

Steens Mountain Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

April 9, 10 and 11, 2003

Members Present:

Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, Oregon
Jerry Sutherland, Vice Chair, Environmental Rep – Statewide, Portland, Oregon
Tom Harris, Chair, Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation, Keno, Oregon
Alice Elshoff, Environmental Representative – Local, Frenchglen, Oregon
Wanda Johnson, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, Oregon
Cynthia Witzel, Recreation Permit Holder, Frenchglen, Oregon
Mike Golden, Dispersed Recreation, Redmond, Oregon
Stacy Davies, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, Oregon
Harland Yriarte, Private Landowner, Eugene Oregon
E Ron Harding, Wild Horse Management, Burns, Oregon

Members Absent:

Richard Benner, No Financial Interest, Portland, Oregon
Jason Miner, Fish and Recreation Fishing, Portland, Oregon
Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, Oregon

Designated Federal Official (DFO):

Karla Bird, Andrews Resource Area Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management
(BLM), Hines, Oregon

Designated Federal Official Assistants:

Rhonda Karges, Management Support Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Liz Appelman, Budget Analyst, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Tara Wilson, Public Affairs Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon

Presenters:

Gary Foulkes, District Planning & Environmental Coordinator, BLM, Hines,
John Neeling, Wilderness Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Mark Sherbourne, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Matt Obradovich, Wildlife Biologist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Jerry Mcgee, Environmental Protection Specialist, Oregon State Office, BLM, Portland,
Oregon
Evelyn Treiman, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM, Hines, OR

Facilitators:

Dale White

Gary Foulkes, District Planning & Environmental Coordinator, BLM, Hines, OR

Commenting Public:

Susie Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc.

Harland Yriarte, Private Landowner

Brent Fenty, OR Natural Desert Assoc.

John O'Connor, Steens Mountain Backcountry Horseman

Richard Day, Community Response Team

Leon Pielstick, self

Others Present:

Wayne Kinney, Senator Wyden's Office

Ron Garner, ODFW, Hines, Oregon

Charlie Otley, Diamond Valley Ranch, Inc.

Gene Scrivner, Steens Mountain Backcountry Horseman

Josh Warburton, Steens Mountain Resort

Rich Delong, Enviroscientists, Inc.

Pam Hardy, University of Oregon

Fred Otley, Otley Brothers, Inc.

Kelly Hazen, BLM

Michael Weston, BLM

Skip Renschler, BLM

Tom Dyer, BLM

Nick Miller, BLM

Carolyn Freeborn, BLM

Jon Collins, BLM

Rick Hall, BLM

Joan Suther, BLM

Tim Walters, ODFW, Hines, Oregon

Steve Hammond

Barb Cannaday, Capitol Press

Patti Wilson, BLM

Eric Haakenson, BLM

Darren Brumback, BLM

Sandy Berain, BLM

Mark Armstrong, BLM

Doug Linn, BLM

Lee McConnell, BLM

Jill Benefield, BLM

Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping and Agenda:

The meeting was called to order, introductions made, and the agenda reviewed.

Chairman Update:

Tom Harris reported during the telephone conversation for the agenda, a discussion was held on the value of verbatim minutes. Tom stated from now on the minutes would be a record of motions, seconds, and the status of the motions. Points of discussion may be recorded to clarify or if someone specifically requests for a discussion to be on the record. Senator Wyden's office had submitted the LWCF request for \$5 million per the SMAC letter. Jerry reminded SMAC members to ask the DC offices or their constituent groups to lobby for this and ask their House members to sign the Johnson-Udahl letter currently circulating, which asks for more NLCS funding in general.

DFO Update:

Karla Bird gave the Council a brief biography, updated them on the Cooperative Management Agreements in progress, and what is proposed for today's meeting.

Alice Elshoff, on behalf of the entire SMAC, presented Rhonda Karges, Liz Appelman and Tara Wilson with gift certificates and literary tributes for their work with the Council.

Planning Review Strategy/Facilitation Role:

Gary Foulkes functioned as the main facilitator with individual BLM specialists, as well as Dale, coordinating the information flow.

Jerry raised his concern that some Chapters differentiate between inside the CMPA and outside the CMPA while others do not. Jerry asked to go on the record that he believes Section 102 of the Steens Act requires a higher standard of management inside the CMPA and there should be a difference shown throughout the document to reflect this.

