

# Meeting Minutes

## Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council July 27 & 28, 2004

Sturgeon's Motel and Casino  
Lovelock, Nevada

I. RAC Attendance and Welcome .....	2
II. Summary of Motions .....	2
III. Summary of Action Assignments .....	2
IV. Minutes from the April Meeting in Sparks .....	3
V. Field Managers' Reports.....	3
A. Carson City Field Manager Don Hick's Report.....	3
B. Winnemucca Field Manager Terry Reed's Report .....	6
VI. Sand Mountain Monitoring Update .....	9
Sand Mountain Rec Area Fees-Expenses Report .....	9
VII. Report from the Friends of Sand Mountain .....	10
VIII. Churchill County RMP Amendment EIS .....	14
North Valleys Water Projects EIS .....	14
IX. Update on SNPLMA Projects in Northern Nevada .....	15
X. Public Comment Period .....	16
XI. Lovelock Cave Slide Show.....	17
XII. Report on National RAC Chairs' Meeting in Phoenix (May 11-13, 2004) .....	17
XIII. Meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm. ....	17
IX. Field Trip .....	18

## I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

9:00 a.m., Tuesday, July 27, 2004 – Meeting Called to Order by Sierra Front RAC Chair Bill Roullier with the following members of the RAC present.

### SIERRA FRONT – NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Council Member	Resource/Expertise	Tues. 7/27	Wed. 7/28
William Roullier – Chair	Transportation/ROW	X	X
Tina Nappe – Vice Chair	Environment	X	X
Susie Askew	Wild Horses and Burros	X	X
John Dicks	Recreation	X	X
Jim Eidel	Wildlife	X	X
Jacques Etchegoyhen	Elected Official	X	
Gerry Emm	Native Americans	X	
John Falen	Nevada Cattlemen	X	X
John Gebhardt	State Agency	X	X
Jerry Hepworth	Energy/Minerals	X	X
John Mudge	Mining		
Ernest Paine	Livestock	X	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X	X
Larie Trippet	Public-At-Large	X	X
D. Craig Young	Archeology	X	X

## II. Summary of Motions

MOVED - by Sherm Swanson that Don Hicks work within a Churchill County collaborative process with all of the appropriate parties to implement a RAC subcommittee to work on Sand Mountain issues within the Churchill RMP Amendment/ACEC process.  
DISCUSSION - The motion died for lack of a second.

Don Hicks invited the RAC to start a new RAC subcommittee starting in October 2004 with the purpose of assisting the Carson City Field Office staff in activity level Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) planning at Sand Mountain Recreation Area.  
MOVED – by Tina Nappe to accept this proposal.  
SECOND - by John Dicks  
APPROVED – by acclamation.

## III. Summary of Action Assignments

There were no actions assignments made at this meeting.

## **IV. Minutes from the April Meeting in Sparks**

MOVED – by John Gebhardt

SECOND – by Jerry Hepworth

DISCUSSION – The following corrections to the minutes were requested: on page 2, add Jacques Etchegoyhen’s name back into the list of members; on page 2, paragraph 2, change “field manager for the Surprise, California field office” to “field manager for the Carson City Field Office;” on page 3 Summary of Motions, Motion 2, line 5 and page 11 Motion 2, line 5, take out word “green,” phrase should read – “leaving existing trails open;” on page 5, section c, second quote from Jim Eidel, change “Lahontan Cutthroat Trout” to “Lahontan Delta.”

APPROVED – by acclamation with the requested corrections.

## **V. Field Managers’ Reports**

### ***A. Carson City Field Manager Don Hick’s Report***

1. Written summary of the report was distributed.
2. Additional items covered orally.
  - a. BLM has provided much logistical support in Fire this year. There have been 62 fires so far this year. They have been kept small. Northwestern Nevada is still at Fire Planning Level 3. Fire restrictions were initiated in early June. BLM Carson City started mechanical treatments for fire reduction in June. The Student Conservation Association crew is working with the Carson City Field Office (CCFO) again this summer providing their Fire Safe message to homeowners in the area. They were very busy after the Waterfall Fire.

