

Meeting Minutes
Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
October 22, 2004

Riviera Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

- I. RAC Attendance and Welcome [*](#)
- II. Summary of Motions [*](#)
- III. Summary of Action Assignments [*](#)
- IV. Minutes from the July Meeting in Lovelock [*](#)
- V. Field Managers' Reports [*](#)
 - A. Winnemucca Field Manager Terry Reed's Report [*](#)
 - B. Carson City Field Manager Don Hick's Report (Presented by Associate Field Manager Elayn Briggs) [*](#)
- VI. Public Comment [*](#)
- VII. Winnemucca Field Office RMP Process [*](#)
- VIII. FY04 Accomplishments & FY05 RAC Issue Priority Setting & Scheduling [*](#)
- IX. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am. [*](#)

I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

7:35 a.m., Friday, October 22, 2004 – Meeting Called to Order by Chairman Roullier with the following members of the RAC present.

Sierra Front – Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Council Member	Resource/Expertise	Fri. 10/22
William Roullier – Chair	Transportation/ROW	X
Larie Trippet – Vice Chair	Public-At-Large	X
Laura S. Crane	Environmental	
John E. Dicks	Recreation	X
Rochanne Downs	Native Americans	X
James Eidel	Wildlife	X
John Falen	Nevada Cattlemen	X
John Gebhardt	State Agency	X

Jerry Hepworth	Energy/Minerals	X
Patricia Herzog	Elected Official	X
John Mudge	Mining	X
Ernest Paine	Livestock	X
Vernon Schulze	Wild Horses	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X
D. Craig Young	Archeology	X

BLM staff present – Terry Reed, Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office (WFO); Elayn Briggs, Associate Field Manager, Carson City Field Office (CCFO); Mark Struble, Public Affairs Specialist, CCFO; Jamie Thompson, Public Affairs Officer, WFO; Nancy Thompson, Secretary, WFO; Debra Kolkman, Nevada State Office Public Affairs Specialist.

Public present – Richard Hilton, President, Friends of Sand Mountain.

Chair Bill Roullier welcomed Jerry Hepworth as a returning member of the RAC and extended a special welcome to new members Rochanne Downs representing Native Americans, Patricia Herzog representing Elected Officials, Vernon Schulze representing Wild Horses and Burros, and Laura Crane representing Environmental. Laura was not able to be present at the meeting.

MOVED - Jerry Hepworth to nominate Bill Roullier for 2005 Chair of the Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC.

SECOND - by John Gebhardt

DISCUSSION -

APPROVED - by acclamation.

MOVED - John Dicks to nominate Larie Trippet for 2005 Vice Chair of the Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC.

SECOND - Patti Herzog

DISCUSSION -

APPROVED - by acclamation.

II. Summary of Motions

MOVED - by Jim Eidel that BLM add a wind energy project category to the Planning and Projects schedules.

SECOND - by John Dicks
DISCUSSION -
APPROVED - by acclamation.

III. Summary of Action Assignments

BLM Carson City and Winnemucca Field Offices were asked to add the category of proposed wind energy projects to their Planning and Projects schedules.

BLM Carson City Field Office was asked to provide Yerington Mine project information updates at each RAC meeting.

BLM Carson City Field Office was asked to give to the RAC more information on the river restoration project at Mustang Ranch as it becomes available.

4. BLM was asked to notify the State RAC coordinator that the Sierra Front RAC would like to bring the three RACs together on more issues.

IV. Minutes from the July Meeting in Lovelock

MOVED – To Approve with a correction by Larie Trippet

SECOND - Jerry Hepworth

DISCUSSION – The following correction to the minutes was requested: in the 10th paragraph of Section 7 change "on the ground as a result of Friends asking for routes" to "on the ground as a result of *CORVA* asking for routes."

APPROVED – by acclamation with the requested correction.

V. Field Managers' Reports

A. Winnemucca Field Manager Terry Reed's Report

1. Written summary of the report was distributed.
2. Additional items covered orally.

a. The first phase of a project in cooperation with US Fish and Wildlife Service to address Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) habitat issues on Mahogany Creek was completed. Staff time and equipment was donated by Newmont Mining Corporation. Planning is continuing on other LCT projects on Crowley Creek. Oregon State has two more years on its contract to study LCT movements within selected stream systems. The study will be expanded into the Kings River area and the Alvord Basin in Oregon.

b. Radio transmitters were attached to seven sage grouse captured in the Montana Mountains in August in a continuing effort by the WFO and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to track the birds' movements.

