

Beatty Town Advisory Board
100 A Avenue South
P.O. Box 837
Beatty, NV 89003

Nevada Land Management Taskforce Workshop
Minutes
07/14/14

**THE BEATTY TOWN ADVISORY BOARD MET IN REGULAR SESSION AT 5:30PM IN THE BEATTY COMMUNITY CENTER.
THE BEATTY TOWN ADVISORY BOARD HEREAFTER WILL BE REFERRED TO AS THE (BTAB)
THE BEATTY TOWN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS HEREAFTER WILL BE REFERRED TO AS THEIR RESPECTIVE INITIALS.**

Dick Gardner (DG) – Chair
Kelly Carroll (KC) – Vice Chair
Erika Gerling (EG) – Treasurer
Randy Reed (RR) – Member
Crystal Taylor (CT) – Member

1 Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm

2 Approval of the Agenda for the Beatty Town Advisory Board Workshop of July 14, 2014.

No Changes

3 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (Three-minute time limit per person.) Action will not be taken on the matters considered during this period until specifically included on an agenda as an action item

None

4 Action – Board Member’s Comments (This item limited to announcements or topics/issues proposed for future workshops/agendas.)

DG - None; EG - None; RR -None; CT- None; KC - None

5 Discussion regarding Nevada Land Management Task Force to the Legislative Committee on Public Lands. Pursuant to AB 227 of the 2013 Nevada Legislative Session.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated this is for the public.

Karl Olson – Stated he wrote Lorinda a letter and he has several questions. The first question is who is going to head the State agency if we did get the public lands in question, and who is going to be the watchdog to protect the public’s interest against the state?

Commissioner Wichman – Responded Nevada already has the State Division of Land Management and currently the director of that is Charlie Donohue. I have been working with him through the State Use Plan and Advisory Council for the last four years, I believe. He is very diligent; he is always at the State Land Use, the SLUPAC (State Land Use Planning Advisory Council) meetings. SLUPAC is also going to be instrumental in helping him and acting as a watchdog. That organization is represented by each of the 17 counties, of which I am a member. The other watchdogs on that are going to be you and the County. Any proposal by the State to sell public lands has to be vetted through the County Commission meeting and a public hearing, and approved.

Mr. Olson – Clarified any land?

Commissioner Wichman – Went on we do not have the right to veto a decision that they’ve made but even the legislation is written in such form that the movement to sell property or to dispose of property is a ground level movement, other than the things that we’ve already put in phase one, which is the checkerboard lands and the lands that have already been identified by the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) for disposal around the communities.

Mr. Olson – Clarified so we have no say in the checkerboard lands, the public?

Commissioner Wichman – Responded oh yes, before they are offered for sale you most definitely will but not you specifically, unless you live in; Elko, Humboldt, Lander, Washoe Counties.

Mr. Olson – Clarified anything that happens in Nye County?

Commissioner Wichman – Confirmed anything that happens in Nye County.

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Mr. Olson – Stated next question is, and this is really important, where do you plan on getting the trained workforce; Geologist, Biologist, Land Use Managers, Botanists, Hydrologists, and all the other disciplines that are needed to manage the vast amount of land, six hundred million acres in our County of diversified public lands correctly with conservation, with the future in mind?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated you know I can only use some common sense to figure that out. I can only imagine that what's going to happen is, as lands are transferred from management in the Federal Government's workforce to the State. Some people, it may have been one of your questions, there were some people wanting to know what are we going to do for all of those BLM people who we are going to put out of work and I would say with all honesty some of them will qualify to work for the State, some of them may not. So, that's not going to be our decision down here. The State, Charlie Donohue, is going to have to go through whatever channels they have with HR (human resources) to put those people in place.

Mr. Olson – Asked if we, the public, will get a chance to review this plan and see how he's going to do this?

Commissioner Wichman – Sated probably not, that's an internal, administrative portion that is not part of what we were tasked to do. We were tasked with a broader scope than that. I have already been approached by two BLM individuals who are highly qualified and who I would love to see stay in the State of Nevada and I've given them Charlie's phone number.

EG – Stated one of the things it does say in this plan is that where there are Federal or State agencies already in place, like Nevada Department of Fish and Wildlife or those kinds of agencies, they would still be responsible because they are State of Nevada for overseeing whatever falls into their category; mining, environmental, fish and wildlife, etc.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated all of those fall under the umbrella of the Division of State Land.

