



Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission

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ELKO COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2011

6:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Spratling called the regular meeting of the Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission to order at 6:05 p.m. on **January 26, 2011**, in Suite 102 of the Nannini Administration Building, 540 Court Street, Elko, Nevada.

Members Present: Craig Spratling
 Thad Alger
 Ken Wellington
 John C. Carpenter
 Ralph R. Sacrison

Absent : Orson Tingey

Others Present: Randy Brown, Natural Resource Manager
 Jeff Williams, Elko County Commissioner
 Demar Dahl, Elko County Commissioner
 Gus Brackett, 71 Livestock Coalition
 Cliff Gardner, Great Basin Consulting
 Ken Miller, Elko BLM District Manager
 David Overcast, BLM Tuscarora Field Office Manager
 Tamara Hawthorne, BLM Recreation Planner
 Casey Addy, BLM Rangeland Management Specialist
 Jeff Moore, BLM Rangeland Management Specialist

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Allegiance pledged.

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

ACTION ITEM

Pursuant to Title 12-1-2(D) of the Elko County Code, the Natural Resource Management

Advisory Commission shall elect its chairman and vice chairman from among the appointed members and the term shall be one year with eligibility for re-election of one year.

A. Chairman

Chairman Spratling opened nominations for the position of Chair.

Commissioner Wellington nominated Craig Spratling to continue to serve as Chair. Commissioner Carpenter seconded the nomination and the Commissioner's voted and approved the nomination.

B. Vice Chairman

Chairman Spratling opened nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Commissioner Wellington nominated Thad Alger for the position of Vice Chair if Commissioner Alger would accept the nomination.

Commissioner Alger accepted the nomination.

The Commissioner's voted and approved the nomination for Thad Alger to serve as Vice Chairman.

III. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 29TH MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ITEM

MOTION: Commissioner Wellington moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Alger seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

IV. COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC: NON-ACTION ITEM

There were no comments made by the public.

Chairman Spratling moved the order of the meeting to item XI of the agenda.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE CHINA MOUNTAIN WIND PROJECT ACTION ITEM

Mr. Brown recommended this item be tabled due to the representative not being able to attend the meeting and he stated he had included the presentation in the documents contained in the packet for tonight's meeting.

Ken Miller, Elko BLM, commented that the property involved is a fair amount of private land and State land on the Idaho side and then a large amount of public land. He added that a draft EIS will be put out by mid February and that would be worth commenting on.

MOTION: Commissioner Carpenter moved to table the item and the motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

VI. PRESENTATION BY CLIFF GARDNER, GREAT BASIN CONSULTING SUGGESTING A STUDY REGARDING WILDLIFE/LIVESTOCK RELATIONSHIPS ACTION ITEM

Cliff Gardner stated during the comment period at a previous County Commission meeting he was representing Great Basin Consulting and suggested the Elko County Commission encourage the State Wildlife Commission to conduct a study with regards to big game relationships in a few different ways and the County Commission suggested he present to this Board for consideration and this Board could provide comment. He added that since he attend the County Commission meeting he has spoke with individuals at the State level and understands there is funding available through the Heritage Project and anyone that presents a project and wants to see the project through can make application. He further stated instead of the State agencies conducting the study it would be done by Great Basin Consulting which the principals are himself and Floyd Rathbun, who has a degree in wildlife biology and range management and the study will be overseen and supervised by Tony Lesperance and could take two to three years. He gave an overview of what the affects have been to the range since sheep has been removed and reviewed studies that have been conducted in Nevada that have determined some vegetation increased by 8% when it is being impacted. He indicated they would like to focus their study on impacted black sage and determine how much is stimulated and measure the nutrient content of the reoccurring vegetation and at what

temperature it begins growing. He provided further information they had obtained and supporting evidence for the information. He continued explaining what the study would focus on, how it would be conducted and that they hope the results will support returning livestock and wildlife to the rangelands. He added that another part of the study they would like to conduct would deal with dying off of bighorn sheep that has been occurring in different parts of the country and specifically north of Wells. He continued and provided information that has been gathered over the years regarding dying off of bighorn sheep and the lack of focus on certain issues regarding their habitat. He continued stating that there are many aspects that need to be considered to determine if the habitat required for bighorn sheep is present and indicated historically there were almost no sheep in the Country except in the areas that had the right type of habitat, vegetation and hillsides and were in small bunches from 25-50 and under the best circumstances could grow to hundreds. He further provided information he had obtained from different individuals, historical data and personal site visits regarding the health of vegetation in Nevada and possible causes of impact or lack of impact. He continued giving specifics on what they would like to do during their study and asked for the group's support and a recommendation to the County Commission that they recommend to the State Wildlife Commission that these kinds of studies be pursued.

