



Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

8 a.m., June 22, 2023

Members Present

Category 1

In-Person	Virtual
Preston Larimer	
Pete Stagner	
Curt Howell	

Category 2

In-Person	Virtual
John Sztukowski	
Loretta Mitson	
Mick Daniel	

Category 3

In-Person	Virtual
Kent Wood	

BLM Employees Present

In-Person	Virtual
Cathy Cook	
Levi Spellman	
Dario Archuleta	
Katie Singleton	
Sue Swift-Miller	
Taylor Applewhite	
	Keith Berger
Lili Silva	

Public Present

In-Person	Virtual
Adam Ortega	
Dennis Crowther	
	Janelle Giorso

Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping

Members of the RAC, members of the public, and BLM employees introduced themselves. Roll was taken during this time.

Cathy Cook, the Designated Federal Officer, went over the charter with the RAC members, explaining the history of the RAC, outlining expectations, and highlighting procedural points. She discussed the need for a RAC leader and the need for a vote.

Agenda Item 1: District Updates

Cathy Cook, Rocky Mountain District Manager

Cook highlighted high-level personnel changes at the district (Matt Norden to Fire Management Officer). She announced critical vacancies (Assistant Fire Management Officer, National Environmental Policy Act Coordinator). She announced the San Luis Valley Field Office had selected a new Field Manager, who had tentatively accepted.

Mitson asked for clarification on whether the RAC was required to reach a consensus. Cook explained it was not necessary.

Cook discussed the new public lands rule that put conservation on equal footing with other priorities. She asked for RAC input on it.

Cook explained the renewable energy rule and that we are in public comment period for both rules.

Mitson said the public comment field on the site is not user friendly or even fully useable and asked if the deadline was still June 20. Stagner said the deadline was extended to July 5. Daniel asked if we would come back to that. Ortega mentioned he submits a lot of comments and that it's easier to write them in a word processor first, and then submitting as an attachment or copy/paste.

Cook made the RAC aware of major planning efforts (big game Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Gunnison Sage Grouse Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement). She discussed staffing levels as a limitation for the workload. She said the Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan should be published in early July.

Cook gave a brief timeline of the big game planning effort. She presented a slide on the Gunnison sage grouse plan with a link for more information. She discussed the developing nature of solar energy on public lands, with a brief timeline for solar PEIS progression. She explained that some areas in the Valley may be strong candidates for solar development, then updated the RAC on the progress of the solar lease sale.

Wood: Is there suitable land for solar development in the eastern plains area?

Cook: There isn't a lot of public land in that area.

Wood: Has there been any dramatic development in the last three months regarding the solar development?

Cook: It is going through its planning phase.

Agenda Item 2: SLVFO Updates

Dario Archuleta, Acting Field Manager.

Archuleta explained there can be some subtleties in the Valley regarding the big game management plan and solar PEIS. He explained that the RAC will need to be involved as those pop up.

Archuleta discussed the land and water conservation funds. He explained the area around La Jara Creek that is being targeted for acquisition, and the collaboration with the Forest Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to make it happen. He explained the parcels they're looking at, the history of the proposal, possible timelines for acquisition, and possible management collaborations. He explained there are some important cultural areas included with those parcels.

Mitson offered a more detailed archaeological perspective on some of those.

- Wood: Did the state give up the land because they can't manage the land?
- Daniel: Clarified the goal of state lands to generate income.
- Mitson: Where did the money come from to acquire this? Significant cultural sites have been ignored
- Archuleta: LWCF funds allocated by Washington. To apply, lands must fit specific criteria.
- Cook: We have to compete against a lot of other applicants, and the money doesn't come all at once. Difficult to make land purchases without lump sum.
- Wood: (review recording)
- Archuleta: We can't purchase land from the state land board directly.
- (Discussion on particulars of land acquisition. Archuleta invited the RAC to reach out with questions and to schedule a field tour. RAC members voiced interest)

Katie Singleton, SLVFO Acting Assistant Field Manager, discussed the North Tract acquisition. She explained that the BLM thought they owned it, but it was actually owned by the Nature Conservancy. As a result, there's already a significant amount of BLM infrastructure and the Nature Conservancy is amenable to a sale. She provided details on cadastral survey progress on the parcel. She said the state-owned parcel next to it is possible to acquire through an exchange.

