



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SUSANVILLE DISTRICT OFFICE
705 Hall Street
Susanville, California 96130

12-26-90
IN REPLY REFER TO:

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DEC 26 1990

Dear Modoc-Washoe Committee Members:

Attached are the minutes from the October 23 and 24 meeting held in the Susanville District office. Please note any comments and changes, and bring them up at our next meeting, and we will make any corrections or additions.

In a departure from past practices, we did not enclose an agenda for the next meeting. The Executive Committee will set that agenda at a meeting on Tuesday, January 8, at 10 a. m. at the BLM Alturas Resource Area office. BLM State Director Ed Hastey will also attend that meeting to review the presentation we have planned for our visit to Washington, D. C. the week of Jan. 13, 1991. Our preparations for the Washington visit are coming along well. We have planned separate briefings for the Society for Range Management, key Congressional representatives and staffers, members of key interest groups, and staff members from the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture.

We will forward an agenda for the next meeting as soon as it is finalized. In the meantime, please accept my best wishes for a happy new year.

Sincerely,

for Joseph J. Fontana
J. Anthony Danna
Surprise Resource Area Manager

Attachment

MODOC WASHOE ESP
MEETING
TUESDAY, OCT. 23, 1990
SUSANVILLE BLM DISTRICT OFFICE

Unapproved Minutes

CALL TO ORDER, OPENING BUSINESS

Attendance: Herrick E. Hanks, Susanville BLM District Manager; Douglas G. Smith, Modoc National Forest Supervisor; Irvin E. Toler, Rich Heap, Fred Wright, Rick Delmas, John Lowrie, Jean Schadler, Tony Danna, Surprise Resource Area Manager; Ray Page, Barry Reiswig, Jim Stokes, John Weber, Joe Harris, Tom Ballow, Nancy Ballard, Modoc National Forest.

Meeting called to order by John Lowrie at 10:23 a.m.

AGENDA

Sheldon Planning Process moved to first day at request of Joe Harris. Consensus to move item.

Additions: Ray Page requests discussion of Modoc Forest Plan. Bin.

Next meeting date: Week of Feb. 4, location and exact dates to be set by executive committee.

Rick Hanks reviewed the bylaws and told the committee that the executive committee contains seven members. The committee agreed that the current executive committee will set the next committee meeting agenda, and new committee appointments will be made. The new committee will carry out business.

The next executive committee meeting will be held Jan. 8, 1991, at the Modoc National Forest headquarters in Alturas.

MINUTES:

The minutes were approved with the addition of one correction requested by Fred Wright. Moved, seconded, carried unanimously (MSCU) Delmas, Page.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Rick Delmas reported a balance of approximately \$1,700, and no checks have been written since the last meeting. A show of hands reveals that no members will request financial assistance for the SRM trip to Washington D. C.

ESP/CRMP CONFERENCE, RENO

Tony Danna: Hotel arrangements are finalized and promotional material has been mailed. The agenda has been changed since publication of the brochure. 450 brochures have been mailed, and a follow-up mailing of 300 is planned. News releases have been sent to national and regional agriculture publication and the article has been published in several to date. There have been some registration delays that could be attributed to the government budget stalemate. We will have space for 250 attendees, but the conference will break even financially with attendance of 100. Speakers have accepted invitations. Changes: Bill Anderson canceled, and has been replaced with a consultant from Consensus Associates.

SRM PRESENTATION IN DC

Rick Delmas: Modoc-Washoe has been notified of acceptance to make a presentation at the SRM national meeting in Washington D. C. We will have one hour on Jan. 13 as part of a symposium on CRM and ESP in the U. S. There will be several presentations in the symposium. The updated version of the Modoc-Washoe video will be presented. Rick and Jeff will be working to add new video to replace slides and unsatisfactory video. UC Davis studio will again be used. Rick and Jeff will also attempt to insert correction of narration.

Jean Schadler: Modoc-Washoe's part of the symposium will be "Many Mini Changes on the Range." We are in the beginning stages of developing the slide show and script.

Rick Delmas: We will also distribute updated, graphically enhanced versions of the 13 success stories developed over the years. Karen Shimamoto will help with graphic displays and development of a packet for SRM members. Doug Smith suggested that authors be given credit and each story should be dated. Author titles should be clearly identified.

John Lowrie and Rick Delmas asked the committee members to review the success stories carefully and get suggested changes to Karen by early November.

