

Glenda Wiles

From: MACO <MACO@mtcounties.org>
Sent: Friday, July 7, 2017 8:15 AM
To: MACO
Subject: BLM Planning
Attachments: BLM plng comment WCCA w Attachments (1).pdf

Commissioners,

*Attachment was
284 pages long
not printed
"Wyoming Co. Commissioners Assoc."*

The Bureau of Land Management is working on revisions to their planning rules. Interior Secretary Zinke directed the Bureau to do this in March.

Valley County Commissioner, John Fahlgren was selected to represent Montana on a Core County Working Group that is working with the Bureau in the development of those rules. John has many years of direct experience as a former BLM employee and manager so is very familiar with the process.

John's report on the two conference calls that he has participated in so far is below. One thing to note is his comment that Planning 2.0 is dead and that BLM will be drafting entirely new rules.

June 29th

The BLM lead, Steve Tryan led with the information that Sec. Zinke had tasked BLM to streamline planning, to make it more cost-effective and more responsive to local input. The earlier planning update, Planning 2.0 is dead, (per Executive Order) we are not revising 2.0, we are starting over.

Several Commissioners made related comments that the Coordination with local government planning per the FLMPA law needs to be clearly defined in policy. There was a strong push to make it clear in the revised regs that county plans must be coordinated with by BLM.

Mr. Tryan encouraged the group to work with their respective BLM State Directors as needed to let them know how this group is working. Each BLM state has provided staff to the effort.

Comment was made that new BLM managers need to develop relationship with commissioners... this is a two-way street and commissioners need to reach out to new BLM managers in the same way.

Frustration mixed with success was noted for various Cooperative planning efforts, on the one hand many good things have been accomplished working together, but also many, many cases of previous administrations just going over the top and imposing new designations, etc.

There is a due date to get comments in on the existing planning regulations by July 21. The planning document we are reviewing is some 160 pages in length, so this is a big task. If anyone has concerns you would like me to carry forward, let me know.

July 6th

(Note: file attached)

A read of Wyoming's comments give some idea of the complexity of this project and the level of engagement between BLM and major BLM counties.. We have another call today. Looks like we should have our response coming from MACO, the July 21 deadline will make that a difficult. I will shoot to have something out next week so others can add/ edit. After today's call I will know more. jf

Report following working group conference call on July 6th:

The call began with the intent by the BLM to build on the Wyoming letter, to add specific changes to the planning document as Wyoming had or to review the Wyoming product.

The call quickly veered from that as several commissioners, from Oregon O&C Counties, Idaho, Colorado, New Mexico expressed their frustrations with BLM. Several had been the experience of having BLM first meet with them and then meet with outside groups or agencies without inviting the county.

Commissioner from Custer County, Idaho really nailed BLM that Zinke had given them this task back in March and they waited till now to put this group together and expect us to have a product by July 24.

The Webinar I listened to yesterday was also mostly an airing of similar concerns, it seems the counties throughout the West have much the same experience. There is a feeling that the project is very important but much distrust as well.

--

John Fahlgren
Valley County Commissioner
501 Court Square, Box 1
Glasgow, Mt. 59230
Phone 406-228-6219

If you have comments about the BLM Planning Rules, please send them to John.

Thanks,

Harold

Harold Blattie, Executive Director
Montana Association of Counties
2715 Skyway Drive
Helena MT 59602
406.449.4360 (W)
406.698.0939 (C)
406.442.5238 (F)
hblattie@mtcounties.org
www.mtcounties.org