

Park County WPLI Advisory Committee | MINUTES

July 27, 2016 | 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm | Park County Courthouse Alternate EOC Room

Meeting called by	Bucky Hall, Park County Commissioner and WPLI Committee Chair	Attendees
Type of meeting	Advisory Committee	Committee Members: Bucky Hall, Chris Pfister, Jenny DeSarro, John McGee, Bob Jackson, Christine Bekes, Karinthia Harrison, Doug Smith, Rick Harrison, Phyllis Preator, Hap Ridgway, Dustin Rosencranse, Greg Mayton, John Gallagher, Rori Renner, Joseph Kondelis; committee secretary Shaunna Romero
Facilitator	Tara Kuipers, UW Extension NW Area Community Development Educator	Other Attendees: Delissa Minnick, BLM; Paul Rau, BLM; Tim Woolley, Game & Fish; Park Co. Commissioner Loren Grosskopf; Steff Cossler, Wyoming Outdoor Council; Jessi Johnson, Wyoming Wildlife Federation/ Wyoming Sportsmen's Alliance; CJ Baker, Powell Tribune; Cassandra Sturos, Cody Enterprise
Note taker	Shaunna Romero, Park County Commissioners' Exec. Asst. & WPLI Committee Secretary	Absent: Wes Allen, Michael Hirsch, JD Radakovich, Don Schmalz, Tara Kuipers, Lee Livingston

NEXT MEETING

(tentative) Wednesday, August 24 – 3:00 p.m. – Alternate EOC Room, Park County Courthouse Addition
Presenter: *(tentative, pending confirmation)* Sue Stresser, Shoshone National Forest North Zone District Ranger presenting on the High Lakes WSA

AGENDA TOPICS

Approval of Minutes | Approval of WPLI Committee Final Charter

The June 7 WPLI Advisory Committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

The final WPLI committee charter was unanimously approved.

It was noted that the scope to be undertaken by the WPLI committees, as defined in the WCCA's WPLI Principles and Guidelines ("While WSA designations will serve as the launching pad and anchor for the WPLI, county advisory teams are encouraged to look more broadly at long-standing land use challenges and build consensus based agreements using whatever tools at their disposal to reach agreement"), differs from the Park County Commission's intent, to limit the scope to only the WSAs.

McCullough Peaks WSA – BLM Presentation | Delissa Minnick, Field Manager, Cody Field Office; Paul Rau, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner, Cody Office

The presentation on McCullough Peaks WSA included an overview of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and FLPMA 1976, Sections 201 & 603; WSA meaning; BLM's inventory, study and reporting processes; and WSA management, uses & comparisons.

Cody Field Office Manager Delissa Minnick discussed the BLM's initial inventory process (1978-1980) and study of the McCullough Peaks (EIS draft issued June of 1984) to determine its manageability as a WSA: Can it be managed as wilderness according to the Wilderness Act of 1964? Considerations were impacts to wilderness values, water quality, exploration and development of leasable, locatable and salable minerals, recreational off-road use, livestock

grazing, wildlife habitat and populations, threatened and endangered species, wild horse management, cultural and paleontological resources and impacts to predator control.

Following the BLM study, the final recommendation was developed with possibilities for wilderness designation in 1990 [Final Grass Creek/Cody Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)]. Options in the FEIS included (1) Conflict Reduction Alternative I, with 23,580 acres recommended for wilderness designation; (2) Conflict Reduction Alternative II, 8,020 acres; (3) All Wilderness Alternative, 25,210 acres; (4) Wilderness Manageability Alternative, 29,590 acres; (5) No Wilderness Alternative, 0 acres.

BLM's 1991 Wyoming Wilderness Study Report Statewide Overview recommended 8,020 acres be designated as wilderness (Conflict Reduction Alternative II). Only an Act of Congress can create wilderness designation. As no action by Congress has been taken to date, the WSA is managed so as not to impair wilderness characteristics (Management Class I), in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, BLM Handbook H-8550/Manual 6330, Instruction Memorandum No. 2000-96, and under the 1990 Cody Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The 2004 McCullough Peaks Travel Management Plan (TMP) designated roads within the general McCullough Peaks area and primitive routes open for motorized use within the WSA (approx. 20 miles). Minnick said the 2015 Bighorn Basin RMP Revision does not contain significant changes from the 1990 RMP.

In the event the WSA be fully released, its management would be consistent with the surrounding area - under an interim plan first and ultimately determined through a public process of analysis.