Cooperating Agencies were noted to be Malheur Refuge, F&WS Ecological Services (Bend); ODFW; Burns Paiute Tribe; DEQ, Bend; City of Hines; City of Burns; and County Court.

Tabled Motion/Transportation (Grove Creek & Big Alvord)

Council discussed the need to allow for areas of pulling off the road, parking, and turning around.

Motion made and seconded that from Jackman Park to the Big Indian Canyon pulling off the road be restricted to the existing disturbed areas. (Alice moved and Jerry seconded)

Discussion: It was pointed out this motion would cover more than just the Loop Road which includes the small spur roads.

No objection to the motion was heard.

Consensus Decision: From Jackman Park to the Big Indian Canyon pulling off the road will be restricted to the existing disturbed areas.

Council members discussed the previously agreed upon 100 foot wide corridor; how it fits within the existing regulations; what affect the type of road has on it; and what the requirements are within current designations.

Carried forward from the last meeting was a question about the route that leads into the weather station. It was noted both the Weather Bureau and the Hammonds want the road to remain closed. Since it is already closed, no action is required.

The motion made and seconded, then tabled at the previous meeting was: That Big Alvord and Grove Creek roads be designated as service or permit use routes and closed to public use.

Discussion: As was requested, Hoyt talked to Ed Davis who didn't have a problem with closing the one of his. Mark Sherbourne reported that Don Renie said the same thing as long as it was left open for permittee access. Concern was expressed by several members over the closing of Grove Creek road because it is a major access route for some recreationists.

Objections to the motion were heard.

Roll: Tom H. - No; Jerry - Yes; Wanda - No; Cindy No; Stacy - No; Mike - No; E Ron - No; Alice - Yes; Hoyt - No; and Harland - No.

Motion defeated due to insufficient affirmative votes.

RMP Discussions:

Council members began a discussion of the RMP and its various components based on the SMAC's agreement from the March meeting to focus on Alternative D and create language they felt they could all support.

The SMAC decided to go through all priority items and suggest appropriate language for each action. They would then determine if there was consensus on the last day. One objection on any action would remove the action from becoming a formal SMAC recommendation to BLM. (Robert's Rules of Order would not apply.) Decisions in this regard are noted where discussed in the agenda though actually made on Friday.

Transportation:

The following is reflective of what the Council discussed concerning the Transportation section of the RMP. If any member objected, it is noted. If all agreed, it is also indicated. Those items the Council is recommending to BLM are shown as consensus.

- Alternative 1D (table), Objective 1, Action 1: "...100 feet of centerline along..."
(Also include all decisions that have been made/voted on up until now)

CONSENSUS

- *The RMP needs to establish criteria for the exceptions that will be granted under section 112(b)(2) of the Steens Act.* **CONSENSUS**

- *Decommissioning of closed routes – these should be treated as separate action items.* **OBJECTION** (Stacy)

- *For now, use BMP...* **OBJECTION** (Jerry)

- Alternative D (text) Line 25: “*Keep the entire Steens Loop open...except the Rooster Comb section which would be Maintenance Level 3.*” **CONSENSUS**

Public Comment:

Richard Day, Community Response Team of Harney County, read a letter addressed to District Manager Tom Dyer, and spoke of his group urging rapid resolution of ONDA’s WSA proposal. He spoke of the original inventory and how the areas were dropped at the time because they didn’t meet the wilderness criteria. He also stressed the fact the economic impacts (less hunting, less visitors, less business) had not been considered then or during the present day proposal by ONDA. The Community Response Team is willing to work cooperatively, but believes any further addition of land to WSAs defeats the purpose of the Act.

Brent Fenty, ONDA, noted that SMAC had not completed their discussion on the Bridge Creek area as far as the transportation plan and making any recommendations for it.

Susan Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc. expressed her concern about the process to ensure appropriate correspondence reaches the SMAC. Karla suggested any correspondence sent to the BLM could also contain a carbon copy notation for the SMAC, or for the writer to notify the BLM in some form and they would certainly be willing to forward it. Susie requested the process, no matter what form it is, be explained to the public as well.

