

Resource Advisory Council Meeting

Spearfish, SD

Holiday Inn

January 10, 2000

Attendance

Carol Koerner, Marc Trimmer, Larry J. Nelson, Dan Hutt, Bob Gartner, Jerry Kobriger, Larry G. Nelson, Harvey Malon, Curt Johnson, Patricia Stockdill, Rod Landblom, Thomas Quinn, Steve Williams, Doug Burger, Patrick Gubbins, Mary Ramsey

Call to order: 8:24 am

Welcome and introductions

Logistics

Motel Issues

Bring your receipt to Mary tomorrow morning

Lunch: Doug suggested to have lunch at the motel, just to keep the meeting on schedule

Dinner: make a reservation for 15 at Margies

Update of "RAC member data sheet"

Complete RAC biosketches

Review and Modification of Agenda

We are extending the comment period to include today

We will move the election of RAC chairman to later today.

The Prairie Dog petition for listing is moved to 9:00 am on Tuesday

Pat would like to move the Belle Eldridge Cleanup to the top of the agenda

The Consensus Council issue will be tacked on to USFS Northern Great Plains Update

Updates/Discussion

Review of RAC Charter - Doug reviewed the charter point by point. Doug asked if there were any other elected official (besides Curt Johnson) on the council. Tom Quinn said he is an elected city council member (up for reelection April 2000). Curt asked if there was any more news about the Forest Service joining the RAC as an official member. Doug and Steve said there still has not been any official notification on that issue.

Belle Eldridge Cleanup- Pat reviewed the issue with the assistance of the South Dakota BLM staff.. We're cleaning up mining tailings up Spruce Gulch. We're looking at another site on public lands, 6/10 of a mile from the site. Russ Pigors said we've cleaned up the tailings from the northern part of the site. Curt asked who bears responsibility for these old mines. In this particular case, Russ said, this mine was never patented. After it was abandoned BLM was still the land owner. Curt asked if there were a lot more out there. Patrick said there most likely are. Tom inquired if the mine will be capped and sealed over. Russ and Patrick indicated that this will be contractors.

Truck Bypass on Ft. Meade - Patrick said the Land Exchange and Truck bypass are interrelated issues. One of the members asked how much has been spent on this issue so far. There has been approximately

\$80,000 spent on cultural work for the land exchange with the state by BLM. Curt said the state has spent \$4K to 5,000. There would be 4,000 acres that would change from Federal to State. This summer there was a truck bypass proposal. Patrick said the Department Of Transportation (DOT) would not entertain a bypass unless there was a city and county were in agreement. Patrick said we do not have a formal proposal from anyone. We only have verbal comments thus far. Dayle Hammock, adjacent land owner, clarified the proposed route change.

At this point these little parcels of scattered tracts aren't doing anyone any good. The original intent was the state would exchange these tracts for land they could use. The county commissioners went to the state and asked if they would hold up the land exchange until the truck bypass issue was resolved. Doug ran through the land sale procedures in North Dakota. Larry Nelson said he really thinks this is a good land exchange. If they can't get a trade done, sooner or later they're going to go to an auction route. Jack Wilson from the Meade County Commission, said they feel they can negotiate easier with the state than with BLM. He agreed with Larry about the scattered parcels. Mr. Wilson expressed a number of problems with the trucks going through the city of Sturgis. Carol asked what the time frame was. Mr. Wilson stated there was no formal request is in place, hence no time frame. Patrick stated we haven't heard any proposals from DOT at this time, either.

Mr. Hammock said the issue has developed over safety issues. The whole point is to reduce the traffic on the S-curves. Kelly Bell, Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce, spoke opposing the bypass. She addressed the safety issue and said the Chamber had passed a resolution opposing the bypass. She also stated that it would be detrimental to the business community. Rod asked how many of the accidents were driver error and what kind of law enforcement is on or near the curves. Mayor of Sturgis, Clifford Linn, said the city actually created the S Curve situation by building the high school at that location. As far as the bypass, the citizens of Sturgis need to look at this and make a decision. Clifford is opposed to it until the citizens have had that opportunity. He asked that the city be included in the talks, discussion and planning. Pat S. asked what the speed limit was on the curves. The answer is 35.

