

**Upper Columbia-Salmon Clearwater (UCSC) District, Idaho
Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting**

March 12-13, 2003

Missoula, Montana

RAC Members In Attendance: Cora Patterson, Louise Stark, Bill Madonna, John Barker, Kathy Richmond, Dan Rix, Ben O’Neal, Mark Taylor, Bryan Rowder, Doug Boggan, David Nelson (via teleconference call for recreation fee demo subgroup discussion and decision) – RAC Members.

BLM Employees in Attendance: Fritz Rennebaum and Stephanie Snook

Guests: Pete Ellsworth and Cliff Osborne (potential RAC Nominees)

Public: Gia Fairchild and Bill Bernt on March 13.

Fritz welcomed the RAC Members and guests.

The BLM budget has been late in getting approved this year. BLM has been operating under a Continuing Resolution and have been able to spend \$ based on last year.

RAC Chair, Kathy Richmond reported that she has attended several meetings. There is no quorum this meeting.

Meeting Minutes from October 16-17, 2002, were reviewed. Dan Rix made a motion to accept, it was seconded by John Barker. Minutes were approved after phone call with David Nelson.

Meeting Minutes from November 20, 2002, were reviewed. Bill Madonna noted an omission regarding his statement that about the need to simplify or streamline the RAC re/nomination process. A motion was made by Bryan Rowder to accept the minutes as corrected. Motion seconded by John Barker, motion carried after phone call with David Nelson.

Kathy Richmond reported on her attendance at the Phoenix RAC Chair meeting in November 2002.

- This involved all 24 RACs and was the first time such a meeting has taken place. She reported that it was nice to meet BLM Director Kathleen Clarke. She described the most effective thing the RAC was involved with was when they were asked by the Secretary of the Interior, Babbitt at the time, to work on the grazing standards and guidelines. She said several of the RACs are frustrated with the lack of focus; locally though we have been able to pick up and identify issues for the RAC to work on. Kathy shared issues from our October RAC meeting minutes in the afternoon small work groups where they identified issues.
- Twinkle Thompson, the new Communication Director has been the lead staff assistant to the Director and will move to Phoenix as the National RAC Coordinator.

- National Initiatives have been given to the RAC Chairs by Kathleen Clarke and include energy, Sage-grouse, Threatened/Endangered/Sensitive Species, and recreation.
- All RAC Chairs are invited to Washington, D.C. again on 4/21-22, 2003.
- Fritz mentioned that the RACs will also be involved with the fire/fuels and healthy forests initiative.
- Kathy reported that she met with the other two Idaho RAC Chairs while in Washington D.C. She would like to see the RAC Chairs meet with other BLM folks; share information about each others' RAC accomplishments.

Kathy reported that she and Fritz met with the new BLM Idaho State Director, K Lynn Bennett, in Boise on **December 18, 2002**, as well as the other RAC chairs. They agreed to share minutes to keep up to date; also suggested there be an Idaho RAC Coordinator for the 3 Idaho RACs. Jerry Rohnert and Jack Sept, Boise BLM, will be sharing these duties with Jerry having the lead on administrative issues and Jack on resource issues. (See copy of 12/18/02 Minutes for more details). Minutes from the meeting will be posted on the BLM website www.blm.id.gov. Minutes will also be shared with the other RACs.

Kathy reported on the **2/4/02 meeting in Boise** where the OHV Strategy was discussed and presented as the top Idaho issue along with reviewing and evaluating the rangeland standards and guidelines; are they working? BLM will be doing some training for all RAC members and a meeting planned for April 8th will be discussing the RAC nomination process and how to streamline it.

Orientation Notebooks:

Kathy provided her notebook as a guide and Stephanie made new notebooks for each RAC member. These will be used until the RAC member retires then the notebook will be passed on to a new member. Please take care of them and continue to add minutes of meetings, handouts, etc. as they are received.

Stephanie will be the primary person responsible for orienting new RAC members as they come on. It would also be good for the RAC Chair to meet with the new members. Stephanie will provide copies of the notebooks to Jerry Rohnert and the other two RAC Chairs so we can come up with one master notebook for the Idaho RACs.