Chairman Spratling asked where the funding would come from for the studies.

Mr. Gardner indicated years ago there had been action to set aside \$3 from every deer tag issued in the State of Nevada to go into a special fund which is called the Heritage Funds which is currently about \$400,000, and can be used for these kinds of studies.

Commissioner Wellington indicated the Elko County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife submitted two projects for the Ruby Mountains called emergency predator projects but they disappeared. He further indicated they had submitted the projects last September which were for monitoring collars and mineral supplements for deficiencies in the area. He stated the Elko County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife would support Great Basin Consulting's submittal for Heritage Funds and he could help them with the project application.

MOTION: Commissioner Wellington moved to make a recommendation to the County Commission to support this project and assist Mr. Gardner and Great Basin Consulting with their wildlife/livestock relationships study project. Commissioner Carpenter seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE:	Craig Spratling Thad Alger Ken Wellington John C. Carpenter Ralph R. Sacrison
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NAY:	None
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ABSENT:	Orson Tingey
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ABSTENTIONS:	None
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VII. PRESENTATION, OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE LAS VEGAS HORSE SUMMIT ACTION ITEM

Mr. Brown indicated he had provided some information at the meeting and Commissioner Tingey had asked the item be placed on the agenda. He asked Mr. Miller from the BLM if he had anything to add to the item.

Mr. Miller indicated he had handed out remarks made by BLM Director Bob Abbey at the forum and BLM's participation was not accepted by some of the advocacy groups and that is an indication of some of the issues BLM has with the wild horse program. He added that over the last couple of weeks between the Antelope wild horse gather, the eco-sanctuary proposal by Mrs. Pickens, similar proposals elsewhere and the wild horse forum most of what has been in the news is not necessarily accurate. He continued stating the document passed out contains the remarks by Mr. Abbey to the group and Mr. Abbey did say that BLM and the Department of Interior have taken euthanasia off of the table and the reality is that is not something BLM would be successful proposing. He added that Mr. Abbey also stated unrestricted sale of wild horses is off of the table meaning that BLM does not envision horses would be sold in a fashion that would allow them to be taken directly to slaughter. He highlighted some of the things that BLM is focused on, one being that the inventory is accurate and given the methods the BLM is using now they can display to those concerned with wild horse programs what the numbers are and if they are ever incorrect they will be on the low side. He gave further details of practices noted by Director Abbey in his remarks at the summit.

County Commissioner Williams indicated previously a scheduled gather was cancelled near Fallon because it was determined that the horse count wasn't as much as initially thought and stated it puts committees such as this board and the County Commission in a difficult position to support the gathers when news comes out that indicates the methods are incorrect and asked Mr. Miller if he could explain what happened in that situation.

Mr. Miller stated it goes back to the credibility of the BLM and the specialist doing the inventory. He added that the gather that was cancelled is on the western side of the state and is a small herd and they are working hard to assess the condition of herds and numbers of herds right up until the day of the gather. He continued that it was a small herd and he speculated that was one of the reasons why it allowed them to not move forward with the gather.

There was further discussion about information being distributed by horse advocacy groups that has been taken out of context and being used as a way to discredit the means the BLM is using to assess the number of horses in a hma and the action(s) the BLM is taking to correct any discrepancies of horse counts.

County Commissioner Dahl stated the Summit of the Horse was a bigger issue than the wild horses and the theme was taking back the reigns of our industry and he thought since we no longer have processing plants in the United States that is what drove the summit. He added the BLM has taken selling the horses off of the table and the Act provides for that to happen and soon they are going to have to exercise their sale authority due to the numbers of horses in holding facilities and still out on the range. He continued providing information and comments on the issues discussed at the Summit of the Horse.