Curt said from the position of the state they will do what they can to support the county commissioners and the city of Sturgis. Pat S. reiterated that at this point there is no formal proposal on this issue. Doug asked why the land exchange is being held up for the mile of road that is in question. The County would still have to approach BLM even if the land exchange is not completed. Bob asked if the DOT now has a proposed bypass on a map in Pierre. Curt said as far as he knows they don't. But they would probably come up with a couple of options from an engineering standpoint. Bob stated that in either case if a land exchange happened tomorrow, the majority of the land would probably be BLM.'s. Marc expressed he doesn't know of any more support we can give other than to encourage the state to proceed with the land exchange. Doug discussed the possible problems that would be created by routing truck traffic through camping areas, horseback riding and hiking trails used by the public.

BLM would like to see the exchange proceed. Harvey said we should look at the large picture. The bypass development just muddies up the water, and it might never transpire. He said it seems we should just go ahead with the trade. Larry pointed out that we have a section we are trying to acquire too and it's awful tough to trade land between counties because of taxes. Jerry K. brought up the fact that no trucks have been involved in the accidents that have occurred. Bob G. said a priority issue would be the land exchange rather than the truck bypass.

Marc brought up that we need to add an extra emphasis on the Federal side. Marc questioned how to direct them to proceed with the land exchange. Curt said based on current information and listening to county and city commissioners the RAC feels we should move forward with the land exchange.

Marc moved that we proceed with another resolution. Motion carried.

Bob stated that we really don't have any idea where that bypass might go. Harvey asked for a time frame. Curt explained the steps taken for a land exchange.

Resolution - Whereas: The South Dakota Office of School & Public Lands and the SD BLM have spent significant time and money on the proposed state and federal land exchange in Meade County.

And whereas: Local government officials have not presented a formal plan or time table for a bypass route through Ft. Meade.

Therefore be it resolved: The Dakota RAC wants SD School & Public Lands & SD BLM to proceed with this Land Exchange.

Grazing Permit Renewal - Patrick said SD office were completing the environmental analysis on renewing existing grazing permits. We have to do an assessment when a lease comes up for renewal. Eighty of them are done. Fifteen have been completed in ND and 4 or 5 still need to be done in SD. Permits are good for 10 years. Chuck said if there has been no change in the permit they will just need to be updated in the future. They are tied to the Standards and Guidelines. The biggest holdup has been the sage grouse and prairie dogs issues.

Schnell Interstate Sign - resolution passed at the last meeting for the state to sign the Schnell Recreation Area. Up until this time the state has been unwilling to put up a sign on the interstate. Doug approached the regional director in Bismarck in the fall. He said they didn't want to put a lot of signs up for maintenance and visual concerns. Doug gave him photos of other signs that were up. Doug also gave him a copy of the resolution and followed up with correspondence. The DOT is reviewing the issue. Doug is waiting to hear from them.

Rod suggested that you might want to approach Marshall Moore before he leaves his position. Rod said outside of McKenzie there is a large sign indicating a dig. Doug said we need to contact various mapping industries to get the Schnell Recreation Area placed on those maps. Bob suggested we let word of mouth take it's course - give it a couple of years and let people find it on it's own. Bob was concerned it would get overcrowded if there is too much advertising.

Doug hoped that we would have a sign by the next meeting. Doug said a goal would be to get articles in AAA, Home and Away etc. There is also a weed seed free hay policy in both (North and South Dakota). Pat S. suggested seeing if the Richardton Chamber of Commerce would consider supporting this issue.

USFS Northern Great Plains Update - Steve reviewed the background of the plan. The Forest Service has a law that states that they have to review and revise their management plans. The draft was released in July of 1999. The comment period has been extended three times. Currently the comment period ends February 3rd. Initially there were 6 or 7 issues that the plan addressed. There is currently a lot of effort going into politicizing the issues.

Pat S. reviewed the Consensus Council bus trip meeting. It's a non-profit association formed to try to look at ways to reduce the dissensions going on. The group is made up of a large representation of various groups. There were no state agencies involved. The group was brought together to tour two ranches. The ranchers work to develop management goals. They establish the goals, implement the tools. There are standard monitoring techniques. They monitor in July. The group was brought together to see how these techniques work. Another goal was to see if these groups of polar opposites can work together to preserve the grasslands. The group felt that there needs to be a continuation of this effort.

