M I N U T E S

Eugene District Bureau of Land Management
Resource Advisory Committee
Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000

November 7, 2002
Siuslaw/Willamette Conference Room
Bureau of Lane Management – Eugene District

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Category 1: Judy Fitzgerald, Peter Hackett , Joanell Mogstad, and Ross Mickey
Category 2: Edward Alverson, James Baker, and Penny Lind
Category 3: Bud Hinman, Jamon Kent, John Lindsey, Anna Morrison, and June Olson

ALTERNATES PRESENT:
Category 1: None
Category 2: James Fairchild
Category 3: None

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Category 1: Steve Woodard
Category 2: Robert Keefer, James Thrailkill
Category 3: None

ALTERNATES ABSENT:
Category 1: David Schmidt
Category 2: Linda Susan Kelly
Category 3: Philip Barnhart, William Dwyer

OTHERS PRESENT:
Wayne Elliott (Designated Federal Official), Julia Dougan (Eugene District Manager), John Arnold, Polly Elliot, Jim Hallberg, Doug Huntington, and Mark Wilkening

Designated Federal Official Wayne Elliot called the meeting of the Eugene District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 to order at 9:45 a.m. He noted that a quorum was present and stated that appropriate notice of the meeting had been published and that public comment was scheduled to be received immediately after the noon recess.

BLM Eugene District Manager Julia Dougan welcomed the RAC to its fall strategy meeting. She stated that the purposes of the meeting were to provide members an opportunity to collaborate on

concepts for Title II proposals in Round Three, and to develop an effective strategy to generate proposals from the public.

Approval of Minutes

Committee member Anna Morrison moved, seconded by Committee member Bud Hinman, to accept the minutes of the July 25 meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 13:0.

Status of Approved Projects

Mr. Elliot referred to a packet of material distributed with the agenda of the meeting, including copies of documents entitled, as follows:

- "Eugene RAC 'Round 3' Title II Project Time Line"
- "County Payments Database Printout - FY 02 Funding Spent"
- "Eugene RAC Project Numbers and Planned Funding Amounts for FY 2003"
- "Eugene RAC 'Round 1' Project Status"
- "Eugene RAC 'Round 2' Project Status"

Mr. Elliot reviewed information contained in the documents, emphasizing the status of projects approved by the RAC in Rounds One and Two.

Meeting Overview

Meeting facilitator Mark Wilkening reviewed previous RAC discussions regarding development of project proposals. He said members had agreed that guidelines were needed to guide BLM support and encouragement for proposals from community and non-government organizations. He referred to posted "Questions to Consider," as follows:

1. What components or concepts are critical for a proposal to warrant your approval?

2. What guidelines, beyond those already identified by the Act, should be developed for the use of Title II funds on non-federal lands?

3. How can the RAC make the most effective use of Title II funds?

4. What is your expectation of the BLM in project proposal review for those projects submitted from outside sources?

Mr. Wilkening stated that RAC consensus on responses to the questions was needed early in the meeting. He said that without clear direction, the BLM and public would not be able to move forward with preparation of Round Three project proposals.

Development of Title II Proposal Concepts

Member Edward Alverson stated that he was concerned about the role of the BLM in screening project proposals before they were presented to the RAC.

Ms. Dougan said the current BLM practice was only to screen proposals to ensure that they met requirements of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act.

Member John Lindsey said he favored having the BLM screen out project proposals that did not meet requirements of the Act. He said it aided RAC members by limiting the information they were required to study in making recommendation decisions.

Member Judy Fitzgerald said she believed it was important for BLM staff to answer questions about potential projects raised by applicants.

Alternate Member Jim Fairchild said he believed it was important to have clear criteria regarding project eligibility available for applicants.

Mr. Wilkening requested that members divide into Category Groups and discuss "Questions to be Considered" presented earlier.

Members convened in Category groups at 10:10 a.m. and held individual discussions until 11:30 a.m.

Category Group Feedback

Member Penny Lind reported results of the discussion of Category Two members regarding the "Questions to be Considered," as follows:

1. What components or concepts are critical for a proposal to warrant your approval?

    - Provide benefits to Oregon and California (O & C) public lands.
    - Positive environmental benefit.
    - Leverages additional parties, financial resources, and larger scale.
    - Compelling reasons to fund (applies mostly to federally funded projects).

- Avoid projects that create short-term environmental loses for long-term benefits.

- Is there an evaluation /assessment component?

2. What guidelines, beyond those already identified by the Act, should be developed for the use of Title II funds on non-federal lands?

   - History of past projects – ecological and fiscal records.

   - Clarify what is meant by benefiting O&C land.

   - Cite sources of priority needs.

3. How can the RAC make the most effective use of Title II funds?

   - Leverage.

   - Low overhead cost – set minimum/maximum allowable amounts.

   - Long-term/large-scale results.

   - Outside advisors – other public lands specialists, universities, watershed councils, private organizations.