10 YEAR STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Tony Danna: Tony met in Boise on Sept. 4-6 to work with the other Stewardship areas to outline and format the 10 year report to be presented to Congress. A first draft is completed. The report will include sections on strengths, weaknesses, conclusions and recommendations to agencies. A summary:

Strengths: Development of trust, commitment, range improvements and other resource improvements, including riparian and wildlife habitat. The economics have been positive, with the outcome (doing things right the first time) worth the investment of time.

Weaknesses: The program is seen as not going far enough in the area of innovation and experimentation. Monitoring and followup is not occurring. The program suffers from an image problem. The "experimental" concept has been difficult to convey, and the program has suffered from a perception by some that little is being accomplished. More agency incentives, such as the grazing fee credit, are needed, and there needs to be more attention on commitment by those participating.

Recommendations: The report writing group is still "wide open" on this section. Strong suggestions on the future of the program are needed.

A draft document might be out for review by November. A final draft is targeted for release in time for the December conference in Reno. Committee members will also distribute the report during their visit to Washington, D. C.

Jean Schadler pointed out that the structure of the Washington SRM meeting seems to have changed from our earlier understanding. She feels the attendance will be primarily agency people. Jean said there is a need to get the Stewardship success stories to Congressional staffs. She suggested development of a strategy to reach key staff people and key Congressional Committees with the success story slide show and the 10-year Report. Plans should be made to present the material outside of the SRM sessions, as well as at the SRM symposium. Jean suggested that presentations should be kept to a total of 40 minutes -- 20 minutes for the presentation and 20 minutes for discussion.

John Lowrie agreed the committee should spend time "knocking on doors" in Washington. John, Jean Schadler, Tony Danna, Tom Ballow and John Weber will meet to develop a strategy for Washington contacts. Jeff Fontana will provide a listing on Congressional offices and Congressional committee assignments.

VACANCIES AND TERMS OF OFFICE/APPOINTMENTS

Rick Hanks and Doug Smith: Doug reported that members and agencies have received letters advising them of the need for reappointments to the steering committee. Doug has not yet heard from John Lowrie, Joe Harris, Terri Jay, Jean Schadler, John Laxague and Ray Page.

John Weber does not want to continue on the steering committee and the cattlemen's association must be contacted to nominate a new representative.

Discussion followed on the replacement of Terri Jay, who is no longer employed by the Nevada Wild Horse Commission. The Committee agreed that Terri should be contacted for ideas about a replacement.

The Modoc County Supervisors have decided to retain John Laxague as the elected government official.

The committee was told that the Warner Mountain permittees have renominated Ray Page to continue as their representative. Page has agreed.

Jean Schadler said she will send letters to her permittees asking for someone else to represent them on the steering committee. Jean expressed the opinion that she will continue on the committee.

The committee was reminded that two at large seats, the chairmanships and the vice chair positions must be filled. Jim Stokes will coordinate development of a list of candidates and report at the next meeting.

LUNCH

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

Fred Wright reported that a coalition of interested citizens is working on proposed legislation that would lead to a Congressional designation of the Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area in the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon of the Susanville and Winnemucca BLM Districts. (Fred has been attending coalition meetings to represent the interests of the Nevada Wildlife Federation and to act as a liaison between the coalition and the ESP steering committee). The coalition's primary focus is protection of the undisturbed sections of the emigrant trail from Ryepatch Reservoir in the Winnemucca District to 49 Pass in the Surprise Resource Area. The Congressional designation, as proposed by the coalition, would include wording to protect and preserve the emigrant trail's historic viewshed "to the fullest extent possible." Fred said one problem is that the trail preservationists want to preserve an "unviolated viewshed" which may or may not be feasible.

A map of the proposed boundaries was discussed, and Rick Hanks explained that the current proposal has grown to more than 1.5 million acres.

Responding to questions, Fred Wright said that private land could be acquired from willing sellers, that management of the area would be under multiple use principles, and that there have been discussions about development of a model vegetation management and grazing program which parallels the ESP concept. Fred said there have also been discussions of development of a program of experimentation to facilitate restoration. Fred explained that legislation, if passed, would direct BLM to develop a management plan for the NCA. Fred also explained that the legislation would call for establishment of an advisory council for the NCA. The council would be established under guidelines set forth by FLPMA.

