

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION GROUP MEETING NOTES

January 23, 2002

Participants: MJ Byrne-BLM, Charlie Chambers-Idaho Army National Guard, Jeff Cook-Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Ken Crane-Idaho Department of Agriculture, Jim Desmond-Owyhee County Natural Resource Committee, Chad Gibson, Mary Jones-BLM, Jack Peterson-BLM, Dick Sheehan-Idaho Army National Guard, John Sullivan-BLM, Wes Whitworth-Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

Observer and Presenter: Mike Harty-CDR Associates

Facilitator: Marsha Bracke, Bracke & Associates, Inc.

Meeting purpose

The Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG) met for the second time on Wednesday, January 23 in the BLM Lower Snake River District Office Conference Room from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting objectives were to:

- Confirm a shared understanding of ICG framework
- Provide updates on specific Resource Management Plan (RMP) activities
- Obtain feedback from the group on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) approach to conducting the socio-economic analysis, and to
- Share and begin to develop a common understanding of RMP guidance and sideboards (BLM and other intergovernmental entities)

Marsha Bracke, Bracke & Associates (under contract to North Country Resources and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution), who provides the neutral process support to the BLM RMP effort) facilitated the meeting. Marsha maintained meeting conclusions, feedback and action items on flip chart notes as a record of the group meeting. Those flip chart notes are included as Attachment A.

Results

ICG Purpose and Objectives.

The ICG confirmed the group's statement of purpose, objectives, and expectations for when meetings will be held. Those are:

ICG Purpose:

The ICG is a group of intergovernmental entities meeting to:

- Increase two-way information sharing about natural resource guidance, documents, data and initiatives to ensure that information is considered, and to
- Assist in resolving inconsistencies between federal and non-federal plans.

ICG Objectives:

- Pursue opportunities to develop complimentary and coordinated plans with agencies and local governments
- Serve as liaison with state and federal agencies, counties and communities
- Review and comment on issues to be addressed, alternatives formulation, and draft documents to identify potential inconsistencies with existing agency and local government plans and ongoing management initiatives
- Coordinate the sharing of data
- Assist in identifying opportunities for public involvement

The group confirmed that it expects to conduct meetings at the following junctures:

- Prior to finalizing issues to be addressed
- Prior to finalizing alternatives to be analyzed
- Prior to finalizing decision documents so the ICG will have the opportunity to comment on consistency of issues and areas of concern
- At the request of any of the members

The group stated its preference to not develop a group charter. It acknowledged that those not present at a given meeting would learn about meeting results by reading the meeting documentation. Regarding meeting dates, participants indicated a preference for three weeks meeting notice rather than develop a regular meeting schedule. Given the confusion regarding this meeting's start time (those contacted by telephone were told 9 a.m. and a BLM letter of invitation mistakenly identified the meeting time as 8 a.m.), participants requested identifying a standard meeting start time (9 a.m.) for any future meeting.

Updates and points of interest.

Scoping Meeting. Mike O'Donnell (BLM) provided an informal summary of the six scoping meetings held to date, describing some specifics including participation by the horse, rock hound and environmental communities, time spent visiting with ranchers at the meeting at Rimrock, and the BLM's commitment to follow-up by finding the most meaningful way to involve the public in future issues bundling and alternatives development activities. The issues participants wrote on flip charts during those six scoping meetings are in the process of being transcribed.

Jim Desmond said that while the scoping meeting process may have been effective at other meetings and in urban settings, he thought the Rimrock meeting was not. There he said the crowd was homogeneous and all sought the same answers to the same questions respective to grazing. Jim found it frustrating that the group was asked to participate in the open house setting rather than maintain participants in a group setting (following the BLM presentation) to answer questions in front of everyone. He said that the ranchers weren't comfortable writing on flip chart pages, and that it wasn't immediately clear where to go for grazing information.

