

Public Lands Coordination Commission

Meeting Minutes February 1, 2011

Commissioners present: Drew Gordanier, Frank Green, Zane Odell, Dennis Atwater, Matt Clark

Commissioners absent: Rob Yates

Approximately 8 citizens and BOC Commissioner Gerald Koppenhafer were also present.

6:35 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,

RS 2477 was discussed. Duane Likes reported that RS 2477 was discussed with the Forest Service and that he would like to see that the County Document all RS2477 Roads and then we would have to see what the County wanted to do especially regarding the Wagon Road and Stock Drive.

Zane Odell asked Joe Stevens if he had some concerns regarding RS 2477. Joe indicated that he owned a 10 acre private parcel within Owen Basin located with in sections 29 and 32. Wayne Noland and several others also have 10 acre parcels within the same area that would be affected by the road closure. He reported that the main issue was that the access road to his property had a culvert removed on Echo Creek that would cause the road to wash out with the spring run off.

Frank Greene asked if it was the only access to those properties and Joe responded that it was. Frank furthered that there may other avenues besides RS 2477 to preserve access.

It was noted that more supporting information was needed to establish RS 2477 on that particular road . (Owens Basin)

Drew Gordanier reported that a mill had operated there from 1889 to 1910.

It was reported the FS road number of the Owens Basin Road was 566 G.

Dennis Atwater reminded the group that the PLCC had written a letter to the BOCC recommending an action on RS 2477 and other road issues. The letter was distributed and the PLCC members reviewed the letter. A brief discussion was had regarding what it took to define an RS2477 Right, does it take a legal action or is it a land grant right. A motion was made to forward the letter to the BOCC with one spelling correction. The motion was carried with one member abstaining from the vote.

The next item of business was to review the SOPA list with Forest Service Representatives.

Steve Beverlin introduced Tom Rice the Associate District Ranger and Debbie Kill the NEPA Coordinator.

Debbie Kill gave a quick overview of the SOPA noting that the FS is required to publish a schedule of proposed activities on a quarterly basis. The purpose is to give a brief description of what the project is and where it is located, the type of NEPA document and a contact name. The list is on the Website or it can be mailed to individuals directly as per request to be added to a mailing list.

The purpose of the SOPA is to catch the project in a preliminary stage so the public can get involved and provide input.

The Forest Service provided updates including the following projects;

- Revision of the management plan was discussed noting that the Forest Plan is a guiding document much like a County Comprehensive Plan that paints the picture of future conditions. It lists allowable uses and suitable lands for different uses. At the District Level site specific projects are implemented all aimed at moving the land towards the goals and objectives as outlined in the Forest Plan. The Plan Revision is currently preparing a supplemental that will cover new information brought forward on the Gothic Shale Oil play. The Air Quality Analysis will also be updated. The initial draft is out and is located on the Forest Service Website.
- Noxious Weed Plan is underway and a draft is available.
- Potash Project which is a large scale exploration project using wells. It will evaluate surface disturbances.
- Kinder Morgan Trespass well. Kinder Morgan brought forward information on a well they drilled into federal minerals without authorization. They are working well on it and do not expect difficulties in straightening things out.
- Lower Disappointment Grazing analysis. Decision is pending. Western Watersheds is threatening a lawsuit. The Permittees have requested a Section 8 mediator.
- Habitat Improvement Project. Includes Hydro- Mowing and Prescribed burning. (San Miguel County)
- Desert Bighorn. Authorizes CDOW to transplant animals from one population to another area to increase population in Polk Canyon. Complete.
- Goodman Point (Heather Musclow from CANM) six wells on three pads NEPA complete and decision is imminent.

- McLean Basin Grazing Permit Renewal. (Heather Musclow from CANM) Assessment done, Capacities incorporated into Management Plan. Two decisions are made and working with permittees on 9 more. Long term trend data is being used to offset dry years etc.
- Aerial Application of Fire Retardant. Discloses effects of the fire retardant on the land so it can still be used.
- Land Management Planning Rule. Rules and regulations as disseminated by the Chief of the FS. In process of reworking the rule for NF Land management planning. Gives direction on how Forest Plans are written. Current plan is under the old rule.
- WAPA Power Line Maintenance. EIS because of multiple jurisdictions. Includes vegetation treatments.
- Forest Health. Planting project in Narraguinepp Bradfield fire area.
- Rock Springs Fuels. Combination tree cutting, prescribed burns and hydro-mowing. NEPA completed.
- Compass Exploration. Exploratory wells at Red Arrow Mine prospecting for gold.
- Doe Canyon Seismic project.
- Lower Glade. On hold.
- North Mancos EA project.
- Dolores Norwood Road Transfer. Linked to Boggy /Glade Decision expected at the end of February. On hold because of appeal.
- Townsend water transmission line. Proving up ROW.

