

**Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council (SEORAC) Meeting
Minutes May 24-25, 2004
Lakeview, Oregon**

RAC Members Present	Group Number	Federal Officials Present	
Tom Harris	1	Steve Ellis, DFO Lakeview BLM	
Dick Leever	1	Larry Frazier, Vale BLM	
Mark Ferns	1	Karen Shimamoto, Fremont-Winema NFs	
Bob Kindschy	2	Sandy Berain, Burns BLM	
Jill Workman	2	Margaret Bailey, Malheur NF	
Chad Boyd	3	Lisa Swinney, Facilitator	
Chuck Graham	3	Pam Talbott, Recorder	
Jane O'Keeffe	3		
Cecil Dick	3	Guests	
Walt Van Dyke	3	Jon Raby	Chuck McElwain
		Erin McConnell	Frank Bird
Absent		Joan Suther	Bob Hopper
2 Vacant Positions	1-2	Tom Rasmussen	J.R. Stewart
John Bishop	2	Ivan Maluski	Ken Kestner
Lee Belknap	2	Jim Walls	Vicki Reynolds
Dennis Hitt	1	David Draheim	Lucile Housley
		Jean Schadler	Dick Bradbury
		Gretchen Burris	

MEETING FACILITATOR

Lisa Swinney

- Lisa welcomed everyone to Lakeview and went through the agenda items.
- We had self-introductions of all members and guests present.

ADMINISTRATION AND OLD BUSINESS

Jill Workman, RAC Chairperson

- There was not a quorum for this meeting so no formal voting can take place.
- The council was asked to work on a list of ideas to make BLM more effective.
- Jill read the letter that was sent to Kathleen Clarke on the timeliness of the appointments. Appointments may get hand carried in the future.

HEALTHY FOREST INITIATIVE - Agency Representatives

Lakeview – Chuck McElwain

- Schedule for FY 05 for both agencies (BLM/FS).
 1. Working on 8 million acres of Winema area to return to condition class 1.
- Prescribed fire, best if mechanical treatment is conducted first, then burning.
 1. Much safer way to work.
- FY 04 accomplished 20,000 acres of treatment, also planned for FY 05.
- Pushing for Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) lands close to towns.
- BLM uses contractors for 50% of the work and FS uses contractors for 20% of the work.
- Rains in June very influential to severity of fire season.

Malheur National Forest – Margaret Bailey

- 5-year strategy plan compliments Forest Plan that covers 1.7 million acres.
- 452,000 acres determined to be in WUI designation.
- Safety First always with cooperation, collaboration and communication.

Burns BLM – Joan Suther

- Two projects for the HFI.
 1. SHED on overstocked dry pine site, covering 1500 acres on 5 watersheds.
 - o Aspen and Mahogany regeneration by removing juniper encroachment.
 - o Project area is fenced to keep Elk, Deer and cattle out for a designated time.
 2. Lake Creek/Boone Canyon same projects.

Vale – Larry Frazier

- Community fire plan still progressing.
- Larry handed out a map and chart of all the WUI projects and hazardous fuels locations on the District

CONSERVATIVE PERSPECTIVE on HFI and HFRA

Sierra Club – Ivan Maluski

Conservation views on HFI and HFRA programs.

- Projects need to be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
 1. Protect old growth, possibly need new legislation.
- Vision for Forests:
 1. Concern that community protection around homes is larger than ¼ mile area. Extending the interpretation of Wildland Urban Interface to 1.5 miles from homes and communities means that agencies will have a hard time prioritizing immediate work within 1/4 mile area (approximately 500 yards) of fire risk reduction advocated by the Forest Service's own research on how best to reduce risk to homes and communities. We must spend scarce resources wisely and work out from homes and communities.
 2. Protect landscape and old growth. Enforcing a diameter cap on logging projects to focus on only small trees (8 -10 inches in diameter and smaller) would do the most to reduce fire risk and not make landscape more flammable, as removing large diameter trees typically does. Very little original old growth left in Blue Mountains and eastern/central Oregon forests.
 3. Many obscure but significant changes by Bush Administration through HFI. Changes are much larger than refocusing agency energy on Wildland Urban Interface and 'thinning from below.' Of special concern are:
 - a. Appeal regulations changed to impede public participation; comment periods changed though use of 'categorical exclusions.'
 - b. Categorical exclusions would allow large green and salvage timber sales with little or no environmental study and next to no public participation before project implementation.
 - c. Use of new 'emergency' authorities being actively used on multiple salvage timber sales (including Toolbox on the Fremont, and Monument and Flagtail on the Malheur) even though the logging is