There is no proposed water rights language. Fred said the viewshed issue has been a concern for the mining industry and questioned whether Nev. Sen. Richard Bryan would support a viewshed mineral withdrawal as large as the one supported by the trail preservationists.

Fred said no way has been found to directly write Stewardship into the proposed legislation.

Rick Hanks pointed out that strong players on the coalition have been the Oregon-California Trails Association and the Sierra Club. He summarized that the issue boils down to a question of protecting the trail with other resource issues secondary, or protecting the trail and resources of the area on an equal footing. He said BLM is pushing for the broader perspective.

Discussion continued about the viewshed protection being proposed by the trail preservationists, and Rick Hanks said a bill is pending to designate the trail as part of the National Historic Trail system. Rich Heap expressed a concern that some may be trying to use the viewshed issue to create a "defacto wilderness," and said that would be beyond the general intent of an NCA. Fred Wright added that a viewshed designation must be realistic to win the support of Sen. Bryan. He suggested the first priority should be to protect the physical aspects of the trail.

If consensus can't be reached Fred said he would be willing to let go of the idea.

Tom Ballow said there are no visible trail remnants across the Black Rock Desert playa, and that anything preserved there "would be a figment of your imagination."

Fred said the proposal may pose the opportunity to carry out what ESP has been attempting at High Rock. He said ESP could continue to function as a separate committee, voicing interest as a member of the NCA advisory board. He said a Congressional designation would bring the land to a higher status in the eyes of Washington officials and might result in additional funding being made available for personnel and on the ground work.

Rick Hanks explained that as proposed, the NCA would be jointly managed by the Susanville and Winnemucca Districts. He said an NCA proposal might present an opportunity to use the California and Nevada BLM offices to secure funding.

Jean Schadler expressed concerns about how the proposal would be used in the political arena. Would formation of this NCA be used as justification to move lands now administered by California's Surprise Resource Area under the jurisdiction of Nevada BLM? Jean called the proposal "extremely dangerous," and said there is no evidence that the NCA, once formed, would not be handed to the Winnemucca District for administration. She said there are many of her constituents who would not want to see that happen. Jean said she would feel more comfortable if the proposal crossed into California and possibly into Oregon, taking in all of the trails in the region. She said that arrangement, by necessity, would draw the Modoc National Forest and the Lakeview BLM District, lessening the chance of a "power struggle" between California and Nevada BLM. Jean also expressed concern with the future of the livestock industry if the NCA is designated. She said the past 10 years of Stewardship has resulted in the continuing survival of 45 families who make a living by producing food and fiber.

Jean said livestock industry representatives need to attend the coalition meetings to be sure their views are aired. Jean said if the coalition will not work with ESP, she will devote her efforts toward defeating the legislation. She said she could support a management plan, but opposes the legislation.

Ray Page also expressed concerns of a "land grab," said the area proposed is too large, and expressed concerns that the NCA could be used as a justification to reduce livestock numbers, adversely affecting the economic base in Surprise Valley. Ray said he might be able to support the proposal if a reduction in livestock numbers could be precluded by the NCA legislation.

The possibility of legislation guaranteeing livestock numbers was discounted by Rich Heap.

Fred Wright said he has heard the comment that some people would like to get the area under the control of Nevada BLM, but said he sees no such hidden agenda on the part of Sen. Bryan. If that were the underlying motive, Fred would oppose the idea. He said he sees nothing in the proposal that runs counter to what has been discussed in the ESP High Rock Subcommittee.

Rick Hanks commented that from a nationwide aspect, this is the direction in which BLM needs to move. He sees the proposal as a boost to BLM Nevada, in helping to move the agency into the full gamut of BLM responsibilities. BLM is recognizing its need to serve all of its publics. Rick explained the NCA would provide enhanced opportunities to protect the nationally important resource values, while allowing compatible uses.

Joe Harris commented that the proposal would detract from grazing values.

Rich Heap reminded the committee that the NCA proposal is a continuation of the national monument effort that started years ago. He said the NCA proposal struck members of the coalition as an opportunity to realize improvements in the area. He said the proposal is on a fast track.

Discussion continued about impacts on grazing.

Tom Ballow pointed out that the Black Rock Desert has nationally significant potential for geothermal, wind and solar energy production, and disagreed with eliminating the potential to develop those resources for preservation of a trail that is not visible on the desert playa. Tom said he would rather see a historic trail designation than a National Conservation Area.