4. What is your expectation of the BLM in project proposal review for those projects submitted from outside sources?

   - Make sure proposals are complete

   - Develop time line process to allow completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements

   - Review and pass through all projects

Member Judy Fitzgerald reported results of the discussion of Category One members regarding the "Questions to be Considered," as follows:

1. What components or concepts are critical for a proposal to warrant your approval?

   - Efficiency – get the most for the resources available.

- Accountability.
- Taxpayers see benefit.
- Applicants are qualified to do the job, or have access to experts who are.
- Show clear benefits to improve health of forests.
- Minimal overhead.
- Logical and measurable outcomes with one year's funding

2. What guidelines, beyond those already identified by the Act, should be developed for the use of Title II funds on non-federal lands?

   On federal lands

   - Maintain or increase access to public land.

   On non-federal lands

   - Documentation of claimed benefits to O&C land.
   - Practices used are comparable to those on federal land.
   - Maintain or increase access to public lands.

3. How can the RAC make the most effective use of Title II funds?

   - Follow guidelines we are developing.
   - Encourage projects that have multiple benefits.
   - Encourage projects that reduce cost/waste in future (education).
   - Encourage projects that increase recreational opportunities.
   - Encourage projects that assist displaced timber workers.
   - Continue to encourage small projects.

4. What is your expectation of the BLM in project proposal review for those projects and submitted from outside sources?

    - Review for proper form and meeting basic criteria.
    - Educate applicants on effective presentations (especially first time applicants). Perhaps offer a sample presentation and/or video as assistance.
    - Who are the main players (Board of Directors, Consultants, Associations, etc.)?
    - Partners – what resources do they bring to the project (people, assets)?
    - What would the future of your project be without these funds?

Member Jamon Kent reported results of the discussion of Category Three members regarding the "Questions to be Considered," as follows:

- *BLM Filters*
- Matching dollars with private land/BLM partnership projects.
- Low overhead (administration).
- Overall long-term benefits for O&C lands.
- No state or federal back-fill.
- Long-term values as a whole to the RAC principles.
- Bang for the Buck (Monetary and Non-Monetary, Quantity and Quality, Best Practices).
- *Collaboration*
- Include Watershed Councils? Or neighbors?
- If councils want to come forward with projects, can do, but they have funds of their own and should use them to avoid contradicting what is being done through the State legislative process.
- *Private Projects*
- Need to have NEPA requirements completed.

- Other outside funding sources need to have been exhausted (attach letters of refusal from grant applications).

- *Potential Project Ideas*

- Filtered and Non-filtered

- Fuel reduction

- Demonstration projects of invasive vegetation control

- On the ground (studies a low priority)

- Thinning (commercial and non-commercial)

- Maintain access to public lands (signs, trails, facilities)

- Recreational projects

Members took a 40 minute lunch recess at 12:15 p.m.

Public Forum

Mr. Elliott determined that there was no one present wishing to address the RAC.

Synthesis and Agreement

Mr. Wilkening reported that he, Ms. Dougan and Mr. Elliot had met during the lunch recess and attempted to identify commonalities among the responses given in the Category Group responses to the "Questions to Be Considered." He reviewed the commonalities and members added comments, as follows:

- Benefits to O&C lands
  - *Health of land*

- Leverage – monetary and non-monetary
  - *Displaced workers, future benefits (education, etc.)*

- Partnerships/Collaboration

- *Primary proponents/Who are decision makers?*

- Low Overhead

- Demonstrated technical and financial capabilities

- Best practices
  - *Cost effective*
  - *Methodology – quantity and quality*
  - *Science/Advice*

- Project evaluation/Assessment
  - *Fiscal*
  - *Resource Effectiveness*

- RAC sees all projects, even those which don't pass "filters"
  - *Give applicants opportunity to fill in missing elements*
  - *Want to know why projects filtered out*

- BLM staff should work with project proponents to ensure complete proposals and effective presentations
  - *Doing so may require that submission time line will have to be revised*

Mr. Kent pointed out that NEPA requirements were not addressed in the common elements identified.

Ms. Lind said prohibition of using Act grants to "back fill" other budget components was also missing.

Member Ross Mickey said he believed ensuring that applicants had pursued other funding opportunities should be identified as a common element.

Mr. Lindsey discussed the value of an Act grant to leverage other funding resources. Mr. Wilkening added that BLM staff could be helpful to applicants in regards to discovering available resources. Chairperson Jim Baker said he believed it was important to identify the significance of multi-year projects needing to have measurable outcomes in the first year and the goal of securing stable funding.

Mr. Kent said he believed it should be stated that there was agreement among the groups that projects that benefit O&C land were more appealing if they included multiple benefits.

Mr. Alverson suggested that it be recommended to applicants that re-submitted or revised projects be more complete that simply referring to something previously submitted.

Mr. Mickey said he believed it was important for applicants to be informed that all claims for support, best practices, and other resources should be documented.