- potentially illegal (under litigation), costly to taxpayers, and could be increasing fire risk by logging large diameter trees and leaving behind flammable slash. Nearly 1 billion board feet of salvage logging 'in the pipeline' in Oregon right now - very controversial.
- d. Allowing natural recovery after salvage, prescribed fire and prescribed wild fire, as well as strict adherence to small diameter thinning (8 to 10 inches dbh and under) is a better alternative to the potential abuse of public resources.
 - e. Changes in Northwest Forest Plans to double or triple old growth logging levels, part of broader HFI agenda - mostly affects west side Oregon, but also affects the Winema national forest.
4. Conservationists are dismayed that Forest Service nationally is not asking Congress for resources to carry out fuel reduction work. Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Rey recently testified to the US Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee they are asking for less than half of what Congress authorized annually for HFRA (\$760 million) because there are not enough contractors available to do the work.
 5. HFRA - conservationists would like to see BLM and FS implement diameter cap on tree size cut (21 inches dbh) but would prefer to see focus on small diameter (8-10 inches dbh) with manual hand piling and burning to create maximum employment.
 - a. Funding and accountability an ongoing question. Congress' General Accounting Office has issued numerous reports over last few years taking Forest Service to task for diverting funds for hazardous fuel reduction projects into commercial timber sales, unreliable accounting methods, and diverting funds for fuel reduction to fire suppression, and being behind on developing fire plans for fire prone areas.
 - b. Small diameter fuels reduction and protecting communities should be motive not increased logging. However, HFI and HFRA provide a variety of new authorities for individual managers to potentially abuse, leading to the implementation of destructive logging projects that in fact leave communities at greater risk through diversion of scarce resources away from the WUI and increasing flammability of landscape through removal of large trees and non-treatment of slash.
 - c. Post fire salvage and backcountry fuel reduction far from communities takes many people and agency resources away from other beneficial programs, such as thinning and fuel risk reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface, and fire planning and preparedness work.
 - d. Across the landscape there are simply too many timber production projects and not enough time and resources spent on ecological work. Genuinely ecologically focused work could create jobs through increased road upkeep, maintenance and decommissioning, projects to improve stream quality and fish habitat, and fuel risk reduction near homes and communities - while avoiding controversy and lawsuits.

6. Toolbox salvage has been appealed. Is it going to make money for the government? This will be one of the main questions raised by conservationists as well as whether or not post-fire salvage genuinely aids forest recovery.

RAC INVOLVMENT IN HFI

Jill Workman

- Community Fire Plan – County Fire Plan. Agencies give support but communities must lead.
 1. Assist with training for fire workers.
 2. Money to support mechanical thinning prior to burning.
 3. Improve communications, better radio systems.
- Congress needs to know that involved groups are doing a good job so it will give more money.

NOXIOUS WEEDS PRESENTATION BY LAKEVIEW DISTRICT

Erin McConnell

- Warner Basin Weed Management Area-working group started in 1998
 1. Priorities are top of watershed, roads and waterways, and shared properties.
- Oregon State Weed Board has money for cost share programs.
- Oregon Department of Agriculture has money to spray within the injunction rules.
 1. Using this to spray pepperweed at wetlands.
- Red Knoll Medusahead Project
 1. Doing an EA for the weeds and for restoration of T&E species involved.
 - o Start by burning thatch then follow with seeding.
- Lake County Weed Management Area consolidated group starting up.
- Best plan is “Community Awareness and Education.”