It was suggested that the PLCC send a letter requesting additional information on each project. Dennis and Drew were asked to write the letter and that letter would be submitted to the BOCC.

Public input was taken.

An audience member asked if coordination was being done on any of the projects currently on the SOPA including Grazing and Oil and Gas. Gerald Koppenhafer responded that we have been notified but have not been meeting on any of them yet.

Steve Beverlin added that it was his impression that the PLCC had been set up for the sole purpose of being the liaison between the BOCC and the Federal Agencies for the purpose of coordination and it was my understanding that we were requested our presence here tonight to initiate that coordination process for the projects that were on

the SOPA. I just want to make sure that I have the correct understanding. If not I would like a clarification on what PLCC would like from us.

Zane Odell responded that he felt like this part of the coordination process and I feel like it is now our initiative to look through the SOPA and request specific items and we can coordinate through this.

Frank Greene added that we should have been doing this a year ago so that we would have been coordinating right now.

It was noted that we are just beginning to have input and the BOCC will be able to contact the FS to ask for coordination. It was also noted that input from the public is important.

Dennis Atwater noted that the Travel management plan affects everyone in the county but maintained that coordination had not been done through the plan so the plan was a flawed process and had to be started over. Projects that are coordinated through the County Government let the citizens have their voice.

Dave Duff expressed concern over access to 7000 acres of BLM lands at the foot of the Mesa Verde Escarpment noting that the lands are blocked off by the County Landfill. The County feels like they are following federal law by denying access. Issues regarding signage were also brought forward regarding the BLM lands west of the Airport. It was reported that the management solutions for that area including closing easements were unnecessary and could have been solved with a few signs establishing the rules.

Steve Wallace had concerns over 11 % AUM cuts on his permit and thought that it did not possible follow the County Land Use Code. He noted however that it appears that with further explanation there does not appear to be a conflict with the County Regulations.

Norm Zwicker expressed concerns over 50% cuts on his AUM which seemed excessive. Norm noted that while the BLM maintained that they were cooperating, he felt like he was the one doing most of the cooperating to come to the BLM numbers and it felt like things were pushed through fast and that he felt isolated. Another thing is that the economy did not seem to be analyzed as thoroughly as the environmental impacts.

Heather Musclow clarified that the 50% depended on how many AUMs you start with. But the one that you are referring to is the Adam Louie allotment and unfortunately it has a riparian area going right through it. The Land health assessment looks at four different functions; Plants; wildlife, soils and riparian (water function). That allotment was at risk in all four areas. We did do an economic analysis and in the long run if the land is not healthy it is not going to help the economically. So our objective is to get the land back into health and then get production back going so that livestock can benefit as well. If it continues to go down it does not help anyone.

Dennis Atwater asked how does the assessment of the land compare to the last time it was assessed ?

Heather replied that the land health assessment has only been done once but that they went out last summer to evaluate the land health parameters and it did not show signs of improving since 2001.

It was noted that the land health assessment was done in 2001 during the drought.

Heather replied that the land health assessment that compiled data from the 1960's on through was done in 2001. So we did want to look at several of those allotments again last year thinking this was a really good year as last winter was good. And basically what we saw was an increase in annuals that respond well to good rain but we are still hurting in those cool season perennials, which is what the concern is.

Matt Clark asked where the process was at now and Heather responded that they had met four times presented the data and then sent the permits. She felt like they were in agreement.

Norm added that all he has to go off of is what they tell me.

Dennis Atwater noted that it appears that that was a historic use of that land.

Zane added that the PLCC could request supporting information on those allotments.

Heather requested a letter directly to her.

Zane added that the PLCC would write another letter.

The next meeting was selected for Feb. 15 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00.