

Park County WPLI Advisory Committee | MINUTES

November 22, 2016 | 3:00 – 5:00 pm | Park County Courthouse Alternate EOC Room

Meeting called by Bucky Hall, Park County Commissioner and WPLI Committee Chair

Type of meeting Advisory Committee

Facilitator Tara Kuipers, UW Extension NW Area Community Development Educator

Attendees

Committee Members: Bucky Hall, Lee Livingston, JD Radakovich, Jenny DeSarro, John McGee, Chris Bekes, Karinthia Harrison, Rick Harrison, Phyllis Preator, Doug Smith, Hap Ridgway, Dustin Rosencranse, Greg Mayton, John Gallagher, Rori Renner, Joe Kondelis; Facilitator Tara Kuipers, Committee Secretary Shaunna Romero

Other Attendees: Paul Spitler, Director, The Wilderness Society; John Osgood, citizen; Loren Grosskopf, Park County Commissioner

Absent: Michael Hirsch, Wes Allen, Bob Jackson, Chris Pfister

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 18 – 5:00 p.m.

AGENDA TOPICS

Approval of Minutes |

August 24 WPLI Advisory Committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented to the committee via email.

Discussion: McCullough Peaks WSA

On Saturday, October 22 the Park County WPLI committee members traveled drivable areas within the McCullough Peaks WSA to gain a better understanding of the WSA's geology & ecology, its current uses and management and location of the designated areas according to the BLM FEIS.

Joining WPLI committee members on the field trip were Paul Rau, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner / McCullough Peaks WSA use management; Doug McWhirter, Wyoming Game & Fish Biologist; Holly Kennedy, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Field Services & Federal Lands Associate; Gregory Cowan, Wyoming County Commissioners Association Natural Resource Staff Attorney; Park County Commissioners Joe Tilden and Loren Grosskopf; local OHV Club members; members of the media and local citizens. Invited but not attending were the five grazing permittees who hold allotments within the McCullough Peaks WSA: Jones Trust; Clark Ventures, LLC; Bell Land and Cattle; Dave & Paula Flitner; and Rafter Reverse Four Ranch, LLC.

- Led by WPLI committee member Phyllis Preator, the tour included: overview from McCullough Peaks Road & Whistle Creek Road; 8,000 acre "core strip" boundary based on BLM information; discussion of current grazing lessee(s) on/near the property; discussion of current recreational uses. Preator obtained permission for the group to have lunch at the old stone barn on land owned by
- Paul Rau (BLM) answered questions about current management of the WSA.

- Doug McWhirter (G&F) gave an overview of the animals found on the WSA (primarily antelope, some deer, potentially the McCullough Peaks horse herd, sage grouse).

WPLI Chairman Bucky Hall opened the November 22 committee meeting and called for discussion of how the McCullough Peaks WSA should be used and managed. He thanked Phyllis Preator for her work to organize and lead the field trip. Preator provided a review of the field trip, pointing out areas on the WSA map displayed on the projector screen.

Facilitator Tara Kuipers reminded the group that there might not be an existing designation that fits the desired use(s). The committee can tailor designation(s) according to the desired use(s). Kuipers reiterated that at this stage the goal is to decide values, uses and management for the area, to start a conversation about what the group really wants to see happen with the McCullough Peaks WSA, what the “ideal picture” would be.

The committee would like to consider additional information related to:

- Any existing oil leases and their status
- Grazing
 - potential impact of different use designations
- Existence of archeological sites and status
- ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern)
 - it was noted that the ACEC is not within the WSA (location is SW of the WSA)
 - status / activity of the ACEC (climate research project)
 - access needs
- Wild Horse Management Area
 - water sources needs
 - horses’ range
 - potential management impact of different use designation
- Possibility of “trade” (State-owned section)
- Management enforcement

Additional discussion

Roads and primitive routes in the WSA: members posed the possibility of keeping them as they are versus considering restricting travel to one main road or designating part of the WSA as roadless. It was noted that the roads and primitive routes are already part of the BLM’s current approved management plan. Others commented that the WSA is managed as a multiple use area now. It was also suggested that limiting the usage types would improve both enforcement of usage rules and the public’s understanding of them.

Considering wilderness designation was proposed by committee members. The question was raised of what Congress might ultimately be willing to pass and whether “piecemealing” the designations would make it more complicated. Another committee member asked how best to present the proposal to make it “palatable” to legislators, and what the successes of similar legislation has been.

Paul Spitler, director of the Bozeman, MT, Wilderness Society, was in attendance. Chairman Hall asked Spitler to comment on his experience in writing legislation. Spitler said he “has worked on more land bills than he can count, in collaborative settings like this one.” Spitler said the committee is on the right track in talking about what kind of uses they want to allow, and once that’s determined “we can write designation that fits it.” He said it was possible to have one piece designated as wilderness and other parts as other uses. “The process you’re doing right now is to identify what uses you want and where those are useful.” Spitler offered to come back at some point and “walk the

committee through” it. Spitler went on to say that in his experience the most successful efforts in getting legislation passed start at the local level, are consensus driven and move upwards from there to Congress. Those that aren’t successful are those that lack consensus at the local level, with one group trying to steamroll others. Spitler said his role is to try to help groups figure out areas of agreement, present that proposal to area legislation and let them present it from there.

Members of the group communicated their readiness to start noting specific desired needs for the different areas. Committee co-chair Lee Livingston suggested working on a large map and breaking it into sections to determine current uses and desired uses, including proposed new uses.

A committee member reminded the group that Park County’s recommendations for the WSAs will be packaged with the other counties’ (the legislative package will be written by the WCCA) and presented in one bill for the entire state of Wyoming.

Discussion of options for usage continued. A committee member noted that there is no point in replicating the existing BLM land management properly and suggested the group consider if it believes current management is appropriate. Chairman Hall reminded the group that its goal is to work toward removing the current WSA designation.

At their January 18 meeting the group will work on a map of the McCullough Peaks WSA, considering current designations as a baseline and identifying desired uses. BLM representation will be requested (invited are Delissa Minnick, Cody Field Office Manager; Paul Rau, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner / McCullough Peaks WSA use management; Trish Hatle, BLM Wild Horse Herd Area Management Specialist).

High Lakes WSA Field Trip

The High Lakes field trip is targeted for mid-March or early April. The committee will request assistance from Ken Ostrom (USFS) on mapping information when the High Lakes WSA is visited.

Update on US Forest Service High Lakes WSA presentation

The committee continues working to coordinate with the Forest Service to schedule their presentation. Shoshone National Forest Supervisor Joe Alexander anticipates staff availability at the end of January or early February.

Public Comment

Commissioner Loren Grosskopf addressed the committee, noting the BLM has responsibility for the WSA’s land management and at the end of the process the uses have to be within the framework of what the BLM can manage. Grosskopf suggested it might save time if the committee asked BLM what it would look like if all multiple use was turned back and the WSA was eliminated. With that knowledge, the committee could then add on the things it would like to do that are not part of normal BLM land use. Grosskopf said the BLM would be able to manage the wild horse herd.

Closing

Hall asked the group to review resources including:

- [BLM's National Landscape Conservation Lands \(NLCS\)](#) PowerPoint and referenced documents
- [Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area](#) and its enabling [legislation](#) (see Subtitles C & D for cooperative management direction)

Additional resources provided by committee member John Gallagher:

- <https://www.imba.com/resources-landprotection/companion-designation-toolkit>
- <http://www.wilderness.net/NWPS/landClassifications> has a list of current companion designations in use and a brief description of each.

The meeting was adjourned.