Archuleta discussed the Middle Creek South (Haymaker) acquisition. Detailed the location and a history of BLM acquisition in the area. Singleton said the acquisition is pending finalization.

- Wood: Are any of the species in the area threatened by acquisition due to limits in management capacity?
- Archuleta: said he doesn't see an issue because of partnerships available and a proactive stance in working with them.

Daniel mentioned his organization got a grant to help mitigate resource damage. Increased use is making an impact on public lands. A discussion ensued on increased recreational use and the need to manage lands effectively.

Singleton discussed the Sangre de Cristo Dark Sky Reserve, providing some background, informing RAC members on the proposed reserve area, highlighted next steps in the process. Daniel informed the RAC that the International Dark sky Association is not being supportive and continuously adds new roadblocks to certification.

Restoration Landscapes

Taylor Applewhite and Sue Swift-Miller, Biologists

Fact sheet distributed and video presented.

Applewhite provided a background on the restoration landscape initiative and its purpose, then referred the RAC to the fact sheet. He then highlighted climate change impact, resource management, cultural resource management, and improving quality of life for local populations, and putting youth corps groups to work. He shared the award amount of \$6.1M and his hopes that successful utilization of those funds could justify future awards. He explained the money is not yet in-hand. But, they expect some soon.

Swift-Miller provided a history of the Blanca Wetlands and other projects where the first round of funding will be distributed. She presented a poster board detailing a historical map of the area, discussing the history and evolution of water in the area's closed basin. She showed photos of the land prior to BLM acquisition and after. She detailed key water management efforts by the BLM and their importance. She then explained problems with well infrastructure and the impact on achieving goals.

Applewhite explained the area is also an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Swift-Miller detailed the importance of the habitat to a variety of species. She also discussed

the importance of private water sources to wildlife in the Valley, but that private lands cannot meet wildlife needs alone.

Applewhite mentioned the importance of the area to cultural resource management and the value of restoring these areas for cultural reasons.

Swift-Miller discussed acquiring new water sources in Treasure Pass and water rights to help bolster the Valley and the wetlands. She discussed the partnership with SLV Water Conservancy District and CPW to assign responsibilities for acquisition and resource management for an existing dam.

Applewhite spoke on invasive species and mitigation efforts as a way of improving the habitat. He then spoke on the Rio Grande Natural Area and some of the efforts to manage its riparian areas.

Together, they discussed details of other projects in the valley that will benefit directly or indirectly from restoration landscapes funding.

Cook asked what we might see from funding this year.

Swift-Miller said they are still in the planning phase. But, the dam at Shaw reservoir needs to be drained and repaired. That should happen this fall. The youth corps will be able to do improvement work around other areas. Get well redrilling contracts under way. Basin restoration is currently under way and funding may help continue that work. Fence repair on multiple areas.

- Stagner: Which water sub-district are we?
- Swift-Miller: We are our own and have our own sustainability numbers.
- Online: Are you encouraging beavers as a keystone species.
- Swift-Miller: That is something our partners focus on in the USFS. We don't have a lot of flexibility.

- Wood: Is there documentation that captures restoration landscapes information in more granular detail?
- Applewhite: We do have documentation at a higher level and more documents that synthesize our intent.
- Swift-Miller: Check with Levi and he can answer some of that.

Chronic Livestock Trespass

Dario Archuleta, Acting Field Manager

Archuleta highlighted one last detail on IRA funding and that it's not limited to Blanca.

Archuleta provided some background on the Rio Grande Natural Area, its boundaries, and its important in the ecosystem. He discussed the damage being done to the area because of persistent livestock trespass.

Archuleta discussed the history of grazing violations in the area. He then outlined the livestock trespass monitoring process and procedure for criminal and administrative adjudication. He said there has been a fine-tuned administrative process they believe will be vastly more effective than the criminal approach.

Cook asked if there are different rules or processes if a violator is a permittee.

Archuleta explained there is some leeway and benefit of the doubt given to permittees. Permittees and non-permittees are both given initial notification.

Stagner said permittees should not be treated any differently.

Mitson asked if the whole RGNA area was fenced.