County Commissioner Williams asked if the proposal from Mrs. Pickens was off of the table or still a possibility of Mrs. Pickens could come up with a business plan to support the proposal. He also commented that he was previously contacted by someone that told him it cost more in fuel to take a horse to Twin Falls, Idaho, than the compensation he received for the horse and asked if the BLM has concerns about horses being deposited on public land.

County Commissioner Dahl stated that happens and geldings that still have their shoes on are turned out with the wild horses.

Mr. Miller stated BLM knows there have been horses turned out on public lands that are owned by someone and are astray throughout the west. He indicated the sanctuary proposal from Mrs. Pickens is not a dead deal as the newspaper reported. He further indicated the proposal is still being considered and as stated in Director Abbey's remarks at the Summit of the Horse, Director Abbey has had talks with Mrs. Pickens and others regarding possible wild horse eco-sanctuaries and there are still issues that need to be addressed but her idea has merit and deserves serious consideration. He continued that the BLM has told Mrs. Pickens and her representatives that her prospectus is not adequate for the BLM to be accepted as a proposal and be able to move forward and consider any action but they do expect that she will provide a more detailed proposal that will be able to be considered. He handed out a document that included the points where the BLM is at with the proposal from Mrs. Pickens which were in response to statements being made that are not correct.

VIII. REVIEW, UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF THE NEW OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS BILL/AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS ACT OF 2010 (S. 303)
ACTION ITEM

Mr. Brown handed out a copy of the summary of the bill and read a portion of an article regarding the bill from the website of American Trails.

IX. NEVADA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION-PRESENTED BY MEGHAN BROWN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ACTION ITEMS

- A. Discussion and information related to the Spruce Allotment and the proposed wild horse sanctuary by Madeleine Pickens and matters related thereto.

Chairman Spratling indicated Ms. Brown was not present and asked for a motion to table the item to the next meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made to table the item to the next meeting and the motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

X. AGENCY REPORT AND UPDATES:

A. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

ACTION ITEMS

Dave Overcast, BLM Tuscarora Field Office, stated there was one item that was not on the agenda that he wanted to bring to the Commission's attention. He indicated they completed the EIS and Record of Decision for the Immigrant project for Newmont south of Carlin and identified the location on a map.

- 1) City of Elko Water Reclamation Facility Reuse Site Environmental Assessment Decision Record and Finding of No Signification Impact.

Mr. Overcast identified the property on a map and indicated the decision has become final and the process is complete. He added that they are sending letters to the State Office for patent which will take two years and will be in two phases for a total of about eight hundred (800) acres. He indicated the project decreased about sixty-three (63) aums off of the Buzzetti permit and there had been discussions with the City of Elko and Mr. Buzzetti in an effort to determine what actions could be taken to have the least amount of impact on the permit.

Commissioner Carpenter asked if Mr. Buzzetti is going to lose his aums.

Mr. Overcast stated with the BLM's decision to patent under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act there will be a loss of aums from 179 to 116. He added based on their Resource Management Plan which guides the field office it indicates within a four mile radius of the City of Elko the BLM will prioritize projects that have a public purpose and public benefit.

Mr. Miller asked if the items could be moved around to accommodate presentation by a BLM representative that is familiar with the project and able to provide information on the item. He introduced representatives of the BLM that would be providing information on the different items listed on the agenda.

Chairman Spratling agreed and indicated the BLM items would not necessarily be discussed in the order they appear on the agenda.

- 2) Antelope Complex Wild Horse Gather Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Decision Record (DR).

Mr. Miller indicated the Antelope Gather was initiated and as of this morning gathered about 93 horses. He outlined where the gather began in White Pine and stated they anticipate the gather will be in Elko County in about ten to twelve days. He gave details on the gather up to today and what they anticipated would occur for the rest of the gather. He stated that they had received

numerous requests for postponing the gather to provide opportunity for other action and gave some examples of what had been proposed.

There was discussion about the information contained in the newspaper article indicating that the proposal by Mrs. Pickens had been denied by the BLM.