Mr. Olson- The next question is how are you planning this takeover of public lands? How are they going to raise the money and getting and dedicating the State Government to fund the takeover proposal when they can't even find the funding to support our failing school system. I read the paper every day and Nye County has a heck of a lot of problems, but I did read your plan of selling land off.

Commissioner Wichman – Asked what was the first beneficiary?

Mr. Olson – Stated it was the schools but that's selling land off.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated you asked a question, you wanted an answer, that's the answer. That is why we did this in phases; with phase one identifying the checkerboard lands which are a pain in the backside to both the BLM and the private land owners out there. By simply doing the checkerboard land and the lands that have already been identified for disposal the funds will be raised to start the process. You're absolutely right, Mr. Donohue, right now, does not have the staff to handle all of it but we are not asking for all of it at once. We are asking for it in phased steps in order to get a handle on it, in order to put our arms around it. I think if you look at the numbers and you're able to track those numbers through and you try to poke holes in all of the graphs that show the numbers. You need to understand that we took the highest expenses in all the States around us and the lowest revenues of all States around us and those are the numbers that we used to move this forward. 351 million dollars a year is way more than what we need to put on a few staff members, but there are beneficiaries and there are lists of about ten or twelve, I can't remember what's on that list, but there are 10 or 12 beneficiaries. The first of which is our education system, because here's what the difference is; States like North Dakota where they have 3% of their land mass is controlled by the Federal Government as opposed to Nye County which has 3% of our land mass which supplies all of our needs. They're able to put in three times as much for each individual student in year than what we are.

Mr. Olson – Stated that maybe he read the graphs wrong, that had to do with revenue. When you all sat down with these graphs, after the first graph with the massive land sales, in the states that you were talking about it (revenue) went down. It was the land sales that propelled the issue.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated that the land sales absolutely have to start the whole thing. There's no way we can do it without some land sales.

Mr. Olson – Repeated, there's no way to do it without selling the land?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated that's right.

Mr. Olson – Stated I don't know if you can answer this and if you can't its fine. Behind every bill, every act, I'd like to know who the principals are. I know you, I know who you are, but I want to know who the other principals are and what are their backgrounds that would convince me, even though there's that plan and ideals that are in the best interest of our public lands not self serving.

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Commissioner Wichman – Stated there are 17 of them, one of which I am, the other 16 are elected County Commissioners from each County in the State of Nevada. As far as their background, I don't know, Tom Collins from Clark County is a Rancher I believe. I know these guys I've worked with them all the time but I don't know their history. I know that whatever they did they were wise enough or genial enough or popular enough to get elected. That tells me one thing about them and that is that they are personable, but actually where this began is not here. It began with an organization called the American Lands Council, which is online and the actions that came out of Utah in their last legislative session, I think it was HR148 if I'm not mistaken but even they will agree and I agree. Those out of Utah will tell you we (Utah) got our cart before our horse, we made a law to do all this transfer before we figured out how we were going to do it. So, by using those comments that's where our, Pete Goicoechea and I can't name all those who supported him. Pet Goicoechea was one of those that moved AB227 through the legislature. That's where the impetus comes from, the start of this. It wasn't the 17 Commissioners, we were appointed to do this job.

Albert Verrilli – Stated that having been absent from a number of these meetings I was hoping to get a short synopsis of where we are and what the plan is but I can see that's not practical and I think what I need to do is pick it out of the context. I withdraw my request for a short summary.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated I can give you a short summary, because of what I just explained to Karl, one of the primary reasons that I believe this was started by Senator Goicoechea and the others who sponsored it was because we are having such a difficult time keeping our school districts whole, educating our kids, finding the funds that we need to provide the services that you expect of us in each of the Counties. The State has gone through several years of budget cuts, Nye County has gone through several years of budget cuts, and there is only so much you can cut before you have to start cutting services. I don't know where it started, but in the process of looking at all of this and trying to figure out where this money is supposed to come from and why are we so different from the other States that are east of the Mississippi. When they started looking at all of this it was obvious, Federal Land Management takes up over 80% of the State of Nevada, it's 98% of Nye County and we're limited to that much. When you are limited to that small amount of revenue generating property in the County it's extremely difficult to provide all of the services that are mandated by law. For 100% of the people who visit here, travel through here, rent, purchase maybe but spend most their time elsewhere. It's extremely difficult to do that. We have to provide those services for 100% of the people on 3% of the land mass. So looking for new ways to fund that was probably a very good reason why this started.