Transportation Discussion Continued:

- Alternative D (text) Line 43: “*...Off road use remains prohibited within wilderness, WSAs, and in the CMPA.*” (Include CMPA in all areas where this idea exists.) (Cross-reference transportation and OHV sections to emphasize travel on designated routes) **OBJECTION** (Stacy)
- *It needs to be clear how access is granted to private landowners. Permittee access should be addressed in the same manner and necessity as private landowner access. Historical use/access should also be considered.* (What frame of reference will the routes/uses be taken from?) **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D (text) Line 28: “*...except to access the snowline on the North Steens Loop for motorized and nonmotorized forms of winter recreation by permit.*” (Add “*by permit*” in other alternatives as well to emphasize that we are not getting rid of the permit system.) **CONSENSUS**

- Alternative E (text) Line 10: “...public access to the gates on the North Steens Loop...” (Replace “snowline” with “gates” to emphasize the gate/permit system.) **OBJECTION (Stacy)**
- **Discussion Only:** Council members discussed the necessity for Alternative D (text) Line 40 since Line 41 is intended to deal with that issue and dispersed camping areas will be added to the coverage system with open routes to those sites. Jerry felt there needed to be the clarification that Wilderness and WSAs are not included here.
- Alternative C (text) Line 15: *Do we need to include this line in Alternative D?* **OBJECTION (Stacy)**
- **Discussion Only:** Members talked about the issue of whether or not the size of vehicles should be controlled as well as ATV uses on the Loop Road. BLM stated it was to be handled in the Recreation section; however, members pointed out the non-recreation uses should be covered in the transportation section and so far was not covered in either. BLM was asked to review previous SMAC notes on this issue and check existing management direction such as the Steens Mountain Recreation Amendment of 1993.

Wildlife:

The following is reflective of what the Council discussed concerning the Wildlife section of the RMP. If any member objected, it is noted. If all agreed it is also indicated. Those items the Council is recommending to BLM are shown as consensus.

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 1: “Same as IB.” (This at least puts an emphasis on native species.) **OBJECTION (Stacy)**
- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 2: *Take out the specific numbers to allow more flexibility. Create a map that would pertain to this as well.* **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 2: “...and nonnative species could be used where appropriate.” Who decides what is appropriate? *The wording in D should somehow talk about working toward a more natural landscape. Emphasize that we are trying to return the mountain to a better ecological state.* **OBJECTION (Stacy)**
- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 2: “...as many acres of deer winter range that funding would allow...” (Instead of removing the specific acreage completely, replace it with “as many as funding would allow.”) **OBJECTION (Stacy, Cindy)**
- Alternative C, Objective 1 (table), Action 3: “Identify and undertake opportunities...” (Inclusion in Alternative D, which reads ‘Same as 3C’) **CONSENSUS**

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 3: *Limited fence removal should still be an option. Can this be included here? (Take this language from 3C.)* (Although the action is specific to functional fences, the change may still be included to cover non-functional fences.) “...*functional fence removal would not be completed due to livestock grazing.*” (Use the latter version.) **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1: “*Same as 1C.*” **OBJECTION** (Stacy and Hoyt)
 - Discussion: How can we facilitate expansion if we don’t provide for/allow habitat expansion as well?
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1: “*Allocate forage for wildlife at management objective levels...*” (Replace current demand, with “*at management objective levels...*”) **CONSENSUS**
- **Discussion Only**: Jerry raised the concern again that there should be a higher standard of management inside the CMPA than currently exists based on the Purpose of the CMPA as stated in Section 102 of the Steens Act. Matt Obradovich explained many things did not end at the CMPA boundary and much of the management is the same inside and outside of the CMPA. He said Jerry’s concerns relate to the physical actions which might be different but goals in the document would be the same because goals are the same on the ground. Alice reminded the Council it was important to follow the Act and do something good for the Mountain.

Followup Action Item: BLM was asked to get the information to the Counsel concerning what the percentage of allocations currently are (how many AUMs for wildlife, horses, etc.)

April 10, 2003

Introductions:

Council members, as well as audience members, introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of March Minutes:

Council members reviewed and corrected the draft March minutes.

Motion made and seconded to accept these minutes as amended (Stacy moved and Mike seconded) with the paragraph concerning the map to be added later.