Jim Eidel asked how many of the sage grouse populations have collars. Terry told him that this is the only one in the Winnemucca District.

Jerry Hepworth, in reference to an enclosure fence constructed at Soldier Meadow Hot Springs to protect the habitat of the Soldier Meadow Desert Dace and Basalt Cinquefoil, asked if protecting the Desert Dace is part of the recommendations in the Black Rock NCA management plan. Terry answered it is part of the multiple use decision update of that allotment.

c. There has been a lot of public education on fire. All groups participating had a lot of impact on catching the 2004 fires when they were still small.

Jim Eidel asked why the number of human caused fires went down. Terry told him that he attributed it to the outreach efforts of BLM and other agencies.

The Glamis West Marigold Expansion plan amendment is out for public comment until November 1.

WFO staff is beginning work on the Coeur Rochester EIS for expansion and closeout. The agreement between WFO and Coeur was signed a few weeks ago.

John Gebhardt asked if the Standard Mine plan amendment isn't still out because he has it for comment. It is.

f. The NEPA planning summary document will be updated some time this fiscal year. Jeff Johnson was selected as the RMP project lead.

g. The Little Owyhee gather took place in late September and early October. Eight hundred ninety-two horses were captured, 162 released, 728 shipped, 2 died or destroyed, 106 mares fertility treated.

Vernon Schulze commented that the two-year sterilization program allows the horses to retain the same social structure throughout the time the mares are not foaling. The sterilization material is encapsulated in plastic so it seeps out slowly. Wild horse and burro people are not interested in a permanent sterilization. In his opinion there would be an advantage to something that would last through a five- or six-year cycle.

John Falen commented the down sides are that the mares get fat when they're not foaling and after the drug wears off a larger percentage of the mares foal. Vernon commented that some of the national wild horse and burro groups are really opposed to altering the horse gene pool. It might not be such a big issue in Nevada, but it is nationally. Terry commented that the more times the fertility treatment shot is given, the more costly it is and you do have to pay more attention to the genetics of the herd.

John Gebhardt asked what the Appropriate Management Level (AML) is of the Herd

Management Areas (HMAs) mentioned. Terry answered that it is a number lower than the number gathered to. The WFO is in the process of working with the Battle Mountain Field Office to set AML for the Tobin and North Stillwater ranges.

h. There have been no new allotment evaluations since the last RAC meeting.

i. There is a list of completed range projects in the report.

j. Five off-highway vehicle events have been scheduled for January and February 2005. All of them are on previously used and analyzed routes.

k. WFO is scheduled to sell 880 acres. Bids will be opened on Tuesday morning, October 26. WFO is preparing for four other BACA land sales totaling 5,400 acres.

l. Granite-Fox, a subsidiary of Sempra Power, is scheduled to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to begin the permitting/EIS process for the Granite-Fox Power Plant project in northern Washoe County next week. The MOUs will detail the cost recovery amounts and specify the responsibilities that will be required of each party in order to complete the EIS. The WFO is also asking Washoe County and the State of Nevada to be cooperating agencies in the environmental process.

Jerry Hepworth asked if the proponent pays for processing the EIS. Terry answered no, BLM pays for that, but there is cost recovery. We don't start working on the project until we get the initial deposit from the company.

Craig Young asked if there is cost recovery even if the project is not completed. Terry answered that BLM bills for any work we do even if the project is not completed.

Jim Eidel asked why the RAC can't get involved at the application stage. Terry answered the main reason is we don't charge for cost recovery until we work on the project. If there is only a projected project there is nothing for us to work on. We don't expend staff time working on something that might not go through. Jerry Hepworth commented there is some information on projects on the WFO website. Terry added that information is also available through the county involved.

MOVED - by Jim Eidel that the RAC be informed of where project application information is located and the geographic areas of the applications, specifically those for wind energy projects, for both the WFO and the CCFO.

SECOND - by John Dicks.

DISCUSSION -

Jim asked if the RAC could be provided with a one-page matrix showing where the application areas are and what they are for, included in field managers' reports.

Terry Reed suggested that information on all applications be included in the Planning and

Project list that is printed once a year by the WFO.

Mark Struble commented that wind energy project information was given to the RAC members at their July 2004 meeting.

1st Rewording - by Jim Eidel that the field office reports to the Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC contain appendices that list wind energy project applications by their name and location with the website address listed.

SECOND - by John Dicks

DISCUSSION -

Patti Herzog commented that this should be tied to an action plan for the RAC.

Mark Struble suggested a live demonstration of the LR2000 computer database at the January RAC meeting.

