

**RAC Minutes**  
**January 26, 2006**  
**Marriott Courtyard Hotel**  
**Provo, Utah**

**Members in attendance:** Robert Uzelac, LaMar Mabey, Norm Carroll, Mike Jenkins, Riley Cutler, Richard Sewing, Gordon Topham, Drew Sitterud, Fee Busby, Tom Clawson, Lynn Stevens, Manuel Morgan

**Members not in attendance:** John Busch, Amanda Smith, Ashley Korenblat

**BLM employees in attendance:** Gene Terland, Sherry Foot, Maggie Wyatt, Sandy Meyers, Cornell Christensen, Wayne Wetzel, Shelley Smith, Sherry Hirst, Todd Christensen

**Members of the public:** Ron Dean, Senator Hatch's Office; Melanie Bowen, Senator Hatch's Office; Ron Jorgensen, RAC Subgroup Chairperson; Ray Bloxham, SUWA

Welcomed committee members and held elections of officers. Gordon Topham was elected chairperson; Fee Busby, vice-chair.

There was a change to the topic of "Senator Bennett's Bill-OHV Issues," which was announced in the Federal Register. After speaking with Ashley Korenblat, it was mentioned that there was confusion on this item which must have come from the legislation regarding Washington County, which references OHVs, but which did not need to be discussed at the RAC meeting. The topic for the agenda was to be more general in nature, hence, the change in the topic, "OHV Challenges: Next Steps." Ashley did not attend the meeting, however, she and Gordon discussed the topic and he will address it later.

Ron Jorgensen provided a status report from the Factory Butte Subcommittee (copies of PowerPoint available upon request).

Gene Terland (Acting State Director) gave an overview of events that have/will be happening in BLM Utah.

### **Energy Policy Act**

- - Brave new (very, very busy) world
- - The Vernal FO is one of seven BLM offices piloting streamlining effort; Consolidate federal and state agency personnel for "one-stop" coordination on APD; 3-year pilot, after which report will recommend as to whether to extend project throughout the rest of U.S.; Special funding provided by return of 50% of rental revenues; The Vernal FO has initiated the process to hire and/or contract an additional 17 people to directly support the permitting and compliance process for oil and gas management. Additional office space and equipment are being secured; Temporary and permanent vacancy announcements have been issued; USFWS has designed an interim employee to the Vernal FO to expedite ESA Section 7 consultation. An agreement with the State of Utah for SHPO for NHPA Section 106 is being pursued.

### **RD&D**

- - Utah received 9 applications for RD&D leases--smaller entrepreneurial as opposed to major companies that applied in Colorado

- - Most, of the applications for same White River area
- - Interagency/intergovernmental team has completed their scoring of applications and will provide recommendations to Secretary
- - NEPA would be next step
- - Goals is to be ready to issue lease (initial 640 site and preference option on larger area) by April.
- - "Stockpile" lease sale concerns have surfaced in D.C.

### **Programmatic Oil and Gas Leasing EIS**

- - The Energy Policy Act mandates commercial leasing of oil shale and tar sands lands by January 2007
- - One consolidated EIS, for both, will be conducted, led by BLM's Sherri Thompson out of Colorado.
- - Should be aware of potential concerns related to combining two into one study; in light of location of tar sand resources in Utah.
- - Potential ramifications if lease acre quotas are imposed.

### **Other Energy Related Activities of Note**

#### **Leasing**

- - Still riding the crest of an unprecedented 2-year trend
- - Currently about 4 million acres of BLM (out of 23 million total surface acres) under lease.
- - New development is the renewed interest in central Utah coinciding with company interest in testing limits of "southern Utah thrust belt."