Consensus Decision: Accept these minutes as amended with the paragraph concerning the map to be added later.

Special Status Species (Animals):

The following is reflective of what the Council discussed concerning the Special Status (Animals) section of the RMP. If any member objected, it is noted. If all agreed, it is also noted. Those items the Council is recommending to BLM are noted as consensus.

- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1: “...*habitat for recovery.*” (Remove the section that says “for conservation.”) **OBJECTION (Jerry)**
- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table), Action 1: *Same as 1C because of the sagebrush habitat.* **OBJECTION (Stacy)**
- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table): *Is there any chance to create an entirely new action under Objective 3? “Begin to plan for restoring sagebrush steppe to maximum health indicated by good science, soil nutrients, and native plant composition.”* **OBJECTION (Harland)**
- Alternative D, Objective 5 (table): “*Maintain, restore and improve...*” (Change ‘or’ to ‘and’) **OBJECTION (Stacy)**
- Alternative D, Objective 5 (table), Action 3: *Include “...remove fences that restrict bighorn movements and impede access to water...” from Alternative B, Action 3.* (Emphasizes that we are working toward a natural environment rather than introducing additional ‘hard to maintain’ infrastructure.) **OBJECTION (Harland)**
- Alternative D, Objective 4 (table), Action 1: “...*reintroduction of Columbia sharp-tailed grouse, mountain quail and other species except predator species.*” (Include “except predator species.”) **OBJECTION (Wanda, Alice and Mike)**

Riparian Species (Beaver)

- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table), Action 1: “...*if economic or ecological damage is occurring...*” (Include “*ecological damage,*” as requested by the county and agreed upon by the SMAC.) *Need to include ODFW to coordinate population management as well* (as suggested by Matt Obradovich). **CONSENSUS**

Redband Trout Reserve:

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 1: “*Same as 1B.*” **CONSENSUS**
- Discussion Only: The question was raised as to whether or not expansion of the Redband Trout Reserve would decrease wilderness protection or if it would impact wild horse management and why not to include tributaries. Council discussed the possibilities the reserve protection might create problems with wilderness and wild and scenic rivers. The concern was raised because of the conflicts that sometimes occur with the various types of designated protections. Other than the change above, the Council felt it was appropriate to leave the remainder as they were, unless Jason has some addition input.

Recreation:

- **Discussion Only:** Alternative D, Objective 1 (table): Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs). The questions were asked as to how BLM would characterize intensive management practices and what special recreation management areas are. BLM can have an intensive use area within an ERMA. SRMAs recognize a special area when compared to ‘regular’ BLM lands and that it may be a ‘magnet’ for a variety of uses which needs to be closely watched. ERMA is the traditional standard which will be allowed in some areas within the CMPA.
- **Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1 (Planning Area):** Change it to read “...Allow tourism opportunities consistent...” **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Council members thought any encouragement of tourism should come from the County or the Cities, not the BLM.
- Jerry once more raised the issue that he believes the actions and management should be different between the CMPA and the rest of the planning area.
- **Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 3 (CMPA):** “*Improve facilities to reduce resource damage...*” (*Improve with minimum development, incrementally*) (*Monitor, develop a plan, etc.*) **CONSENSUS**
- **Discussion Only:** Council members discussed the possibility that instead of including picnic tables and fire rings, maybe barriers could be erected to reduce resource damage (no additional developments/upgrades while still protecting resources). Although it was recognized barriers would limit expansion, but wouldn’t necessarily deal with the impacts in the remaining area. One member also expressed the belief that if development is not wanted, the use of fire pans needs to be required.
- **Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 4 (CMPA):** -- “...with the primary purpose to improve public safety and limit resource damage...” (*Include this language.*) **CONSENSUS**
- **Focus additional development at South Steens campground, or focus on enhancement/expansion of the current facilities.** **CONSENSUS**
 - **Discussion:** The question was asked as to why a new facility would be needed. It was felt enhancement or possible expansion at the existing facility would meet the requirements. Part of the concern that may need to be addressed is the trailhead parking for Little Blitzen, which is too small, and there isn’t parking in the campground for day-use. The concept is to put something at South Steens for people who want to go into the area – provide a staging area. The concern was raised

any enhancement or expansion would most likely increase public use which may impact private use as well.

