

**Minutes of the
EUREKA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION**

The Eureka County Natural Resources Advisory Commission (NRAC) held a public meeting on March 11, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the County Administrative Facility, Eureka Nevada.

Members Present: Jim Baumann, Chairman, Carl Slagowski, Vice-Chair, Ken Conley, Chad Bliss, Paul Etzler, and Gary McCuin, Ari Erickson, and Jerry Todd

Members Absent: Mike Rebaleati

Others Present: J.J. Goicoechea, Eureka County Commissioner, Rich MacKay, Eureka County Commissioner, Lance Knudson, Local Rancher, George Fennemore, Nevada Gold Mines (NGM), Kim Wolf, NGM, Jesse Watts, Eureka County Sherriff, and Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County Natural Resource Manager

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Baumann at 6:02 p.m., a quorum was determined to be present.

Public Comment

None.

** The board jumped to the presentation from Nevada Gold Mines representatives on the Goldrush Project. After the presentation, the board continued on with the meeting following the regular agenda schedule.*

Commission Business

Approval of agenda notice with addition of any emergency item and/or deletion of any item.

Carl Slagowski motioned to approve the agenda as written. Ari Erickson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes from February 19, 2020 Meeting.

Mr. Slagowski motioned to approve the February 19, 2020 minutes, with the correction of two typos on pages 984 and 988. Jerry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Member Updates and Reports.

Gary McCuin reported there is a Wild Horse and Burro Summit in Casper, Wyoming May 27-29, 2020.

Discuss correspondence and natural resource issues affecting Eureka County and consider action items for the next agenda.

Jake Tibbitts informed the board that Mike Rebaleati will be resigning from NRAC, but will stay on until a replacement is found. Once a replacement is found, Mr. Tibbitts will put an item on the County Commissioners agenda to accept Mr. Rebaleati's resignation. The open spot on the board has been posted.

The board and Mr. Tibbitts discussed various correspondence topics that are currently happening in and around Eureka County.

Recently, an EA was released regarding Mormon crickets and grasshoppers. The impacts of baiting the Mormon crickets and grasshoppers are being analyzed on public land. This is not an agenda item, however, Mr. Tibbitts just wanted the board to be aware.

The record of decision (ROD) was recently released allowing the BLM to move forward with their growth suppression study for fertility control on wild mares. Currently, BLM is in the appeal period following the release of the ROD. The Board and County Commissioners provided comment to the BLM on this study back in December.

The NEPA Regulations comment period ended yesterday, March 10, 2020. The county commissioners did provide a comment. If anyone wants the final letter, please let Mr. Tibbitts know and he will provide that.

At the end of April there is a Raven Workshop in Elko. This workshop will help address any issues with Ravens. If anyone else wants more information, let Mr. Tibbitts know. The workshop is scheduled for April 21-23, 2020.

A weed extravaganza course is taking place next week. It is a crash course pesticide training. This course helps train you and prepare you to take the test to get an applicator's license. There is another course held here in the annex on March 24 via video streaming.

District court Judge Estes recently ruled on the Southern Nevada Water Authorities (SNWA) and upheld the State Engineers (SE) decision. Judge Estes rejected the proposed 3M plan. The next step for the SNWA is to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The Central Nevada Regional Water Authority (CNRWA) is meeting this Friday here in Eureka. The meeting will be held in the commissioner chambers. Mr. Tibbitts said he will be giving a short presentation on high level issues in Diamond Valley. If anyone is interested in attending, they are welcome to join.

Ari Erickson wanted to note that the Crises Ore Ban is gone up in Newark Canyon. He will be reporting it to the BLM at his meeting Friday.

*The board members were sent a packet regarding support material for this meeting. The packet is on file at the Natural Resource Department and available upon request.

Agency Reports

Reports and updates from various natural resources and land management agencies in attendance.

The board received a BLM report sent in from Jess Harvey, BLM Battle Mountain District Public Affairs Officer. The BLM update covered mining, Sage Grouse, Weed Control, as well as a few mining items. There were no new updates for the Wild Horses. The board discussed various points on the handout but did not deliberate on anything.

*The BLM update provided by Mr. Harvey is on file at the Natural Resource office and available upon request.

Mr. Tibbitts noted that on the update provided, BLM is working to find a path forward for a resolution on the Corealus Springs. The right of way (ROW) issue on this spring is related to a public water reserve on the Diamonds.

Lance Brown, US Forest Service Austin-Tonopah District Ranger, followed up from his presentation at the January meeting and provided an update on wild horse numbers for USFS land. Mr. Tibbitts forwarded the email to the board members.

