

Public Lands Coordination Commission

Meeting Minutes June 14, 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. Minutes were approved. Agenda was amended to allow citizens that were having issues with a motorized trail to voice their concerns.

- Concerns were voiced regarding the lower portion of Gold Run around Hesperus. Citizens have concern over lack of communication with the permit holders and with the construction of the cattle guard, fencing and location of the trail. There have been issues with the construction methodology which lacks H braces. Motorcycles are also running around the meadows where they are not supposed to go and venturing up cow paths out of the flats. They also have concerns that the transect for their permit are in the flat where motorized use can degrade the forage conditions. It was suggested that the Forest Service tap into the Trail Riders group for assistance in putting up cattle guards and fencing as well as maintenance. The Forest Service responded that they would be willing to work with volunteer groups to improve the situation and the Forest Service agreed to contact the concerned party and work with them to find a solution to the problem.

Other concerns regarding enforcement were also voiced but it was explained that trail violations were very difficult to enforce unless they are close to the trail head.

Old Business was reviewed;

Submitted comments on the new Forest Plan Rule were briefly discussed.

- The Glade Boggy Draw Travel Management Plan was then discussed. Montezuma County has been preparing comments in anticipation of the comment period being reopened. It was pointed out that there were several open houses scheduled where citizens can voice concerns & add comments. The Forest Service passed out information on upcoming open house meetings and public hearings. The Forest Service is reopening the comment period to really get the community involved to hear what they have to say. It will be a 30 day period but depending on what happens with the analysis there may be more opportunity for public comment.

The Forest Service explained that they would be using modified alternative B as a starting point for conversation but that they would really like to hear specific comments on particular roads & trails because the local citizens have intimate knowledge of the landscape up there and that information that they garner will help them make better management decision with the Plan because they are really trying to analyze the resource impacts of things and to find a balance.

Dennis Atwater voiced concern that information from the public is not reflected in the plans. Dennis pointed out that in Dolores County 89% of the comments asked for motorized big game retrieval the first time around. The Forest Service responded that it is not a voting process and that there are many comments coming in that disagree. Concern was expressed that the bulk of the comments on Forest Planning are form letters coming from extremist environmental groups. It appears that these organizations are driving the decisions for local communities where the forests exist.

Steve Chappell pointed out that there are only 20% of the hunters in Colorado that are successful. Only a handful of those use ATV's to retrieve game. The impacts could not be too much especially if it is at non peak hours.

Zane Odell asked if Motorized Game retrieval could be implemented as a trial run in specific Big Game Management Units.

The Forest Service explained that a similar scenario had been tried in Mesa County but that it had many problems and eventually it was discontinued.

Zane Odell asked if the County comments count for more than other comments. The Forest Service Responded that they do consider County Comments to be very important because Counties do have some jurisdiction over water quality.

Zane continued that as a coordinating county the county comments should be considered before citizen comments. The Forest Service responded that they desire to work together and that the County comments are very important and that is why they are here meeting every two weeks with you.

Steve Chappell pointed out that the one thing that has been left out is the economy and that the county has responsibility for ensuring the economy is healthy. The Forest Service responded that they plan to consider that.

- It was suggested that the Boggy Glade TMP and the road-less rule be the only two agenda items next time.
- A review of the after action review was given. The review looked at the road closures and methodology used so that modifications could be made to the remaining portions of the action that still needs to be wrapped up. Approximately 10% of the decommissioning effort remains. Alternatives to ripping and berming was looked at as well as ways to allow dispersed camping using existing disturbed areas.

- RS 2477 potential was discussed and it was reported that if courts recognized the claim the Forest Service will recognize the scope of that decision but the Forest Service cannot recognize or affirm any claims as that is the Courts duty. It was asked if the Forest service looks far enough ahead to avoid ripping and decommissioning roads that hold potential since they would be responsible for reopening roads that are closed and then found to be RS 2477. The Forest Service responded that they will be using more modified techniques for decommissioning such as boulders that would be easy to reverse. The Forest Service added that RS 2477 can be asserted by the State, County or individual but the courts ultimately validate that claim. Discussion over the TMP rules regarding RS 2477 was discussed and it was pointed out that the Forest Service should be aware of the rights of way. However it was also pointed out that a mapped & verified route was difficult to establish in many cases.

The next meeting date was selected for June 24 .

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

