

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Jan. 17, 2002

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area visitor's center

Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:

Marta Agee	Grazing/Ranching
Dr. Colleen Beck	Archeology/Historic
Barbara Callihan	Dispersed Recreation
Patrick John Chicas	Permitted Recreation
Thalia Dondero	Elected official
Maurice Frank-Churchill	Native American
Billie Gayle-Young	Wild Horse & Burro
Jerry Helton	Transportation/Row (Chair)
Dr. John E. Hiatt	Wildlife
Robert Maichle	Environment
Steve Mellington	Public at Large (vice-Chair)
Dr. Steve Parker	Academic/UNLV
Ben Patterson	Ranching/Grazing

Resource Advisory Council members absent

Mark N. Ioli	Mineral Development
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Bureau of Land Management representatives present:

Mike Dwyer	SNPLMA project leader, BLM
Bill Fisher	BLM Tonopah Field Station
Michael Gates	BLM Tonopah Field Station
Phillip Guerrero	Public Affairs Specialist, BLM Las Vegas District
Eric Luse	Associate Manager, BLM Ely District
Mark Morse	Manager, BLM Las Vegas District
Jo Simpson	Public Affairs Specialist, BLM Nevada State Office
Gayle Marr-Smith	BLM Las Vegas District
Gerald Smith	Manager, BLM Battle Mountain District

Public attendees:

Helen Mortensen	Archeologist
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A copy of each attachment is listed in the text of, or at the end of these minutes, and also is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Las Vegas Field Office of the BLM. Persons

desiring to review said minutes should contact Phillip Guerrero, public affairs specialist, at (702) 498-6088.

- There being a quorum present, Chairman Jerry Helton called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. -

Mike Dwyer, BLM project leader for the SNPLMA, updated the Resource Advisory Council on implementation of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.(refer to attachments A and B).

- SNPLMA is currently in “Round Three.”
 - ✓ Thirty-nine properties are listed. The nominations were received in September. The public comment period began in November. The lands are scheduled for ranking one week from today. Preliminary recommendations are scheduled on or about Feb. 1.

- Helton recessed the meeting at 9:20 a.m., and reconvened the meeting at 9:40 a.m. -

Gayle Marr-Smith, a BLM Las Vegas Field Office botanist, was scheduled to update the RAC on public lands restoration efforts, but said presentation was rescheduled due to power-point projector problems.

BLM Field Office update:

- Eric Luse, BLM Ely Field Office associate manager (refer to attachment C).
 - ✓ Tri-county wilderness legislation, energy project proposals, Lincoln County Land Act of 2000, Urban Interface-type projects, Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project or ENLRP, Wild Horse & Burro program, BACA Bill land disposals, fire rehabilitation, mine closures and White Pine County Airport expansion project.

Gene Arnesen, a BLM Las Vegas Field Office recreation planner, provided a Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area general management plan and final Environmental Impact Statement update (refer to attachment D).

- Steve Parker raised the monitoring issue, re Raptors and recreationalists, i.e., bicyclists and climbers.
 - ✓ Arnesen explained that Cottonwood Valley area trails would be modified so as to lessen impacts to cultural resources, and wild horses and burros. Also, the proposed parking lot would be relocated, he said.
- Robert Maichle requested a copy of the transportation report.
 - ✓ Arnesen said he would obtain a copy and forward it to Maichle.
- Robert Maichle asked about water rights and the Las Vegas Valley Water District.
 - ✓ Gayle Marr-Smith said the BLM wants an agreement with Clark County wherein the federal agency will receive 50-percent of the water rights, per agency policy.

- Helton recessed the meeting at 10:45 a.m., and reconvened the meeting at 10:50 a.m. -

Using a power-point projector, Marr-Smith provided an update on public lands restoration efforts, highlighting previous successes, current challenges, future goals and fund raising efforts (a public presentation is available upon request at the BLM Las Vegas Field Office).

- Marta Agee questioned project costs.
 - ✓ Marr-Smith and Mark Morse explained to Agee the project and reasons behind the project's cost, noting that all was paid for by a private firm found violating federal law.

BLM Field Office update (continued):

- Bill Fisher, BLM Battle Mountain Field Office associate field manager (refer to attachment E).
 - ✓ Recreation events, planning efforts, renewable resources and Yomba Shoshone grazing issues.
 - ▶ Marta Agee asked about the Elk Management Plan as it pertains to ranching.
 - ▶ Maurice Frank-Churchill cited the Duckwater and Yomba Shoshone tribe's opposition to the plan.
 - ▶ Acting on advice from council members, Jerry Helton placed the Elk Management Plan on the next RAC meeting's agenda. A more in-depth presentation will be scheduled.

- Helton recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:15 p.m., and reconvened the meeting at 1:15 p.m. -

John Jamrog, BLM Las Vegas District, provided an update on the Highway 159 speed limit versus local burro populations.