Public Comment:

Susie Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc., stated she believes SMAC is not addressing economics, and BLM is not leaving room for development outside of the government. She believes input by private property owners for cooperative management is not being allowed in this process. Cooperation has been done in the past between private land and public, but when we keep putting more and more overlays on the land, it makes it more and more difficult. She stated 97,000 acres of wilderness has already been made and it has no economic use on it. It is important to remember part of the Act is to allow the ranchers to continue to exist. If we take the wilderness out and the economic use and leave no access for being part of the process, then the management on the Federal agency is maximized and there isn't going to be enough room for economic viability of ranching on the Mountain. She believes there is a place in the process for cooperative management and not just under the CMPA but with ranchers approaching the agency saying we need to do this or that and we need to do it now. That is the only cooperative management we can live with. She said someone said earlier that details trump generality and she believes if we have too many details in the planning process, we will have the same bureaucratic overlay that will make it unmanageable. She thought the agency was doing especially well with the wildlife, yet she saw SMAC committee take that away from them. Susie doesn't believe the Act intended to allow for increased introduced species. If we do go there, the private property will no longer be viable nor will it be what we intended for it to be. She doesn't believe you can have "maintain, restore and improve" and still have economics in the mix. She would like someone to make a motion to reconsider the maximum of wildlife, for the SMAC alternative to have those things in it she doesn't think it is doable.

John O'Connor, Back Country Horsemen, informed the Council a local chapter of this group has been formed and call themselves Steens Mountain Backcountry Horsemen. The mission of the group is to mostly concentrate on trail maintenance, trail head facilities and to put together work parties to coordinate with the agencies to help improve and maintain facilities. The group is mainly trail riders. John himself has been going on the Steens about 15 years and packing in on horseback. The members want to ensure they still have the access and ability to picket their horses when in the backcountry. One specific interest in Steens Mountain is the historic trails and being able to preserve them. Members are in contact with a lot of the older people who have worked on the Mountain and have old photos showing these old trails and hope to get them reestablished. The maintenance would help backpackers and horse riders to be able to use the trails, and make the facilities more horse friendly without having conflict between backpackers and horse packers. John stated they are trying to make something that will serve all of recreation users on the Mountain. John also stated the group believes some good rustic type signs are necessary at trail junctions to help ensure people remain on the trails as well as to keep people from getting lost. He stated the group members are strictly volunteer, don't make any money volunteering, and are not permittees or permit holders.

John explained the facilities were good, but to make them a little more user friendly perhaps a loading ramp and a little more reliable stock water would meet many of the needs. He would also like to see at the unloading/staging area, a kiosk or reader board that tells them where they are and where the trails are, as well as providing a registration site. He felt some of the conflicts between types of recreationists could be alleviated with education/etiquette.

Recreation Continued:

- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 5: “*Same as 5C.*” Through interpretation, encourage people to use the facilities at Fish Lake or Jackman Park. **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Members felt there may be a more suitable place for the toilet, because the location identified is the worst possible place to put it. It was noted facilities on the road would reduce traffic in the campgrounds, especially if placement would be similar to the facility at South Steens campground.
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 7: **Include 7E in 7D* - **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Council members raised the questions of how this fits into leaving the gate where it is and where a staging area would be placed as the snowline changes.
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 8: “*Same as 8A.*” **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Educate the public to use only dead and downed wood or to bring their own wood. There are some resource concerns with the Aspen trees.
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 6: *A better definition for group camping is needed.* **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 9: “*Same as 9A.*” (*Do nothing – no advertising, further development, etc. “Do not promote or develop...”* (Include this language.) **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 4 (table), Action 3 (CMPA): “*...the Steens Loop Road above Jackman Park and above South Steens campground...*” (*Include the second ‘above’ for clarification.*) **CONSENSUS**
 - *Areas should not be closed to camping until monitoring indicates a need for change.* (Language in 3D should include this.) **OBJECTION (Jerry)**
 - Discussion: Alice raised the issue of serious ecological concerns for camping in those small, closed basins.