They are going to try to cultivate some common goals to develop the grasslands in North Dakota. They want to develop a pilot CRM (Coordinated Resource Management) program. One gentleman wanted to know if economy and ecology can co-exist. At the end of the trip he stated he felt they could. They will meet again January 22, 2000 to see how they can continue to develop these goals. The bottom line is that there will be an effort to get these interest groups together to continue to work on this. This issue is pretty focused on North Dakota. The tour started in Dickinson and they bussed the people to (about 15 miles south) Lander, WY. The 3/4 Circle Ranch was one of the ranches they visited.

Marc said the BLM was probably only interested in what's going on with the subsurface. Curt thought we should leave it at "roadless in need of management". As far as Oil & Gas goes - not quite 75% of the leases are already let in the grasslands. Rod said it was frustrating because the plan tried to address too many uses.

In a multi-use management scenario - there will never be a spot on the spectrum that will please everyone. There won't be one single way to manage the land. If there is a wilderness area with a lease in side of it is probably a grandfathered right. That lease has the possibility of terminating. If that happens, that land would go back to wilderness. Marc commented that wilderness is an extreme. In some places it will be extremely difficult to manage. Particularly in "back country, not motorized" areas. Marc feels that recreation has become the dominant scheme of managing the land. Larry J. felt we have to make sure we don't lose site of managing the land.

Marc did indicate that while there were many areas that were difficult there were some very nice areas in the plan as well. Curt asked what position that the RAC should make.

Marc felt we should come out with some specific mitigation schemes excluding O&G. There will be some impact on ranchers, although it will be minimal. Marc felt the FS and BLM provide adequate access as far as the travel management section goes.

Bob felt all the planning activity may be taking away from the actual management of the land. He felt that each region has to be managed using the land itself as a guide.

Curt asked how we come to a conclusion with this. Doug said maybe the RAC doesn't want to comment on this issue, however this doesn't prevent members as individuals or as members of other groups.

Steve said if there are some things RAC could come up with, instructions or comments the FS would appreciate it.

Marc wondered if comments to the effect of managing watersheds in the form of RAC type groups would help.

Curt differed to the subcommittee regarding whether to drop this issue or not.

Marc moved to vote on continuing or discontinuing commenting on the EIS. They voted to comment.

Marc asked if it should be limited to oil and gas. The vote was to include all areas and recommend the FS develop a collaborative process for implementing the plan. Motion carried.

Nominating new chairman - Marc nominated Larry J. Nelson. Larry was voted in as the new RAC chairman.

Figure 4 Ranch and Three Affiliated Tribes - Doug reviewed the background of the figure ranch status.

Doug said the working group met with Tribal Chairman Tex Hall to see if there was a possibility of consolidating the public lands. Tex wasn't interested in that plan.

There is a stocking issue to contend with. The TAT and BLM need to come to an agreement.

RAC members asked what the fencing situation was at this time on the ranch. Doug pointed out the fenced areas.

Carol suggested shifting the public land to the west within the boundaries of the ranch. At this point there are no markings on the boundaries. We would somehow have to flag the boundaries.

The state land department is considering selling their land.

Doug said one concern is public access. We would need a walking easement as well as north or south access. Right now we don't have good access to the public lands.

Larry J. asked if there was a wildlife management plan in place in that area. Curt said that he was going to refer back to the former RAC opinion on this matter. At this point there is 719 AUM allowed on the yellow or BLM land.

Doug asked the RAC if they had any suggestions or ideas with this issue, please contact Doug.

Tuesday, January 11, 2000

Public Comment Period

8:00 am in meeting room

Turn in Receipts and Sign Travel Vouchers

Updates/Discussions

Prairie Dog petition for listing - Pat Gubbins introduced Pete Gober, Lead on the Prairie Dog Listing, USF&WS

Pete reviewed the petition that has been filed, the response procedure, legal aspects and the biology of the species.

He handed out brochures regarding Prairie Dogs. Mr. Gober, using a series of overhead materials, reviewed the USF&WS reasons for listing the prairie dog as an endangered species. There has been an ebb and tide of prairie dog population throughout history.

Legal aspects - There is an MOU signed by 8 states concerning a management plan. Mr. Gober has copies of it available for the asking.