#### **ADP/EIS updates**

- APD application trend continues. In FY '05 we saw another 62% increase over the previous year. (About 1,200 to for '05 statewide)
- - During Fiscal Year 2005, BLM Utah processed 753 Applications for Permit to Drill (APD). The current number of pending APDs in the system is 990 with 902 residing in the Vernal Field Office.
- - Even more significant are the number of field development EIS/EA currently pending. About a dozen so far, projecting 5,900 new well (primarily gas)
- - The APDs that will flow from these studies ensures significant energy activity into the foreseeable future.
- - Progress: Inland (Newfield) Castle Peak & 8-Mile Flat EIS – 920 Wells. ROD signed August 24, 2005. NOA published Oct 21, 2005 w/ Nov 21, 2005 effective date

### **CX PROCESS FROM THE ENERGY POLICY ACT**

- - Field Offices are applying provisions of statutory CXs to oil and gas proposals since passage of the law.
- - Statutory CXs were recently discussed at BLM, Utah Environmental Coordination Group Meeting on November 2, 2005. Discussions concentrated on application of the five CX categories and instructions contained in WO IM 2005-247. Due to uncertainty of application, NEPA coordinators agreed formal state instructions would be premature, until an opportunity to work with CXs is afforded.
- - A draft CX form is being developed by NEPA coordinators from Vernal and Price for consideration statewide.

- Use of new Statutory CX option:

- 1) Price: 1 CX - Category No 1. (< 5 acres) (40 CBM NOS's in similar situation)
- 2) Vernal: 1 CX (for 11 APDs) (Category No. 1)  
1 CX pending for pipeline (Category No. 4)

### **Bill Barrett Corporation Update**

- Bill Barrett Corporation (BBC) proposes to develop natural gas resources of the West Tavaputs Plateau in Duchesne and Carbon Counties. An EIS will analyze 750 wells involving 500 pad locations.
- The Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS was issued August 26, 2005. The comment period ends November 14, 2005. Three scoping meetings ( Price, Roosevelt, and Salt Lake City/Provo) were conducted in October 2005 for the EIS.
- An interim proposal to allow additional drilling in the area while the EIS is being prepared is under consideration. The interim proposal will involve APDs from BBC and other operators in the area. The number of permits involved is indeterminate at this time. Additional NEPA analysis (EA) will be required.

### **Modifications to continue work this winter**

• Also under consideration are eight wells to be drilled this winter from two pads to be constructed. Existing documents are currently being evaluated to determine feasibility. Completion operations have also been granted to allow certain wells previously drilled to be completed this winter.

### **Interim Drillings Program**

- Expect BBC to propose in near future

### **Energy Support Team**

- Consolidated, efficient, hopefully effective way to get the right people working on priority work within the realities of our budget.

### **Quitcupah Coal Decision**

- (For more than a decade) the Sevier County Special Services District has sought a ROW to construct a shorter coal haul road to ensure the productivity and economic sustainability of the SUFCO mine.
- The Water Hollow route is the preferred option (this was chosen as the preferred over the Quitcupah alternative, originally identified as the preferred, due to environmental and cultural resource concerns—sacred canyon to Piute Tribe)
- Thought initially costly to build (\$16-22 million) the new road will save 42 miles per round trip (9.3 gallons) equating to tens/hundreds of millions of dollars over the life span of the mine.
- BLM and Counties will celebrate in a joint announcement later this month.

### **GSENM Grazing EIS**

- The draft grazing EIS, necessary to renew grazing permits (among other things) should be out late winter/early spring.

- - Affects approximately 80 allotments/102 operators in the GSENM, non-Monument BLM, and Glen Canyon NRA lands.
- - The NPS and Kane and Garfield Counties are formal cooperators in the EIS
- - Intent is to provide flexibility to maintain operators with minimal impact while addressing range health requirements.
- - There are 5 alternatives in the mix
- - Our study does not suggest major changes are needed; however there are areas of concern. (e.g. Del LeFevre stopped grazing the Big Bowns allotment 6 years ago, due to a lack of water.) Perhaps this reality should be carried forward in the future.
- - To make this work, a number of new seeding, water improvements, fences are recommended as part of the mix. Fortunately, we have one of our most capable range programs in the Monument, where we can do what is necessary to support grazing.
- - 4 allotments embroiled in grazing relinquishment issues with the Grand County Trust part of the EIS.

### **Fifty Mile**

- - A few weeks ago, after much trial and error, cost (and risk . . .) we, range staff, began eliminating feral cattle.
- - Staff made excellent gains (31 animals). We estimate that is about 40 to 50 of all feral animals.
- - Next week, staff will return Fifty Mile to continue operation.

