

RAC Meeting Minutes
June 26-27, 2008
Salt Lake City, Utah

June 26, 8:30 – 5:00 (BLM Salt Lake Field Office, 2370 South 2300 West, Salt Lake City – 977-4300)

Members in attendance:

Paul Jacobs, Mike Jenkins, Lowell Braxton, Ray Bloxham, Riley Cutler, Jerry Spangler, Gordon Topham, Fee Busby, Lynn Stevens

Members not in attendance: Drew Sitterud, Tom Clawson, Manuel Morgan, Carl Albrecht, Dell LeFevre, Ashley Korenblat

BLM employees in attendance: Glenn Carpenter (Acting DFO), Sherry Foot, 6 Salt Lake Field Office Staff

No members of the public attended the field tour

The RAC toured the Five-Mile Pass area looking at management concerns, discussed the State Parks partnership, draft plan amendment, and rural and urban interface issues.

Recreation Issues: OHV use; Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreationists and other authorized users; Overused/abused sites from lack of designated camping areas; User satisfaction

Law Enforcement: Urban interface (dumping dead animals, abandoned vehicles, hazmat, waste/trash; Accidents (reckless OHV use, target shooting, illegal drug/alcohol use, fire, vandalism, natural resource destruction); Large parties (RAVE, high school graduation, underage and illegal alcohol/drug use); Illegal target shooting; User safety

Renewable Resources and Wildland Fire: Livestock harassment, vandalism of range developments, gates left open. Weed proliferation; Wildlife (raptor nesting and foraging habitat for sensitive species); Higher risk of fire due to illegal debris burning, campfires, target shooting, vehicle ignitions, arson.

Mining/Abandoned Mine Lands/Hazardous Materials: Manning Canyon Closure; Other mining contaminations (heavy metals, etc); Physical hazards (tailing piles, open active private clay pit, open mine shafts, steep drop-offs, unsafe access points); Active excavation of mineral material sale sites

Cultural Resources Management: Degradation of historic railroad grade; Degradation of prehistoric rock art.

June 27, 8:00 – Noon (BLM Utah State Office, 440 West 200 South, Suite 500, Monument Conference Room, Salt Lake City – 539-4195)

Members in attendance: Paul Jacobs, Lowell Braxton, Ray Bloxham, Riley Cutler, Jerry Spangler, Gordon Topham, Fee Busby, Lynn Stevens, Tom Clawson, Manuel Morgan, Carl Albrecht, Ashley Korenblat

Members not in attendance: Dell LeFevre, Drew Sitterud

BLM employees in attendance: Sherry Foot, Selma Sierra, Glenn Carpenter

State Director, Selma Sierra, welcomed the group. Mentioned the budget restrictions on travel (BLM-wide). No travel can take place until after the FY. Should the RAC wish to meet again, it may need to be via conference call.

Five-Mile Pass

Glenn Carpenter (new title: West Desert District Manager) asked the group about any additional concerns about the field tour:

- Need to tell the story (interpretive signs)
- Need places (legally) for OHVs to recreate
- Fully record historic places
- What constitutes existing trails? Has cultural work done on trails—plan to protect sites if cultural findings are found.
- Dust
- OHV play areas that cross the highway (fatalities) – and dust
- “Visual character” area be built for crossing highway (signage)
- Liability concerns
- Fire safety issues and fire rehab
- Habitat
- Education/Kiosks
- Trail marking
- Equestrian staging areas
- Potential for fees
- Hunting concerns

RAC would like a copy of the draft plan amendment and NEPA document. Plan will need to be revised and will go back through the NEPA process. RAC can provide their feedback/contributions. Get counties involved.

Recreational Users Insurance Coverage, Ashley Korenblat

Funding Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations: Currently the legislation which funds SAR Operations in Utah is extremely similar to that of Colorado, with the exception of the Colorado hiking certificate. In both states, SAR funds come from 25-cent surcharges on hunting, fishing, OHV, boat, and snowmobile licenses and registrations. Because hiking, mountain biking, and many other outdoor activities do not require licenses or registration, CO created the voluntary hiking certificate to capture funds from these user groups.

Hiking Certificate is Not Insurance: Many people assume that the CO hiking certificate will act as insurance in the case of backcountry evacuation. This is not the case. Revenues are added to the general SAR fund and are used to reimburse counties for SAR missions, training, and equipment, but do not reimburse victims for medical evacuations.

SAR in Utah: Utah considered issuing something similar to CO's hiking permit when the fund was created but rejected this idea. Currently victims in some Utah counties are billed for SAR charges and some counties use collection agencies to collect these bills when necessary.

New Ideas for Reducing SAR Missions: Several county sheriffs would like to see more done to reduce annual SAR Missions. In many counties, demand for recreational opportunities often exceed both federal and state agencies' budgets for managing these activities. A pro-active solution that has been suggested by several people in the SAR community would be a 25 cent surcharge on all motor vehicles, with the stipulations that this money would be spent on improving the recreational experience on public lands through partnerships including the federal agencies and volunteer user groups. Further research needs to be done to determine if this would be viable.

Ashley would like to continue pursuing this. This may not necessarily be a RAC issue—it could possibly be brought up to the Natural Resources Coordinating Council (NRCC) group.

A motion was made by Fee Busby to have the RAC write a letter to the NRCC supporting a \$.25 charge on all registered motor vehicles to provide funds to reimburse counties for recreational related search and rescue efforts and encourage safe recreational activities on public lands through partnerships including local, state, and federal agencies an volunteer user groups. Lowell seconded.

Ashley will prepare the letter.

RMP Updates, Selma Sierra

RMPs are being reviewed. The first of the proposed final 6 plans is scheduled to be released by the middle of July. 30-day public comment review period. Any protests are to be sent to the National Director not to the State Director. There will also be the Governor's consistency review of plans (concurrent with the 30-day public review/protest period). Washington/Utah respond to protests. Records of Decision will be signed by the end of October, then we'll move forward with implementation. There are always funding concerns.

Oil and Gas Updates, Julie Howard

(Powerpoint presentation – Compliance with National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for Oil and Gas Decisions – made available upon request).

Two distinct Section 106 Utah Processes

Documenting compliance with Section 106 of NHPA

Native American Consultation

West Tavaputs Plateau EIS and Nine Mile Canyon

Dust Concerns

Nine Mile Canyon National Register Boundary

Public Comments

Ray Petersen, Emery County

Emery County encourages the BLM to get the RMP out quickly. Oil and gas exploration is going crazy—it's moving and growing. Visitation and recreation—BLM is years behind in management of these resources. Lands and realty issues should be dealt with soon. San Rafael Motorized Route Designation Map – asking BLM to be consistent.

Schedule Next Meeting Date and Location: Due to travel budget restrictions, the RAC has scheduled a conference call “meeting,” Thursday, August 21, 10:00 – Noon. Conference call bridge number will be issued in the Federal Register. Topics of discussion: Five Mile Pass Draft Plan Amendment and NEPA documents; Search and Rescue approval letter.

Future topics (face-to-face meeting): Geothermal process/updates; alternative energy

Approved by:

/s/ Gordon Topham

7/8/08

Gordon Topham, RAC Chairperson

Date