Archuleta said not all of it is fenced yet. Sometimes the terrain is enough to prevent livestock from traversing an area. But, feral horses have been able to cross those areas and the field office is looking into options. However, the fence in that area was cut four

times this year. Fencing is helpful and effective. Fencing is not a cure-all. The land in this area also requires public access as it serves multiple uses – such as recreation – that make closed fencing impractical. The primary issue is trespass and that's what needs the most focus.

Cook said that the fence was the first part of the strategy. The second part was coming up with a new process for dealing with trespass.

Archuleta explained the observation and documentation process for monitoring trespass and real-time population of the database. This was developed to ensure documentation would stand up in court. He mentioned he wants a dedicated range technician to focus on this exclusively and ensuring consistency. Right now, people in the office are getting detailed out to do this. This approach requires an additional range technician, but funding isn't available to do that.

Stagner: Have you approached the brand board for training on identifying brands?

Archuleta: It can be difficult. If we have any questions, we contact the brand inspector to ensure its correct.

Stagner: People can also contact the Colorado Public Lands Council for help.

Archuleta said an issue presents itself when a permitted grazer exceeds the dates of their permit. There is some debate regarding intent when dealing with those types of infractions.

Archuleta said the trespass documentation process is difficult. But, that's what it is going to take to enforce these permits.

Mitson: do you use remote cameras? Archaeologists use it. Why not here?

Archuleta: We're hoping to.

Mitson: The punishment is pennies on the dollar compared to the grass they get for free.

Archuleta: By establishing the legal definition of willful trespass, we can escalate the issue substantially.

Mitson: I think you need several full-time staff members to address this.

Archuleta: this is complicated and frustrating. We'll show you the process for taking those steps.

A conversation ensued on suspected violators.

Archuleta explained that the last step of the process is impoundment. It takes a lot to get it approved in Washington D.C.. Multiple agreements need to be in place to ensure capture, transport, board, feed, veterinary services, etc. Even then, all of it can be challenged in court. The SLVFO is using this process to build its case so they won't lose in court anymore. The courts have been very lenient with violators. The SLVFO does not want to leave room for that possibility.

However, Archuleta said he wants to be reasonable with permittees.

Daniel: Can the RAC send a letter about this? We want to support you in this.

Wood: If you had full-time, comprehensive monitoring, that trespass violation map would likely be much denser. You mentioned a trespass survey. Is that publicly accessible? I think having that available to the public would be valuable. Also, high-tech satellite monitoring could make comprehensive monitoring possible. Satellite remote sensing.

Archuleta: That's the future.

Cook: That is what the BLM will hopefully be moving to for a wide variety of applications.

Archuleta: Let's talk more.

Archuleta said that collecting remote and automated camera data can be difficult because cameras are often vandalized.

Daniel: Can colleges with drone programs be of use?

Cook: Our ability to use drones is limited to firefighting operations.

Solar Lease Update

Dario Archuleta, Acting Field Manager

The land parcel in the De Tilla Gulch Solar Energy Zone went out for bid and got a response. While it is ideal for solar energy production, the issue is transmission. There was a successful bid and the paperwork for the permit has been submitted to the BLM. They have a two-year window to submit a plan, which then will be assessed by the BLM.

We want to get the company out on the ground to assess the physical site before they start planning. Possibly conduct an environmental assessment.

There are two other SEZs in the Valley, and we may be able to look at areas previously excluded. But, there may be some tribal opposition to those areas.

Mitson: There has been some expression of concern about infringing on Old Spanish Trail routes. Isn't it also putting the cart before the horse to start carving up land without having a transmission solution in place?

Archuleta: Upon further discussion, there is some very limited capacity for transmission along existing routes. We do need a transmission route. But, there are challenges in our current resource management plan. There are lots of options in front of us. Nothing is decided.

Mitson: I object to carving up public lands for corporate solar production. There are warehouses all over the country that have roofs.

A discussion ensued on the merits of solar energy production, possible transmission routes, and feasibility studies.

Daniel: I agree with Loretta.

Stagner: Solar will degrade the land. Take away the sun and things won't grow there.

Daniel: I think we should be looking at other ways to do solar than large industrial solar complexes.

Archuleta advocated for waiting for a plan before passing judgment.

