

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WORK SESSION MEETING HELD ON  
Tuesday, September 11, 2018**

A Work Session Meeting of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 3:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room, at the 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, AZ 85603

Present: Peggy Judd, Chairman; Patrick G. Call, Vice-Chairman; Ann English, Supervisor  
Staff Present: Edward T. Gilligan, County Administrator; Sharon Gilman, Associate County Administrator; Britt W. Hanson, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney; Amanda Baillie, Public Information Officer; Melissa Belasco, Administrative Assistant  
Attendees: Christine Roberts, Civil Deputy County Attorney, Amy Markstein, BLM Planning & Environmental Specialist, Scott Feldhauser, BLM District Specialist Manager

Chairman Judd called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**THE ORDER OR DELETION OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AT THE MEETING**

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***INTRODUCTIONS***

***ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Discussion, presentation, and possible direction regarding the Bureau of Land Management's proposed Resource Management Plan for the National Conservation Area.

Mr. Feldhauser stated they are wrapping up their 90-day public comment period on September 27, 2018. Four public meetings were held in Sierra Vista, Benson and Tucson with good turnout, giving the public an opportunity to express their concerns. He said they have also met with all the Congressionals, Cooperating Agencies, the City of Sierra Vista, Fort Huachuca, the County, and Game and Fish multiple times to get their perspective and concerns.

Mr. Feldhauser explained the process, looking at traditional alternatives, and the direction from the Secretary of Interior to streamline their projects, for page and time limits.

The San Pedro Resource Management Plan (SPRMP) was the first plan that went back to DC for the Deputy Secretaries review. As part of their effort to streamline government, internal agency reviews have been condensed to establish a Resource Management Plan (RMP)

regarding land allocation for the next twenty to fifty years. This includes aligning with the Department of Interior's (DOI's) priorities which are to improve customer service; making better decisions at the local level; better coordination of Game and Fish agencies; and trying to balance use with conservation. Mr. Feldhauser said regardless of the decision, their goal is for the public to understand their vision for the next twenty years. Upon completion, the Deputy Secretary in DC will be briefed and the State Director will sign.

Ms. Markstein presented the background on the project, with proposals and alternatives to the draft RMP. BLM's RMPs are like city and county land use plans, providing high-level framework/guidance on how a particular area is operated. They establish goals and objectives for the use of resources in any area, but do not authorize on-the-ground actions; she cited examples. Ms. Markstein said this project began with Public Scoping, April 2013 - September 2013 with public outreach and five education forums regarding resource issues in Sierra Vista. In June the draft was released and the public comment period is June 29, through September 27, 2018. After public comments are categorized and edited, a cooperating agency will review and the Board will have an opportunity to meet with the BLM with any questions or concerns. After administrative review, the proposed RMP environmental impact statement will be released. In February 2019 there will be a 30-day protest period, and a concurrent 60-day governor consistency review and a record of decisions approved in April 2019.

Ms. Markstein stated that the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) was established in 1988 to protect the riparian, aquatic, wildlife, archeological, paleontological, scientific, cultural, educational, and recreational resources of the San Pedro River. This legislation 1) Made the SPRNCA withdraw from mineral entry, unless there is a congressional act; 2) The BLM cannot dispose of any land within the National Conservation area boundary; and, 3) All motorized vehicle use must be on designated routes within the National Conservation Area.

Ms. Markstein presented a location map of the SPRNCA area. The decision space for this plan is all the BLM land within the National Conservation area boundary. An RMP is necessary for the SPRNCA because it is managed under two twenty-five-year old documents: "The Safford District Resource Management Plan" and "The San Pedro River Riparian Management Plan". Neither documents established clear goals and objectives for the resources within the SPRNCA or address the issues of today, such as increased population growth, and increased demand for access, and ground water that affects the resources in the SPRNCA. Alternatives being proposed in the RMP are four standalone plans on how to possibly manage the SPRNCA. Plan A is the no action alternative - there is no change and it continues as is. Alternative B is the increased use alternative, C the BLM's preferred alternative, is a balance of appropriate use levels with the established conservation values, and D is a focus on protective designations and a light-on-the-land management approach with modifications to the no action alternative. Reasons to look at these plans is to provide a reasonable range of alternatives and provide a context for the impacts.

Mr. Feldhauser stated some of the biggest challenges.

Vice-Chairman Call asked Mr. Feldhauser if they had considered grazing as a possible management tool; if he anticipated receiving funding from his department or from Congress to carry out option C; and stated that this plan is fairly aggressive.

Mr. Feldhauser responded by saying that the aggressive nature is what is creating the tool box and there is more money. One, DOI is getting a large influx of fuels related money for border vegetation treatments in which the SPRNCA would fit in, and there is some veterans funding within DOI. Also, once the plan is in place, it will help them be more competitive for funding requests.

Vice-Chairman Call asked if these areas can be addressed without increased funding, stating

that creating more access does not cost that much.

Mr. Feldhauser said they have multiple secretarial orders relating to access in which one piece is motorized and non-motorized travel planning. After completion of the RMP, the next step is to do a travel management plan to meet the secretarial requirement. The goal is to look at the current state and future proposals based on people's needs.

Mr. Feldhauser briefly addressed fire suppression per Vice-Chairman Call's request and stated that it is a simple decision and they are in full suppression mode. Once the RMP is set, they will adjust their current fire management plan and release the details to the public.

Supervisor English expressed her concerns and Mr. Feldhauser addressed those. He reiterated the challenges of the RMP and the County's role moving forward and concluded that he will keep the Board informed.

Vice-Chairman Call adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Peggy Judd, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Melissa Belasco, Administrative Assistant

**"PUBLIC PROGRAMS, PERSONAL SERVICE"**