Members continued to discuss what they believed to be important elements of the application process. Mr. Wilkening summarized their comments, as follows:

- Multi-year projects need to be broken into single year components with measurable outcomes

- Documentation of claims is important

- Project cost needs to be analyzed – budget, administration, in-kind support, hourly rates paid, direct services provided

Ms. Lind said it was her experience that more that a project's budget needed to be included with an application.

Ms. Dougan stated that BLM would follow the same guidelines required of community and non-governmental agencies in preparing applications for Act grants.

Mr. Mickey suggested that a small group meet with BLM staff to develop specific guideline recommendations.

Mr. Baker said he agreed and suggested that the themes identified needed "fleshing out."

Ms. Lind said it would be important not to allow the goals of the Act to be in conflict with RAC goals.

Mr. Alverson said it would also be important to maintain awareness of guidelines already adopted in Rounds One and Two.

Ms. Morgan said she believed it was important to emphasize that a large percentage of support for a project was "on the ground." She also suggested that "recreation projects" be specifically identified as potential project types.

Mr. Alverson suggested that study/assessment project proposals be required to indicate how they would lead to "on the ground" projects.

Ms. Dougan said some of the concerns raised reflected what would be "on the minds" of RAC members as they evaluate applications. She said it would be difficult for applicants to address many of them.

Ms. Lind asked if applicants would be given guidelines for projects. Mr. Elliot described information provided to those interested. He said the same information was available on the Eugene District Internet website.

Ms. Morrison stated that she did not believe Act resources should be spent on preparation of NEPA requirements. Ms. Dougan replied that the legislation specifically allowed for such uses. She explained that projects not approved by the RAC were withdrawn from consideration and that any project funded by the Act became responsible for all federal requirements, including NEPA studies.

Ms. Morrison said she believed she would look more favorably on non-governmental projects in which NEPA requirements were already completed and funded by private sources.

Mr. Alverson said he believed it was best if only final RAC approval of a project was dependant on the completion of its NEPA requirements, not submission of applications.

Mr. Mickey suggested that the issue involved spending Act resources on NEPA requirements, and having NEPA requirements completed before an application could be submitted.

Ms. Morrison said she believed completion of NEPA requirements should be funded by applicants since government agencies were already required to complete the requirements for any of their project. She said the requirements could take up to two years to complete.

Ms. Dougan stated that the BLM did not work on any project that did not have its NEPA requirements completed.

Mr. Kent said it might be positive to identify completion of NEPA requirements before submission of an application as an advantage, but not a requirement.

Ms. Dougan said NEPA requirement costs were often a large part of a project's cost and that it was important for an applicant to have thought through their implications.

Mr. Kent suggested that a plan might be devised to create a fund to cover the cost of completing NEPA requirements that could be used by projects reaching a certain stage in the application process.

Mr. Alverson said he believed it would be helpful to offer an alternative to the suggestion of Mr. Kent – encouraging applicants to raise separate funding for completing NEPA requirements and the BLM fund completion of NEPA requirements for projects its submits from non-Act resources.

Ms. Mogstad pointed out that the BLM completed the NEPA requirements for many privately submitted projects. Ms. Dougan added that BLM did not control who completed the requirements, but imposed standards for those who did.

Members discussed the value and importance of reaching consensus on application guidelines. Mr. Wilkening said he believed there was agreement for BLM staff to summarize guidelines discussed, and to improve the application process to provide correct and complete information to all interested parties.

Ms. Lind said she believed any directions regarding project applications should be written as "guidelines" not "directives" and should not provide strict interpretations that might stifle interest in making submissions.

Members took a ten minutes recess at 2:50 p.m.

Strategy for Effective Outreach

Mr. Wilkening invited members to comment on expansion and improvement of attempts to make the availability of Act resources known.

Mr. Mickey suggested that advertising on the basics of the legislation be used. He said he believed it would be helpful if a sample completed application and/or an instructional video were prepared for applicants. He also suggested that a summary of concerns raised in the meeting be prepared for applicants and entitled "What the RAC Will Be Considering."

Ms. Mogstad said she agreed with the suggestions of Mr. Mickey.

Mr. Baker said he would favor BLM staff seeking ways to encourage the submission of private projects.

Ms. Morrison said she believed RAC members should also encourage submission of private project applications.

Mr. Elliott suggested that RAC members be "ambassadors" of the Act and said that BLM staff was prepared to make presentations at group meetings regarding it.

Ms. Lind suggested that increased exposure for the Act could be gained from filling vacant positions in RAC Alternate Member categories.

Mr. Elliott announced that the next meetings of the RAC were tentatively scheduled for May 22,2003 and June 26,2003. The May meeting was tentatively scheduled to be held at the Lane Forest Work camp at Alma but input would be solicited from members regarding this meeting. The purpose of the May meeting will be to review proposed 'Round 3' projects and tour the facility and the purpose of the June meeting will be to decide on project recommended funding levels.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)