### **Antiquities Act**

- - BLM's four corner states have joined forces to make something memorable to happen
- - Utah has diverse list of projects to celebrate throughout the year
- - Comb Wash is our showcase project; multiple partners, would like to shine a bright light on efforts with a special invitation to leaders to attend and get involved. We will be working with our WO to roll out the red carpet and invite VIPs

### **Sage Restoration Projects**

- - UPCD? Partner effort---unprecedented cooperative effort
- - Northeast Utah focus; NEPA strategy to be efficient and defensive able
- - Many more projects already happening or planned throughout the state (list)
- - Working group approach is really working

### **Road Issue(s)**

#### **Kane County/GSENM**

- - Maybe the 10th Circuit ruling will set the stage for common sense to finally break out.
- - Regional Solicitor Larry Jensen has been appointed by the Secretary to engage in a consultation process with Kane County. (Durbin letter) Objective; disarm from the present conflict and explore possibilities of establishing method of dealing with acknowledge and management of any RS 2477 ROWs
- - First meeting to be following by second one on 12/15.

### **Maintenance Agreements**

- · For several months we have been in discussions with State with thoughts of re-establishing the type of road maintenance agreements we used to have to address routine maintenance of backcountry transportation systems.
- · As always, devil in details, but looking towards, routine maintenance needs on roads where there is mutual agreement of need.
- · Very close.

### **Title Vs**

- Uintah County 30 ROWs (200 miles) Class B 10 miles Class D
- Daggett County; 3 ROWs (7 miles) more than 100 miles pending
- Duchesne County; similar to Daggett
- Promising discussions with Emery and Garfield, and others

### **Bumps in the Road**

- · Kane County - trespass issued on Shunes Hollow road
- · Juab County - update regarding Juab's letter to FFO; no work yet done
- · Box Elder County - Grouse Creek road widened to 60 feet
- · Tooele County - Leppy Pass widened to over 60 feet, with the county indicating they would also apply rotomill asphalt
- · Millard County - Kanosh road widened, crowned and ditched with pullouts, for about 6 miles up to the access to the World Minerals perlite mine
- · EarthJustice has inquired
- · QTA provisions preclude such actions while lawsuits are pending. Justice Dept to clarify this.

### **Private Fuel Storage (nuclear waste storage company)**

NRC is seeking to terminate 106 process based on their position that due diligence has been done, and they are high centered with process.

- · On 11/22 they wrote a letter to Advisory Council on Historic Preservation stating such
- · We are assessing facts to determine what if any response is warranted.
- · Until we are told differently, we assume we are precluding from any action on ROW application due to the Congressional imposed moratorium

### **Southern Nevada Water Project**

- · Nevada BLM is taking the lead.
- · Utah BLM will support as needed, with own ID team.

### **Pending Bills of Interest**

#### **Cedar Mountains**

- · We have provided drafting services for map. We understand this is part of conference work to reconcile differences in DOD appropriation act

### **Recreational Land Exchange**

- - Congressional staffs are working back in DC to negotiate an improved version of the bill. Optimistic we will soon be back in the large-scale exchange business

### **Three Peaks Gene**

- - BLM's national review team is reviewing the Nichols package. Next step is Deputy Director (Hughes) concurrence. Given that the lands are valued over \$500,000 we must notify Congressional committees of our exchange. Current with this Congressional notification step we work on operational details to make it happen (exchange agreement, etc.) We hope to finally have this wrapped in Fall '06. The SITLA package that has already gone through all review steps, will be run concurrently with Nichols package.

### **Dugway Expansion**

- - We have provided some maps and staff work.