Cultural Resources Update

Dario Archuleta, Acting Field Manager

Archuleta presented a brief history of BLM priorities and challenges for land management for RAC consideration.

He discussed background on the Lobatos Bridge project, mentioning funding through the Great Outdoors Fund, as well as detailing some of the petroglyphs in the area. He explained the work done together to protect the cultural resources in the area.

- Mitson: got a call from an individual who lives near the Lobatos Bridge site. He was concerned over the design, as he is an architect. There is another world-class architect who lives near the site.

Mitson suggested the architects be involved in the design.

- Archuleta: The site is already being vandalized by those using the area currently. With this project, we stand a chance of using educational and interpretive signs to help educate the public and to preserve that site, rather than leaving it to an unwitting public.

- Mitson: We have the resource of these architects, we should use them.

- Archuleta: let's do it. Lets get in touch.

- Daniel: I know the budgets have been set for this and the designs are under way.

Upcoming community events could be a good time for these architects to get involved. If a better design can be submitted within the same budget, we should take advantage of that.

Public attendee Dennis Crowther suggested get some locals involved. Get volunteers involved. If the community is involved, the community will help police it.

Archuleta discussed Los Mogotes and the tribal consultation on that project. Tribes have been clear that they will fight it.

Archuleta discussed Bishop Rock fuels treatment, primarily a mastication project. It is targeting pinon juniper and beetle kill Douglas fir. Archuleta explained that Scotty Nilson, Fire Management Officer for the SLVFO, came up with a project for fuels treatments and to work with tribes for future fuels management projects. Ensure no special, historically significant, or sacred plants are in areas targeted for treatment.

- Larimer: Is anyone looking at Pinyon Jay breeding colonies? It may possibly be listed soon, and pinyon mitigation is affecting their habitat.

- Mitson: DeVargas Crossing is one of the most culturally significant sites in Colorado, and it isn't protected. It's ignored. Half is on BLM. Half isn't. It needs to be purchased and interpreted.

- Daniel: If we bought it, the BLM would take it, right?

- Archuleta: Yeah. We may currently have the funds to consider that.

Archuleta added a final note about how the Valley's invasive species program has been active for 20 years and he is proud of the work they're doing. There are a number of effective partnerships with counties and federal partners for consistent application. He wants the RAC to be aware of that and to keep invasive species in minds.

Agenda Item 3: RGFO Updates

Keith Berger, Field Manager

Berger opened with an introduction and background for the ECRMP. He briefed the RAC on its status and some broader details of the plan's provisions.

Berger shared the RGFO's work with Fort Carson on their HAMET training and the possibility of conducting that training on and above BLM lands. Closing in on an environmental assessment to determine long-term use and ROW.

- Mitson: was there public input on the use of these sites? Why weren't the sites in Pinyon canyon sufficient?
- Berger: Yes. Lots of public input. Helicopters perform differently at different altitudes. Pinon canyon is still lower altitude than areas where they need training.
- Wood: Is this really that much higher?
- Berger: The altitudes do make a difference. You can't tell from this map, but a lot of these sites are on ridge tops and hill tops.
- Larimer: I've been told 8,000 feet is good enough altitude for that training.
- Sztukowski: Will any of the decisions in the upcoming ECRMP affect what will be coming later in this planning effort?
- Berger: Good question. This is a right-of-way and I don't think any of these are ROW exclusion areas. So I think the decisions are compatible.
- Sztukowski: These are areas under consideration and not a final decision?
- Berger: Correct. The analysis presents a range, and a range of sites is under consideration.

Berger introduced the Wildhorse Reservoir project and provided background on the effort and a progress update. The take-home implication: there are no jurisdictional wetlands on this, so the Army Corps of Engineers will not be the lead federal agency on the project. BLM will be the lead federal agency.

- Larimer: What's the timeline?
- Berger: No definite dates yet. Possibly beginning construction in three years. That may be optimistic. I think we will begin the environmental impact statement sooner than that. But, we'll see how it goes.
- Mitson: Is the reservoir completely on BLM property?
- Berger: No. Much of it is on private property. Much has been acquired by city of Aurora.
- Cook: That little sliver on the map? That's all the BLM land involved.
- Mitson: This sends up red flags to me about the role of BLM to be complicit in water storage for the big cities in the lands in our area?

- Berger: Some of the dam will be on BLM land. That creates a federal nexus for us to be involved. BLM can't issue a ROW without extensive research and analysis.
- Wood: Do they own the water?
- Daniel: I think they own the water. They're just looking for a place to store it.
- Cook: Is that right? The city of Aurora already owns the water?
- Berger: Correct.
- Cook: Where is the origin of the water? Is it coming out of the Arkansas?
- Berger: I think some west slope water may be involved also, pumped and transferred through the pump station.
- Cook: Comingling the water.
- Wood: If BLM declined to take it on, would the city be in trouble since the Army Corps of Engineers can't take it on?
- Berger: I'm not sure it's discretionary for BLM. There's an application in front of us for a ROW. We can analyze and make decisions on the application. But, we can't decline to work on it.

Berger offered a fire update, acknowledging the wet spring and some of the lowest fire dangers than is the norm. The additional growth of grass and forage is a mixed blessing. Eventually, they will dry out and create a fine fuel potential that will enable some fast-moving fires. Emphasized the need for awareness of that and need to understand the developing situation.

RGFO Campground Business Plan

Kalem Lenard, Assistant Field Manager

Lenard introduced himself and gave his background.

Lenard presented background on fees, use trends, funding, and expenses. He then outlined the current fee sites in the RGFO, and then the proposed sites for fee collection.

Lenard then presented information on the federal statutes defining what justifies a fee for recreational use areas. Then, he broke down the different management costs for current campground types in the field office. He then compared fees between comparable campgrounds managed by different federal agencies.

Lenard presented a financial analysis of the budgetary impacts on relevant sites and outlined the result of implementing the fee increase vs. no implementation. He then illustrated the results of putting the proposal out to public comment, and outlined proposed next steps.

•Larimer: Two groups within that lower income demographic would be displaced – homeless individuals and seasonal employees for river guides and other seasonal employees. The other side of that is families seeking sanitary campgrounds. I'm appalled sometimes in some of those areas with the human waste and other waste up in those areas.

•Lenard: We're definitely aware of the variety of visitors up in that area.

•Howell: Is there any part of your research you felt was lacking?

•Lenard: No. I don't think so. Calculating expenses can be tricky and hard to pin down exactly because every site is different. I can see the concern with the sites that will be developed in the future. But, we need to make sure we keep an eye on the future. Lots of variables need to be evaluated, including future demand and use.

•Howell: Have you identified any places displaced individuals are likely to go?

•Lenard: There are some places along Shelf Road and Oil Well Flats where we anticipate some of that. We looked at a lot of that during the Chaffee County management plan and considered that as part of the overflow analysis.

•Larimer: Can you help define the difference between a developed site and a less-developed site, like at Turtle Rock?

•Lenard: Like at Tunnel View? Are there portable toilets in that area?

•Larimer: Yes.

•Lenard: OK. That's within the AHRA. The river is a slightly different situation than pure BLM lands. At Turtle Rock, there are a ton of amenities and a full-time campground

host. And, it's pretty much fully occupied half of the year. In other areas, we don't have any of those facilities. Maybe fire rings to address fire concerns and some basic vehicle barriers. The fee would only come into place when we provide a certain level of convenience facilities.

- Larimer: The \$20 fee may not be enough.

- Lenard: We started the idea at \$15 and were losing money. After feedback from partners, we moved up to \$20. RAC feedback across the state seems to be that we're selling ourselves short. We don't raise fees very often. We don't peg it to active changes in operating costs. We really only do this only once every 10-15 years.

- Daniel: These are all available for reservation on rec.gov?

- Lenard: The bank and sand gulch went to rec.gov in response to fee tubes being stolen. But, that has its critics. The reservation fee is something people are unhappy about. We may not be 100 percent committed to reservations. But, reservations have been useful and we do want to have that as an option.

- Daniel: I'm inclined to back the \$25/night idea. But, that may not be the ideal denomination. But, there needs to be a way to cover expenses. You would have my vote on this. But, is there a way to build in an inflationary component to avoid having to revisit this yearly?

- Lenard: I can look into that. Round numbers for fees might not be an issue since we probably won't be using cash again in the field office.