Larry G. asked about the black footed ferret. Gober said the population has been diminished primarily in relation to the population of the black tail prairie dog.

Warranted, but precluded- means limbo for the species. Other species needs and concerns may take precedence. It's a temporary protection statewide, but not federal.

Surveying has been done in a variety of ways. Tribes have done some work with GIS, FS did a line transect survey.

Larry J. wondered if smaller towns weren't better when considering the effects of plagues. Mr. Gober agreed that they were.

Pat Gubbins read a letter from Matthew J. Trask against listing the prairie dog after Mr. Gober's presentation. Mr. Gober noted the letter and said he would add it to the comments he had received previously. One member of the public said he seconded the contents of the letter.

The final call will be made by the director of US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lead on Sage Grouse -Cheyenne Office, Pat Deibert 307-772-2374. At this time they have not received any petitions so far, but there are a number of them expected.

Off Highway Vehicle Management

Doug quickly ran through the issues. He offered copies of the Draft EIS or the summary to anyone who did not have one. Doug reminded everyone that the public comment period ends February 24, 2000. South Dakota is still holding their open houses.

Pat G. reminded everyone that the preferred alternative was only a starting point for discussion. There is still time to comment and make changes in this plan.

Pat also discussed the proposed travel plan. Tom questioned the ease of the permittee to obtain permission to travel on the Federal permitted land. Doug stated that permittees would be allowed to travel across their land to maintain their permit unless there was a specific area stated in their permit where they would not be allowed to travel.

Some of the various comments made include:

- This DEIS does not cover snowmobiles.
- Jerry questioned if doing grouse surveys would fall under administrative use or permit.
- A similar permit situation would exist with utility companies
- Steve suggested that we would probably create a MOU with the two agencies NDG&F and FS/BLM).
- Harvey asked for a review of the history of this whole situation. Bill M. said most BLM states have already gone through this process.
- Bob asked if a 4 wheeler would leave the same tracks as a pickup. Larry J. and Harvey said they generally didn't.
- Larry J. questioned why we weren't able to establish specific areas where off road travel was not prohibited.
- A member of the public commented on why the concept of educating the public rather than restriction was not considered. Doug agreed that education is critical and referred to the Tread Lightly program.

South Dakota Open Houses yet to be held in January:

- January 18 Lemmon

- January 19 Buffalo
- January 20 Pierre
- January 21 Belle Fourche

Pat S. reported on the subcommittee OHV report. Jim Melchoir, and Pat Stockdill were on the committee. Jim and Pat attended the initial scoping meetings.

Pat read the following recommendation:

"First of all we would like to thank the RAC for giving us the opportunity to follow and monitor this process. It indeed has been a learning experience and as given us an appreciation of the efforts the BLM and Forest Service go through to make sure that anyone who wishes to comment or participate in the process can.

In May 1999 we provided the BLM and the RAC with a listing of the most widely expressed concerns of those attending the scoping meetings. We believe that the draft EIS adequately addresses these concerns.

We have reviewed the draft EIS, attended a couple of the open houses held by the BLM and Forest Service and received hundreds of written comments from the public. Nearly all the comments we reviewed were from residents of Montana. The vast majority of the written comments favored some travel restrictions ranging from prohibition of any motorized access to motorized access on the existing roads and trails. Many supported the adoption of the Montana State Lands Policy that apparently is more restrictive than any of the alternatives considered by the BLM and Forest Service.

Based on the foregoing, we recommend that the RAC support Alternative 2 as proposed by the BLM and Forest Service with the recommendation that motorized game retrieval off existing roads and trails not be allowed in any areas without a permit.

If the RAC desires, we will continue to follow this process to its implementation. If anyone has any questions please contact us."

Pat went on to say we have to consider what can be done in the best interest of the resource.