Jim Eidel thanked BLM for their participation at the Waterfall Fire. He asked what happened at the beginning of the fire to let it get so big. Don answered that initial attack was not BLM responsibility. There was a medical emergency early on that may have affected initial attack.

Jim asked about the draft fire management plan, saying that he was sure every agency will end up with as good a fire management plan as they can, but how will they mesh? Will there be one agency in charge? Terry Reed answered the fire plans being developed by BLM are mandated to be multi-jurisdictional. There is a very strong emphasis on multi-agency participation. Initial attack is also addressed. Elayn Briggs, Associate Field Manager, Carson City answered that Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) had the responsibility for initial attack on the Waterfall Fire. They couldn’t get planes on the fire until

early morning. That was no one's fault. They had mutual command with BLM. They did everything that could be done but things just went badly. Sometimes that happens.

- b. Expedited results from nine soil samples from mineral processing sites at the former Yerington Mine were found to have elevated levels of radiation. More than 100 shallow samples were sent to a laboratory. The final lab results, expected by the end of July, will be incorporated into a Worker's Health and Safety Plan.

John Dicks asked if anyone looked at the health records of previous workers. BLM should be able to get the records through OSHA. Don answered that it is a good question. Generating data from the past would be helpful.

- c. The field office has received a number of wind energy applications.

Bill Rouillier commented that BLM has to analyze power lines too.

- d. The field office continues to work with a couple of groups on the Ruhenstroth emergency vehicle closure in the Pine Nut Mountains. Don told the group he looks at it from a longer prospective to build a relationship and work from there. He is trying to come to consensus that until an agreement is reached we stick to the existing trails and try to discourage cross-country travel. BLM hopes to get a kiosk with better interpretive information soon. A trail system will probably be designated in the Pine Nuts. BLM would like to see riders' organizations work with them. The key is getting folks to come to the table.

Craig Young commented that he asked for a report on the mastodon site at the last meeting. He's heard that there is a draft report out.

Jacques Etchegoyhen said he heartily commends Carson City BLM. The outreach they have been doing is wonderful.

John Dicks commented he would like to echo that. The meetings vented a lot of the emotionalism. Kiosks work, but after a couple years the maintenance goes away. The CCFO should try to continue all the attention that is being given to the area now.

- e. BLM is going through an internal evaluation of the Pine Nuts RMP, but can't be sure of the final schedule.

Larie Trippet commented that there is a partners planning group and asked when they will be reconvened. Elayn Briggs answered, when the draft plan comes out.

Dan Jacquet, Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources, Carson City, answered that BLM did meet with

a group of users along with county government about a month ago. We met again yesterday with Douglas County. Some of the changes from those meetings will be incorporated into the administrative draft. Larie Trippet continued that his understanding was that the partners group was broader than just OHV.

John Dicks commented he thinks trash accumulation is a real problem out there. September or October might be a good time to have a cleanup.

Jacques Etchegoyhen commented that it might be BIA land. Terry Reed answered BLM Winnemucca worked with BIA once on a contract basis to get a large area cleaned up, so there are ways to do that.

Gerry Emm commented the OHV group should contact the BIA if they want to set up a cleanup group.

- f. There has been a high degree of compliance with the emergency closure for the camping /riding areas within the riparian zone at Wilson Canyon. BLM plans to put in photo points to do monitoring. BLM met with trails and water coalition groups. The groups had some concerns about monitoring and base line science data used to make management decisions.

Gerry Emm commented he didn't see any mention of weed control. It is one of the major things we need to look at. Don answered that will fit in well with monitoring.

- g. BLM is on track with wild horse and burro gathers. Lyon County received a grant to do a feasibility study for the proposed adoption center.

Susie Askew commented there are two very small herds and asked if Don had talked to his staff about zeroing them out. Don answered he hadn't thought about that. Dan Jacquet commented that BLM is looking at herd areas that are under 50. Each area has its own unique features and character. It's also a budget issue. Can we afford to manage such small herds? John Falen commented that he supports what Susie and Dan said.

- h. Things are coming together at Mustang Ranch. The buildings are being moved off and the area is being cleaned up.

