

**Eastern Washington Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
Spokane BLM District, Spokane, WA  
Spokane District Office – January 23, 2004**

<p><b>Members Present (interest/term expiration):</b> <u>Designated Federal Official (DFO):</u> Joseph K. Buesing, Spokane District Manager, BLM</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 1</u> Dave Billingsley (Grazing/2004) Maurice Williamson (Commercial Recreation/2005) Andrew Berg (Energy &amp; Minerals/2005)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 2</u> Charles Warner (Environmental/2005) Steven McKinney (Conservation/2004) Sharon Vore (Dispersed Recreation/2006)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 3</u> B. J. Kieffer (Indian Tribe/2006) Doug Pineo (State Government/2006) Mary Hunt (Elected Official/2006)</p>	<p><b>Members Not In Attendance:</b> <u>Sub-Group 1:</u> Steven Tveit (Timber/2004) Lori Jordan (Rights-of-Way/2005)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 2:</u> Mark Amara (Archaeological/Historical/2005) Al Cunningham (Environmental/2004)</p> <p><u>Sub-Group 3:</u> James Dobrowolski (Academician/2004) Julie Dagnon (Public at Large/2006)</p> <p><b><u>Others in Attendance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kevin Devitt, Field Manager, Border Resource Area, BLM</li><li>• Jim Fisher, Field Manager, Wenatchee Resource Area, BLM</li><li>• Kathy Helm, Planner &amp; Environmental Coordinator, Spokane District, BLM</li><li>• Rich Hubbard, Range Specialist, Spokane District, BLM</li><li>• Keith Nelson, member of public</li><li>• Everett Cole, member of public</li></ul> <p><b><u>Meeting Recorder:</u></b> Kathy Helm</p>
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The meeting was called to order by Chair Dave Billingsley at 10:00 a.m. at which time a quorum was established. The hour delay in starting the meeting was due to weather-related traffic problems, which caused late arrival of one member traveling from Wenatchee.

Joe Buesing, Designated Federal Official and Spokane District Manager, welcomed RAC members.

Chair Dave Billingsley amended the agenda, at the request of Mary Hunt, to include discussion of a road issue in Douglas County.

Notes of the October 2003 RAC meeting were approved.

**Proposed Grazing Rule Changes**

Rich Hubbard, rangeland specialist with the Spokane BLM District, distributed an informational packet about the BLM's Proposed Grazing Rule changes and gave a Powerpoint presentation

highlighting the main points of the proposed changes. Mr. Hubbard fielded questions from the RAC members to provide additional detail. The information packet included the Federal Register Notice of December 8, 2003 and a list of Questions and Answers on the Proposed Grazing Rule. Also distributed to RAC members was the Environmental Impact Statement, which analyzes the potential impacts of the proposed grazing rule changes. The due date for commenting on both the grazing rule changes and the EIS is March 2, 2004. The RAC members decided to meet on Wednesday, February 25 to discuss their views and develop some EWRAAC consensus statements on the grazing rule changes. Individual RAC members also have the option of submitting individual responses, as members of the public.

One RAC member expressed concern that requiring monitoring data (for example over a 24-month period) might result in a particular problem being tracked over time before the problem is resolved. Another member expressed concern about the reduced requirement for consultation, as it implied less public notification. Questions were raised regarding the definitions of “consultation” and “interested public.” The tribal representative was not aware whether the local/regional tribes had been consulted.

RAC Chair Dave Billingsley expressed concern that at the RAC Chair Meeting in Washington, DC, the RAC members stressed the importance of RAC involvement, but that RACs were bypassed in the EIS preparation phase and Proposed Grazing Rule changes.

Dave Billingsley requested a copy of the Rangeland Standards & Guidelines be provided to the RAC members. (Note: This was done at the meeting.) It was also suggested that a need may exist to re-evaluate whether the Rangeland S&G’s are useful.

## **Land Exchanges**

Doug Pineo expressed a preference for early public involvement in a conceptual land exchange between BLM and Washington State (Department of Natural Resources). Joe Buesing explained the processing of land exchanges involves the full range of public involvement opportunities. BLM has met with other state agencies and landowners, but has not made any decisions. DNR has not formally committed to any exchanges, but has agreed to cooperate with BLM in considering an exchange of lands. Mr. Pineo suggested having some DNR staff make a presentation to the RAC. Other avenues for agency involvement include the Department of Fish & Wildlife’s advisory council and the Department of Natural Resources’ Commission.

Mr. Buesing agreed to talk to DNR to address public involvement needs and possible ways of improving outreach to the public. He explained that land exchanges are crafted in the best interest of the public.

One RAC member expressed concern about the total loss of timbered land. The concern was that too much emphasis is being put on acquiring lands for sage grouse.

Kevin Devitt, Field Manager for the Border Resource Area, gave an update on the proposed Columbia Basin Shrub Steppe Land Exchange (CBSSLE). He said that BLM had purchased some land known as the Telford parcel that originally had been in the Columbia Basin Shrub-

Steppe Land Exchange. The Telford land purchase was purchased with Land & Conservation Funds. An environmental assessment addressing the CBSLE is nearing completion.

Mr. Devitt explained that the fair market appraisal is done 100% by a contractor to the BLM, to Department of Justice standards, and is certified by the state of Washington. According to recent BLM policy, the appraisal is available to the public.

Jim Fisher, Field Manager of the BLM Wenatchee Resource Area, gave an update on two land exchanges, including the Central Washington Assembled Land Exchange (CWALE) and the Hallauer Exchange. Title conflicts and high appraisals on some small remote BLM parcels caused some parcels to be dropped from the Central WA Exchange. The environmental assessment on the current phase of CWALE will soon be released for a 30-day public review and comment period. The Hallauer Exchange is in the Palmer Mountain area and involves inholdings. An exchange agreement has been signed and the next step is to prepare an environmental assessment.

*Public Input:* At 10:45 a.m., the RAC chair recognized time for public input. The two people in attendance introduced themselves as ranchers interested in hearing about the proposed grazing rule.

### **Road Closure Concern in Douglas County**

Mary Hunt reported that a landowner requested Douglas County close the Whitley Canyon Road, due to continued problems with trash dumping, by unknown persons, on his private land. The requesting individual owns all land around the road, except for two parcels—one owned by DNR, and one owned by BLM. To date, BLM has not expressed a desire to close this road. There was some discussion about the management situation in the area and possible resolutions. The north part of this road has been closed, which has apparently resolved some trash dumping problems. In the long term, BLM is considering disposal of a BLM parcel along the road. This road situation served as a good example to RAC members of the problems associated with intermingled land ownerships, but no specific RAC action was taken.

### **FY05 Workplan**

The RAC members identified the following as topics they wanted to focus on this year:

- Land Exchanges
- Wild Horse & Burro Program (specific to impact on other programs)
- Weeds
- Rangeland, grazing rule changes
- Forestry (Planning and Healthy Forests)
- Priorities of programs, considering budget
- Sage-grouse
- Wind energy and fossil fuel initiatives

### **Next Meeting**

Five future meetings were tentatively scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, February 25, 2004 (agenda: Proposed Grazing Rule)
- Friday, March 26, 2004
- Thursday, May 27, 2004 (possibly a field trip)
- Thursday, July 22, 2004 (possibly a mining field trip)
- Thursday, October 7, 2004

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.



Officially Approved: February 25, 2004 at RAC meeting