Paul Rau, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner and responsible for the WSA's use management, provided explanation of the difference between roads, trails and primitive roads. Rau said, for wilderness inventory purposes, criteria as defined in the 2015 RMP process are used that include (*in no particular order*) whether (1) a linear feature defining a road exists; (2) it was constructed at one time; (3) it is maintained; (4) it is still in use, and type and frequency of use; (5) a legal ROW is in place; (6) it was created by vehicle passage; (7) and, what it looks like at the time of inventory. If it's concluded all criteria are met, it is designated as a road. A primitive route is a linear path created by passage of a vehicle, but was/is not formally constructed and does not meet road criteria.

Rau explained how travel management under the BLM RMP would be administered if the WSA was designated as one of two options presented in the BLM's 1990 FEIS (Wilderness vs no Wilderness).

It was noted that the WPLI committee can present for recommendation to the county commission any combination of resource management levels for the WSA. The WPLI is not limited to the BLM FEIS recommendations / designations.

Boundaries of the WSA are marked by roads or by natural features such as cliff faces, escarpments, drainages.

The WSA contains a 640 acre 'landlocked' State of Wyoming parcel. Potential for exchange for lands outside of the WSA was suggested. Minnick said it would require vetting, including an appraisal of the land.

The WSA contains a 640 acre split estate parcel.

The WSA is partially bordered by an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Changes since the 1984 BLM study altering the WSAs are:

- Scientific study activity at the Willwood Formation

- Erosion, piping, sink holes

- Increased pressure from motorized recreation

- No changes warranted to the 2004 TMP – management is as-needed (any / all changes are public process)

There is no economic difference in management costs for the WSA versus other BLM non-WSA lands.

Tim Woolley, Game & Fish Wildlife Management Coordinator, provided an overview of the biological aspects of the WSA including seasonal ranges and wildlife leks.

There are no critical habitats in the WSA.

There are no crucial winter range areas in the WSA.

No fisheries resources exist in the WSA.

No breeding bird surveys exist in the WSA. Surveys of species populations are conducted when a need is presented. Observation data is broadly collected and queries by species not necessarily accurate representation of actual numbers.

There are no conflicts with sage grouse core areas (core areas defined per Wyoming Sage Grouse Core Area Protection Executive Order, version 4).

Pronghorn antelope hunting area 78 overlaps the McCullough Peaks. The hunting area is much larger overall, averaging 322 licenses issued annually with about 84% success rate in the whole area.

Mule deer general hunting area 122 with approx. 1440 licenses issued annually, depending on flux of populations and approx. 52% success rate.

Elk area 54 partially lies in McCullough Peaks; however, no elk are known to be here. In area 54 overall, 488 licenses are issued annually with approx. 36% success.

A committee member requested crucial habitat and core area information for the state. Woolley said all crucial habitats / core areas are identified in the BLM RMP.

A member of the public in attendance and requesting to speak was Jesse Johnson, representing the Wyoming Wildlife Federation and Wyoming Sportsmen's Alliance. Johnson said the organizations' values are access, wildlife and habitat. She shared the Park County-specific land impact study with economic data for hunters and anglers.

Closing | Commissioner Hall

Committee Chairman Bucky Hall asked the group to think about dates to visit to the WSAs. Nothing was decided.

Next meetings: (tentative based on agency availability)

Wednesday, August 24 -- Forest Service / Game & Fish presentations: High Lakes WSA

The meeting was adjourned.

Requested Resources

https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/9506/58518/63310/BB_PRMP_FEIS.pdf

2015 Bighorn Basin Resource Management Plan
Revision Project Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and
Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Requested Resources

https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/9506/19700/20212/BBDRMPDEIS_Build_PrintPDF.pdf Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/DEIS)

https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/9506/43704/46981/BB_RMP_SEIS_Chapters_1-6.pdf Supplement to the Bighorn Basin Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/9506/44731/48235/ACEC_Report.pdf Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Evaluation Report Bighorn Basin Resource Management Plan Revision Project

http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wy/programs/planning/rmps/bighorn/docs.Par.73005.File.dat/Rec_TravelMgmt_Report.pdf Bighorn Basin Resource Management Plan Revision Project Summary of the Recreation and Travel Management Workshops

http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Information_Resources_Management/policy/im_attachments/2006.Par.69739.File.tmp/im2006-173attach2.pdf BLM Roads & Trails Terminology Report 2006

<http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Planning/rmps/bighorn/docs.html> Big Horn Basin RMP Revision Document Library

http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/news_room/2016/july/18cyfo-SRP.html BLM Releases Analysis of McCullough Peaks Special Recreation Permit Program