Mr. Verrilli – Asked if that means that some of the revenue Nye County gets through PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) will go away?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes it would, in increments. The way PILT works now is they pay us based on how many acres they have control of. On some of their lands not on all of them, the Federal government has no properties that are taxable, none, but the refuges, like the wildlife refuges, they don't pay PILT on that.

EG – Stated but we're going to lose that payment in lieu of taxes in revenue if we as a State takeover those federally managed lands. We won't get that money any more.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated not from the Federal Government, no and went on to finish answering Mr. Verrilli's question. Yes, the Federal Government would not pay for payments in lieu of taxes if they no longer controlled that piece of land. If the State took over that land one of the other beneficiaries in that list way down below the school is keeping the Counties whole from the revenues that they have lost from PILT. So if you have 10 acres that the federal government is no longer managing they don't pay their \$0.33 per acre.

EG – Confirmed but then the State is going to pay the County.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated, yes the State from the revenues that are collected from their activities on those lands, after the other beneficiaries get their money if there is some left we'll get some back.

EG – Stated I read everything you sent about this stuff, this is a meeting to see what our concerns, fears, and questions are, here is my thing. So the Federal Government gives the management of all these lands to the State. The State is having a hard time managing their budget so then they're going to say okay Nye County, these lands are in your District/County and we want you to manage them, and we're not going to pay for it.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated no, that's not part of the report.

EG – Clarified, so that's not going to happen?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated no, and that was definitely brought up, it was discussed at length and that is not part of the recommendations that were made.

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EG – Stated that's not part of the recommendations, and that's all this is right? The recommendations that

Commissioner Wichman – Stated to the Legislature.

EG – Went on, exactly that's not to say that when they are discussing it in Carson City that they will say; we'll do this, we'll accept all these lands but every County is going to have to be responsible for their lands.

Commissioner Wichman – Responded in some cases there are Counties who are willing to do that, like Douglas County, they want to have a very active role in what is going on in Douglas County, but they don't have hardly anything (land), they don't have hardly any at all.

EG – Stated we have a huge amount (of land), even here in Beatty. That's my concern it the State doesn't think it's fiscally responsible for them to take on the management of these lands and they pass it on to the counties, I know we as a County that's something that fiscally we can't do.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated we can't do that Erika, no. We can't and it's not responsible to say we (the State) can't financially handle it so we're going to let you financially handle it when they (State) are the ones who give us all the money we get. That just doesn't make sense, but with the guidelines that are set up in that report, and being suggested to the legislature, you're absolutely right they are suggestions, this is our report, here is what we've found, here are all of our details and here is what we suggest you do. They don't have to follow that; they can do what they want.

EG – Stated they are going to have to draft legislation to do this, so it's not something they can just decide. Isn't it something we will have to vote on as a State?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated I'm not sure if it will go on a ballot, but there will be legislation that comes out of the 2015 session that deals with this.

EG – Clarified so as a body they could pass legislation without putting it up to a vote. So if we don't think that this is a good idea we need to be flooding our Commissioners, State Representatives and Federal Representatives with this information.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated exactly, and next year I'm not going to be absent from the legislature, I will be the President of NACO (National Association of Counties) next year. So from February to July is going to be spent in Carson City.

EG – Stated these are my personal things, as a County I don't feel that we are in a position, as a County, to take on any more responsibility, financially, physically, to manage anything. The way our finances are as a County the last few years, and we are going to try to get on the right foot over the next few years.

Commissioner Wichman – Asked how? There is a reason I asked how, how would you do that Erika.

EG – Responded how would I do that as a County? This is my personal opinion and I am not speaking for the Board. I would have a lot less administrative secretary/assistants.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated we have and the last time I was out here you were really mad at me for some of the reductions.

EG – Stated I know you guys have, but those aren't \$150,000.00 a year jobs that we were mad at you about. Those are the jobs that I'm mad at you about, we don't have a comptroller, right?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes we do.

EG – Stated we have a person filling in for a comptroller, right.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated she's the interim comptroller, and we are not replacing the comptroller.