Mike acknowledged that he did spend the bulk of that meeting sitting together with those ranchers who sought specific answers to specific questions, that grazing issues were captured with some of the other resource issues, and that he created the grazing chart specifically at that time, encouraging ranchers to write their comments, and volunteering to write them for those who were uncomfortable committing their comments to writing in that format.

Mike said BLM seeks to identify the way in which different interests and individuals want to be most meaningfully involved in this process, and hopes that the assessment process will be conducive to providing that information.

Assessment tool and process—Mike Harty, CDR. Mike Harty from CDR Associates in Boulder, CO was at the meeting to introduce himself and describe the assessment process. CDR Associates is under contract through the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to provide the assessment tool and process.

Mike described how the assessment is conducted. He will conduct informal personal interviews with stakeholders doing everything possible to ensure a range of perspectives is represented. He will be seeking information about perspective, issues and participation needs and interests. Mike pointed out that he will not be able to interview everyone, and didn't want to create the expectation that that would be the case, but he did ask ICG participants to provide the names of those individuals who they thought should be interviewed. Once he starts to hear the same information repeatedly, the interview process will stop. Mike will write a report following the interview process summarizing the results. He will be in the area for two different weeks in February and perhaps another time to conduct the interviews.

Bundling of identified issues and concerns. Mike O'Donnell said that the bundling of identified issues and concerns will be the next big public process and will also involve the ICG. While BLM does not yet know what that public process will look like, BLM has made the commitment to involve the public in the bundling process. He said that the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) RMP Subcommittee is developing a proposal for RAC involvement in the bundling process, and it may include some form of public outreach and involvement. BLM does not yet know what this involvement process will look like. There is some thought that some of the bundling may have to be done by a smaller group before going to a larger group. Raw issues as well as the "bundled" issues will be made available.

Mike also mentioned the role of planning criteria and how to communicate what will and will not be in and out of scope and why. The ICG will be sent a draft copy of the planning criteria BLM develops and the raw list of issues prior to the group's next meeting. The ICG will also discuss the bundling process and, if possible, review the draft bundling results accomplished at this time. These items were written on flip chart notes as agenda items for the group's next meeting.

OHV Route Designation Process. Mike O'Donnell pointed out that OHV route designation joins the Snake River Birds of Prey and Bruneau Planning Unit as the third of the big planning efforts undertaken by the BLM. He said that OHV work will include specific route designation, and the process is beyond what BLM can do without significant help from others. He learned during the scoping meetings that members of the public are interested in helping with the inventory and mapping process. Jeff Cook, Idaho Parks and Recreation (IP&R) said that they have equipment and seasonal staff who can be made available to help with the inventory and mapping process. Mike and Jeff will follow-up independent from this meeting to pursue that opportunity.

GIS database (Automated Geographic Reference Center). Mike O'Donnell described his efforts to work with the Natural Resource Committee (a self-initiated group of director-level federal and state agencies with responsibilities for land management and natural resources) to stimulate the development of a statewide database for the benefit of all. A presentation he was to make to the group in December was delayed until February when that meeting was cancelled, but Mike is aware of this group's interest and interest from the Governor's office in developing such a resource. Mike described the work accomplished in Utah and their willingness to share lessons learned with folks in Idaho.

Socio-economic analysis.

Mike O'Donnell summarized the discussions undertaken about the socio-economic analysis so far, and solicited feedback from the group respective to their thoughts on the project's scope, approach, and opportunity to pursue support from the Sonoran Institute.

Chad Gibson (Owyhee County) gave specific feedback respective to the need for an economic analysis to do more than what was accomplished in the Owyhee RMP; he sought an analysis that looked at specific impacts of specific activities in consideration of a number of variables that may affect them. Chad's comments were recorded on flip chart notes and, to provide additional information, Chad agreed to put his comments in writing so that those could be considered as BLM further pursued an arrangement to complete a socio-economic analysis.