Terry Reed commented that individual RAC members who have a special interest are certainly welcome to contact BLM for more information. We can certainly provide maps showing places of interest for wind generation.

FINAL REWORDING - MOVED - by Jim Eidel that BLM add a wind energy project category to the Planning and Projects schedules.

SECOND - by John Dicks

APPROVED - by acclamation.

The WFO held two National Public Lands Day projects, one at Porter Spring and one at Soldier Meadow Hot Spring.

n. BLM continues to have substantial law enforcement activity at the Burning Man event. The population at Burning Man was at 35,511 at the peak. Medical problems were down. There were no serious injuries. There was proponent response to every issue BLM raised from the previous year ranging from management of the airport to management of pedestrians.

Ernie Paine commented that he noticed a 16% increase in the population at Burning Man and asked if WFO is planning to raise the fees to limit the population. Terry answered we are beginning to talk about limits on population mostly related to infrastructure. The fee is set in Washington, not locally.

Craig Young asked if the count is based on ticket sales. Terry answered that BLM spot checks and then estimates population. The Burning Man organization gives us numbers of population daily. To date we have had no reason to believe the figures are not accurate.

o. Kathleen Clarke, Director of the BLM will be in Reno, Monday, October 25 to present the Four C's Award to 74 people both in and outside of BLM who worked especially

hard on the three-year time-sensitive RMP for the Black Rock NCA. Owen Billingsley, Field Manager of the Surprise Field Office in Cedarville, California, Dave Cooper, NCA Manager and Terry Reed will be accepting the award on behalf of all those who contributed. All 74 of those invited will receive a certificate honoring their contributions.

p. Personnel actions are listed in the report.

q. Larie Trippet commented that new members be aware that the section of the report "Actions Taken as a Result of RAC Counsel" was added at the request of the RAC.

B. Carson City Field Manager Don Hick's Report (Presented by Associate Field Manager Elayn Briggs)

1. Written summary of the report was distributed.

2. Additional items covered orally.

a. The new CCFO Fire Management Officer is reporting in November.

b. Management of the Yerington Mine project has gone to the BLM State Office. John Dicks asked if some information will be available on the Yerington Mine. Elayn answered that BLM will make sure that information is available for each of our RAC meetings.

c. At its April 28, 2004 meeting in Sparks, the RAC advised BLM to go to the next law enforcement step at Sand Mountain and advised that BLM should identify what areas should be considered and take a scientific approach, considering prohibited areas and what the next step for habitat protection should be without closing off the whole area. BLM should consider habitat alternatives to provide protection while leaving the trails marked green open. BLM had an internal meeting on these issues and hoped to embark on a management plan for Sand Mountain but has no funding for that now. BLM will do some of these things under the auspices of the Churchill County Plan. BLM will make sure that everyone is included.

John Dicks asked if any of the things that Richard Hilton (President of Friends of Sand Mountain) mentioned at the last RAC meeting, particularly communication with the BLM office, had been taken care of. Elayn answered that BLM looked at some of the proposals for putting up fencing at Sand Mountain along with signage. Fencing has been put up in some areas. John asked if BLM needs any other support, recommendations or help from the RAC. Elayn answered BLM has received some recommendations. We will certainly ask for more as we need it. Mark Struble commented that Sand Mountain will be on the January RAC agenda.

Richard Hilton told the RAC he hasn't had any problems with answers to emails since he raised this matter at the last meeting.

c. BLM is still revising the Administrative Draft of the

Pine Nut Plan. An ATV jamboree proposal will be put into the Plan. BLM hopes to get the Administrative Draft out for public comment by the end of December 2004.

Jim Eidel asked about the removal of renewable energy resources and Fire Management decisions from the Pine Nut Plan. Elayn answered that the renewable energy part was pulled and put into the Churchill County Plan so it would not get lost in the mix. The Fire part was put into the National Fire Management Plan. Jim asked if it isn't better to have it [the Fire Management] in the Draft RMP so that more people know about it. Elayn answered no, BLM believes that more people will see it the way it is.

d. Things are working well at the Wilson Canyon OHV area.

John Dicks asked if there are any principles that were used at Wilson Canyon that can be used at Sand Mountain. Elayn answered that BLM is learning from those examples.

e. Jerry Hepworth asked if the RAC can get an update on the river restoration project at Mustang Ranch. Elayn answered BLM will get that to the RAC as more information is available.

VI. Public Comment

Richard Hilton, President of Friends of Sand Mountain, told the RAC that last year was the first time any rules had been proposed at Sand Mountain. (He circulated photos of signs placed at Sand Mountain.) Right now the signs are only out there on busy weekends. The Friends organization feels signs should be up on a more permanent basis. The Friends group is checking into the cost of getting more signs and into approval for getting them out there all the time.