June Field Trip - Discussion

Ideas included range standards & guidelines, healthy forest, sage grouse, OHV. Others who should be invited to the June meeting may include permittees, National Cattlemen Assn. representatives, Challis Experimental Stewardship.

Ben mentioned that the Standards & Guidelines (S&G) have become secondary to the Biological Opinions due to Endangered Species Act issues. Fritz said the F&WS has taken these away from BLM and that lawsuits are being filed. Doug reminded folks that the S&Gs were designed to keep us (BLM) out of court; managing the land in order to

avoid the listing of a species. Mark Taylor mentioned that TES has helped the fish but dam breaching remains an issue.

Louise said she would check her calendar and see about a horseback ride to see the proposed ATV loop in Challis along with the wild horse herd area. John Barker wants to see the “bad” grazing areas as well as the good. He has spent several years looking at forest/timber sale projects and needs a frame of reference.

Fritz suggested Morgan Creek with the Biological Assessment/Biological Opinion- the Riparian Service Team recently recommended looking at this innovatively (after their review of soils, soil compaction, and vegetation potential rather than stubble height).

June Meeting Decision: June 17 and 20 as travel days to/from Challis; field trip on 6/18. Fritz recommended that Louise and Ben work with Renee Snyder, Challis Field Manager, on details of the June field trip (weeds, wild horses, ATV, S&G). John Barker suggested using the second day of the field trip for the OHV subcommittee.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Topic: Fee Demo Project on the Salmon-Challis National Forest

Gia Fairchild, LCT Adventures from Missoula commented on the fee demo \$ Recommended: Enhancement of river users experience vs. supplementing FS facilities; Educational purposes or maintenance vs. Congressional add-ons; would like to see ramp; and road maintenance, noxious weed control (get creative such as getting Girl Scouts on a river trip and having them pull weeds at a discounted price)

Doug Boggan questioned the opposition to using money for weeds. BLM RAC is an ad hoc to an ad hoc member. Fee demo were information gathering only.

Louise questioned how seriously the FS will consider the RAC input especially considering how the FS opened the meetings to the public.

GIA said she like the ranking system that was used for the projects.

John Barker shared that he understands how important the patrols are along the Lower Salmon River – they do more than patrol, they clean up campsites and educate the public. He questioned the dollar amount when three years ago \$40,000 was spent for FS river patrols and in 2003 the FS is asking use of the fee demo \$ up to \$250,000. The FS budget for river patrols was less in 2003 so they requested the fee demo \$ be used for patrols. John believes this is wrong and, instead, suggested the FS use the \$90,000 received as a result of the lottery system.

Bill Bernt, Aggiph River, appeared before the RAC. His business involves the Main, Middle and Lower Salmon Rivers. He is a member of the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Assn. and is concerned with the amount of the fee and that this was not an agenda item

for the FS Fee Demo meeting. He described the intent of the program was to “enhance users experience” and not as a substitute for regular budgetary appropriations.

Proposed to be spent \$500,000

25% - WEED

25% – people to check permits

25% - Boat patrols

25% - left for enhancements

IOGA agreed early on to donate money for weed control.

He described the Lower Salmon River as different than the Main and Middle Fork rivers through the Frank Church. On the Main and Middle Fork, the cleanliness is due to people (FS and outfitters) educating the users about river ethics/etiquette at the launch sites; and where funds have been used to complete oral history research such as at Boundary Creek on Middle Fork, and for the Loon Creek Hot Springs redevelopment.

Bernt expressed concern about voting on projects when half of the voters were river users and the other half was RAC & County Commissioners.

He received an email from Dave Sabo, FS in Salmon, last evening asking for \$200,000 over the next three years for ramps.

Of special concern are three items the FS said they would not consider:

1. Changing legislation regarding Fee Demo
2. Fees and the way they are collected

Bernt said if the RAC is going to collect public input for the FS, things need to be done differently. The IOG Licensing Board is comprised of 1 out of 3 outfitters and should be included.

The RAC thanked Gia and Bill for their input and said that recommendations will be made through Fritz to the Salmon-Challis National Forest Supervisor.

