

MRCDC Coordinator's Meeting Report

Who:	<p>Bureau of Land Management & MRCDC Bob Abbey, <i>BLM Director</i> Jamie Connell, <i>Montana State BLM Director</i> Stan Benes, <i>BLM Central MT District Manager</i> Mark Albers, <i>BLM HiLine District Manager</i> Gary Slagel, <i>BLM Missouri Breaks Natl Monument Manager</i> Nick Schultz, <i>MRCDC Chair, Petroleum County CD Manager</i> Dean Rogge, <i>MRCDC Vice Chair, Garfield County CD</i> Rick Anderson, <i>MRCDC Member, Choteau County CD</i> Dick Iversen, <i>MRCDC Member, Richland County CD</i> Jeff Tiberi, <i>MRCDC Member, MT Assn Conservation Districts</i> Laurie Riley, <i>MRCDC Coordinator</i> Steve Hedstrom, <i>National Assn Conservation Districts & MT Assn Conservation Districts</i></p>
What:	The Council was invited to meet with the National BLM Director, Bob Abbey, and Montana State Director, Jamie Connell.
Where:	Grand Union Hotel in Fort Benton.
When:	Sunday , September 18, 2011
Why:	<p>Bob Abbey visited the area on a 3-day listening trip to hear from diverse interests on a variety of topics involving BLM-managed lands in the state. In addition to pointing out what MT conservation districts are doing on the land to promote natural resource conservation (greater sage grouse, weed management, cottonwood regeneration, range management, irrigation water management) and highlighting our cooperative arrangements with BLM (Central MT BLM RAC, CMR Community Working Group, Cottonwood Working Group), the Council discussed a number of issues of concern including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monument designation & wilderness • State lands exchanges / sales • Scoria - mineral leases and back royalties • Greater sage grouse • Abandoned mine clean-up • Riparian Assessment Team (BLM / NRCS) • Bison • Wild horses and burros
Accomplished:	<p>Bob Abbey explained that the BLM administers 245 million acres of land of which 8.6 million is in MT. BLM wants to leave a legacy of life being better for having been here and believes we as people interested in land management have more in common than not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoria - land is not well marked for ownership, trespass is an issue and BLM understands that it is not intentional. Scoria is classified as a sellable mineral. They don't want to shut down scoria mining as it is needed for roads. They are working on getting the area mapped and scoria areas identified. They want to get more people and funds to work on the problem. 50% of BLM royalties stay in the area and 50% go to the general fund. Up until now mining scoria for own use has been

	<p>ignored; becoming more of an issue with commercial operation in a boom town. Should be having conversations at the district level. Jeff offered to help with pass-through funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fracking - Bob said there are 2 main issues: integrity of the well and water management. Brief discussion of fracking followed. • State Land Exchange - Bob is willing to meet with any state wanting to talk about land exchange. Mixed ownership pattern is very difficult to manage. Land exchange is very complicated and takes many years to work through. Transactions are based on value-for-value and not acre-for-acre. A meeting is scheduled with the state for the fall, then a process will be developed. What BLM wants may not agree with what the state wants. Some transactions have been pending for decades. • Jeff talked about sage grouse initiative, partners, and funding. Jamie said MT is advanced in sage grouse management. The state is split in half and issues in west are different than those in east. Question of state partnering was brought up. • Rick mentioned that having different agencies working on different BMPs is problematic. • Had brief discussion of groups whose primary effort is litigation and removing cattle from public lands. • Talked about wilderness and how there is no need for additional wilderness. Current WSAs need resolution. • Talked about wild horses and how changes to existing laws are required. • Talked about overlap in agencies and efficiencies of labor. • There is no current plan for bison on BLM lands; BLM considers bison as livestock.
<p>Follow Up:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a break-out session on mining at the MACD Convention and invite Jamie Connell. • Get briefing paper on scoria from Jamie Connell. • Ask Alan Rollo to send his paper on agency partnership for efficiency and reduction in overlap to Jamie Connell. • Add Jamie Connell to notification list for CMR meetings. • Continue open dialog on issues and opportunities for partnership and collaboration.