## ***B. Winnemucca Field Manager Terry Reed's Report***

1. Written summary of the report was distributed.
2. Additional items covered orally.
  - a. There is a new center manager at Central Nevada Interagency Dispatch (CNIDC). Tom Cary comes to the Winnemucca Field Office (WFO) from Las Vegas where he was a Center Manager for the last three years. Prior to Las Vegas, Tom worked in Grand Junction, Colorado as the Center Manager and also has a vast amount of diverse experience including working in Lakeview, Oregon with both the BLM and US Forest Service. Winnemucca BLM has managed to keep fires smaller this year, the result of changes in resources, distribution of resources, and staffing.
  - b. WFO continues to implement the pilot Campfire Permit and is also working on an update of the WFO Fire Plan.
  - c. A programmatic environmental assessment (PEA) has been completed for the district's fire rehabilitation program for the coming years.
  - d. There have been a number of mineral activities. Terry encouraged RAC members to look at the Planning and Project Schedule which was distributed to the group. The schedule will be available on line in the future.
  - e. Two mines are looking at expanding into new areas, Florida Canyon Mine and Marigold, through their Marigold Mine Millennium Expansion.
  - f. The WFO continues to work on prep for the Winnemucca RMP. Staff is working on a Statement of Work. Work on the RMP will probably begin in earnest in early fall.
  - g. The WFO started the Oil and Gas/Geothermal Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA), but work has been suspended due to funding constraints.
  - h. The WFO has prepared an EA for the Newmont Rapid Infiltration Basin Exploration Project. The EA analyzes the potential environmental impacts that could result from Newmont Mining's proposal to explore for areas in Pumpernickel Valley about 34 miles east of Winnemucca suitable for rapidly infiltrating water from the dewatering of its Lone Tree Pit. The EA is open for public comment until August 4.
  - i. The Draft Soldier Meadows Management Plan will be available for review until August 9.
  - j. The Owyhee gather may occur this fall depending on funding.

John Falen asked how much of the WH&B reprogramming money WFO is getting for this year. Terry answered that he can't remember the exact amount but doesn't think we got much of it. The amount was scaled down from what was originally proposed. BLM had a successful Wild Horse and Burro Show plus small adoption in Winnemucca July 9-11. Twelve horses were adopted.

Susie Askew commented that all the horses brought to the show were adopted.

- k. Range continues to scramble to deal with the long term effects of the drought.
- l. Hazmat actions taken include a cooperative cleanup effort of an abandoned homestead near Sulphur at the boundaries of the NCA among Hazmat, Engineering and Fire people, and the initiation of a cooperative cleanup effort among Hazmat and Cultural Resources in the Tunnel Camp mining camp in the Seven Troughs Range. Hazmat training continues to be offered to staff.
- m. Planning has been completed for the NCA.

Larie Trippet asked what the process is for appealing the three items listed in the Field Office Overview. Jamie Thompson told him when the plan is published in the Federal Register there will be a 30-day appeal period available to the public. An appeal is sent to the Field Manager who makes a recommendation to the State Director. Instructions are attached to the published Record of Decision (ROD). The appealable parts do not affect the overall document. Implementation can proceed.

- n. In response to an action item from the last meeting, a handout on the use of Fee Demo funds was distributed to the RAC.
- o. Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) work is proceeding in the Montana Mountains on the Washburn/Crowley Creek projects.
- p. There are a lot of activities in the Lands and Realty Program. The Orovada land sale is proceeding.
- q. SEMPRA Energy of San Diego has submitted an application for a right-of-way for a power transmission line and road near Gerlach
- r. The appraisal for Knott Creek Reservoir is due this Friday, July 30. Depending on the appraised value and the owner's willingness, this acquisition may proceed.

Jim Eidel commented that the photo of a wind energy farm in the field office report looks like a huge fragmentation of management with a huge impact on sage-grouse. What

stage are you in? Terry answered we are in the scoping stage. John Gebhardt commented the sage-grouse issue will be identified in the scoping process.