- Jamrog cited the current 60 mph speed limit and increased usage for an increase in the number of burros killed on Highway 159. He said the BLM has requested that the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) lower the speed limit to 45 mph. Jamrog said the BLM has requested funding for a fencing project. He said that NDOT has told him it would cost approximately \$300,000 to construct a fence. Funding efforts are currently underway, he said.
 - ✓ Billie Gayle-Young noted the number of recreationalists, i.e., bicyclists, skateboarders, etc., who also use Highway 159.
 - ✓ Thalia Dondero asked about the traffic count. Jamrog said he did not bring the figures with him.
 - ✓ Gayle-Young said a local petition effort aimed at lowering the speed limit is progressing. Jamrog said that NDOT has relocated approach signage and installed livestock signs alongside the roadway. Gayle-Young also said several gathers have been conducted in the area to remove the burros.
 - ✓ Dondero called for a resolution to the governor on behalf of the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council.

 - ✓ Jerry Helton asked if the requested funding would provide for fencing all alongside the roadway. Jamrog said it would not fence-off the entire roadway.

- ✓ Helton asked who or what agency is responsible for resolving the issue. Dondero suggested it would be the agency or group responsible for the surrounding property. Parker suggested it might be NDOT.
- ✓ Marta Agee proposed that a letter be sent to the governor pointing out the issue's immediacy. Hiatt proposed gathering all pertinent information prior to writing a letter to the governor.
- ✓ Parker suggested inviting an NDOT representative to an upcoming meeting so as to discuss the issue further. Robert Maichle suggested the NDOT representative attend the March meeting. Steve Mellington suggested that the issue belongs to NDOT, not the BLM. Patrick John Chicas suggested the RAC obtain all the facts before proceeding. Helton suggested that Jamrog return in March with all the pertinent facts and an NDOT representative.

Public comment:

- Marta Agee asked that all studies and/or reports brought to the RAC be accurate and unbiased, citing a recent incident elsewhere in which an outside government agency allegedly falsified figures so as to support their position. Agee asked if the RAC should write a letter demanding that all agencies doing business with the advisory council vow in writing that all future documented information is accurate. Steve Parker said the personnel involved (7) were not BLM employees. Robert Maichle said the RAC could write to BLM State Director Bob Abbey, asking him to forward the RACs concern to Washington D.C. Parker disagreed. Helton agreed the situation was disheartening, adding that the alleged incident did not occur in Nevada. Hiatt said all the information gathered to date has been garnered by reading newspaper articles. Helton asked for a show of hands from everyone desiring to write a letter to Abbey. Instead, the RAC continued discussion. Helton suggested the RAC consider the issue overnight, bringing it back to tomorrow's meeting.
- Helen Mortensen asked the RAC to study and address concerns re land sales and a proposed right of way for a 500kv power line crossing the Tule Springs Archeological Site (refer to attachment F).
 - ✓ Maichle said that much of the land described is state-administered, but that adjacent lands are BLM-administered. Mortensen said lands proposed for disposal cross a corner of the Tule Springs Archeological Site. Mortensen cited the Tule Springs Archeological Site's tourism potential, and asked the BLM to consider the issue. Dr. Colleen Beck echoed Mortensen's concerns. Mark Morse said a Right of Way (ROW) for a transmission line has not yet been granted. Mortensen asked that any ROW include a clause so as not to set a precedent for other future uses. Billie Gayle-Young suggested that a tour be scheduled in March, allowing the RAC to take action on the issue.

Bob Maichle provided an update on Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) issues and the Tri-RAC subcommittee.

- Maichle said an OHV subcommittee meeting was held the previous Monday. He also said the Interior department's Internet shutdown had affected the committee's timetable, but that a new hire would soon bring the subcommittee up to date. Maichle said education would be a subcommittee focus. He also called for a so-called "trigger mechanism," which would act as part of the "limits of acceptable change" concept that, in itself, would be a tool to prevent additional adverse degradation while waiting for the necessary FLPMA planning amendments.
- Jo Simpson said the subcommittee meeting also called for future involvement from other local, state and federal agencies. She also said that Bob Abbey, the BLM state director, had called for subcommittee tie-in with other environmental-type plans, i.e., the Governor's Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Plan.
- John Hiatt praised the education plan, suggesting media involvement.
- Helton requested a written update be submitted at the March meeting.

BLM Field Office update (continued):

- Mark Morse, BLM Las Vegas Field Office manager.
 - ✓ Gayle Norton tour, memorial dedication, North McCullough Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA) Restoration Project (attachment G), land sale actions, Nellis Air Force Base expansion, pending Las Vegas Field Office relocation and pending OHV races.

- There being no further business, Helton adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m. -

APPROVED BY:

Date

Jerry Helton, Chairperson
Mojave-Southern
Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely Field Office public affairs specialist -

Attachments:

- A / Implementation Agreement, SNPLMA
- B / SNPLMA Round 3 - Properties listed for Acquisition

C / BLM, Ely Field Office update
D / Red Rock Canyon NCA General Management Plan update
E / BLM, Battle Mountain Field Office update
F / Tule Springs Archeological Site
G / North McCullough Mountains WSA Restoration Project