- Alternative D, Objective 4 (table), Action 5: *It may be necessary to reference a map here (a map of SMAC decisions).* **CONSENSUS**
 - Note: include language that talked of snow machines from previous SMAC meetings.
- Alternative D, Objective 4 (table), Action 6: “...camping in areas more than ½ mile from a developed campground...” (Change 1 mile to ½ a mile.) **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 4 (table), Action 7:
 - Discussion: Council members felt this was more of an issue of motorized access up the Loop Road – not necessarily river access. BLM agreed to have it read “Allow motorized use only in a manner...” (Include ‘motorized’ to clarify that BLM is not trying to limit river access and use here.)
- Alternative D, Objective 5 (table), Action 1: *Include language that emphasizes the need to minimize impacts to visual resources.* **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 5 (table), Action 2: “Same as 2C, within the CMPA.” 2D “...as needed, outside the CMPA.” **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: The Council asked what happened to all of the sub-committee discussions/decisions on signage, and was told it was still an ongoing process.
- Alternative D, Objective 6 (table), Action 1: “Implement allocations...for the CMPA as needed (to deal with resource damage, etc.).” (Include ‘as needed’ or ‘if needed’ to clarify.) BLM is to find the resolution concerning historical permittees in the previous meeting minutes. **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Council members talked of their wish for the *legal*, historical permittees to get preference if demand exceeds allocation levels and how this is spelled out in a previous meeting’s minutes.
- Alternative D, Objective 8 (table), Action 1:
 - Discussion: Members asked what the context of the MOU with the Desert Trail Association is.

Followup Action: Evelyn to get a copy of the MOU with the Desert Trail Association.

Jerry reiterated his belief that in the RMP, inside the CMPA and outside the CMPA should be separated. There should be no common planning area discussion, all topics would have their own discussions separate from the AMU, and distinctions applicable to Wilderness made.

Wilderness:

Jon Neeling brought back to the group the delineation of the LAC Zones and what kind of problems they create when trying to write the RMP for on-the-ground application. Council members discussed the various aspects of the zones and their impact on planning and possible implementation in the field as well as the need for flexible, adaptive management capabilities. Members talked of the importance of baseline data to ensure management is meeting objectives as well as what progress is or is not being made toward those objectives. Members were told a great deal of baseline data will be gathered this summer with the Wilderness positions that are currently being hired. Also reviewed was the back country and arterial approach.

SMAC members asked that the BLM complete the following: Wilderness Planning:
SMAC direction

- Develop the standards and indicators in the plan that BLM would view as triggers to automatically engage management actions. SMAC zone descriptions can be abandoned. BLM may consider two areas – arterial and backcountry.
- SMAC zone descriptions can be abandoned. BLM may consider two areas – arterial and backcountry.
- Since the baseline will not be well established prior to the plan completion, use percentage figures rather than hard numbers to determine the level of acceptable change for the standards and indicators developed. Those may differ geographically, based in general on the zone map that the SMAC originally drew.
- Use actions 11 and 12 as the first two action items that have no alternatives. Then use the development of standards and indicators to determine if there is any need for change.
- Develop a wide variety of action items that could be used so the public can view them ahead of time in the plan.

APRIL 11, 2003

Introductions:

The meeting was called to order with those present introducing themselves.

SMAC Action Items Spreadsheet Review:

Reviewed and updated.

Q&A's from Wednesday and Thursday:

Gary updated SMAC on the status and schedule of the RMP as the draft will be issued in August 2003. Public comment period for the draft will be 90 days (the end of the period is projected for November 2003). All comments on the preliminary draft are due by

May 14, 2003. Although the preliminary draft will not include some of the agreed upon changes, the draft will. Some discussion of facilitating public comments by way of the internet.

Karla updated the Council on the status of the in-house review of ONDAs WSA proposals. Of the 24 new areas, 20 have already fallen out based on staff knowledge; 1 most likely qualifies; and 3 more possible. The latter four areas to be ground-truthed as soon as possible.

Motion made and seconded to include the paragraph that was completed at the direction of the SMAC and to include in the minutes the maps that detail the routes discussed. (Stacy moved and Harland seconded) (Clarification to the March minutes.)

Discussion None:

The Council went through those items discussed yesterday and determined if there was consensus or not. They are listed in these minutes at the time of the discussion with a delineation of Consensus or Objection as done during this timeframe.

SOILS:

- Discussion: Consideration of biological crust required by court decree in a settlement.