BIOMASS PLANT IN LAKEVIEW

Jim Walls

- Project of Lake County Resources Initiative.
- Biomass does not make money – it needs to have government stewardship contracts involved to provide resources and offset expenses.
 1. Will be good use of salvage materials and work with juniper reduction programs.

LAKEVIEW DISTRICT RMP AND RAC INVOLVEMENT

Tom Rasmussen

- RMP implementation strategy works from large categories then moves to smaller.
- Subcommittee involvement in:
 1. High visibility areas
 2. This RMP is a pilot project with WO.
 3. Public meetings

RAC PROJECTS (TOPICS FROM BURNS MEETING)

Jill Workman

- Projects should be in line with RAC priorities.

- Finalize letters concerning weeds from RAC to Director, Congressmen and Commissioners.
- Develop New Subcommittees
 1. Lakeview RMP Implementation (Chad, Chuck, Tom and Jill)
 2. Wild Horses and Burros (John, Tom, Chad)
 3. Concept of salvage-in depth study (Jane, Mark, Dick, Chuck, Bob, Lee)
 - o Possible study of Toolbox implementation projects.
- Projects that can be addressed later: Weeds Vegetative EIS project final dates; FS – OHV policy coordination with other agencies; Tribe and lands around Klamath Falls.
- Karen asked to provide individual maps of RAC boundaries and area to include around Klamath Falls.

KLAMATH TRIBE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN AND RAC INVOLVEMENT

Karen Shimamoto

- There is internal conflict going on at the Tribes that is slowing the process.
- The Tribe is still reviewing the plan for accuracy.
- Projects on the Chiloquin Ranger District involve the Tribes.

SAGE GROUSE UPDATE

Chad Boyd

- Status review process with the 90-day finding.
- National and state plans being developed.
 1. Oregon sage grouse scoping meetings coming up June 2 in Bend.
 2. National BLM Plan being developed from summary of actions from states.

FOREST PLAN REVISIONS

Margaret Bailey

- Collaboration Strategy – is working together to design processes and develop products.
 1. Co-conveners will lead the effort to bring diverse interest groups in their areas together.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dick Bradbury, Beaty Butte Grazing Association

- Beaty Butte allotment is a high profile area with controversy.
- One large member sold out and the new member is stocking heavier than before, creating concerns and a few “wake up calls.”
- There is an appeal of the AMP
- The grazing association would like the RAC to endorse grazing on the Beaty Butte Allotment.
- Members are working to do the right thing.

RAC ADMINISTRATION

Jill Workman

- Charter Changes:
 1. Possible boundary adjustments:

- o Deschutes/Ochoco
 - o KFRA
 - o Winema – Klamath basin area
 - o Get map of boundary areas to include for changes.
- 2. All RAC charters are different.
- 3. Advise other DOI agencies-check for legalities.
- 4. Temporary extension of appointments until new appointments arrive.
 - o Would allow business to continue with a quorum.
 - o Could enable more stalling from WO.
- 5. Possible change of Wild Horse designation; maybe Wildlife/Fish/Hydrology.
- Report from RAC Chair meeting;
 1. Filling positions is very slow, Kathleen Clarke wants to create a position to hand carry appointments to get them signed.
 2. RAC funding in some states is not good. Each state must fund the RAC.
 3. BLM employees can make “educational visits” to congress, not considered lobbying. RAC members can lobby.
 4. OHV issues with agency regulations not being uniform throughout.
 5. There is a new BLM District in Twin Falls and a new RAC.
 6. Wild Horse problems – too many horses not enough funding.
 7. The meeting was not interactive as planned, there were lots of presentations.
 8. Members suggested moving some DC jobs out to the field level.
- Ideas for the “Ways to make BLM more effective” letter for Twinkle Thompson.
 1. Reduce DC staff and move positions to restoration field level.
 2. Develop a unit on each District for Habitat Restoration so other resources don’t have to work without a full staff during the field season.
 3. Move forward on noxious weeds, national and state levels.
 4. Would like the BLM to address the “loss of open space” issues.
 5. Give funding to implement management plans that have been approved.
 6. Job promotions within the same office to retain continuity of programs.
 7. Need better training for front desk people.
 8. Manage for proper functioning ecosystems rather than single species.
 9. Give Field Managers more flexibility on how they use money.
 - o Make money for special designations separate from other funding.
 - o Allow for 100% of carryover money to come back to the District level.
- Create way for retirees to record their findings through the years as a reference available to resource specialists.