Discussion continued on the size of the proposed mineral withdrawal, potential for increased federal funding, the need for and location of visitor centers.

Nancy Ballard, Resource Officer for the Modoc National Forest, said the NCA is an opportunity for the livestock industry to prove that we can graze livestock without damaging the resources. She suggested that it will be necessary to continue to prove that point.

MODOC/WASHOE ESP ROLE:

Rich Heap suggested that a member of the steering committee should express their concerns before the coalition, because many issues discussed at the steering committee meeting had never been broached before the commission.

Rick Hanks agreed, saying the coalition needs to hear the input from other public land users.

Jean Schadler acknowledged that the trail preservationists feel "as strongly about trails as we do about cattle." She said some sort of compromise position is needed. She suggested that Rick Hanks bring the Friends of High Rock, the Coalition and the ESP group together to discuss the issue.

John Lowrie suggested that the coalition be invited to make a presentation at the ESP steering committee meeting, so the coalition recognizes our concerns as valid.

The group reached consensus on a motion by Doug Smith that Rick Hanks be directed to address the coalition to make the views of the potential affected ESP interests known.

Jean Schadler also suggested that:

1. A determination be made as to whether the next version of the coalition's proposed legislation could be used as a tool to bring individuals together at a specified date;
2. The entire trail system should be studied to see whether there are advantages to the communities, trail resources and the region in expanding the protection area over the Warner Mountains. The possibility of multi agency administration, similar to that used on the Pacific Crest Trail, should be studied;
3. Off Highway Vehicle groups have not been sufficiently consulted and should be more involved.

Jean asked for a steering committee member to attend the next coalition meeting. No one offered.

SHELDON PLANNING PROCESS

Barry Reiswig distributed a handout and explained the background creating the wildlife refuge, and the fact that it is not a multiple use area. The primary use is to manage for 3,500 antelope.

A CRMP process was completed 10 years ago, and the current planning process was initiated in June 1989.

Major issues developed in a June workshop were livestock and wildlife interaction and roads management. Recommendations have been developed in both areas.

Problems identified include a mission that is often not being met, user conflicts (particularly with roads), and poor condition of riparian areas. There is even-aged decadent sagebrush over most of the area, which does not provide good sagegrouse and antelope habitat. A major restoration effort will be needed before moving to standard management, and that may take 20 years.

A discussion followed about FWS policy on feral horses and the relationship between ESP and the Sheldon.

Barry said the Sheldon currently supports 2000 antelope, below the management number of 3,500, but restoration of grasses and forbes will be needed in some areas to support the management number.

Barry also reported that Jim Clapp's wild horse group has been taking horses gathered from the Sheldon and placing them in adoption. He said the horses, not protected by the Wild Horse and Burro Act on the refuge, are causing a financial burden to gather because the FWS is not authorized to use helicopters.

Jean Schadler explained the historic relationship between ESP and the Sheldon is the permittees in common. She said there is a history of involvement to determine whether pressures are being shifted.

Rick Delmas voiced a concern about partial participation by the permittees in Sheldon land management issues.

TPL, BUNYARD TALKS
MASSACRE MOUNTAIN GRAZING DECISION

John Lowrie reported that exchange discussions have begun between TPL and Bob. He has not been privy to details. John said he is optimistic that an original goal of creating a win/win for Bunyard and launching point for other efforts may occur within a year.

Jean Schadler reported that the firm of Monday and Assoc. visited the week of Sept. 24 and completed a preliminary appraisal using the comparative sales method.

Tony Danna reported that the Massacre Mountain Grazing decision was protested by White Pine Ranch, who did not feel it was equitable. Bob Bunyard has also protested, saying he wants a combined season of use sheep permit. The Resource Area response is pending Susanville BLM District review.

A discussion followed about the steering committee members roles with regard to support of their constituents versus support of their individual agencies.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 24

The Meeting was called to order at 8:23 a.m. by John Lowrie.

In attendance: Ray Page, Tony Danna, Jim Stokes, John Weber, Doug Smith, John Lowrie, Barry Reiswig, Herrick E. Hanks, Jean Schadler, Tom Ballow. There being no quorum, John advised committee members they could take no action. All meeting activities will be advisory.

WILD HORSE PROGRAM -- ADOPTABILITY REPORT

Bill Phillips said his report is not final and presented information as valid through the end of September. Bill presented charts showing that the Susanville District's efforts at structured herd management is having a positive impact in increasing the percentage of horses adopted and reducing the amount of time that horses are held in sanctuaries and holding facilities. Bill said there is nothing new or unique about attempts to cull horse herds. Culling efforts have been ongoing for more than 400 years.