Some of the comments made by RAC members include:

- Larry G. said he felt he could not support the plan as it is, particularly law enforcement.
- Marc said that enforcing any law is impossible.
- Pat said they really wrestled with the game retrieval issue.
- Jerry felt he could go along with the recommendation of the committee, even though he has some issues with the game retrieval part.
- Doug reviewed a number of game retrieval scenarios.
- Bob asked if off road travel was allowed at Schnell Recreation Area. Doug said there is no off road travel allowed.
- Larry G. said he prefers alternative 4.
- Patrick G. reminded the group that SD still has not held their open houses.
- Doug said the RAC does have the option of recommending a split option. One alternative for ND, one for SD.
- Marc felt there is a need to adopt an overall alternative, and then move to a site specific plan later on.
- Tom also said Alternative 4 looked feasible. He was concerned with permittee and handicap access,

not so much with game retrieval.

- Dan had some concerns about utility access and adjacent property owners. He felt the no action alternative would be best.
- Carol felt she was in favor of splitting the options. Alternative 2 for ND, Alternative 4 for SD.

Larry G. moved to pass a resolution to accept Alternative 2 for ND. Marc second. Motion carried. Larry G. moved to pass a resolution to accept alternative 4 for SD. Tom seconded. Marc would like to see a new subcommittee created to address the SD issue.

Larry G. suggested that the SD subcommittee could make their suggestions and then have a conference call to make a decision.

Larry G. withdrew his motion, Tom withdrew his second.

Harvey moved to form a South Dakota subcommittee to address the SD issues. When that is done hold a conference call with the entire RAC to vote on it. Tom seconded. Motion carried.

Sub committee members are: Tom Quinn, Carol Koerner and Larry G. Nelson.

Bob presented information about a couple of books that are available. The titles include: Plants of the Black Hills and Bear Lodge Mountains and Grasslands Plants.

Next Meeting

Date: July 10, 11th

Time: 8:00 am

Place: Dickinson, ND

Issues: OHV followup, SD Land Exchange, grazing permits, Schnell signing, Endangered Species (sage grouse and prairie dogs), Grasslands,

Field Trip desire/ideas: Schnell Recreation Area

Adjourn - 12:00

Larry J. Nelson
Chairman



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Last Modified:

**Resource Advisory Council
Travel Lodge
Dickinson, ND
Monday, July 10, 2000**

Welcome and Introductions

Doug and Pat welcomed the members and asked them to go around the room and introduce themselves.

Logistics

Motel issues - Doug asked if there were any issues with the motel that needed to be brought up at this time.

Vouchers/receipts- Doug reminded everyone to bring their motel receipts to Mary in the morning.

Lunch - Mary will make reservations at a restaurant

Update of "RAC member data sheet" - Doug passed around the data sheet asking members to review the information, make any necessary changes and return it to Mary

Complete RAC bio sketches - With the upcoming new members, we will be once again updating the bio sketches Please review yours and let Mary know of any changes.

Outgoing/Incoming RAC members - Doug reviewed the lists of outgoing and incoming RAC members. He presented Wildlife Viewing Guides to the following outgoing members and thanked them for serving: Marc Trimmer, Rod Landblom and Bob Gartner. He announced and congratulated the reappointment of Patricia Stockdill and said Ron Ness and Richard Braun will be new members this fall.

Review and Modification of Agenda

Doug asked if there were any changes that needed to be made in the agenda.

Updates/Discussion

Belle Eldridge Cleanup [update] (Patrick) -

Pat reviewed the background of the Belle Eldridge mine. The cleanup at this point defers back to the Federal Government. The main change is the tailings deposit. The amount of tailings have quadrupled from the initial estimate. The cost has risen as well. Pat described the tailing repository. The rancher who has the allotment feels comfortable with the current developments. This project should be finalized by the end of September. Curt asked how the total costs compared with the estimates. Pat said the total cost is near a million and covers approximately 7 acres of land. When the project is over there shouldn't be any more leeching although there will still be some water leakage.

The goal is to keep the trees out of the repository. That will be capped with a layer of clay, hydro-mulched for grass and then fenced off. Rod asked if BLM could supply photos, etc to show the RAC members who are not familiar with the area. Carol said she would be interested in a 'before and after' water quality report. The repository is located half a mile up Spruce Gulch.

Doug asked what the public access will be after September. Pat explained that the area is a popular area for hunting, four wheeling and there is public interest. However, right now nearly everyone has to go through both BLM and private land to get to that area so it remains to be seen whether it will be open or not. Doug reminded the members that public access remains a large issue concerning BLM land. Harvey suggested that someone should meet with the realtors to find out where we stand. Pat agreed that there needs to be an education processes. Pat said he would be willing to invite Pam Brown from the Forest Service to the next meeting. Also

John Twiss, the Forest Supervisor from the from the Black Hills Forest Service. Rheinhard said the private sector is going through the same thing.