There was discussion regarding the amount of horses in the area and the amount that will be gathered. There was also discussion regarding the opposition being less than what was encountered during the Tuscarora gather at the same time during the gather.

- 3) Notice of Action for the Bluebell and Goshute Peak Wilderness Study Areas regarding an Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review.

Tamara Hawthorne, BLM Recreation Planner, stated the notice which is required before a project in a wilderness study area can proceed was done in cooperation with the Department of Wildlife. She indicated they found some springs that were impacted in the area that are being used only by wild horses and wildlife due to their location and are being degraded to the point that there is no water coming from the springs. She further indicated they are trying to come up with projects to repair the springs and NDOW came on board with funding and some ideas on how to repair the springs and in addition to repairing springs there has been discussion about developing new water sources further south in the Goshute range. She added that the Interim Management Policy for lands under wilderness review gives direction on how they manage wilderness study areas and it states that grandfathered uses can be maintained for their intended purposes and the document includes justification for repairing and maintaining the springs including additional improvements because it enhances the wilderness. She continued that they would put temporary fencing around the spring source but keep troughs available to wildlife and wild horses. She further added that the comment period ends February 11, 2011, and they have not received any comments, either negatively or positively but received a request from Western Watersheds for documentation and the monitoring data.

County Commissioner Williams asked if the degradation was being caused by wild horses.

Ms. Hawthorne replied that the damage is partially due to lack of maintenance from the originator so the BLM is trying to maintain them but minimally. She added that the Antelope gather of wild horses is being done because there are a high number of wild horses over the caring capacity that has negatively impacted the spring. She indicated there aren't cattle on this side of the range but sheep and they do not go up high enough to impact the areas and it is mostly wildlife and wild horses.

Commissioner Wellington asked if the wild horses from the Antelope gather are the same horses causing the damage.

Ms. Hawthorne answered it is the same herd.

There was discussion about removing the wild horses from the areas and if that would aid in the rehabilitation of the springs.

Chairman Spratling asked why temporary fences would be used instead of permanent ones.

Ms. Hawthorne answered they have not received any data that would indicate that temporary fences would not help to reestablish the source and assist in re-growth of the surrounding vegetation so they could not justify placement of permanent fencing.

There was discussion regarding the water rights for the springs.

Commissioner Wellington asked Ms. Hawthorne if NDOW had already entered into an agreement with BLM to assist with the project with funding.

Ms. Hawthorne indicated NDOW is a cooperator and support will come when the environmental documents are done but they do not have a memorandum of understanding or money changing hands yet.

Commissioner Wellington asked about the structures that will be placed in the area and asked if there is anyone with allotments in the area and if they had been contacted.

Ms. Hawthorne answered yes and they have been contacted.

There was continued discussion regarding water rights in the area and their ownership.

Commissioner Carpenter made a comment that it was not right that the livestock people were being treated different than the wildlife and wild horses.

Mr. Miller indicated all ranchers that have maintenance agreements on water developments must maintain them on an ongoing basis. He added they are putting fencing around these which is an addition or change and they are working with a fair number of permittees on similar issues.

Chairman Spratling asked since the sites are in a wilderness study area how would the materials get to the site.

Ms. Hawthorne indicated all of the springs that are being repaired have ways which is defined in the IMP as roads leading to them. She added when the environmental assessment is written maintenance will need to be addressed.

Chairman Spratling asked if it was legal to go into wilderness areas with a helicopter.

There was discussion regarding the type of fencing to be used for the project.

4) Final Grazing Permit Renewal Decision for Hubbard Vineyard Allotment and Addendum.

Jeff Moore, Range Specialist BLM Wells Field Office, stated the allotment is about 125,000 acres and currently grazed by the Boies Family which has held portions of the allotment since 1947. He added when the Wells Resource Management Plan was developed this allotment was identified as a high priority to develop a management plan on the property. He gave details of the history of the allotment and indicated the decision presented was a product of the BLM withdrawing from litigation with Western Watersheds Project after an agreement could not be reached during mitigation. He added that the decision has to be delivered by hand or certified mail and there is a

thirty day appeal period and they anticipate receiving an appeal from Western Watersheds. He continued stating the permitted use is not changing and in the decision there is a description of how each individual pasture could be grazed including adopting what the Boies Family has been doing since 1999. He added that there are a number of range improvement projects that have been authorized through the decision including spring developments and he explained some of the proposed improvements.