BLM specifically asked for information about experience with the "socio" aspect of the analysis, but none was forthcoming. Some responses to the discussion were to investigate methodologies used at Colorado State University and Utah State University, and the sense that those methodologies might get at Chad's concerns; a perception that the Sonoran Institute might be too "green" to be considered credible by Owyhee County residents; recommendations to go to the County and the Department of Commerce for economic data; and an offer by IP&R to provide survey information currently available and perhaps even conduct another survey to produce the type of data that might be useful in this context. This and other feedback are recorded on the flip chart notes.

Ultimately, the group asked for an opportunity to look more closely at all of the options available (Sonoran Institute, unsolicited proposals, CSU and USU, and Request For Proposal (RFP)) before providing more specific comments. With that intent, Mike O'Donnell will solicit a proposal from the Sonoran Institute to share with the group to get

their feedback on its strengths and weaknesses and what elements may be included in an RFP.

Resource Management Plan guidance and sideboards

Mike O'Donnell provided some background respective to the draft document outlining and references the guidance and sideboards by which BLM is required to conduct its planning process. This document was developed in response to the ICG's request at its November meeting, and is an attempt to capture volumes of references, citations, guidelines, requirements and constraints that influence the planning process. It is anticipated that these references will be instrumental in communicating sideboards for decision-making to the public and as a tool for the ICG when it begins its work on resolving inconsistencies among federal and non-federal plans.

BLM is also seeking to develop a library of other entity's guidelines and sideboard for reference during the RMP process. Owyhee County has two plans—its Comprehensive Plan and its Land Use Plan, that it wants to ensure is on that list, and IP&R has guidelines it will provide as well.

Given participants' need for an opportunity to review the BLM draft document, the group decided to review the document subsequent to this meeting and get back to Mike with comments and suggestions for other items to consider.

Action Items

1. Marsha Bracke will deliver draft meeting documentation to the BLM on Thursday, January 24, 2002
2. Mary Jones will revise the minutes to add a specific reference to the Owyhee County planning documents and delete the parenthetical reference to the Owyhee Initiative
3. Jim Desmond will provide BLM with copies of materials describing the organizing of the Owyhee Initiative for BLM to include in its distribution of materials to the ICG as soon as possible
4. Chad Gibson will put his comments about conducting an economic analysis in writing and provide it to BLM within three weeks after he receives a copy of the information BLM will provide about the Sonoran Institute
5. All ICG participants are invited to provide to Mike Harty of CDR Associates names of individuals who they recommend for interviewing during the assessment process
6. Mike O'Donnell and Jeff Cook will follow-up and meet independently to explore the opportunity to coordinate inventory/mapping work for OHVs
7. Mike O'Donnell will get a proposal to conduct socio-economic analysis from the Sonoran Institute and send it to the ICG as soon as possible
8. ICG participants will look at the Sonoran Institute propose in terms of its strengths and weaknesses and provide comments respective to those, and what might go into a potential RFP for socio-economic work, to Mike O'Donnell within three weeks of receiving a copy of the proposal. Follow-on work

- respective to that will be pursued by a subcommittee of this group convened by BLM.
9. ICG participants will read and comment on the draft “Guidelines and Sideboards” document provided by BLM and provide their comments, questions, and contribute additional guideline and sideboard information to Mike within three weeks. This information will form the basis of the next meetings’ discussion on this topic.
 10. BLM will send the meeting notes, revised meeting minutes from the last meeting, Owyhee Initiative information as provided by Jim Desmond, and the Sonoran Institute proposal information if available by the end of next week.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be coordinated by BLM on a date to be determined by the status of the process. BLM will send a meeting notification, agenda, and background information three weeks prior to the meeting, which will be scheduled to start at 9 a.m.

The next meeting agenda includes a:

- Review and discussion of the draft planning criteria, to be provided in advance
- Review of the raw list of scoping issues, to be provided in advance
- Discussion of the bundling process, with a review of draft results to date as available, and
- Review and discussion of the results of input to the draft Guidelines and Sideboards effort.