

**Eastern Washington Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Moses Lake, WA
May 23, 2012**

Members Present (interest/term expiration):	Others in Attendance
<p><u>Designated Federal Official (DFO):</u> Daniel C. Picard, BLM Spokane District Manager</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 1:</u> Norris Boyd (Commercial Recreation/OHV/2014) Thomas Busker (Transportation/Rights-of-way/2014) David Hubbard (Grazing/2014)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 2:</u> Charles Warner (Environmental/2014)(Chair) Ivan Lines (Environmental/2014) Richard O’Dell (Conservation/2014) Dale Warriner (Dispersed Recreation/2012)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 3:</u> Dr. Ross Black (Academician/2014) Donald Larsen (State Employee/2012) Sharon Vore (Public at Large/2012) B. J. Kieffer (Indian Tribe/2012)</p>	<p><u>BLM</u> Allison C. Clough, Associate District Manager Linda Clark, Border Field Manager Linda Coates-Markle, Wenatchee Field Manager Scott Pavey, RAC Coordinator Steve Smith, Recreation Planner Diane Priebe, Recreation Planner Kerrin Doloughan, Rangeland Specialist Molly Boyter, Botanist Jason Lowe, Wildlife Biologist Robert St. Clair, Meeting Recorder</p> <p><u>Forest Service</u> Margaret Hartzell, Planner, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF Deborah Kelly, Public Affairs, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF</p> <p><u>Public</u> N/A</p>
Members Not Present (interest/term expiration):	
<p><u>Sub-Group 1 :</u> Jodie Lamb (Energy/Mineral/2014)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 2:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 3:</u> Dennis Bly (Elected Official/2012)</p>	

Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
10:00 – 10:05	Call to Order and welcome	Charles Warner
10:05 – 10:20	Introductions	Daniel Picard
10:20 – 10:35	Public Comments	Charles Warner
10:35 – 10:45	Review and approval of March 7, 2012 meeting minutes	Charles Warner
10:45 – 11:00	RAC application update	Scott Pavey
11:00 – 12:00	Colville NF Forest Plan Revision	Margaret Hartzel
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch	
12:30 – 4:00	BLM RMP Revision – update and discussion	Scott Pavey
4:00	Adjourn	

Welcome/Introduction (10:00am)

The meeting was called to order by Charles Warner (RAC Chair) at 10:00 a.m. at the Hardin Community Room, ATEC Building, Big Bend Community College, 7662 NE Chanute St, Moses Lake, Washington. A quorum was present.

All in attendance introduced themselves.

Public Comment Period (10:06am)

No members of the public were present.

Review of March 7, 2012 Minutes (10:06am)

Sharon Vore asked if there was any clarification regarding the requirement that an elected official be present at Resource Advisory Council meetings. Scott Pavey replied that there was no new information available.

Norris Boyd stated that he is a precinct committee officer and that he could possibly be an elected official.

Charles Warner stated that it may be helpful to engage in outreach toward the Washington State Association of Counties for the recruitment of elected officials.

The March 7th minutes were accepted at 10:13am.

RAC Application Update (10:15am)

Scott Pavey stated that the only positions that have not been applied for are Historical/Archaeological and the Elected Official. There was discussion of the possibility of moving Norris Boyd to the elected official position if nobody else chooses to apply.

Colville National Forest Plan Revision Update (10:20am)

Margaret Hartzel and Deborah Kelly gave an overview of the June 30, 2011 release of the Proposed Action and the comments received during the following 90 day comment period. They stated over 27,000 comments were received and sought to answer questions from the March 7th RAC meeting as to how USFS processes the comments and how “form letters” are combined into single comments.

They described how a private organization utilized social media to increase public awareness of the Forest Plan, and how the website encouraged individuals to share the information with their friends and acquaintances. When individuals would share the information the organization’s website would email a generic comment form to the USFS and the Secretary of Agriculture. This resulted in the high number of comments.

Sharon Vore asked how the RAC as a group would consider the validity of this type of mass form letter, especially when many of the individuals causing a letter to be sent may not understand the issues considered by the proposed management action.