Bill feels the Susanville District effort is a success, but he still needs to convince others. He said the economics show a clear cost savings and that any other arguments about the program should be on biological or other concerns. Bill said he will attempt to have the report finalized for the December conference.

Questions and answers followed:

Jean Schadler requested Bill's response to allegations that structured management and increased horse gathering hassles the horses too much. Bill responds that gathering and releasing means that nearly twice the number of horses are gathered compared to traditional management, but offsetting the argument is the fact that unadoptable horses are released back onto the range rather than sent the more stressful conditions of holding facilities.

Rick Hanks reported that the subject was discussed at a recent BLM wild horse and Burro coordination meeting. John Boyles and some Nevada representatives voiced some concern, but the rest of the group felt that BLM should pursue the program on a bureauwide basis. Rick said the bureau is looking at ways to reduce the amount of time horses must be held, and the number sent to holding facilities.

John Lowrie suggested that this program should be reflected in an update of the ESP success story on wild horses.

MT VIDA EIS REVIEW

Karen Shimamoto summarized the comments received. The preferred alternative will be presented to the publics who voiced interest and had substantive comments. A subcommittee will work on Nov. 7 and 8.

Karen said 90 letters were received from individuals, groups and agencies. Comments covered a wide range of alternatives, particularly on timber harvest and road issues. Karen said a majority of comments were on the preservation, protection and conservative side, and only a few comments were received from commodity interests. There was overwhelming opposition to clear cutting, reflecting the feeling that it currently is a discredited timber harvest practice and no longer acceptable. There were strong feelings that the strength of the Mt. Vida area is for recreation. There was support for an increased capacity at the Cave Lake Campground, and support for a day use area at Lily Lake. There were also concerns voiced about riparian areas, roads and herbicide use.

There was some opposition to grazing, while others opposed grazing only in riparian areas. There were also proposed solutions, including riparian fences and closer cooperation with permittees.

Discussion followed about protection of pine martin habitat, and Karen reported that the pine martin habitat in the Mt. Vida areas is not suitable for timber harvest, so there should be no conflict. There could be some conflict with firewood cutters.

Jean Schadler suggested that workgroups need to identify the issues that need to be revisited in coming years, particularly where there might be conflicts.

MODOC NATIONAL FOREST PERSONNEL CHANGES

Karen Shimamoto will be leaving the MNF in mid November. A general discussion was held about the transition. Karen said Forest Resource Officer Nancy Ballard will be handling ESP matters and will be the key ranger district contact until a new district ranger is on board.

MODOC NATIONAL FOREST PLAN:

Doug Smith reported that the plan work group had wide representation and that many suggested changes were implemented. Doug said he feels the Modoc plan had the most in depth review of any forest plan in California, but he still expects appeals. Doug said he hopes to resolve conflicts on an area by area basis.

Doug Smith also announced that Regional Forester Paul Barker has announced his retirement effective Oct. 30.

NEW BLM MISSION STATEMENT AND LONG TERM GOALS

Rick Hanks handed out a new BLM mission statement and long term goals announced by Director Cy Jamison.

TULEDAD OBJECTIVES -- PROGRESS OF TEAM

Richard Westman distributed a report and explained that the team effort began with an objective writing visit to the Tuledad allotment. The goal was to determine clear, measurable objectives that could be agreed upon by everyone.

Richard summarized the findings of the report and asked for comments and corrections.

John Lowrie said he was encouraged by the progress made and commended the group for their work.

LIVESTOCK/BIG GAME REPORT

Jean suggested the group invited Jim Connelley, Public Lands Council, Nevada; Bob McQuivey, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Nevada; and John Inman, Forest Supervisor, Humboldt National Forest, Nevada to attend next meeting to discuss the report.

A general discussion followed about the growing issue of elk population increases, and the conflict they can have on other users.

OTHER BUSINESS

The committee voted to give Jean Schadler and John Lowrie authority to use funds to make arrangements for the January visit to Washington D. C. (MSCU, Page, Weber). Jean said an effort needs to be made to get wildlife representatives to accompany the group to Washington, but now **only livestock industry representatives will be attending**. Tony Danna expressed hope that the December conference will turn a profit and funds can be made available.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.