Chairman Spratling asked if the improvements will be funded by the BLM.

Mr. Moore indicated they anticipate a partnership and the Boies Family has indicated some willingness to contribute but the funding mechanisms have not been worked out yet.

Chairman Spratling asked what the ownership status was for the springs.

Mr. Moore indicated he did not know and explained how the spring developments became a consideration during the process.

Chairman Spratling asked if the permittee is able to utilize their total preference with the grazing systems proposed.

Mr. Moore indicated the way the grazing system is set up a lot of the pastures are rested on an annual basis so the answer is no they would not be able to make all 13,000 aums of use in any given year because of the rest provisions in the grazing system which is in line with what the Boies Family has been doing over the past years.

Chairman Spratling asked if the Boies Family is fairly agreeable with the decision.

Mr. Moore indicated in his discussions with the Boies Family there has not been anything in the documents they haven't seen and they are not completely happy with all of the content but they have not expressed that there is something in the decision they can't live with.

Commissioner Carpenter asked if the appeal period is almost over.

Mr. Moore indicated the thirty day appeal period starts after receipt of the certified copy of the decision so each party has their own unique appeal period and he explained the process of the appeal.

There was discussion whether it would be appropriate for the Commission to support this decision.

Mr. Miller explained how the decision was developed and repeated that they expected an appeal to be filed by Western Watersheds.

Mr. Moore stated that part of the preparation of the decision was reviewing the previous decision and stay order granted by the judge and focusing on the items the judge had identified as procedural weaknesses or other determinations that caused the judge to make the ruling he did. He added that he didn't want to speak for the Boies Family but they have not expressed that there is anything they won't be able to live with.

Commissioner Carpenter asked if a motion could be made with a stipulation that the Boies' be contacted for their input of the decision with the motion being to approve of the permit renewal decision for the Hubbard Vineyard Allotment and include all of the things that were discussed that allows for flexibility and the Collaborative Management and the situation that allows water development.

There was discussion on the action that should be taken on the item and when comments could be received on the item.

MOTION: Commissioner Carpenter moved to support the decision on the Hubbard Vineyard Allotment pending discussion with the permittee, the Boies Ranch, before drafting the letter of support for signature. Commissioner Alger seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

5) Preliminary EA for the Triple B, Maverick-Medicine, and Antelope Valley Herd Management Areas Wild Horse Gather.

Mr. Miller indicated the gather is scheduled for July and the EA is being done. He added that the property is in Elko and White Pine Counties. He gave an example of changes that occurred in White Pine County regarding HMAS by using a Land Use Plan Revision.

Commissioner Wellington asked if the county border will split what the total is for the entire area.

Mr. Miller stated that did not change and they will be managed the same. He continued to identify HMAS on a map and indicated the gather will start in July with the intent of removing about 1,700 wild horses with the appropriate management levels are 472-889.

Commissioner Wellington indicated he thought the number of horses was about 161 in the area.

There was discussion about the number of horses to be gathered and what the aml was for the hma.

Mr. Miller gave an overview of where the BLM is at in the process for the gather.

MOTION: Commissioner Wellington moved to support the round up of the Triple B, Maverick-Medicine Antelope Valley Herd Management Areas Wild Horse Gather for BLM. Commissioner Sacrison seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

6) Cortez Hills Expansion Project Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Final SEIS).

Mr. Miller indicated that this project is not an Elko County Project and he didn't have any further information.

7) Bellinger Seeding Allotment Final Determinations of the Standards and Guidelines, Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Casey Addy, BLM Range Management Specialist, located the area on a map and indicated a final determination had been issued and all of the standards of the allotment are being met. He added that the BLM proposed action is a grazing system that will be a deferred rotation where one pasture is rested each year and the season will change from April 1st to December 31st to April 1st to October 31st and the aums will remain the same. He continued stating there will be a range improvement which is a pipeline with a storage tank and two troughs that will be connected to an existing well located on the allotment.

