

Public Lands Coordination Commission

Meeting Minutes May 10 2011

PLCC Commissioners present: Drew Gordanier, Frank Green, Zane Odell, Dennis Atwater, Slim McWilliams, Casey McClelland (alternate)

Montezuma County Commissioners present: Steve Chappell

Citizens Present: None

Federal Agency Representatives: Connie Clemenston, Tom Rice & Debbie Kill.

7:05 PM Meeting was called to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited & ground rules established.

First Item of business was approval of agenda & minutes. Agenda & Minutes were approved.

Old Business was reviewed;

- The Forest Planning rule was discussed. It was reported that the Public Lands Council had prepared comments mainly regarding the livestock industry. The comments were discussed briefly. Dennis Atwater also presented comments that he had prepared regarding the new rule. Concern was expressed over leaving NEPA out of the new planning rule which would diminish the ability of local government to coordinate with the Federal Agencies. Concern was also expressed over having planning fall under categorical exclusions leaving loopholes that are up to the discretion of the local planners. It was also reported that there were a lot of positive comments on giving more control at the local level as well. Dennis Atwater also noted that going from an appeal process to an objection process we need remember that the rules change dramatically. If you have not commented on a specific issue then you cannot object to that specific issue. A motion was made to have PLCC members review Dennis's comments and present them to the Federal Lands Program by Thursday at 5:00 pm so comments can be presented to the BOCC. Motion was seconded and it passed.
- The Boggy Glade comments were reviewed and briefly discussed. Slim McWilliams pointed out the need for adding the language from the statutes that give direction on game retrieval and where the statutes came from. Matt Clark expressed that he was not comfortable advocating for big game retrieval because he had contacted 12 big game outfitters and only one of the 12 were supportive of motorized retrieval. He also felt that the community hunters were also more split than everyone realizes. It was pointed out that the people that use outfitters were not the ones hunting in the Boggy/Glade. A motion was made to forward the draft comments on to the BOCC. It was seconded and it passed.

- The coordination letter to the State agencies was then discussed. Dennis Atwater reported that he had talked with the Attorney General and he referred us back to the statutes that were presented the last time. Under 257105 and 3011101 Powers of Counties that the State looks at this as the authority of the counties to coordinate with the State agencies on public lands. Because it cites pursuant to the statute that contains coordination on public lands.
- Connie Clemenston reported that there would be an open house meeting at the SJLPC in Durango on June 8th which would provide information on the Colorado Road-less Areas.
- Comments and information from Michele Allison was discussed briefly. All of the information that she submitted was distributed to the PLCC and also presented to the BOCC for consideration. Slim McWilliams noted that he did not find any formal comments but rather it was apparently background information.
- Road Criteria was then discussed. A power point presentation was shown that reviewed existing roads in the Boggy/ Glade area, roads that were shown on the Official County Road Map, Schedule A roads and roads that are proposed to be closed and decommissioned through the proposed Glade/ Boggy decision. There was detailed discussion regarding prioritizing the existing roads. The main objective of the prioritization/ categorization of the roads would be to provide direction on which roads are critical to the county in effort to prepare for the next Travel Management update expected ten years or so in the future. Two or three different levels/ categories were discussed. An example was given of category A roads being good gravel roads that were main system roads that provide regional geographic access, category B roads being roads with less use but still essential to provide sub-regional geographic access for commerce, timber, livestock etc. and category C roads are maybe dirt roads that provide geographic access within sub-regions for commerce and could include seasonal closures or things like that. Access should be prioritized based on access for use not on surface conditions. It was noted that access to private in-holding should be in category A. It was pointed out that the County interest is to make sure the roads are well distributed so that the public can get into all of the different areas. It was suggested that all remaining existing roads be determined to be Category A roads. It was pointed out that the roads many of the public are commenting on are non-system roads that were old temporary logging roads that were not decommissioned or are user created routes that evolved over time and there are no accurate maps of the non-system roads. So the roads that are system roads are priority and second third or fourth priority are roads that may not be showing up on the map. As public comment is re-opened people may come forward with specific roads that could then be categorized as B or C roads. The road density question was discussed and it appears that a Forest Plan Amendment will be needed for the Glade/ Boggy area to exceed overall road densities by a small amount. Opening the TMP up to comment again allows opportunity to notify the public that the Plan may be amended. It was reported that there are areas in Glade / Boggy that are sometimes 5 miles or more between roads and it is important to provide access in those areas especially for game retrieval. Parking is another issue that was discussed. Parking right on the main road is really difficult. There needs to be room to get off the road in many places as it is a

safety and security issue. It was decided to take all of the existing roads to the BOCC as category A roads and then utilize public comments to refine the County Comments.

- New Business was then discussed. Debbie Kill gave a brief overview of the proposed Colorado Road-less Rule. Debbie went over a map that illustrated the Road-less areas within Montezuma County. Debbie explained that there have been inventoried road-less areas for over 40 years in the State. Debbie noted that the preferred alternative showed boundaries that were very similar to what they have always been in our area with the exception of an area up in the Fish Creek area. The difference between Road-less and Wilderness was discussed. Road-less area may have motorized trails limited to roughly 50" in them but not roads. Road-less restricts two activities. Road building and tree cutting. The topography excludes timber harvest in some areas but it was pointed out that there are some areas that topography could still allow some timber harvest. It was noted that the reason for designating these areas as road-less is management driven. Those areas would require a reduced level of management to maintain which quantifies it for the Forest Service. Concern was expressed that designating these areas road-less set it up for future wilderness designation. There was concern over prohibiting transport of oil and gas resources. Concern was expressed over access to fight fires and it was reported that access to fight fires would be allowed.
- Agenda 21 materials submitted by Michele Allison were accepted but it was noted that it would take much greater study to evaluate the material. It was pointed out that the material indicates that Agenda 21 is alive and the rules are not being written by people in our country anymore they are being written by the U.N. and that is the point.
- The next meeting date was selected for May 24.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