- s. The list of people willing to work on a new RAC Subgroup for the implementation of the Black Rock RMP is included in the report.
- t. Dave Hays, the replacement for Pete Christensen, AFM for Non-Renewable Resources, who retired this year, will be coming on this week.
- u. Les Boni, AFM for Renewable Resources, is retiring next week.
- v. The BLM Budget Strategy Team meeting was held last week. BLM's budget outlook for 2005/2006 is very bleak. A hiring freeze has been instituted within BLM Nevada. (NOTE: Amy Lueders, Associate State Director, mentioned on the State Leadership Team (SLT) Monday morning conference call August 2 that she and Bob Abbey had decided not to impose a complete hiring freeze based on discussions at the recent SLT meeting. BLM Nevada will continue with the current process that requires justification for all PFT, Term, and SCEP positions but does not apply to reassignments, STEP and Temporary hires.) BLM is looking at a 10-30 percent reduction in one-time funding in '05.
- w. Bob Abbey extended the comment period for Law Enforcement (LE) Rules. Communication of this information with partners in LE was not good and resulted in a negative response. Terry encouraged RAC members to look at the rules and provide comments. The new rules would bring some federal enforcement into agreement with State laws on public lands.

Tina Nappe commented that she is concerned that BLM will end up supplementing local law enforcement especially in view of limited budget. Terry answered BLM provides extended guidance to its LE officers to deal with incidents only when the officers are already there and no other LE officer is available.

Tina Nappe, referring to the Lyon County Plan mentioned in the Carson City Field Manager's Report, expressed concern about the county by county plans that bypass the public interest by not involving public participation in the process. She encouraged Carson City BLM to really look at the Lyon County proposal.



## **VI. Sand Mountain Monitoring Update**

### **Sand Mountain Rec Area Fees-Expenses Report**

Elayn Briggs presented a program on Sand Mountain Rec Area fees and an updated monitoring report.

The National Fee Demo Program was authorized by Congress in 1996 and extended through 2004. It was very hard to collect fees before this program was instituted and all monies went back into the federal government general fund. Now up to 100 percent of the fees go back to the area where they were collected.

Monies can be used for interpretive programs, LE facility enhancement, signs, visitor services, etc. None can be used for administrative costs.

Services provided at Sand Mountain include:

- Law enforcement including increased LE on busy weekends
- Site maintenance
- Customer service personnel
- Emergency medical
- Trash pickup (not paid for with Fee Demo funds)

Visitor use is increasing and budget is going down.

Most users do support a reasonable fee.

A yearly pass at Sand Mountain is \$45. A weekly pass is \$20. There is no daily pass available.

Expenditures by BLM at Sand Mountain exceed money collected. BLM is spending about \$128,000 in Fee Demo money in 2004 and about \$200,000 from the Carson City BLM budget.

Carson City BLM will look at increasing the fees as the process continues, but didn't want to raise them the first year.

Tina Nappe commented that she was impressed with the amount of garbage at Sand Mountain. Will "Leave No Trace" be encouraged - a pack it in /pack it out program? Elayn answered she didn't know how successful charging a fee and hauling out your own trash would be. The cost of trash is paid per dump, about \$600. It adds up to about \$20,000 per year. Gerry Emm commented that they compact the trash at Pyramid Lake.

A representative from Congressman Gibbons' office asked if any of the money is being used to restrict access and for habitat protection. Elayn said not at this time.

Ernie Paine asked how fees compare to other areas. Elayn answered that BLM looked at other sand dune areas before setting fees for Sand Mountain.

Sand Mountain was designated in the late '60s/early '70s. It was adopted into the first BLM Carson City land use plan in the late 1970's.

Elayn told the group that it is easier from an enforcement and implementation stand point not to charge a daily fee.

Ernie Paine commented he thinks there are holes in a weekly fee. As a fee schedule we need a better way to react to what we charge. Some places are charging double what we are. Elayn answered we consider it a user fee not an entrance fee. It's hard to monitor whether someone stays a few hours or overnight.

Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain, commented if there are dumpsters there people will use them. If there are no dumpsters people will take it out.

Elayn presented an updated monitoring report for the 12 weeks since the RAC last met. She told the group that total numbers of noncompliance were high over the Memorial Day Weekend. In the last three weeks noncompliance has gone way down but so has visitation.

She showed pictures of fresh tracks made over the holiday weekend and mentioned that red stanchions were near the tracks.