8) Bottari Allotment Final Determinations on the Standards and Guidelines, Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Mr. Addy gave an overview of where the property is located and indicated the permittee was consulted all the way through the process and are on board with all of the proposed decisions. He indicated the final determination was released and all of the standards are being met for this allotment and everything on the allotment including the aums will remain the same.

9) Spruce Mountain Allotment restoration project aiding in the improvement of wildlife habitat and reducing hazardous fuels.

Mr. Miller stated the Spruce Mountain Allotment has gotten a lot of attention over the last few years on the fuels projects and recreation management. He indicated the intent of the letter that was sent out is regarding fire reduction and habitat improvement projects and they are doing an environmental analysis that will allow these projects to be done on Spruce Mountain for some time. He added that this proposal was pursued in the past and appealed by Western Watersheds and the result was the BLM withdrew the effort. He gave an overview of what was included in the

previous appeal and what was in the current proposal.

Commissioner Wellington asked if access to travel roads will be closed during the time of the project.

Mr. Miller stated only during the actual activity.

Commissioner Wellington asked if NDOW has looked at this proposal because the area is winter range for mule deer.

Mr. Miller indicated NDOW is anxious to see this considered and they differ on the logistics but he expects they will work together as they develop the proposal and the environmental analysis. He continued giving a summary of the project.

Chairman Spratling stated he would normally be in favor of the effort but felt in light of the new permittee he didn't know why the effort should be gone through because of the possibility of what might happen in the area.

Mr. Miller stated the reasons would be the bullet points contained in the document and the effort is for the long term. He added that some of the issues could be more important if an ecosanctuary is approved.

There was some discussion regarding the logistics of the project and the impacts of the processes used to accomplish the desired outcome.

10) Secretarial Order 3310-“Wild Lands” designations and management of designated areas.

- a. Comment on Secretary Salazar promoting Wilderness Management of BLM Lands by Holland & Hart.

Mr. Miller handed out a question and answer sheet for the Commissioners to review.

Chairman Spratling asked for a motion to table the item.

MOTION: Commissioner Wellington moved to table the item and Commissioner Carpenter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

11) BLM Resource Management Plan / Travel Management Plan for Elko County–
Proposed development and schedules.

Mr. Brown stated he was wondering about a timeline for development of a RMP and Travel Management Plan for Elko County.

Mr. Miller indicated they were looking to start a RMP in 2012 but that has been pushed back to 2013.

There was continued discussion about the time frame for the start of the development of a RMP.

Mr. Miller stated the BLM is moving forward with a land use plan amendment for the Spruce Mountain area which is based on the settlement agreed upon sometime ago between Western Watersheds, Sorensens and the BLM that had to do with the Convention Authority's travel opportunity plan. He stated the BLM is required to do a land use plan that addresses the issues and the area is currently posted as existing roads and trails only and the BLM is initiating scoping for the Spruce Mountain Recreation Management Plan Amendment in the near future.

There was discussion about the Spruce Mountain Recreation Management Plan Amendment affecting the Pickens' property.

Mr. Miller stated that the Spruce Mountain Recreation Management Plan will include travel management.

- B. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – OTHER CORRESPONDENCE AND
ITEMS OF DISCUSSION. NON-ACTION ITEM
- 1) Prescribed fire projects completed by Elko District BLM from 1997 until present day.

Mr. Brown indicated this item was on the agenda as requested by County Commissioner Russell and was for information only.

Mr. Miller stated the BLM does not maintain historic documents and were only able to go back to 1987 and he gave an overview of the information they had provided in the document. He provided a copy of the BLM's quarterly report for information and communication purposes.