Charles Warner asked how organizational affiliation is determined and how comments from an organization or one of its members are weighed compared to the public at large. Ms. Kelly stated that organizations are usually identified by the use of letterhead or self-identification by the commenter. Ms. Hartzel stated that the Forest Service seeks substantive comments with a clear rationale which can come from any source.

Ross Black asked if substantive input is requested when comments are solicited. Ms. Hartzel responded that the USFS does give information as to the types of input it is seeking.

Ms. Hartzel explained that every letter or email is given a code and sorted into concern statements. The concern statements are then examined and issues or points of dispute are identified. This feedback is used during alternative development.

Tom Busker observed that some of the comments on the document provided have numbers associated with them. (38A, 38B, etc) Ms. Kelly replied that those numbers refer to public concern statements.

Ivan Lines asked how the issues are resolved when two comments are in conflict. Ms. Hartzel described how this is addressed through alternatives in the DEIS.

B.J. Kieffer inquired about the comment numbers. Ms. Kelly said that the numbers are probably a result of coding

Ross Black stated that an index could prove useful.

Margaret Hartzel suggested providing discussion questions at future RAC meetings in order to get feedback for the Forest Plan Revision.

Tom Busker requested that any discussion questions not be so specific that it fails to include all RAC members from the discussion.

Charles Warner suggested that controversial items be presented in order to get RAC feedback on those topics.

Sharon Vore suggested the formation of a working group of RAC members specifically interested in the Forest Plan Revision.

Ross Black suggested that multiple topics be presented for discussion, especially active topics.

Charles Warner suggested that a menu of possible topics be provided. Ivan Lines concurred and suggested that any sort of menu be distributed in advance.

Charles Warner discussed how the RAC as a whole should take the responsibility of reviewing the RMP and Forest Revision Plan and how working groups should be limited to subjects within those plans.

Sharon Vore suggested taking field trips so that RAC members can become familiar with locations and issues outside of formal meeting environment.

Scott Pavey discussed when the upcoming RAC meeting should be in light of upcoming term expirations at the end of September.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20am for lunch.

Resource Management Plan Revision Update – Overview of the Preliminary Draft Alternatives (12:10 pm)

Scott Pavey gave an informational presentation designed to assist with future RAC participation in the RMP process. This included a description of the planning area, the RMP vision and goals, and the alternatives with an RMP and how those provide different scenarios for management of resources and alternatives.

Charles Warner asked if the “no action” alternative needs to be changed if the alternatives don’t meet the purpose and need. Mr. Pavey replied that all alternatives need to meet the purpose and need except for the “no action” alternative which is carried over from an existing plan. Margaret Hartzel stated that when new alternatives are being developed that it must address identified issues, and address the purpose and needs.

Mr. Pavey continued with a description of RMP alternative terminology and a description of the alternative themes before providing an example of a grazing objective with alternatives.

Dale Warriner asked what is meant by available forage in regard to NRCS soil types. Kerrin Doloughan replied by explaining BLM utilization standards and allocation practices.

Margaret Hartzel asked if there is a limit outside of the language in an RMP as to how much forage can be taken. Mr. Doloughan replied that there are NRCS standards as well as allotment management plans that provide site specific information at the implementation level.

Charles Warner suggested including in the RMP a short description of allocation and utilization and the differences between the two.

An example of an ACEC objective was presented.

Ivan Lines asked how a historical sage grouse lek is compared to a current lek. Mr. Pavey replied that sage grouse ranges are considered instead of individual leks, and that an ACEC can only preserve existing conditions and cannot be used to create desired conditions.

B.J. Kieffer asked how the BLM is using the “cultural” ACEC consideration in the nomination process. Mr. Pavey replied that there must be a relevant historical or cultural value and provided the example of the McLoughlin Canyon battlefield site. Molly Boyter stated that if a resource is very small or highly sensitive it is not nominated. Mr. Pavey said that an ACEC designation is not designed to encourage additional use, and that some sensitive areas are managed through other means.

David Hubbard asked about the criteria used in site selection. Ms. Boyter replied that areas may be nominated by BLM employees or external parties based on the presence of sensitive plants, animals, or other values.