In answer to a question from a RAC member, Elayn told the group that there had been one Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) nomination from internal BLM and one from the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe. Designation does not change the management but draws special management attention to the area. The nominated ACECs total 32,000 acres together.

## **VII. Report from the Friends of Sand Mountain**

Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain, told the members of the RAC that he felt Friends of Sand Mountain was ignored during the last RAC meeting. Friends of Sand Mountain would like to start anew and have better relations with BLM.

He told the group that he felt the presentation last time [during the RAC meeting on April 30, 2004] was a totally biased report. There was no balance. They [the RAC] need to be balanced with an OHV advocate so that the reports are true and accurate.

He added that the report didn't show Kearny buckwheat trampled by cattle, or diminished plant growth due to six years of continued drought. The charts don't prove anything. They don't have a baseline to compare with. It took Friends a month and a half to get a copy of the report from last meeting's presentation. When we got it, it was covered with

disclaimers which I don't think were there when you heard the report. Disclaimers said "we're not responsible for the accuracy of anything on this slide."

Dan Jacquet explained that the disclaimers mean BLM is not responsible for anyone else's use of the data.

Richard continued, we keep getting lip service from BLM. Seems like we meet and nothing happens. We had a field meeting with BLM after the last RAC meeting. There were no changes. Nothing. [At a] meeting [in] early June recommendations were made for fencing, signs, volunteer projects. Nothing. A month and a half goes by and we hear nothing. We have to get the material from BLM so that we can do something. We hoped to get something done before Labor Day Weekend. Friends had signs put up Memorial Day Weekend that said "stay on the designated areas." No matter what, some people will show up who break the rules. These are all new rules. The place has been open for 20 or 30 years with no rules. This is a work in progress. There is a learning curve here. There has to be increased signage. With so many issues here involved with the RAC where is the OHV advocate? With so many issues there needs to be someone in BLM and someone on this group that represents OHV.

Richard also told the group that he had sent two emails to the Carson City BLM office and received no replies.

At the close of his presentation he reminded the group that Labor Day is Friends big cleanup day.

Tina Nappe commented our proposal is based on the hope that Friends of Sand Mountain will help with the area. The base line on loss of habitat is there and goes back to the late '70's. To me it's probably due to use of OHVs. At the last meeting we said that the next step, protection of the resources, needed to be taken. I don't see that the next step has been taken. I appreciate that more education needs to be done but I don't think that the land has that much time left.

Larie Trippet commented that he did represent OHV interests on the RAC among other recreation interests. He also said the BLM State Director has delayed moving to a higher level. He has asked the CCFO staff to delay until BLM has given the initial voluntary program the full year to work that they promised the OHV community.

Sherm Swanson asked if Elayn would comment on BLM not working with Friends. Elayn answered that the CCFO feels it has been working with them; that routes were identified out on the ground as a result of CORVA asking for routes. A lot of the problem is a lack of trust on both sides, and some is due to the way government does business, especially with the fence projects. Elayn also said she had not received any emails.

Don Hicks commented that there is a lack of balance and perspective in reference to the OHV community. Bias is a perception we all have. We are in the process of hiring an

OHV coordinator for BLM Nevada who will be housed in the CCFO. BLM is trying to address the concerns in a way that will be meaningful. Someone should be on board in the next 60-90 days.

A representative from Congressman Gibbons' office commented that habitat restoration has to be a big concern. Have you seen any of the proposals? Dan Jacquet answered that the CCFO has a *Seeds for Success* program, a group of college age students collecting seeds from the Sand Mountain ecosystem. The seeds will be studied at Kew Gardens in London to determine how to cultivate them - a series of steps based on good science.

Bill Rouillier commented that he was extremely disturbed by the lack of communication. It is incumbent on Friends of Sand Mountain, too, to communicate. Neither Friends nor BLM should wait for the other to reply.

Jacques Etchegoyhen commented that the Sand Mountain fees should cover 100 percent or the taxpayer is paying for it. He said he doesn't like it when taxpayers pick up the bill. He said that the move toward 100% fee funding should happen slowly, but it was important to keep talking and moving forward.