- C. UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE ACTION ITEMS
None
- D. UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE – OTHER CORRESPONDENCE AND
ITEMS OF DISCUSSION. NON-ACTION ITEM

**XI. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE JARBIDGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
PLAN AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO ACTION ITEM**

Gus Brackett stated they are currently going through the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan and are in the middle of the public comment period and Elko County plays an important role in the

plan because the Jarbidge area is part of different counties in Idaho and Elko County. He gave an overview of when John Marvel filed a lawsuit that ended up being about sagegrouse and won and the judge mandated that the Jarbidge Resource area come up with a resource management plan. He continued that these plans normally take between 8 and 10 years to get through the entire process but the judge mandated it be done in four years and it is important to keep on the time schedule because the stipulated settlement agreement stated there will be no grazing on the lands after September of 2011 unless the rmp is completed. He further stated that the 71 Livestock Association is a small group of ranchers in the resource area that has gone through the document that is 1,800 pages and the BLM has narrowed their information to five alternatives. He continued indicating the alternatives include 1) a recreation plan, 2) a commercial uses plan, which is the one that livestock grazers are supposed to like, 3) wildfire plan, 4) is the preferred alternative which is supposed to be a compromise and 5) is for the environmental groups. He further indicated the plan was set up so livestock grazers were supposed to pick alternative 2 and sportsman and recreationists were supposed to pick alternative 1 and perhaps the general public would pick alternative 3 and after reading the plan they didn't understand how livestock grazing was exclusive of recreation since both hunting, atv use and livestock grazing has been happening in the area for generations. He continued indicating the 71 Livestock Association got together with the Magic Valley ATV Rider's Association and Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife and came up with a proposed action as an alternative to what the BLM had come up with by picking and choosing different aspects of the five alternatives. He stated since the joining of the different groups they have formed the Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use and created a fifty-two page document and asked for the Commissioners to read the document and asked for their support as Commissioners and as individuals. He added that the coalition currently has 1,000 members and will cease to exist as of February 1st once their comments are submitted on January 31st. He added that they didn't expect the BLM to rubber stamp their plan and use it but to at least make it uncomfortable for the BLM to ignore. He stated there are things in this resource management plan that are new and they tend to show up in other rmps in other states and they are dealing with some things that came from an rmp out of Oregon. He stated there are essentially two issues in the plan that could be troublesome to other areas, the first issue being an aquatic riparian management system plan which is BLM's prescription for dealing with riparian areas and it comes from another plan for riparian management for the Columbia Basin and wasn't even used for the plan it was originally intended for and if it is used in this plan it is part of a NEPA verified record of decision and wouldn't take anything to be used in another rmp. He continued that they don't have riparian issues due the amount of rain and means of land being private or fenced but they were told this would be important to stop in their plan and made some serious efforts to take it out of the BLM's plan and replace it. He continued stating another thing the BLM is doing is using the areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) to create defacto wilderness areas and in the plan they have an ACEC from 40,000 to 70,000 acres depending on the alternative which excludes grazing and can be done at the stroke of a pen and the ACEC are concerns to the Coalition and should be a concern to others. He again asked for support from the Commissioners as a Commission and as individuals.

Chairman Spratling asked for clarification that the coalition would cease to exist on January 31st of this year.

Mr. Brackett indicated their comments have to be submitted by January 31, 2011, to be part of the record and once the comments are submitted their purpose would cease whereas Elko County can provide comments up to the date of publication of the plan since they are a coordinating and cooperating agency.

Mr. Brown suggested the coalition remain intact until the final EIS and Record of Decision was released.

There was discussion regarding the parties involved and the process by which the judge mandated a resource management plan be developed for the Jarbidge area and some specifics of the different alternatives proposed in the plan.

Mr. Brackett indicated many acres have burned in the area and they would like the BLM to address the issue and at least pursue a solution to the problem.

There was also discussion about the farmers and allotments that would be affected by discontinued grazing on the land if the rmp is not completed by September of 2011.

Mr. Brown indicated Elko County is finishing up their initial comments which are general comments and he is describing them as initial comments because they are receiving information everyday that will be taken into consideration. He added that Elko County being a cooperating coordinating agency does not have to abide by the deadlines and can submit comments at any point during the process. He further indicated Elko County is hoping to provide two or three more comments and information. He added stating the initial comments will be accompanied by a copy of the Elko County Public Land Use & Natural Resource Management Plan and appendices that address the economics as well as the agricultural and historical values. He further stated that the BLM is going to have to take the Elko County Plan into consideration and it addresses the same issues as the 71 Livestock Association being in support of multiple use on public land but it further addresses the NEPA process and providing pertinent information regarding different issues. He further added that the Elko County Commission gave him permission to incorporate comments from the 71 Livestock Association, the Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use and Twin Falls WAC endorsed by Elko County as part of the comments submitted by Elko County.