Charles Warner requested an example of a nomination process. Mr. Pavey explained that proposed areas are examined to determine if management actions such as constraints would provide an adequate level of protection. If not then BLM guidance is followed regarding future management or the creation of an ACEC. Not all ACECs are closed to all uses, and non-conflicting uses may occur within an ACEC as well as special management actions designed to enhance the protected value.

Ross Black stated that Hot Lake is not unique for the values listed and observed that it is a merimictic lake and that other lakes are of higher value.

An example was provided of lands with wilderness characteristics.

Norris Boyd asked if any of the areas nominated for wilderness designation are adjacent to a wilderness study area. Mr. Pavey replied that there are not, however there are areas adjacent to Forest Service roadless areas.

An example Recreation Management Areas was provided.

Ivan Lines asked if an RMA designation supersedes wildlife such as Bald Eagles or Bull Trout. Steve Smith replied that it does not. Diane Priebe explained that a sensitive area adjacent to a recreation area may be designated an ACEC or simply not included in the RMA boundary.

An example of Sage Grouse management areas was provided. It was observed that national policies on Sage Grouse regularly change, that grouse management is a cooperative effort with the state, and that national policy is driving toward habitat conservation areas with connectivity corridors.

Norris Boyd asked why Washington grouse are different from those elsewhere. Jason Lowe replied that Washington has a distinct population segment due to isolation, agricultural development, and other reasons. There is a relatively low BLM land in the sage grouse area and the WDFW is administering the recovery plan.

An example was provided of an objective and alternatives regarding Sage Grouse management.

Ivan Lines asked if there is any conversion of shrub-steppe land to agricultural uses on BLM lands. Kerrin Doloughan replied that there are no agricultural conversions on BLM.

The discussion moved to upcoming steps in the RMP process and the tentative project timeline.

Ross Black asked how the effects analysis is being done. Mr. Pavey replied that each resource is examined for potential negative impacts resulting from proposed management actions by alternative.

Mr. Black asked what happens after the public review. Mr. Pavey replied that the public comments will have to be addressed.

Scott Pavey suggested that the RAC either participate in a work group exercise for the next meeting or have RAC input in selection of preferred alternatives.

Ivan Lines expressed a desire to participate more actively in the planning process.

Norris Boyd expressed a desire to have a deeper understanding of how the alternatives were developed in order to provide better feedback.

B.J. Kieffer expressed uncertainty regarding the roles and responsibilities of RAC members as well as concerns regarding potential conflicts of interests, especially in regard to tribal

representation and different interests between tribes. Daniel Picard explained that FLPMA requires interaction with the public as well State and Tribal entities. As the RAC is one of a number of ways for the BLM to receive feedback from those constituencies participation in it is not a conflict of interest.

B.J. Kieffer asked when the BLM will engage in outreach with the Tribes. Mr. Pavey replied that initial outreach occurred during the scoping period.

Linda Clark stated that the RAC review of the alternatives is to ensure that the BLM has a reasonable range of alternatives and to identify any obvious deficiencies.

Scott Pavey stated that public feedback has already had a significant impact on the planning process and the development of alternatives.

Sharon Vore asked if there is any sort of communication outside of public comment opportunities. Mr. Pavey replied that once a new timeline is approved a newsletter will be put out and the Spokane District webpage will be updated.

Daniel Picard proposed holding a RAC meeting toward the end of the effects analysis in order to get RAC feedback into the selection of preferred alternatives.

Charles Warner suggested communicating with the Tribes and DNR and providing them with the latest information regarding the alternatives and analysis.

Norris Boyd made a motion for BLM staff to identify alternatives that would be of the most use to discuss with the RAC and have that information prepared prior to a future meeting. Tom Busker seconded.

Scott Pavey stated that the RAC may be able to weigh in on the selection of preferred alternatives.

Charles Warner asked if the letter of endorsement discussed in the March 7th meeting will still be needed. Mr. Pavey replied in the affirmative.

The meeting was then adjourned at 3:20pm. The date and time of the next RAC meeting is to be determined.