RAC Subgroups – Kathy Richmond

Kathy asked the RAC if they wanted to form various subgroups to deal with issues. She explained that the Lower Snake River District RAC has many subgroups. Issues raised and Questions asked by the RAC members included:

- If fire, fuels, and healthy forest initiatives are all top-down issues, does the RAC have a choice?
- Louise asked about use of time, how much is done away from these meetings, by subcommittees?
- Doug – issues discussed at the table; info gathering can be done separately and successful by bring issues to the full RAC

- Kathy – Range S&G was developed with the full RAC and not subgroups; while the Recreation fee demo subgroup was done more by individuals working together and then reporting to the full RAC for a recommendation.
- UCSC RAC has had other subgroups that have been successful, such as weeds.
- Doug is supportive of subgroups.
- Mark said his experience has shown that there can be factions within groups and the RAC is diverse for a reason.
- John cautioned that the use of too many subgroups would be difficult to manage.

Overall it was felt that subgroups should be formed on an as-needed basis.

Statewide OHV subgroup was discussed to see who would be interested in participating from the UCSC RAC. Several RAC members were interested in being on the subgroup.

Doug shared his thought that new users of the land hurt the ethical users of the land.

Nominating Committee-Kathy suggested the RAC form a committee to help find nominees and to keep balance on the RAC. Fritz explained that this may help. He said he and Stephanie both make phone calls to get folks interested. Bill Madonna asked if this could just be an agenda item instead of making up a committee. Doug thought perhaps one person from each Interest Group could be on the committee. Others expressed the thought that each RAC member has an individual obligation to help make contacts and get nominees. It was decided that each RAC member should help with this effort and either contact people they know or provide the information to Stephanie so she can contact them.

RAC Re-nomination Process – suggestions/ideas

Fritz and Stephanie reviewed the process, Asst. Secretary for Lands and Minerals completes and overview of the nominations, then they move on to the Chief of Staff and recommendations are made to the Secretary who official selects each RAC member.

- Use file for re-nomination rather than having people send in a new nomination, except for reference letters which should be new (Doug).
- Make it optional to update your file for re-nomination or file one time (Louise)
- A question was asked about whether the BLM Manager should make the decision about who should be re-nominated or should the BLM ask the RAC for recommendations? Doug doesn't think the RAC should have any say in this process; otherwise it will become a self-directing organization.
- John – How do you keep the RACs from slowing down? They need to be more efficient.
- Dan – make the term four years instead of three years.
- Make the selections complete by July 30, instead of September each year.
- Unsure of RAC Coordinator's (Twinkle) role
- Suggested delegating the decision on RAC members to Kathleen Clarke.
- John questioned the need for the level of involvement at the Secretary's office if they are already very busy.

Meeting Adjourned for the day at 6:55 p.m.

March 13, 2003

Fire Management Plans (FMPs) - Presentation by Bruce Martinek, District Assistant Fire Management Officer. The FMPs must be in conformance with the overall Land Use Plans decision and will provide guidance on implementation of the plans and determine the workforce and funding necessary.

Bruce outlined the suppression activities on the northern end of the BLM District involving cooperators such as Id. Dept. of Lands or FS as lead in Cd'A, Cottonwood and Challis areas; Salmon has direct fire suppression responsibilities.

Bruce provided information on the following:

National Fire Plan – 10 year strategy; Implementation Plan signed in 5/2003

Historical overview of fires since 1910

Update on each Field Office activities

Rural Fire Assistance Agreements –\$148,000 to distribute, 44 applicants; none of this money is used for BLM personnel. Training, Personal Protective Equipment, safety items, tools, equipment and supplies can be purchased to help local fire districts.

Fritz outlined the need to get long-term funding due to the timelines needed: labor \$, time, implementation, monitoring (find inconsistencies – modify), funding through Congress.

Discussed the need for a watershed approach to fire management/restoration activities – example Clear Creek fire by Salmon where FS hired people to help with restoration of the area and BLM worked on the Wildland Urban Interface situation to protect the community. It is tough to get both agencies together; different Departments; BLM proactive/interactive with communities.