SD Land Exchange [update] (Curt/Pat) -

Pat said that this concerns land in Meade County. It's been in the works for many years. We want to exchange 5000 acres for 1150 acres of state land. The SD governor has to sign the deed, so he does have the ability to stop the process. The Meade County Commissioners are rumored to want to put a Truck Bypass in the area. The Commissioners are not in favor of the land exchange because of the truck bypass issue. The ranching community was very favorable to the exchange. The RAC voted to proceed with the exchange at the January 2000 meeting. Harvey said he plans on meeting with the Meade County Commissioners for his own purposes and he'd like to see if they really feel that they don't want to deal with BLM. Pat said our position is that we would like to have proceeded with the land exchange. Marc suggested it may be time to embark on a public relations campaign. RAC still has a resolution on record that we proceed with the exchange. Joe suggested developing scenarios and proceeding with a public relations campaign. Curt suggested a letter from RAC chairman and rancher supporting this proposal and reaffirming the resolution the RAC passed in January.

Truck Bypass on Ft Meade [update] (Patrick) -

There is still no formal proposal on this matter. So far any procedures are just rumors. The Chamber of Commerce and Mayor of Sturgis are adamantly opposed to the bypass. Harvey restated his opinion from the last meeting that we should just go ahead with the land exchange.

Update on the OHV initiative (Doug and Patrick)-

We received over 2000 letters and many more comments. Doug reviewed the states from which the majority of comments were received. This issue has national implications. Several public meetings were held with over 1000 people attending. In 2 - 3 weeks a newsletter will come out directly to the RAC members and other members of the public. Most people felt this was an issue that needed to be addressed, from there the views varied.

Doug explained the Montana State Land Policy. There was a push in Montana to have the FS say that only roads in the designated system would be open for driving. That alternative will not be carried forward. There are still some issues the team is working on such as: camping 300 feet off the road, disabled access, administrative, grazing and permittee use, and game retrieval.. The snowmobile issue is still not addressed in this EIS. The document will not be available until December. National BLM Strategy on OHV is being developed. Public meetings are currently being planned. Some of what we've discovered and done may be used for this processes.

Curt pointed out the South Dakota State Land policy of no motorized game retrieval. Harvey asked the procedure for outfitters and bringing in paid hunters. Chuck pointed out that you must be authorized for commercial outfitting for game in most instances when hunting for profit.

Sage Grouse petitioning (Karen Kreil; USF&WS) -

USF&WS has not received a petition covering ND and SD yet. They have received a petition for the Gunnison grouse. Karen presented a slide show detailing the background and current status of the grouse. She also went through the process used to submit a candidate for petitioning.

Curt asked what kind of conservation efforts would be helpful. Karen said one that would address the threats would be acceptable. Generally conservation efforts are developed at the state level. USF&WS assesses the agreement.

Harvey asked who to contact to preserve the grouse. Karen suggested Game and Fish Department and the USF&WS. Joe brought up a Permanent Easement possibility. Curt also brought the possibility of controlled burns.

Marc asked what other natural and manmade factors came into play. Karen said habitat modification was one of the biggest threats.

Karen handed out documents entitled: "Proposed Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts When Making Listing Decisions", "The Endangered Species Listing Program", "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Endangered Species"

Native American Consultation (Barry) -

Barry handed out "Section 106 Regulations Users Guide, Indian Tribes and the Section 106 Review Process", "The Consultation Process - July 7, 2000" and a contact person list for the tribes he has been working.

Barry went through some of the considerations we have to deal with during the consultation processes. He reviewed the various laws and considerations we are obliged address when we undertake projects. He explained some of the differences between agencies, states, tribes, etc. Every state, agency and tribe are unique and need to be dealt with differently.

He showed a fifteen minute video entitled: Sacred Domain: Tribal Perspectives in Land Management. Rod asked if the Freedom Of Information Act has been challenged. Curt wondered how we identify some of the Indian concerns when they're often secret. Barry said that he knew of no challenges to the FOIA concerning Indian sacred sites. Barry explained that consultation was the process to bring out those concerns.