Jerry Hepworth commended Terry and the Winnemucca staff for all the projects they are trying to manage. He also reminded the RAC that he made a motion last time for a management plan to consider some type of habitat restoration at Sand Mountain and added that a process must be identified to get some work done on the ground.

Jim Eidel commented that the RAC had been talking about this for four RAC meetings that he was sure of. At the first meeting Friends of Sand Mountain showed a brochure with education. Where has that brochure gone? On another point, Dean Kinerson, Plant Biologist, Carson City BLM, has shown aerial photos over many years that show degradation. "You talked about making contacts camp to camp. Let's do it. You talked about fencing. Let's get it on the ground." He added, the BLM is doing a good job on the scientific data. Maybe the BLM should be talking to Friends on the science data. I would like to see the diagrams redone to show trends and to show when the holiday weekends are.

Larie Trippet commented I would like to see the violations in relation to the number of visitors.

Tina Nappe commented the RAC was given the opportunity to have a subgroup and we didn't do very well. We need to look at what we are doing or not doing as a RAC.

Gene Seidlitz, Assistant Deputy State Director for Resources, Lands and Planning, BLM Nevada State Office, told the group the BLM is actively recruiting for the OHV coordinator. BLM Nevada is not biased by any resource. We are mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). To reach consensus all parties have to listen. To make progress, to move forward, people have to come together. Email

won't get it. Messages won't get it. BLM Nevada will come together for consensus or for disagreement, but we will come together.

The comment was made that Churchill County has put together a group, meeting August 18 at the Churchill County Building to discuss this topic.

Terry Reed commented he would suggest a sanctioned group such as a subgroup of the RAC.

Jim Eidel commented that the buckwheat and the butterfly should be considered a management unit like the sage-grouse.

John Dicks commented [in reference to Richard Hilton's statement], "I resent what you said. I consider myself a representative for the OHV community." He added that something has to be done about the pictures.

Don Hicks echoed Terry's process suggestion. "I agree that we need to get beyond 'us and them'. If this group (a RAC subgroup) can help me put a framework together, that would be most beneficial."

Larie Trippet commented, "I think we're beyond a subgroup. We need to fix the communication between CCFO and Friends of Sand Mountain and we will get more facilitation on the ground faster than with a subgroup."

Sherm Swanson commented if there is substantial communication all the groups involved need to be part of it.

MOVED - by Sherm Swanson that Don Hicks work within a Churchill County collaborative process with all of the appropriate parties to implement a RAC subcommittee to work on Sand Mountain issues within the Churchill RMP Amendment/ACEC process.  
DISCUSSION - The motion died for lack of a second.

Dan Jacquet commented said there is an Interim Management Plan that resulted from previous subcommittee work and recommendations. He added that it's the implementation details, the day-to-day, on-the-ground projects that need to be clarified and completed.

John Dicks asked for suggestions from BLM management on how to proceed rather than voting on the motion now.

**Lunch break at 12:20pm.**

The meeting was called back to order by Chairman Roullier at 1:37pm.

Don Hicks invited the RAC to start a new RAC subcommittee beginning in October 2004 with the purpose of assisting the Carson City Field Office staff in activity level Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) planning at Sand Mountain Recreation Area.

MOVED – by Tina Nappe to accept this proposal.

SECOND - by John Dicks

APPROVED – by acclamation

## **VIII. Churchill County RMP Amendment EIS North Valleys Water Projects EIS**

Terri Knutson, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, CCFO, made a presentation on the Churchill County RMP Amendment EIS. The plan amendment has grown; items such as visual resources, wild horse HMA's, and other issues have been added to the original energy issues. Three ACEC nominations have been added since the process started. BLM will be proposing OHV route designations in Churchill County, plus reevaluating wild horse HMAs. She described the two ACEC nominations for Sand Mountain (one from BLM and one from the Fallon Paiute Shoshone tribe). Evaluations by BLM have been completed and the ACEC's will move forward. BLM will ask for suggestions from the public for implementation ideas when the document comes out in draft form.

Larie Trippet had questions regarding the sequence of ACEC approval. Terri said that the State Director has the signing authority on the RMP and the actual ACEC plans would be completed after the RMP amendment is finalized.