Infrastructure needs to be in place; Elk City where BLM has a small part of the public land acreage. Bennett Industries mill in Elk City is dependent on timber; if the mill moves, BLM timber sales won't help the community. BLM is trying to enhance private industry and keep them in place. Need longevity of mills and others to process sales.

Stewardship – originally designed to enhance the timber industry but the appropriation act passed in February is designed to help other industries as well. Mark Rey, FS, was the catalyst for getting Stewardship in the Appropriations Bill.

8.2 million board feet

\$ estimated for the sale now will be used by the high bidder to do that dollar amount of in-kind work

BLM or FS still have to do consult on affects to endangered species and comply with the National Environmental Policy. It will take time and staff to get these sales/stewardship contract situations set up.

If any of you RAC members have ideas about how to make this work better, please call Fritz or Stephanie.

- Dan does not like to see one mill hold the government hostage (Bennett)
- John asked/suggested that Cottonwood add land base would help a Cooperative Contract for fire suppression.
- Mark T. said there are arguments against Stewardship including favoritism, and some consider it a give-away program

2/19 Fee Demo Project-explained by subgroup members (included David Nelson, via telephone to join this part of the meeting)

Subgroup members Doug, Louise, and Kathy met with outfitters, private jet boaters, two county commissioners but there were no private boaters or other public in attendance.

A ranking process was used to establish priorities – results were emailed to the subgroup. Two years ago this same process was used and a letter was sent from Fritz to George Matejko, Salmon-Challis Forest Supervisor, in favor of the spending the fees on the high and medium priority projects.

This year they also identified projects at high and medium priorities and discussed the support process.

The largest share of the money would be used for: boat ramp, road maintenance, and weed control

Hard projects showing progressive use of fee demo \$\$ to benefit the users

\$550,000/year projections

\$700,000 in account now

\$553,000 high and medium priority projects plus a one time \$230,000 for ingress/egress roads to Middle Fork launch boat sites that need repairs

There were questions on use of the fee demo money for permit/boat checkers and patrols. Other issues at the campground that should be considered: river maps, interpretive information on history of both river canyons, scat machines (human waste), Newland site could also be refurbished.

There would still be extra money available or left in the fund

The RAC subgroup acted as the public for use in the FS fee demo review. The Subgroup will incorporate their concerns along with the funding recommendations; continue the program on-going through 2004 with funding continuing through 2007.

The RAC subgroup is in agreement with the fee demo program.

The RAC made suggestions for the FS to change the process and make it work better the next time the RAC is asked to help:

- Pre-planning stages – identify date and place early to get more public involved

- Need more public involved and better representation by the general public. Floaters- 40% commercial, 60% of public launch users on Middle Fork.
- Review and agree on the agenda including the items that are not up for discussion (fee demo amount -- \$5/person/day, 3 campground day fee rates and lottery (\$90,000)).
- Subgroup wants the fee demo project to benefit the payers.
- Items that are not negotiable by the FS need to be agreed on ahead of time.
- Actual revenues and expenditures from previous years need to be available before or at the meeting.
- Receive a full list of projects in advance of the meeting
- What funds are being shifted from normal FS funding with the fee demo money (i.e., river patrol \$250,000)

Doug said the last time they had a subgroup, they received a letter that included a comment about using fee demo \$ on river patrols.

Medium priority projects included \$125,000

David N. asked about the 2007 timeframe to spend the money being extended and recommended not spending it unless it needs to be then spend it wisely.

Louise said it would help to have the agenda ahead of time and to allow some discussion about the fee amount.

John said people giving input are naïve; the FS recreation funding is at the bottom of the priority list.

Kathy reiterated the role of the RAC and said that Patty Bates stressed these recommendations are “advisory”. The FS will still make the decision. If the RAC recommends the money not be spent, the FS can still decide where and how to spend it.

{Pete Ellsworth joined the meeting at 10:09 a.m. He was introduced as a potential RAC nominee. He joined the meeting as an observer.}

Louise made a motion to:

Submit a letter of support for the projects in the February 19th, 2003 meeting with recommendations to consider changing the process, as outlined above, for future meetings. Seconded by Doug Boggan, Motion carried. Kathy, Louise and Doug will get a letter to Fritz.

Idaho Compass – Fritz Rennebaum

The Idaho BLM Compass was developed as a strategic plan with Goals and Objectives. It is a budget forecasting tool that identifies strategic planning opportunities. It will help BLM project ahead and determine what issues we should be looking at. Funding may need to be moved around to work on high priority issues, which is where we should be spending the funding. It is a flexible document so we can change as new issues emerge.

Copies of the Compass were requested by Louise, Doug and Mark Idaho Cattlemen's Association (ICA) concerns regarding

Framework to Assist Sage-grouse – Stephanie had previously emailed this to Kathy. A response to the ICA letter was prepared by Jack Connelly, ID Fish and Game Researcher and BLM staff. Topics included the number of sage grouse harvested and habitat issues. RAC members interested in seeing the framework include Ben, Doug, Mark and Bryan. Stephanie will try and get copies for these and other RAC members.

Off-Highway National Strategy – Terry Heslin, BLM Outdoor Recreation Specialist from Boise, gave a presentation on Idaho's State-wide Strategy. He would like one to three RAC members to be on a standing subgroup as there will be additional work BLM wants to have the RAC do regarding this topic.

Terry provided some background information and a power point presentation. The BLM Idaho State Director wants consistent policy and approaches recognizing local issues will mean some variations.

Of 12 million acres of public land, six million acres are "open" to OHVs. Land Use Plans and revisions to plans will be addressing the categories of open, closed, and designated routes.

Expected outcomes from the Strategy:

- Memorandum of Understanding will be developed with partners, along with a charter and mission.
- Collaborative approach, incorporating all viewpoints
- Adaptable to changing conditions; emergencies
- Better outcomes – organized trail system
- Hope to get a mix of travel opportunities for multiple use on public land.
- OHV exceptions need to be considered in the land use planning process such as for emergencies and disabled individuals.
- Consider choosing routes rather than historic routes; look at sustainable routes.

Strategies are being or have been developed for:

1. OHV
2. National Mountain Biking
3. Non-Motorized Uses

Issues for RACs:

- Subgroup members come together for a state-wide OHV subgroup/steering committee to address statewide OHV issue and bring recommendations forward to the State Director.
- There is potential for the RACs to play various roles with regard to the development and implementation of OHV policy.
- Need to develop standards and guides for OHV management

- RAC to dialogue with public land users and interest groups

Questions/Discussion on OHV and Strategy:

- How many miles of roads and trails are there across public land? In most cases, we don't know but have started inventories.
- How do you complete the inventories? We use aerial photos and other tools then must do some level of "ground-truthing" to determine what is out there, the condition, use levels
- What is the status of the RS 2477 assertions? Most of these are filed in the county offices and BLM is not taking any action on them.
- MOU's will be or are being coordinated with counties to help with these efforts.
- What is the financial ability of the agencies to continue maintenance of roads/trails (Bill Madonna)? Use IDP&R Trail Rangers, identify low maintenance routes.
- Manage, develop and maintain starts with an inventory, planning and maintenance responsibilities outlined. BLM will use deferred maintenance to catch up on maintenance of facilities and then need to plan ahead and request funding for new facilities (Fritz).
- It may be cheaper to develop a trail system than to chase the multiple and growing trails (Mark Taylor). Rehabilitation of unwanted roads is very difficult.
- Who are the RAC members for LSRD and USRD? Is there anyone from the conservation/environmental side (Kathy Richmond). Fritz said the Idaho Corporate Team will need to review and accept the Idaho OHV Strategy and would then share it with the RACs; followed by public release.
- Doug said it takes people with "passion" to do the enforcement. BLM has problems with people going off of routes and there always will be.

Challis Proposed OHV Loop -Gail O'Neill, Associate Field Manager for the BLM Challis Field Office.

There is a proposal by the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department (IDP&R) to designate an official ATV or OHV loop trail that would connect Challis, Mackay and Arco. The Challis Field Office will be looking at the OHV use and trend. The Challis Resource Management Plan (RMP) does not identify this loop trail for OHV use. The Challis RMP identified areas as "limited" which would restrict OHVs to existing roads and trails. There is a small portion of the proposed loop trail that would not following existing roads and trails so the Challis office will have to considering amending their RMP if/when an actual proposal is received. There are also areas that are closed to OHV such as Areas of Critical Environmental concern (ACEC's), elk critical range, and some with seasonal closures.

The IDP&R Initiative is a positive approach to the OHV issue; with most of the route on existing roads/trails; 92% is accessible by a pick-up

- Map produce, three meetings held so far
- Comments being accepted through April 15, 2003
- BLM to do road and trail inventory this year
- Cities and counties must pass ordinances allowing OHV traffic on streets
- Two questions keep coming up: Who will do the enforcement and how many more people will come as a result of this trail designation?
 - FS, BLM, county sheriffs, F&G do not have a common set of enforcement rules
 - County could pass ordinances to mimic federal law enforcement standards
- What percent of the \$ generated would go back to the city or county instead of to the state?

Kathy asked about the Paiute Trail in Utah. Gail said several folks went to Utah to see this trail and find out what issues they had to deal with them and how it is working. There have been successful partnerships with others. They have 60,000 people/year using that trail due to the proximity to Las Vegas and Salt Lake City. We do not have or expect that kind of number due to the remote area and sparse population.

There is a need for state-wide map showing areas so the public knows what is open, closed, limited and restrictions. There is also a need for more signs.

John said the Environmental Assessment should assess cumulative impacts due to the increase in number of people.

Decision: OHV Subgroup members will be Bill Madonna, Mark Taylor, and John Barker with Doug Boggan as an alternate. All UCSC RAC members can share issues, concerns, etc. pertaining to OHV to Bill, who will carry forward all thoughts on this topic, not just his personal OHV concerns.

Unfinished Business:

Refining the Idaho BLM Organization – K Lynn has tasked Fritz with looking at the existing organization to see if there are some efficiencies and cost savings to be gained. This is a proactive approach and Fritz will conduct personal interviews, consider resource issues, and RAC input. This effort will consider combining Field Offices, such as Coeur d’Alene and Cottonwood, or relocating offices due to the hot issues in southwestern Idaho (Owyhee County), as well as answer the question of are the BLM offices in the right locations.

Doug suggested there needs to be a presence in the Riggins area. Fritz encouraged each RAC member to provide him with thoughts, suggestions, concerns as part of this effort. Fritz talked about the history of the Cottonwood Field Office and how the BLM Director,

Burklund, made the decision. Louise added that the Challis move was a good one. Bryan asked if the Slate Creek Ranger Station could be considered and Fritz said it could.

Sustainability Forum - Mark Taylor talked about a Sustainability Forum that he will be attending in Portland in April. The Sustainable Northwest website is <http://sustainablenorthwest.org>. He said it describes many on-going efforts around the northwest to provide for sound economics coupled with sound environmental policy.

Mark also mentioned two books that are worth reading Community and the Politics of Place and This Sovereign Land, A New Vision for Governing the West, both written by Daniel Kemmis. Mark suggested that since the author lives in Missoula, perhaps we could ask him to speak with the RAC sometime. Another book suggestion is one entitled Getting to Yes. Mark said this would be a good book for the RAC members since it helps with the consensus-based process and working collaboratively.

Mark mentioned that the Fish and Game, Boise National Forest, IDP&R, and BLM have been working on a survey of ATV registrants and licensed hunters. This may be useful information in OHV issues and planning.

Next Meeting – Challis, June 18 and 19, 2003 (travel on 6/17 and 20)

Topics:

- Sustainability Forum – Mark Taylor
- Land Acquisition/Disposal
- OHV Loop near Challis (need copies of the National OHV Strategy)
- RAC Involvement with National Fire Plan

Future Meeting Date – consider November 6 & 7, 2003

Doug Boggan made a motion that the meeting be adjourned; Mark Taylor seconded; Motion Carried - Meeting Adjourned at 1:55

Recorded by: Stephanie Snook, RAC Coordinator

Separate Handouts:

- Notes from December 18, 2002 RAC Chair Meeting
- DRAFT-Idaho RAC & OHV Strategy Implementation
- Overview of UCSC Fire Program
- Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan, July 2002
- Email from Mark Taylor with website and book information