Barry went through the criteria for sites to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Barry would like to begin going to the tribes to tell them about BLM and begin the consultation processes for planning. The Sec 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that we have to consult and take those comments into consideration. Currently, Dakota Cement is looking to relocate in the Black Hills. Barry has been involved in the cultural clearance. We haven't done a consultation at this point, however, the Native Americans are aware of the situation. We're will be working with the USFS on the NEPA and consultation processes.

The Tribal Communities have expressed an interest and are to be involved with the planning processes.

The Coteau coal expansion project was discussed. This involves a 23,000 acre coal expansion. They've started doing an "EIS" on their own. There are approximately 1500 stone rings, 400 cairns, lithic scatters, rock alignments, rock art, etc. on the project. There is no BLM surface, only federal minerals which comprises approximately 1/3 of the holding. We have only recently become involved in this project with the application for exploration. There will be long term, extensive consultation on this project.

Figure 4 Ranch and TAT [update] (Doug)-

Doug pointed out the Figure 4 Ranch on the state highway map. He explained the various activities the tribe has planned for the area.

Doug reported that he learned at a May meeting that they have now fenced in more of the Ranch with 8 foot high woven wire. Some of it was across Corp of Engineers land. The fence has been rerouted a number of times to conform with Corp boundaries. Doug had not heard of any gates other than the one across the county road.

Doug asked for an easement for the public to drive to the corners of the public land so they could walk in from there. Rod inquired about what kind of ecosystem they have on the ranch. Patricia asked how it's possible to fence in wild animals that the ND Constitution provides that the state owns.

Grazing is an issue as well. Doug said BLM established a 250 head stocking rate for this year. We would increase that as we go along in years. The tribe agreed.

The issue remains whether the tribe will open this up for section line access. Curt asked if they've offered to trade BLM land out. Doug is still trying to do a land exchange that would get BLM out of Figure 4.

Grazing Permit Renewal (SDFO/Pat) -

Chuck Berdan, South Dakota Field Office Realty Specialist, reported on the lease renewal processes in North and South Dakota. Chuck handed out a "Grazing Lease Renewal Progress" form. As of today we have completed

15 renewals in North Dakota and 10 renewals in South Dakota . There are 100 renewals in SD and 16 renewals in ND scheduled to be completed by March 2001. We continue to work on lease renewals and are currently doing the field examinations for those that are to be completed by March 2001.

Larry G. Nelson asked Chuck what the review procedure consists of. He said it's doing a field exam and making sure that the allotments are meeting the standards and guidelines. Staff also meets with operators if there is a need for changes and discusses those situations. If we have allotments we look at and discuss the options with the operator to get things back to the standards and guidelines. We have recently added cultural terms to the leases through the lease renewal process.

Operators are notified of any procedures that will be taking place.

Homestake exchange - Appraiser is back in SD again. We were court ordered to make the exchange involving 3300 acres adjacent to the Belle Fourche and Cheyenne rivers. We're acquiring a parcel of land in Haakon county. Basically everything but the EA, appraisal, cultural and consultation is completed. We're hoping to be done by September. There are some tailings on these parcels and part of the agreement is that Homestake would accept the liabilities.

Schnell Interstate Sign [update] (Doug)-

Doug reviewed the information and processes involved with getting Schnell Recreation Area on the new state highway map, and the signs on the Interstate. Rod suggested getting some publicity for all the agencies and the RAC for all the work that was done to get the signs.

RAC Web Site -

Doug mentioned that other web sites list their RAC members on their web sites. Doug asked if we could publish the RAC members names and categories and possibly modified biographies. We'll start with names, categories, interest groups and year their term expires.

Next Meeting:

Date: February 26 & 27, 2001

Time: 8:00 am

Place: Spearfish, SD

Issues: Forest Service Access Issues, John Twist, Prairie Dogs, Dam Restoration, Future goal planning re: small tracts of land - Ray Brady on land exchange?, Outfitting by FS and BLM and Commercial Use in General - regulations and processes, Permits - situations where permits are required (photography, plant gathering, movies, etc), cost recovery, North and South Dakota Skyrocketing Land Values

Field Trip desire/ideas:

Belle Eldridge Mine



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Last Modified: