

**Eastern Washington Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Spokane BLM District, Spokane, WA
Spokane District Office – March 25, 2003**

<p>Members Present (interest/term expiration):</p> <p><u>Designated Federal Official (DFO):</u> Joseph K. Buesing, Spokane District Manager, BLM</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 1</u> Dave Billingsley (Grazing/2004) Lori Jordan (Rights-of-Way/2005) Maurice Williamson (Commercial Recreation/2005) Steven Tveit (Timber/2004)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 2</u> Mark Amara (Archaeological/Historical/2005) Al Cunningham (Environmental/2004) Steven McKinney (Conservation/2004)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 3</u> Linda North-Spaulding (Public at Large/2003) Doug Pineo (State Government/2003) Bill Graedel (Elected Official, 2003) JoAnna Meninick (Indian Tribe/2003)</p>	<p>Members Not In Attendance:</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 1:</u> Andrew Berg (Energy & Minerals/2005)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 2:</u> Linda Harder (Dispersed Recreation/2003)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 3:</u> James Dobrowolski (Academician/2004)</p> <p><u>Others in Attendance</u> Kevin Devitt, Field Manager, Border Resource Area, BLM Jim Fisher, Field Manager, Wenatchee Resource Area, BLM Kathy Helm, Planner & Environmental Coordinator, Spokane District, BLM Rich Hubbard, Rangeland Specialist, Spokane District, BLM</p> <p><u>Meeting Recorder:</u> Kathy Helm</p>
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The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by Dave Billingsley, EWRAC Chair, and a quorum in each subgroup was established. Mr. Billingsley distributed informational flyers about a Washington State University sponsored range meeting/training in Spokane, April 1-2, and a Society for Range Specialists meeting in Prineville.

Mr. Buesing reported that the district is doing outreach to fill six RAC positions: the vacant environmental position and five other positions that will expire in the fall (elected official, state government, public at large, dispersed recreation, and Tribal). The nomination due date for the environmental position was extended to coincide with the other five vacancies. The due date for submitting nominations for all six RAC positions is April 21.

Mr. Buesing discussed a joint OR/WA RAC meeting being planned for sometime in the fall, possibly September, in central Oregon. The meeting is expected to be a two-day session and will provide an opportunity for the RACs to share their successes. The EWRAC can give input to the agenda, which has yet to be finalized. RAC boundaries may be something to discuss at the joint meeting since the RAC charters expire in early December and also the PAC has not been rechartered. Boundary changes that might be considered are including the public lands in southeastern Washington and the Yakima area in the EWRAC boundary. A resolution was passed to attend a joint meeting with Oregon RACs. There was some discussion about timing of

the joint meeting in September, considering that the EWRAC has five positions that expire in the fall.

Meeting notes of the November 20, 2002 meeting were reviewed and officially approved as written, without changes.

Old Business

The proposed resolution regarding support of energy development that Andy Berg distributed at the July 22, 2002 meeting for RAC consideration was again tabled, by RAC vote, due to Mr. Berg's absence at this meeting.

Dave Billingsley gave a report on the November meeting involving RAC Chairs and BLM Director Kathleen Clarke.

The topic of USFS involvement with the EWRAC was postponed for discussion at a later meeting, because the Colville National Forest is undergoing management changes. It was noted that the latest Washington RAC was formed as a result of the Secure Rural Schools Act, and its focus seems to be limited to prioritizing projects for the funding application process. It was recommended that the chair (Dave Billingsley) draft a letter to the Regional Forester inquiring about the USFS position on the EWRAC and stating the willingness of the EWRAC to work with them.

The subject of ground rules for accepting public comment was deferred until the next RAC meeting. The BLM will draft a proposal to present to the RAC at that time.

In the November 2002 meeting, the RAC wanted to consider whether alternates could represent RAC members in their absence at meetings. Joe said alternate representation is not possible because individual RAC members are directly and specifically name selected by the Secretary of the Interior to fill the positions, and there is no provision for alternates in their absence. Remote connections are also not feasible, for similar reasoning, that RAC members are personal appointments.

Public Input

None

New Business

Dave Billingsley discussed an upcoming meeting, April 21-22, in Washington, D.C. involving the RAC chairs and BLM Director Clarke. The RAC members identified a list of recommended topics for Dave to present at the Washington DC meeting. The topics are:

- Expedite RAC appointment process.
- Difficulty in establishing quorums of subgroups.
- Relationship with the U.S. Forest Service
- Expedite land exchange process.
- RAC boundary changes (including southeastern Washington and Yakima River area into EWRAC). One size fits all is not good.

Updates on Land Exchanges

A powerpoint presentation was given by BLM to update the RAC members on the progress of the Columbia Basin Shrub-Steppe Land Exchange. RAC members expressed an interest in reviewing the public comments received in response to the Notice of Exchange Proposal. The District will provide those comments to the RAC members.

Jim Fisher, Field Manager of the Wenatchee Resource Area, gave updates on three land exchanges: Central Washington, McMahan, and Hallaeur. Mr. Fisher also provided handouts to the RAC on each. For the Central Washington Land Exchange, Phase 1 of the exchange is completed, and Phase 2 is now being initiated. Phase 2 involves acquisition of additional private lands that were carried over from Phase 1 consideration. Some RAC members asked about the lands north of I-90 and expressed a desire that BLM coordinate their land exchanges in that area with state agencies regarding shrub-steppe habitat in the region. Mr. Fisher said that BLM staff met with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) staff, and that WDFW had no concerns.

The McMahan Land Exchange is a direct exchange between the BLM and the landowner. The subject area is north of Wenatchee. The landowner is paying all costs associated with the exchange, including appraisals.

In the Hallaeur Exchange, some of the BLM lands may drop out of exchange consideration.

There was some discussion about BLM payments to counties.

Mr. Buesing identified another exchange, still in the conceptual stage, with the Department of Natural Resources.

Jim Fisher extended an invitation to RAC members to call him if they wanted to tour any of the proposed exchange areas.

Bill Graedel expressed thanks for handouts and requested that, in the future, handouts and supporting material related to Powerpoint presentations also be provided to the RAC members.

One RAC member asked for clarification of the RAC's role in giving input to BLM about land exchanges. It was noted that outside of their RAC role, RAC members could submit comments as private citizens. The RAC also has a 3-member subcommittee to review the exchange proposals and provide information to the RAC as a whole, which then could make a resolution or recommendation to the BLM. The subgroup may develop a resolution to present to all EWRAC members. The RAC members may want to develop and recommend programmatic guidance on acquired lands.

A resolution was passed to the effect that if one subcommittee member is unable to attend a meeting of the subgroup, that someone else from the subgroup can serve as an alternate.

A need was expressed to track RAC resolutions. Kathy Helm agreed to set up a tracking system to have available at RAC meetings.

A powerpoint presentation was given on an upcoming public workshop meeting in Moses Lake with the theme of “Sustaining Healthy Landscapes” regarding proposed changes in grazing policy. The meeting will be April 9, 2003 at the Big Bend Community College Auditorium, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Bill Graedel, Linda North-Spaulling, and Dave Billingsley indicated intent to attend that meeting.

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP): The cooperating agencies on ICBEMP have signed a memorandum to integrate data generated through ICBEMP into their plan updates and to use the science that is available from the project.

Roundtable

There was some discussion on BLM’s relationship with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Jim Fisher explained that BLM coordinates with The Nature Conservancy in the Wenatchee Resource Area involving sage-steppe restoration, and that BLM is testing an ongoing mapping project that TNC has with computer interpretation. There’s also coordination with obtaining aerial photos of Moses Coulee area, with BLM and TNC sharing 50-50 in the cost of those. Also, through TNC, BLM provides partial funding of a weed position for Douglas County, because that county does not have a weed board. TNC uses a biodiversity planning strategy for their land tenure proposals.

JoAnna Meninick suggested a field trip to see sagebrush plantings or to see Escure Ranch. She said that Yakama Tribe is more in favor of supporting wildlife habitat projects versus recreation activities. The tribe’s main emphasis is protection. The Yakama Tribe does favor expanding RAC boundaries. Also, the Yakama Tribal Council wants the RAC to meet with Tribal leadership. JoAnna provided a handout to be copied and given to the RAC members.

Next Meeting

The week of April 15, BLM staff will phone RAC members about their availability for meeting on May 21, which is the next tentatively scheduled meeting date. Agenda items for the next meeting will include: RAC review of the Mr. Berg’s proposed energy resolution, meeting guidance, report from land exchange subcommittee, update on planning for joint RAC meeting, and a report from Dave on Washington DC RAC chair meeting with BLM Director Clarke.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.



Officially Approved: July 25, 2003