There was continued discussion about the reason for the Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use not extending its life after its comments are submitted on January 31, 2011, and Mr. Brackett indicated the Coalition only wants to exist for specific purposes and may come back once the process for the Travel Management Plan is started.

Chairman Spratling asked Mr. Brown if action needed to be taken on the Initial Comments concerning the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan & Draft EIS.

Mr. Brown indicated action would need to be taken on the initial comments and there would be further comments and information that will be submitted for review at subsequent meetings.

MOTION: Commissioner Wellington moved to support the Elko County Initial Comments letter drafted by Staff to the BLM Jarbidge Field Office in support of the 71 Livestock Association, Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use and Twin Falls Resource Advisory Council. Commissioner Carpenter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Prior to the vote Commissioner Carpenter suggested the elderly and disabled be addressed in the comments from Elko County.

Mr. Brown indicated those will be specific issues addressed at a future date with other comments.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

Commissioner Carpenter asked about Elko County joining the 71 Livestock Association's efforts and becoming a part of the Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use.

County Commissioner Dahl indicated he thought it would be a good idea and stated Elko County Commissioners went on record in support of the wind generation project located in the area of the RMP and were notified it would not happen if the BLM chooses the preferred alternative. He further added if the wind generation project did not happen three counties in Idaho and Elko County will have an opportunity of cost loss of about \$232 million. He also encouraged the Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use continue its function until the Final EIS and the Record of Decision.

MOTION: Commissioner Carpenter moved to request that the Elko County Commission become a member of the Jarbidge Coalition for Multiple Use. Commissioner Sacrison seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Prior to the vote Mr. Brown encouraged the Commissioners and all of those present at the meeting to join the Coalition individually and as a member of group's they are involved with.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

Chairman Spratling moved the order of the meeting to item V of the agenda.

XII. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE ELKO COUNTY PUBLIC LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN: ACTION ITEM

Inclusion of amendments to address Predator Control Management and Federal Land Management Mining Permitting process.

Mr. Brown stated there was concern expressed about amendments to the Public Land Use Plan and stated he will put some information together for review of the Commissioners and ultimately for the County Commissioners review.

MOTION: Commissioner Carpenter moved to direct Staff to develop language on two amendments to the Elko County Public Land Use and Natural Resource Management Plan to address Predator Control Management and Federal Land Management Mining Permitting process. Commissioner Alger seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

AYE: Craig Spratling
Thad Alger
Ken Wellington
John C. Carpenter
Ralph R. Sacrison

NAY: None

ABSENT: Orson Tingey

ABSTENTIONS: None

XIII. REVIEW, UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF USFS MOUNTAIN CITY, RUBY MOUNTAINS AND JARBIDGE RANGER DISTRICTS COMBINED TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PROJECT: ACTION ITEM

Mr. Brown indicated the County is still working on comments to provide to the Forest Service for consideration and there is a facilitated meeting the next Tuesday with the Forest Service and the Travel Management Committee. He continued indicating there will be another public meeting on February 22, 2011, that will focus on recreation and the impacts of public land policies on our recreation and economy and asked everyone to attend. He mentioned all of the groups that would be represented at the meeting and the issues that will be addressed. He continued stating that the Forest Service is planning on releasing a Final EIS by March 15, 2011. He added the County is providing data to the Forest Service that is in conflict with their findings and asking the Forest Service to take that information into consideration.

XIV. ELKO COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE / NDOW: NON-ACTION ITEM
Commissioner Wellington / Other

Commissioner Wellington informed the Commission of when the next meeting of the Advisory Board and the State Board were going to be held.

XV. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT AND DISCUSSION: NON-ACTION ITEM

NONE

XVI. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNTY STAFF COMMENTS: NON-ACTION ITEM

There was discussion regarding the wild horses impacting the springs and the rest of the public lands.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT ACTION ITEM

Chairman Spratling adjourned the meeting at 9:59 p.m. as there was no further business.

Minutes Clerk,



Kelly Watson

Date Approved, March 30, 2011