Terri told the group that BLM hopes to have an internal draft by September.

John Dicks asked how the ACEC boundaries were determined? They seem very large. Terri answered the lines were drawn around resources like cultural artifacts and known sites. The final boundaries could be adjusted up or down depending on EIS evaluation. Energy is the driving force behind this plan, but other important issues have been added. The Navy decided to go its own way and is doing its own planning at this point.

In answer to a question by Ernie Paine, Terri responded that an ACEC does not preclude grazing. She then gave a description of the wild horse HMA's in the plan amendment area. Discussion followed on the number of HMA's statewide.

John Gebhardt asked if BLM shouldn't zero out several of the HMA's since the numbers are so low? Terri responded that that will be analyzed in the RMP amendment.

Terri reminded the RAC that route designations would only give general open, limited or closed designations; actual route selections (like signing designated routes) would have to happen within five years.

BLM hopes to have a public draft of the RMP amendment out by the end of October 2004.

Terri moved on to the Tracy-Silver Lake 120kv Transmission Line EIS project. Terri described the line route and then explained the planning process. A preferred alternative was not identified in the draft EIS process. The preferred alternative was identified in the final EIS (released July 16, 2004). The Calle de la Plata route was the preferred route chosen. There was some discussion on why that alternative was chosen. BLM is in the middle of a 30-day comment period on the final EIS and expects a Record of Decision to be signed by November (after county special use permits are issued).

Tina Nappe expressed concern that noxious weeds seem to follow power line corridors. Terri responded that mitigation is planned into every project.

Concerning the North Valleys Water Projects – BLM received two water pipeline applications to transport water from Fish Springs Ranch (8,000 acre feet) & Dry Valley (intermountain water - 3,500 acre feet). These are two separate ROW applications (from competitors). These would be 32” underground pipelines. A long list of cooperators was given out in the EIS handout. Issues have been raised by the citizen advisory boards such as “will this keep us from having to dig our wells deeper,” and opposition to any Honey Lake related holdover issues. The State of California and Lassen County have had serious concerns over the project. The Nevada State Water Engineer has already allocated the water. BLM hopes to have a preliminary draft by the end of September 2004.

Craig Young asked if the archaeological survey and report would be completed by the submission of the draft EIS? Terri said yes.

## **IX. Update on SNPLMA Projects in Northern Nevada**

Libby White, Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) Realty Specialist gave a presentation on the environmentally sensitive lands/northern Nevada acquisitions. She gave an overview of the Act, where the funds can be legally spent, and the annual process for nominating and selecting parcels for acquisitions. There have been four Rounds so far. There is a very complete website at [www.nv.blm.gov/lasvegas](http://www.nv.blm.gov/lasvegas).

Libby distributed two handouts including a map of the northern Nevada parcels and a status report on Rounds 1-4 in the Carson City and Winnemucca Field Offices. She spent about 15 minutes explaining the process for appraisals and review by the US Attorney’s Office. The Secretary of Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, makes the final decisions on parcel selections (the Secretary has the final say and the authority to make changes to all recommendations that come up from the executive committee).

Under SNPLMA BLM must offer the appraised value.

Sherm Swanson asked how long the process takes from parcel identification to actual acquisition by BLM? It seems the overheated real estate market in Nevada would make appraisals obsolete very quickly. Libby answered that if the owner agrees and all the legal paperwork is handled correctly, it can take about 12-18 months to complete a transaction. It takes longer if mineral rights are involved, and the environmental review is different every time. Appraisals try to take this into account and we try to close as fast as we can by doing all of the studies at the same time.

Libby then talked specifically to the northern Nevada acquisitions list for Rounds 1-4. The Howard and Dombrowski properties in Carson City were accidentally left off the list.

Tina Nappe had questions regarding the water rights in the Round 2 Knott Creek Reservoir project. The appraisal is currently in process because the owner wanted to adjust the amount of water rights to keep a minimum pool size and depth.