Grazing Management:

- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table), Action 2: Delete the last sentence which reads *“Permitted use in all or a portion of allotments with high resource conflicts could be discontinued.”* Replace with: *“In vacant allotments with high resource conflicts, permitted use could be reserved, discontinued or reallocated.”* **CONSENSUS**
- Discussion Only: Harland brought up his concern that throughout the plan it talks about protect, preserve, manage, no where does it identify doing these things for the livestock industry and the ranches within the CMPA.
- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table), Action 2: Include the language *“Acquire lands and/or permits that could be used as reserve common allotments.”* **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Hoyt raised the concern that with all the juniper work and fires, what happens if a ranch loses forage, there is no place for them to go. He suggested it would be a good idea for BLM to develop a means to support a grass bank, through all possible means. Members talked of the need to ensure the possibility is addressed in the RMP and the means to accomplish it are made available. If necessary state this under a 3d action item.

Wild and Scenic Rivers:

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 2: *Make sure it's clear that the recommendation is to Congress.* **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: SMAC asked why WSR downgrades to Recreation from Wild were recommended at Blitzen Crossing and Newton Cabin. Evelyn said the concrete bridge was the reason for the first, and the road going down to Indian Creek was the reason for the second. Stacy recalled the Newton Cabin cherry stem was supposed to stop at the WSR boundary, so this would not be an issue.
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1: *Insert IC into 1D.* **OBJECTION (Stacy and Hoyt)**

Special Status Species – Plants:

- Discussion: That this would be covered under Vegetation not Wildlife, if not separate section for special plants and wildlife.

Vegetation ~ Riparian and Wetlands

- Objective 3: **Take a look at all of the springs within the CMPA and see which ones can be restored – prioritize/heavily consider restoration* **CONSENSUS** (general idea)
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 6: “Same as 6B.” **OBJECTION**

Public Comment:

Susan Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc., reiterated that no where in this process does she see a place for input by private property owners who would like to be cooperative managers. She believes this communication is critical for seamless success. Susie also wants to ensure ODFW is involved in any part of the RMP discussing wildlife AUMs, because a piece of ground only has a certain amount of AUMs available, and it may take some give and take to ensure management is proper.

Leon Pielstick, member of Backcountry Horsemen and a local 28-year recreation user of Steens Mountain, expressed the concern of the horseman that there may be some means tried to restrict their use of the mountain. He outlined the wish of the Backcountry Horsemen to help maintain trails, to volunteer, and coordinate with the BLM to ensure proper management and ethics such as “Leave No Trace.” He suggested perhaps the group could help educate users as well. One big concern is any requirement to pack processed food in, which create more risk of weeds and requires that for every three horses another horse be brought to carry the feed. He believes grazing native vegetation is appropriate and being able to picket animals is also a good idea. The affects of such pickets is short term, and less of an impact on the Mountain than the extra horse and risk of weeds.

Harland Yriarte, private landowner, talked of how working with the group the past couple of years there had been a lot of disagreements, discussions, and some good things happening. Harland passed around copies of magazines that carry the new Air Zoom Steens Shoe made by Nike and said he would be giving a pair to Jerry since the Sierra Club had shown such interest in the Camp. Harland noted a gentleman who had attended the Running Camp had worked on the design of this shoe and was working on the design for the 2004 Olympics.

Vegetation ~ Rangelands:

- Alternative D, Goal 1, Objective 2 (table), Action 2: Delete the actual numbers. (Match the suggestion in the wildlife section.) **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: It was clarified the BLM currently has no authority to use herbicides, and no crested wheatgrass seedings are identified to be eliminated. It was also explained there would be a glossary to define terms used within the RMP.

Vegetation ~ Woodlands:

- Discussion: Concern about the large percent of junipers to be cut; whether this would require off road use in the CMPA; what kind of tools required; and would the trees be left on the ground or removed? Jeff said typically just chain saws would be used, walking in from the road, and trees usually left on the group. All would be in an EA.

Vegetation ~ Noxious Weeds:

- *Note:* The more roads are improved, the more weeds get infested. Make sure that possibility is included in this section (probably in Action 2, under prevention).

