Meeting Notes – SW Resource Advisory Committee

Montrose PLC

12/12/19

Attendance: (sorry, no names)

BLM Field Office Managers from Uncompahgre FO, Grand Junction FO, Tres Rios FO, the Dominguez-Escalante NCA, and Gunnison Gorge.

BLM District Manager, Deputy District Manager, about 3 BLM Staff

All members of the SW RAC

There were about 6-8 members of the public there.

I did receive a packet of meeting materials that includes the agenda for today’s meeting, minutes from the last SW RAC meeting on September 25th, and a Field Manager Report from each of the 3 Field Offices.

**Review fee proposal for Canyons of the Ancients NM Visitor Center & Museum**

The fee for the visitor center & museum will increase from $3 to $6 and will apply year-round instead of just the busy season of March 1 – October 31. There are several construction projects happening in the NM also, including a big parking lot at the Visitor Center, trailhead parking in several locations, and relocating the road to the Painted Hand Pueblo off private land on to BLM.

More in the Tres Rios Field Manager Report

**Illegal dumping on BLM lands in the SW**

Presentation from Eric Coulter, BLM public affairs officer, SW District Office

Huge problem in the SW region of BLM. Dumping typically is a pickup load of junk people haul out to the BLM. Sometimes they find abandoned vehicles and RV’s, hazardous materials and waste. Most often, the stuff people dump on public land are items that require a fee at landfills, or the landfills refuse to accept them (tires, electronics, appliances, mattresses, hazardous materials).

BLM efforts:

* Education – provide information on recycling, where to dispose of junk, make presentations to schools and youth groups
* Partnerships – Projects and events with Boy Scouts, BHA, honor crews, etc. to clean up shooting areas and dump sites
* Marketing – improving awareness of where to take trash & other items
* Local waste management – working with local landfills and recycling centers to accept materials cleaned up on BLM lands
* Enforcement – Catching and ticketing people dumping on BLM is very rare. Our Chapter of BHA is working to develop a reward program for people reporting offences to BLM similar to our reward program for illegal OHV use.

Discussion/suggestions from RAC

* Work with counties to have sites and/or scheduled days to accept tires, electronics, appliances, mattresses, hazardous materials, etc.
* Encourage public landfills & transfer stations to be open & available when people can easily get there (weekends, later in the evening). Make it more convenient.
* Subsidize disposal fees.
* Create a partnership with trash companies to have them pick up those items commonly dumped on BLM for disposal. Pick-up days for tires, electronics, etc. Apparently there is State funding available for such program development (RAC member Ernie Williams, Dolores).

**Uncompahgre RMP Update and Implementation Strategy**

Presentation from Greg Larson, UFO Field Office Manager

The Decision on the proposed RMP received 150 Protests, including one from the State and 3 from counties. Those protests are still being reviewed and processed by the BLM Washington Office. A bulk of the protests are focused on lands identified for leasing Fluid Leasable Minerals.

A Governor’s Consistency Review is taking place concurrently by the BLM State Office. Greg seemed to think the Consistency Review would be most problematic for the RMP. The big issue is apparently inconsistency between the RMP and other State resource plans. The primary example is related to recent Governor’s EO on wildlife habitat. About 78% of the UFO is identified as big game winter range, 1mile per section as mitigation. (1 mile of road per section of land but it could be a combination of all routes - roads + trails.) The RMP didn’t analyze this and Greg said that he believes most of the UFO already exceeds this standard.

The BLM will eventually respond to the 150 protests and the Governor’s Consistency Review and publish a protest summary report with the final RMP (no prediction on when).

When that is completed, the UFO will move on to developing an Implementation Strategy.

**Field Manager Roundtable**

The Field Manager Reports provide notes on this topic and I can get copies to you. Members of the RAC didn’t really have any substantive comments during this part of the meeting, only questions to clarify what was said.

**Public Comment Period**

Nobody signed up to provide comments and the facilitator offered an opportunity to anyone in attendance. I was the only one to address the BLM & RAC so I spoke to them about our concerns with the proliferation of mountain bike trails and their impact on wild lands, wildlife habitat, and big game populations and requested they at least require trail proponents to include sportsmen, conservationists, outfitter-guides, and livestock people in their planning efforts.