Libby told the group that McCarran Ranch has been withdrawn from Round 3 (parcels upriver from the Nature Conservancy parcel that the RAC visited during a previous RAC field trip). The owner has said that once master planning is completed he might still come back in a future Round with a revised nomination. She then presented Round 4, which includes Winnemucca Ranch Road, Falcon Capital Casey, Carson River-Bernhard property, Home Camp, Carson River-Howard property & Dombrowski property, Carson Conservation Easement Group B, C & D, & Heinz Ranch.

Tina Nappe asked if NDOW could go in and acquire a parcel to “hold it?” Libby answered that BLM can’t promise that funds will be set aside to “reimburse” a State or local agency; only the Secretary of the Interior can approve projects.

The implementation agreement can be found at [www.nv.blm.gov/snplma/agreement.asp](http://www.nv.blm.gov/snplma/agreement.asp).

Round 5 is in the Secretary of the Interior’s office for review and a decision. Libby read off a list of parcels that were added to the Round 5 list for Secretary review.

John Falen asked whether the Act allows for management funds to run these properties once they are acquired? Libby replied not at this time. There would have to be changes to the Act to allow BLM to do that, but that is being looked into in a Solicitor’s opinion on what the Act would allow.

## **X. Public Comment Period**

Dan Peterson, California Off-Road Vehicle Association, asked that as the RAC goes through the ACEC process (Churchill County RMP Amendment) that BLM have public meetings in Sacramento, Modesto and other Sacramento Valley locations. (This will be responded to by CCFO but is not a RAC action item.) He also offered comments on the last Sand Mountain monitoring presentations. He was concerned about the “disclaimers” on the slides that were used at the April RAC meeting. He feels “BLM should stand behind its statements.”



John Dicks explained that the RAC had already discussed this issue in detail earlier in the day. He said he felt the photographs being shown regarding vegetation monitoring tell a story regarding compliance; that people have not followed the suggested route system.

Dan Peterson showed a photograph that he said doesn't show whether or not users are going up or down the hillside in question. Dan feels that BLM has not "tweaked" the signing system to the point that the riding public really understands how it should work.

## **XI. Lovelock Cave Slide Show**

Peggy McGuckian, Archaeologist with the WFO, showed the RAC a PowerPoint presentation on Lovelock Cave to prepare them for their field trip on Wednesday, July 28, 2004. She also detailed improvements that have been made to the Lovelock Cave National Back Country Byway (dedicated in 2003). People from all over the world have been visiting the site.

## **XII. Report on National RAC Chairs' Meeting in Phoenix (May 11-13, 2004)**

Bill Roullier reported to the RAC on the National RAC Chairs' meeting that was held in Phoenix on May 11-13, 2004. Bill had already sent an email report about the meeting to all RAC members but he asked if they had any suggestions on how the BLM can improve.

Susie Askew said she would like to see BLM improve by keeping the National Wild Horse Facility at Palomino Valley open on weekends.

Jim Eidel asked how to fund sage-grouse plans in cooperation with BLM? Complete plans need to be done on all PMU's. Terry Reed commented that the final plans may help keep the species from being listed, but was not sure whether there would be funding to implement the plans?

Sherman Swanson said he feels that sage-grouse plans and fuels management plans need to be fully funded and done cooperatively. The question is whether western Nevada valleys will remain river valleys or become concrete lined ditches. The key is having viable conservation easements.

Jacques Etchegoyhen commented on BLM plan amendments authorizing the purchase of conservation easements in the Carson Valley. He feels that funds need to be released to actually purchase those easements and said this RAC needs to keep on the Bureau's back to not let this tool drop off our table.

Jim Eidel commented that some members of Congress are interested in raiding the SNPLMA funds to increase the amount going to other uses such as education, wild horse gathers and operations, etc.

## **XIII. Meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm.**

## **IX. Field Trip**

**Field Trip:** On Wednesday, July 28, 2004 the RAC took a field trip to the Marzen House Museum in Lovelock, Lovelock Cave Back Country Byway, Lovelock Cave, Leonard Rock Shelter, and the Coeur-Rochester Silver Mine.

Peggy McGuckian, WFO Archaeologist, and Janet Hook, WFO Reclamation and Compliance Specialist, accompanied the RAC on the tour, which was very interesting and much appreciated by all RAC members attending.

The field trip ended at about 3:30 p.m.