Off-Highway Vehicles:

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 6:
 - *Do you need to specify other roads that are open as well?
 - *6D should change in order to reflect what we did on 4/10/03 regarding road closures (specifically Bone Creek road). **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 7: In the CMPA, the designation for off-highway vehicles is limited to designated routes. “Consistent with the transportation plan maps created by the SMAC, all motorized routes designated as maintenance categories 2-5, be open to off-highway vehicles. Ways left open by the WSA inventory would be open to OHV use.” **OBJECTION (Jerry)**
 - *Note:* Exceptions aren’t really discussed (administrative, permittee and landowner uses, mostly in the transportation and OHV sections). Discussion of these exceptions is included in the narrative. Exceptions *do not* identify private land access in the text. Some Council members emphasized the importance of specifying the private landowner access.

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (text) Line 33: *The word ‘designed’ should be ‘designated.’* **CONSENSUS**

*Define what is mechanized.

Social and Economic Values:

- Cooperative management agreements are very rarely mentioned in the document. It important enough to list this as a management action on its own, or *to spread it through all areas?* The appropriate place to do this may be under Lands and Realty (or other). *“Manage to seek timely, effective, cooperative agreements with landowners within the CMPA and others to meet the Act objective in section 121(c).”* **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1: *“Same as 1C.”* (The emphasis is very much consistent with the purpose of the Act.) **OBJECTION**

Letter for March Meetings recommendations:

Council members agreed to Tom Harris signing it.

Visual Resources:

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 7: *Remove this language completely.* **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 9: *“Designate lands within ½ mile of the Loop Road in the WJMA as VRM Class III...”* (Add *“in the WJMA”* to clarify.) **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 10: *Leave it exactly as it is.* **CONSENSUS.**

Wild Horses and Burros:

- Alternative D, Objective 1 (table), Action 1: Include: *The part in Alternative E referring to Dry Creek and Big Springs pastures in allotment 6003, and that the Carlson Creek, Bone Creek and Miner’s Field pastures in the Alvord Peak area be re-opened as active HMA.* **CONSENSUS**
 - Discussion: Ron spoke of the fact that historical use for horses has not been considered. He pointed out an area on the map where horses had once been, but were fenced out of at this point.
- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table), Action 1: *“Same as 1A.”* **CONSENSUS**
- Alternative D, Objective 4 (table), Action 1: *Leave it exactly the same.* **CONSENSUS**

- Alternative D, Objective 5 (table), Action 1: *Include: "...cooperative management agreements are a viable option."* **CONSENSUS**

Wildland Fire Management:

- Alternative D, Objective 2 (table), Action 1: *Include: "Pursue cooperative management agreements with private landowners to manage wildfire cooperatively."* **CONSENSUS**

- Discussion: Jerry pointed out it was important to make sure the fire plan allows for natural fires to burn under prescription, especially in the Wilderness. Jeff referred to a hierarchy of decision.

Air Quality:

- As Objective 3: *During 'problem times' or special events, consider dust abatement measures. (Monitor, implement as necessary, etc.)* **CONSENSUS**

Water Resources:

- Alternative D, Objective 3 (table), Action 2: *Clarify exactly what it is that we are going to do. (Similar to 2C, which is similar to 2B, is too confusing.)* **CONSENSUS**

-Discussion: Discussion of RCAs and WQRP per ICBEMP and DEQ, laws, and BMPs ensued.

Paleontological Resources:

- Alternative D, Goal 1, Objective 3 (table), Action 2: *Add cooperative management agreement language where appropriate.* **CONSENSUS**

Cultural:

- *Add cooperative management language where appropriate.* **CONSENSUS**

ACEC:

- Discussion: Two dropped because now in Wilderness; reasons for 5 new ones given.

Minerals:

- Discussion: Wind energy was not considered because prohibited by the Act.

May Agenda:

Council members listed items for May's meeting.

Camping (close RNAs etc.)

Implementation EA – update on project status and update on fence
removal

SRP EAs Update

Landowner Access EA Update

Permit EA Update

Wilderness Management Plan

Ruby Springs Area – check with staff to determine necessity

Cooperative Agreement

WSA review

Submitted by Liz Appelman

The SMAC approved the April 2003 meeting minutes as amended on May 9, 2003.

Certified by:

Tom Harris, SMAC Chair

May 9, 2003

Date