Education and improving fences are two other issues important to The Friends. The group has put up some test fencing (Mr. Hilton circulated photos of fencing.) The Friends group has just about gone through its batch of brochures and is having a new brochure made with more information about staying on the green trails. He said there needs to be a better effort, especially on BLM's part, to educate the riders out there.

VII. Winnemucca Field Office RMP Process

Terry Reed presented an overview of the WFO RMP process. Complete text of the presentation was distributed to the RAC and is available in hardcopy upon request.

Terry explained that land use plans ensure the public lands are managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). FLPMA requires that public lands be managed under the principals of multiple use and sustained yield, in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic,

historical, ecological, environmental, and archaeological values.

Public lands must be managed to recognize the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber and fiber. Land use plans are one of the primary mechanisms for guiding BLM activities to achieve the mission and goals outlined in the BLM Strategic Plan.

The RMP will establish guidance, objectives, policy, and adaptive management actions for the decision area and will address and resolve issues for the area.

The planning area boundary encompasses about 11.1 million acres and includes all lands regardless of land ownership. The decision area encompasses about 7.3 million acres and excludes private lands, State lands, Indian Reservations, federal lands not administered by BLM, and lands within the Black Rock NCA Planning Area. A map of the WFO planning area is included in the hardcopy of the presentation.

Larie Trippet asked how much of the planning area is US Forest Service land. Terry answered that approximately 4-500,000 acres is in the Santa Rosa Ranger District.

John Dicks commented that there have been plans where entities planned for trails across private lands and didn't discuss it with the private land owners. On the planning map you show all lands regardless of land ownership. This will probably be noticed. Will it be a problem? Terry answered that it was noticed even in the Black Rock Plan.

The RMP effort will stress collaboration and extensive public outreach. Terry told the group that BLM will establish a subgroup and will provide training. Having the public substantially involved led to a much better process when the planning stage was reached in the Black Rock Plan and BLM will do that again.

The BLM WFO will ask others to serve as cooperating agencies in the development of the RMP.

Some of the anticipated planning issues that will have to be addressed in the RMP include:

Fire planning to set priorities for fuel treatments, protection, suppression, fire use, and fire rehabilitation.

Management of sensitive species to avoid listing as a threatened or endangered (T&E) species.

Protection of T&E species.

Noxious weed control.

Designation of Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use areas and routes.

Allocation of wildlife forage.

Land tenure adjustments.

Management of wild horses and burros.

Protection and management of cultural resources.

Local, regional, and national economic operations and diversity.
Management of energy development – Wind, Geothermal, and Oil and gas.
Management of hardrock mining including permitting, reclamation and closure.
Identification of priority areas and special emphasis watersheds for restoration or protection.

John Falen asked if BLM is allocating forage to wildlife. Terry answered that how that issue is addressed will be decided during the planning process.

BLM will get to the stage of developing alternatives by the end of this year. It is anticipated that the planning effort will take between three and four years to complete. BLM will maintain and publish a schedule.

Jerry Hepworth confirmed his desire to be involved in a planning subgroup. Patti Herzog and John Gebhardt also asked to be involved.

Craig Young asked if there is consistency [in membership] between this planning team and the Black Rock planning team. Terry answered no. Craig continued, but there is a lot that can be learned from the Black Rock planning. Terry answered yes there is.

VIII. FY04 Accomplishments & FY05 RAC Issue Priority Setting & Scheduling

The Sierra Front RAC met as an entire RAC four times in FY04, including meetings in Henderson (Tri-RAC meeting in October 2003), Reno (January 2004), Sparks (joint meeting with the Northeast California RAC in April 2004) and Lovelock (July 2004).

In January 2004, the RAC reviewed criteria and initial project proposals for Round 5 of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act; assigned RAC member Susie Askew and a RAC subcommittee to develop wild horse & burro statewide standards & guidelines; reviewed NEPA & Section 106 consultation field office procedures; discussed the Pine Nut Mountains RMP Amendment DEIS; and reviewed demolition efforts at the former Mustang Ranch and the Nature Conservancy's river restoration work at the McCarran Ranch during a field trip along the Truckee River.