- Daniel: Check in with Uncompaghe. They might have an inflationary model.

- Wood: I would support the \$25/night model. I'm uncomfortable with displacing low-income individuals. But, the BLM is being asked to subsidize the lack of problem-solving from the surrounding areas.

- Berger: Camping doesn't really apply to transient and homeless populations because BLM lands aren't allowed to serve as a residence. If you don't have a residence, it makes an individual's stay an act of residence. It's a complicated issue and we probably need to make sure we keep them separate.

- Wood: Is fire risk during dry years another issue worth considering?

- Berger: It's an interesting thought. But, when it comes to transient populations, monetary fines, for whatever infraction, aren't that effective. They can't pay it anyway.

- Wood: What is wrong with the notion that recreation industry should pay their employees enough to cover living costs during employment?
- Daniel: That's a big question. SLV GO is committed to paying a fair and living wage. We make a little less so everyone can make a little more.

Discussion ensues on the topic of a living wage and its impact on dispersed camping.

Penrose Commons Recreation Area Management Plan

Kalem Lenard, Assistant Field Manager

Lenard briefed on the background of the issue affecting Penrose Commons and the management planning for the area. He highlighted its most common uses and the massive increase in use, despite no changes in management or promotion of use. He explained how the misuse and abuse of the area has detrimentally impacted the legitimate uses of other individuals.

Lenard reviewed the results of public scoping on the issue, which showed conflicting use cases and desires for management. The BLM put together a proposed management plan that strives to achieve a best use case scenario.

Wood requested clarification on language on a slide and Lenard clarified.

Lenard then discussed possible actions for future management, as well as next steps in the process of making a decision on how to manage this area.

- Larimer: There needs to be more of a culture of self-policing. That should be part of a solution.
- Lenard: If you take a look at the plan, we write it in as an essential piece. We write that we need help managing this and the users should be a part of that. But, each group seems to only be focusing on their use cases, and not the other users who may not be using the land in the same way at all, like grazing.

- Daniel: Seven miles doesn't seem like a lot of trail. Trails preservation alliance made comments about motorcycle trails in the past.
- Lenard: It's 3,100 acres and the seven miles of trails are actually highly technical and movement is very slow. Trials and rock climbing.

Public Participation and Public Comment Period

Summary of the nature of any public participation up to this point, and during the comment period.

- Adam Ortega: After hearing the conversation about trespass and permittees, grazing board had received a grant to help bring a project forward to modernize range improvements, collars for virtual fencing, and others. It may be possible to help the BLM implement other solutions. On the issue of trespass livestock, the commissioner and Colorado Department of Agriculture will back the BLM in administrative actions on permittees in regular violation. For non-permittees, it's a little different and a little more difficult to assist since the funding is private. Ready to work with groups to address it.
- [5:45:24] Dennis Crowther: I'm a permittee. I'm from here and have been here a long time. I've raised cattle all my life and have been in the mining industry for 50 years. We've talked about identifying cattle and I can read a brand. I've seen drones work on surveying a quarry. They can do almost anything. I want to thank the RAC for giving up their time to help the BLM manage the land that belongs to everyone. I was issued a trespass notice last week and I feel ashamed. There is an active cattle allotment that the BLM claims doesn't meet land health assessment because of trespass happening every year. I've studied the regulations. The BLM has been out there identifying cows. They got one of mine. I don't deny it. I settled with a federal magistrate before the courts had to get involved. A stipulation of that settlement was that the allotment in question be brought back into service. That hasn't happened yet. I asked for an answer on