Mining

Presentation from Nevada Gold Mines representatives on the Goldrush Project. Discuss mining projects and activities in and affecting Eureka County, including but not limited to the Nevada Gold Mines (NGM) Gold Rush Project, McEwen Mining Gold Bar and Gold Bar South Projects, NGM Deep South Expansion, Prophecy Development Corp Gibellini Project, Gullsil Prospect Mountain Project, General Moly Mt. Hope Project, Halliburton Rossi Mine Expansion, all Carlin Trend operations and consider response to any related issues or comment periods.

Ms. Wolf and Mr. Fennemore presented a slideshow to the board going over details of the Goldrush mine construction and expansion. The Mine is about to enter their environmental impact study (EIS) process with the BLM. The estimated mine life is approximately 22 years. The Goldrush mine will be an underground mine with a production of around 10,000 tons a day. Some of the main concerns the board relayed had to do with grazing, fencing, public access, mule deer migration, and water mitigation. The process on this mine is just kicking off and there will many opportunities for involvement as the process progresses. Ms. Wolf invited board members to come and have a tour of the site and see the expansion areas, if they were interested.

*The slideshow that was presented by NGM is on file at the Natural Resources office and available upon request.

*Rick McKay, George Fennemore, Kim Wolf, and Jesse Watts left the meeting following the presentation from NGM.

Gold prices are at a high today, reaching \$1,700/ounce. If gold prices stay at this high Ruby Hill Mine may start doing some exploration through contract mining on the

northern wall. Carl Olsen, who is on the Eureka Conservation District (ECD), noted that right now they are still running gold through leach lines, however, once they reach a certain point they start losing money and will likely stop.

Mr. Erickson did point out that if Ruby Hill does stop leeching, they will need to monitor water levels closely so they do not end up with more water than needed and have it penetrate backwards.

The commissioners approve the letter on the water pollution control permit at their last meeting. The letter was sent off as well. Also, the spring edition of Mining Quarterly came out and covers many topics related to local mines that the board keeps tabs on. If the board would like a copy, Mr. Tibbitts can send a copy out.

The board wanted to thank NGM for coming and presenting on the Goldrush Mine and appreciate the cooperation with keeping them informed and included as the project progresses.

Grazing

Discuss and consider response on recent grazing actions, decisions, and proposals affecting Eureka County.

Mr. Tibbitts relayed that the BLM Battle Mountain District drought EA is in full effect. If triggers are met, drought EA grazing restrictions can be implemented.

Ken Conley asked if Mr. Tibbitts has heard anything regarding fencing and seeding on the Horse Fire Complex. Mr. Tibbitts said he hasn't heard when that will begin but will look into it and get back to him. In the decision that was released, it states that the fence will be put up prior to turn out.

The USFS is adding mandatory terms and conditions in the grazing permits to comply with litigation regarding Cut Throat Trout (LCT). The JD ranch was covered in the LCT streams permit, however, there is a one pasture on the Roberts Mountain allotment that is not included. There is a consultation just for the one pasture to identify specific terms and conditions that comply with LCT.

Sage Grouse

Discuss and consider response to recent activities and issues related to sage grouse including but not limited to the State Plan and associated mitigation regulations and adaptive management strategy and federal Plan Amendments, including objections, litigation and injunction and requesting cooperating agency status and close coordination on BLM supplemental EIS.

The BLM supplemental EIS is out. Judge Windmill, from Idaho, vacated the latest ROD. Currently are in the 2015 BLM plan, which Eureka County previously appealed. BLM is

now trying to get direction from their attorneys and get guidance on how they are supposed to be operating under these plans. BLM is working on trying to pad the ROD to make it more manageable. They have filed a notice of intent to appeal in efforts of undoing the injunction from Judge Windmill.

There is a 45 day comment period on the EIS right now. The closing day for the comment period is April 6, 2020.

J.J Goicoechea did go on record at the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting that Eureka County, as well as local cooperating agencies, did not appreciate being cut out of the final stages of supplemental EIS. The state wanted to have the local agencies involved, but was overruled from Washington D.C.

Mr. Tibbitts and Commissioner Goicoechea asked to be kept informed of any regulation changes on their allotments due to reverting back to 2015 regulations.

Next Meeting-

Items suggested by the board for the next agenda include any updates on any ongoing agenda items. The board should get any other desired agenda items to Mr. Tibbitts for the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2020 at 7 P.M.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn- The motion was made by Mr. Conley to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mr. Todd. There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Respectfully submitted: _____

Magee Braswell, Secretary

Approved: _____

Jim Baumann, Chairman