### **Reorganization issues**

- - Flat or declining budgets in most non-energy related programs causing us to re-engineer.
- - 6% annual cost of living "fixed cost" exacerbate situation
- - Rescission is another wild card.
- - Acute problem is that our workforce is not properly aligned to this reality (imbalance between energy professions and other disciplines)
- - Therefore:

Re-tuning our "support centers"

Going through '06 contingency planning exercise

**Utah State Director position** - anywhere from 4-8 months to fill the position.

**OHV Challenges: Next Steps:** Ideas are needed for increased funding for trail designation for OHVs. Brainstorming list includes the following ideas:

- - Still need to implement what BLM wants to do
- - Work force planning - 5% reduction per year
- - USFWS (money was given) to BLM for interpretive efforts for endangered species on Factory Butte and in the Coral Pink Sand Dunes
- - Money could be obtained from registration fees from owners of OHVs through a granting process (i.e. State Parks)
- - Would industry be willing to contribute funds (or sponsor rights)
- - Reactivate the OHV RAC Subgroup to assert areas of partnerships (along with matching funds)
- - Travel Plans in RMPs - How can RAC help solicit funds
- - In-kind labor from: Bicycle groups, 4x4 groups, counties, BLM, Fed/State agencies, Ford Motor Co., WalMart, Home Depot
- - RAC was asked to provide Robert (subgroup chairperson) with ideas on how to receive funding. He'll then set a meeting date (end of February) for the subgroup (incl. Drew, Norm, and Mike) to attend.
- - Grant opportunities for Federal dollars - Shelley Smith will ask Robin Fehlau (SO) to provide document to Robert.

**RMP Updates** (handout available upon request)

Current Land Use Plan Schedules:

**Vernal** Start - 3/12/01 DEIS & comment period - 1/14/05 - 6/24/05  
FEIS Release - July 2006 Target date for Signed ROD - April 2007

**Price** Start - 11/7/01 DEIS & comment period - 7/16/04 - 11/29/04  
FEIS Release - November 2006 Target date for Signed ROD - Sept. 2007

**Richfield** Start - 11/1/01 DEIS & comment period - Sept. 2006  
FEIS Release - Spring/Summer 2007 Target date for Signed ROD - March 2008

**Moab/Monticello** Start - 6/4/03 DEIS & comment period - Sept. 2006  
FEIS Release - Summer 2007 Target date for Signed ROD - Winter 2008

**Kanab** Start - 9/30/04 DEIS & comment period - December 2006  
FEIS Release - Summer/Fall 2007 Target date for Signed ROD - April 2008

RAC would like to have a one-hour briefing on the Moab/Monticello RMP alternatives at next meeting.

**Public Comments** - no comments were made

**Future Focus of RAC** (future projects or ideas): Gene summarized activities that happened over the past 10 years (Standards and Guides for Rangeland Health, Fire Rehabilitation Subgroup, Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Recreation Management for BLM Lands in Utah, San Rafael Swell Subgroup, OHV Management Subgroup, Drought Subgroup, Resource Management Plan Communication Process, Factory Butte Subgroup).

**Ideas for consideration:**

- OHV Guidelines (suggestions, monitoring/implementation, funding)
- Recreation at large (other than OHV issues)
- San Rafael Swell
- Partnerships (trail patrol, friends of USFW)
- RMPs (RAC member assigned to individual efforts, ways to improve process, Ashley (Monticello), Norm (Moab))
- Cost Recovery (SRP Permits) - (consistency, education, high use areas--fee demo--improvement of the area)
- Corridor EISs
- Exchanges (SITLA)
- Desert Tortoise
- Impact on funding issues (RAC would like a presentation on the budget process)
- RAC to be the eyes and ears for BLM - a conduit for communication between BLM and communities. Attending the Southern Utah Expo (Transportation) on February 7 would be a conduit. Attend public meetings, etc.
- Surge-activities (rock climbing, Newspaper Rock area) - (suggest contracting out, identify high-use events)
- Traditional use areas - WSAs
- Shed Collecting concerns (past information)

**Next meeting dates/location/topics:** The RAC will focus on Factory Butte. A field trip and meeting have tentatively been set for March 23-24, in the Richfield area (the confirmed dates/location will be determined after the next Factory Butte Subgroup meeting, which will take place the first part of February).

**Future agenda items:** Moab/Monticello RMP alternative briefings; Budget/funding process presentation; Recreation at large presentation; feedback from Acting SD and RAC Chairperson on the "List of Ideas/Projects." (Gene and Gordon will be looking over the list and prioritizing ideas/projects for which the RAC could be of help to the BLM.)

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Approved:

Gordon Topham      February 6, 2006

RAC Chairperson      Date