my application on a grazing permit for the spring. You can't hear about those answers in time to get out at the beginning of your permit. But, you can get a trespass notice. I'm still waiting on an answer to my application. If you think the BLM will get other projects done, think twice. It's concerning to me. I have another appeal going regarding the Macintire Simpson parcel. (Crowther then reads excerpt from decision) I protest the fact that the BLM has not put a management plan in place in a timely manner. The BLM responded that they have many complicating priorities and limited time and resources to address those priorities, and that the SLV is in the process of revising the existing management plan and a decision on multiple use on the MS property will be made on that plan. That was in 1993 and 2001. Then, the property burned down in 2013. Would the BLM consider grazing that? What have they learned since 2013? Nothing. We have got to manage that. I can't understand their thinking. I'm not asking for favors. But, whatever happened to consult, coordinate, and cooperate? Did I get those considerations on my trespass? I got a notice. I'm waiting on a final decision. I'm doing this to prove a point. I'm sure you've heard of the Bundy case. It isn't pretty. I've heard other permittees say we should just do what we want. But, I don't want to do that. I can't claim all the cows out there. But I can claim some of them. There's about 0 head. All of a sudden Archuleta is a brand inspector. But, if you want to use that 1-2-3 system, you're going to be in a heap of trouble. I'm a permittee now. But, I may not be in the future. When I was served with my trespass notice, I wouldn't sign it. I told them to bring me a final decision on my permit application and then we'll talk.

- Archuleta: I'd like to address this. We make the effort to communicate twice before issuing a trespass notice. With Survey 123, we work with a brand inspector to get those right. It takes time. As Dennis said, that's part of the problem. But, that's what it takes to get things right. We do expect permittees to have a better understanding of this process and hold them to performance standards.

Crowther began disputing his case publicly and demanding answers.

- Berger: We are discussing a matter under litigation. But, we should not discuss this matter without council here or during a public forum. It's an inappropriate venue.
- Cook: We have work to do with our grazing program and a lot of work to do with our recreation program. There are a lot of folks who need our help and are working with us. Let's bring the public comment period to a close.

Closing Remarks

Discussion regarding transportation logistics for the field tour on June 23.

- Cook: Are there any final comments or questions?
- Wood: We hear about how stressed the BLM is for manpower and money. Penrose seems to be even more stressed than other areas. Maybe the public sector can manage it better. Maybe the land should be sold. If it can't be managed, maybe give up? Is that too far outside the box?
- Crowther: The BLM gets more money to fight fire, but won't graze overgrown areas.
- Wood: I was referring specifically to the Royal Gorge Field Office and whether there is any value to that idea.
- Berger: One of the new wrinkles we've discussed is the Colorado Wild program. CPW has discussed with BLM what areas may be appropriate for a partnership for management. Moving Penrose to a fee site while it being included on the Colorado Wild pass. We've looked at this with the state director. For right now, we're holding off. The CO Wild pass would increase recreational use out there. But, that increase might outpace the resources we get from it, and it would be detrimental to other uses like grazing.
- Cook: We've talked about these things and I want you to know that Keith has been working on his RMP for three administrations now, and that's after we've

streamlined the NEPA process. Our state office evaluates our plans every five years and identifies which field offices are ready for a new RMP. Most recently, Gunnison and SLVFO field offices were identified in 2021. We were told to gather up the information to begin that process in 2023. Those seven large planning efforts and other things we're working on have been driven by litigation and headquarters priorities. Because of that, we had to delay the start of our RMP. Until those other issues are resolved, we probably won't be able to start until 2025. I hope that won't be delayed further because our plan is way out of date and that document is the guiding document for every decision we make. We're moving forward as quickly as possible. Does anyone have any closing remarks?

- Archuleta: We are a multiple use agency and we know this plan is needed.
- Cook: Does anyone on the RAC have any final comments?
- Mitson: I would like to see how funding for BLM sites has changed over the last 30 years regarding the same property. Not just for recreation but for other sites like archaeology. I think you're being asked to do more with less and I think people should see that.
- Archuleta: We're working on multiple ways to help supplement our ranks. We're a bit shorthanded. But, I think we're in a better position now than we have been in the recent past.
- Cook: Every chance I get I lobby for getting us more money. That's probably how we got the \$6M we recently got. It's because of the work Sue and Taylor did that I was able to pitch those projects and get them funded. We're also working with partners to leverage the funding we do have to greater effect, because relying on Congress just isn't enough.
- Mitson: Is there any outreach to get paid internships from out of state? There are three women from the environmental master's program at Yale. How can those kinds of people come in using those sources of funding?
- Cook: We've been having trouble with housing for those coming from out of state because when they get here, there's nowhere for them to live.

Discussion ensues regarding housing problems and internship opportunities.

Meeting adjourns.

Presentation Materials

- Item Name: weblink to item on RAC materials website.

RAC Recommendations

- None.