amendments not kept current. Need live, viable plan.

Scott Powers - trying to develop RMP for 10 years. Haven't relied solely on MFP.

Renee Johnson - Adaptive management strategies to put into RMP.

Presentation - Scott introduced Rick Waldrup, Recreation Planner, DFO and Matt McKinney, Director, Montana Consensus Council (MCC).

Issue Based Subgroups - Scott Powers

- Specific issues with concrete decisions needed in short time
- traditional methods of involvement

- scoping comment
- review draft EIS - feedback
- Subgroups
- WSR (Wild and Scenic Rivers)
- ACEC's
- Draft Alternatives

1st Issue - ACEC's - Decision by June 1, 2002 - to meet relevance and importance. Now compiling material and data.

Relevance criteria

Importance criteria

Need to document findings

- Montana CC will hire facilitator for each subgroup
- subgroup will make recommendation to RAC
- hopefully RAC will agree - present its findings to IDT

Question - Ben Deeble

What further study will occur after 1st cut?

Answer - Scott Powers

If a potential ACEC, then at least one alternative will designate it as an ACEC.

- Discussion on RAC involvement
- ACEC nomination does not preclude any and all activities (i.e. grazing) like WSA's do.

Question - Mel Montgomery

Were ACEC's developed in-house?

Answer - Scott Powers

Internal nominations don't carry more weight.

Travel Management (Scott Powers) - Specific recommendations on open-closed, limited. Handout of travel plan maps and E&W.

- Summer 2001 - GPS and photograph all roads and trails
- OHV EIS - direction - existing roads and trails
- maybe have RAC draw circle on map - have subgroup take on certain area
- Dillon group has started East Pioneer area
- if travel management is done in a subgroup, need BLM staff to advise groups on other issues, need to weigh them all
- recommendation by subgroup will be identified in Draft

Allocation of Commercial Use - Rick Waldrup - getting lots of applications for increased use.

- issue for subgroup
- have 30 now
- MFP talks about designating outfitter permit areas, no commercial use, etc.
- these designations did not happen
- how to deal with new applications - not any specific guidance now.

- FS allocations - jurisdictional issue
- State is responsible for issuing license
- should we say - no you should not hunt in this area?
- lots of response opposing outfitter use but with public notice you mostly get negative reactions
- could choose not to allocate use at all just say yes to everything
- could be more pro-active limiting areas

Question - Mel Montgomery

Helped write outfitter management policy for BLM - we were reporting use, what happened to it?

Answer - Rick Waldrup

Some allocation of use in past not really doing that now.

Question - Mel Montgomery

RMP needs to address NCHU (Net Client Hunting Use). Who is regulating?

Answer - Rick Waldrup

Sideboards should be set now.

Rob McCulloch. - we know where crowded and sensitive areas are - currently deny applications here.

Question - Bruce Farling

Is there some national guidance on outfitter allocation?

Answer - Scott Powers

Nothing consistent.

Rick Waldrup - Missoula permitted, look at all new permits

Mel Montgomery - 1989-1990 plan from before was valuable, need to track what happened to this.

Wild and Scenic Rivers (Renee Johnson) - 2 handouts.

Go through flow chart.

Have identified segments for evaluation

- Determine eligibility - is it free flowing, outstanding remarkable value?
- Determine suitability - RMP makes recommendations congress makes final call

IDT has made decision on eligibility, if found eligible, assign it a classification (Wild Scenic Recreation). Can't do anything to change classification.

RAC - could have subgroup do suitability criteria

- applied to eligible segments
- included as alternative in RMP

Outcome of RMP - list of rivers that are suitable. Would have to be managed for Wild and Scenic River.

Scott Powers - The priorities are 1) WSR and 2) ACEC

Round Robin - What Subgroup are you interested in? (Marilyn Krause) -

Donna Tate McDonald - Commercial Use
 Rob Cunningham - Any except Commercial
 Ted Coffman - ACEC
 Ben Deeble - ACEC
 Dick Young - Travel
 Mel Montgomery - Commercial and ACEC
 Susan Lenard - ACEC, WSR
 Pat Flowers - ACEC
 Roger Peters - Grazing
 Bruce Farling - Pass
 Garry Williams - Pass
 Katie Deuel - ACEC, Wildlife Corridors
 Doug Abelin - Travel
 Robin McCulloch - WSR, Commercial
 Sue Marxer - ACEC

<u>ACEC Subgroup</u>	<u>Commercial Use Subgroup</u>
Ted Coffman	Donna Tate McDonald
Ben Deeble	Mel Montgomery
Mel Montgomery - Chair	Robin Cunningham - Chair
Sue Marxer 3 others - not outfitters	
Katie Deuel	

<u>Travel Subgroup</u>	<u>Wild and Scenic River Subgroup</u>
Dick Young	Robin McCulloch - Chair
Doug Abelin - Chair	Susan Lenard
Garry Williams or Alternate	Rob Cunningham

Scott Powers - set up groups and time frames. Have travel group decide just what they can tackle. Facilitator will help group decide on tasks and processes.

Ted Coffman - move to formalize these committees.

BLM and RAC members will make recommendation to fill committees - Sue and chairperson will decide on members with concurrence from the respective category members.

Ted Coffman - motion to adopt subgroups, THUMBS UP. (1st official vote)

Sue Marxer - Vice-Chair; do you want one? Mel Montgomery nominates Bruce Farling, Ben Deeble seconded. THUMBS UP. Unanimously approved Bruce Farling as Vice-Chair for WRAC.

Next RAC meeting - May 10, 2002
 Location - BLM, Butte Field Office
 Start - 9:00 a.m.

At May meeting, look at field trip possibilities in DFO.