In April 2004, the RAC held a joint meeting with the Northeast California RAC. The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of an interagency panel addressing the topic *"Increasing Use – Decreasing Means on Public Lands in NV/CA."* The panel members consisted of the BLM state directors of California & Nevada, major representatives of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and Nevada Department of Agriculture, NDOW, and the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO). The panel members discussed with the RACs the continuing trends/impacts to public lands from urban growth, recreation and tourism promotion and planning, noxious weeds and wildland fire during a time when federal funds to agencies are decreasing. Both RACs endorsed creation of a new Subgroup to work collaboratively with BLM as it begins management of the Black Rock

NCA under the new NCA RMP and creates implementation plans for that specially designated area. The SF-NWGB RAC also reviewed monitoring of visitor use and compliance at the Sand Mountain Recreation Area; a Pershing County Planning Commission proposal for a Pershing County Lands Bill; and WFO progress on the Black Rock-High Rock NCA and WFO RMPs.

In July, the RAC received additional briefings on: Sand Mountain monitoring and recreation fees/expenses from BLM staff and from Richard Hilton of the Friends of Sand Mountain; Churchill County RMP Amendment EIS and North Valleys Water Projects EIS; the status of SNPLMA projects in northern Nevada (Rounds 1-5); and participated in a field trip to Lovelock Cave and the Coeur Rochester Mine.

In FY04, RAC members continued to provide significant counsel to BLM managers on a variety of resource management programs and projects. The RAC continues to ask that BLM managers include in their reports at RAC meetings the actions each BLM manager has taken that was based directly upon counsel and suggestions provided by the RAC.

Mark Struble explained in answer to a question from the RAC that the Wild Horse and Burro Subgroup is meant to have representatives from all three RACs. Our RAC put together its own subgroup to then work with the other two RACs. There has been some confusion on this issue.

Vernon Schulze commented he would like to see our Subgroup continue to work on the Wild Horse and Burro Standards and Guides.

Jerry Hepworth commented maybe the RAC needs to have a discussion with BLM State Director Bob Abbey on the issue of the three RACs working together. This is not the first time we have had this problem.

Larie Trippet commented that a BLM specialist facilitated the Tri RAC OHV group and it worked well.

John Gebhardt commented that our Subgroup brought its Wild Horse and Burro Standards to the other RACs but didn't receive many comments.

Debra Kolkman explained to the RAC that the other RACs had already approved the Wild Horse and Burro Standards and Guides before the Tri-RAC meeting last year. The Sierra Front RAC needs to work with these. They should just be guidelines. If they are standards they have to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The State Director can only approve guidelines.

The following dates were proposed for RAC meetings in 2005.

January 27-28, CCFO – Agenda topics will include Pine Nut RMP Amendment, North Valleys Water Projects, Churchill County Plan RMP Amendment, Update

Wind/Geothermal Projects, Update route inventory strategy, RMP 101 presentation, Native American work with RACs, Sand Mountain update.

April 24-25, WFO – Winnemucca RMP/EIS Scoping, Echo Canyon Plant, Granite-Fox (Sempra Plant) EIS.

July 28-29, location TBA.

Additional agenda items include LCT recovery plan; Black Rock Wilderness Planning; Coeur Rochester Mine EIS; Wildfire Rehab Projects; Review of Fire planning; Sage-Grouse Report; Carson City Master Plan, demographic analysis from experts to help put RMPs & amendments into context in each RMP effort; Native American consultation process; energy, water tied to RMPs.

Rochanne Downs commented it seems like most of our issues are based on crisis management. We need to look at all resources during the planning stage.

Terry Reed commented that the Planning Nuts and Bolts course will be available to RAC and RAC Subgroup members.

Jerry Hepworth suggested that visual information on demographics be made available to the RAC.

John Dicks commented there is a need to particularize the demographic information for the different RACs because the information will be different for each county. I'd like to see us discuss the negative impacts to displaced groups.

Rochanne Downs said she disagreed that the issues are different for different areas of the state. Most issues are statewide issues.

Larie Trippet commented he would hope that agendas would focus on issues where the RAC can make recommendations or make a difference.

Jerry Hepworth commented that our product is the debate. We should talk about bringing the three RACs together on more issues. He asked that BLM consider this at the state level.

Jim Eidel commented there is no bigger issue than the Lincoln County Land Bill. If we're going to brainstorm issues in the context we talked about we need experts to help us focus. We need to know what issues we're going to focus on before we interact with the experts.

Jim Eidel extended his thanks to Richard Hilton and Friends of Sand Mountain for all the things they've done and the progress made at Sand Mountain since the last RAC meeting. The RAC members concurred.

IX. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am. The Sierra Front RAC reconvened with the other two Nevada RACs for the conclusion of the Tri RAC session.