BASIN BIRDING TRAIL

David Draheim

- Working on a grant application to fund brochures, maps and signs for the Outback Birding Trail. The trail will tie in with the Central Oregon Birding Trail and others throughout the state.
- Also involved are ODF&W, FS, BLM, USFWS, and private too.
- This will be auto self-tours of the areas.
- Jill will write a letter supporting the grant proposal with copies going to the commissioners and refuge.

ROUNDTABLE – Federal Officials

Burns BLM – Sandy Berain

- The new DM is arriving June 1st – Dana Shuford
- Burns BLM and FS are progressing towards a co-location office. Community is excited about this.
- Burns office is on tract to gather 600 horses this summer. This will max out the horse facility and other alternatives are in the works.
- The Andrews/Steens RMP is a little behind because there were lots of comments to address.

Vale BLM – Larry Frazier

- They are getting a new fire mitigation employee to write grants. This is funded by fire trespass money.
- Bully Creek Plan has adjusted permits downward after research and will include an added Wilderness Study Area.
- BLM is working with the public to improve the BLM in-holdings in the Baker City area.

Lakeview BLM – Steve Ellis

- The Klamath Falls co-location is progressing as scheduled with the BLM, FS and Park Service.
- The Sand Dunes will be very busy over Memorial Day weekend.
- There are some changes proposed on the Warner Wetlands. The BLM is working cooperatively with Ducks Unlimited.

Malheur NF – Margaret Bailey (for Roger Williams)

- They are working on Forest Plan Revisions. Blue Mountains are at the co-convenor stage of development.
 1. The RAC is invited to participate.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Jill Workman

- Lakeview RMP Implementation
 1. Chad, Chuck, Tom and Jill
 2. Tom Rasmussen will e-mail members with schedule of activities.
- Wild Horses & Burros
 1. John, Tom and Chad
 2. Will have a conference call in July – Chad will setup.
- Concept of Salvage
 1. Dick, Mark, Jane, Bob, Lee and Walt
 2. Gain understanding of salvage; apply knowledge to sales and handle fire aftermath.
 3. Possible tour with Governor on Toolbox July 13th
- North Lake Recreation Plan
 1. Tom, Jane, Lee and Dick
 2. See other areas of North Lake Recreation

3. Work on new map
4. Possible tour in mid June – Dick will e-mail members.

NEXT MEETING

Scheduled for August 23-24, 2004 – CHANGE LOCATION TO LAKEVIEW

- 1 Day tour of Beaty Butte Allotment
- 1 Day meeting
- RAC Charter
- Budget process with Darwin Priebe
- One HFI project from each BLM and FS office
- Subcommittee Reports
- OHV Policy differences with agencies
- Business plan on RMP with Kit Muller update
- Update on Standards and Guidelines

ACTION ITEMS

Items	Responsible Person
Mail Weed letters	Talbott
Letter to Twinkle Thompson listing ideas for “Ways to make BLM more effective”.	Workman
Write letter ton Outback Birding Trail grant application	Workman
Map of RAC boundary and possible changes (Large wall map and small handouts)	Talbott/Ellis
BLM/FS each bring 1 project for HFI/HFRA that is controversial, complex and public for RAC help.	Agency Administrators
Invite Darwin Priebe to discuss budget process.	Ellis
Standards and Guidelines update for next meeting	Ellis/TBA
E-mail subcommittee with schedule of RMP actions and activities.	Rasmussen
Setup conference call for Wild Horse committee, in July,	Boyd
Check out salvage tour with Governor, get dates and inform subcommittee.	Graham
E-mail subcommittee on mid June North Lake Recreation tour.	Leever
Plan 1 day Beaty Butte tour for August 23	Rasmussen
Next Meeting August 23-24, 2004 Lakeview	

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.