EG – Stated there are things, vital services and safety, EMS (Emergency Medical Services) are the things we need to look at. Managing these public lands and I know what's going to happen. Even in the County we (the Town) have had to take on expenses of having the Fire Department inspections and all those things that the County used to take care of from their budget, now we have to take care of them from our budget. I can just see if the State says okay we've got all these lands and then they're going to say okay well these are your lands, you (the County) take care of them, and then you guys are going to say okay these are your lands, you (the Town) take care of them.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated well, you have boundaries, your Town has boundaries.

EG – Replied but you know what I'm saying.

KC – Stated coming from the sales of the land.

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Commissioner Wichman - Stated that's a good point. The initial start up to get going is from the sale of those lands in the checkerboard and the areas that have already been identified for disposal by the BLM around the Communities in Nye County. That's the start up funds that's how we get started. Let's not lose sight of the fact of how much money is generated from those public lands, by grazing allotments and all of the N4 and the N6 all of the different groups of the Cattleman's Associations have already weighed in on this and told us that if they have to raise their fee to pay to the State, for that same opportunity, they'd be happy to do it. I don't foresee that happening, but even if it stays the same that's revenue generation that stays in the State instead of being sent to Washington. Did you notice in that report when we were looking at each of the States and how many people it takes for them to manage those lands compared to, here's what the BLM and the Federal Government has, and how many people they put on the payroll to manage the same amount of lands.

Audience - But, you never said in the report what they are getting.

Commissioner Wichman - Clarified what they are getting? What do you mean?

Audience - Well you can say we're going to take Nye County over, hypothetical situation, the BLM had thirty people working here, and we're going to do this with ten. What are those States getting, that's what the report doesn't tell. Certainly they reduced the payroll but what did they reduce it to, one guy covering ten million acres?

Commissioner Wichman - Asked, do you think that individuals working for the BLM are being paid less, do you think that they are being paid minimum wage or something?

Audience - Stated I'm not talking about wages.

Commissioner Wichman - Asked, what are you talking about.

Audience - Stated you said in that report, we'll use Utah, Utah takes over something and they reduce, are they getting the same services from the State that the BLM provided?

Commissioner Wichman - Stated yes, services are exactly what they would have been. The services that are provided by the BLM for range management on those lands, I would challenge you guys to sit down with a piece of paper and write down everything that you think the BLM does for you.

Audience - Asked in this area?

Commissioner Wichman - Responded yes.

Audience - When you are talking about the payment in lieu of taxes, the Nevada Test Site or where ever you were talking about, who owns that land now?

Commissioner Wichman - Stated the Federal Government, however let's make sure that everybody understands, we are not asking for the Test Site, Department of Energy lands, Department of Defense lands, none of that.

Audience - Clarified, but that's where you get your payment in lieu of taxes money from, right?

Commissioner Wichman - Stated no.

Audience - What land is it that you get that (PILT) from?

Commissioner Wichman - Stated BLM.

Audience - Stated give me a piece of land that pays that.

Commissioner Wichman - Stated outside of Town between here and Tonopah, all of the BLM land that generates, every year they count the acres in Nye County and say okay you have x amount of acres that we are going to pay PILT on, it goes up and down without any rhyme or reason that we are able to track, we don't know why it goes up and down but it does.

Audience - Asked why aren't you after the land at the Test Site, or Air Force, or whatever?

Commissioner Wichman - Stated that most of us, on the taskforce, most of us agreed that Nevada is pretty patriotic. That most of us have built our lives here, especially in Nye County, on the Test Site, the Stealth was built here, there's a lot of pride that goes with that, we don't want to eliminate that. We don't want to boot those people out; they are brave professional people that are part of our community. If Nye County has their way what we would like to do is stop them from flying in and out and living in Clark County, we would really like to encourage them to live here, but as far as shutting down the test site

Audience - Stated being patriotic, that's fine and dandy, that's really not my question. You said that land is owned by the Federal Government and it's controlled by DOE or the Air Force and all of that. But if you're after all the public lands

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Commissioner Wichman – Stated that's not public land, land within the boundaries of the Test Site, Area 51, Creech Air Force Base, and Fallon Air Force Base, all of those. Those were set up under a Congressional designation; they have been removed from public land.

Audience – That to me would be the cash cow.

Audience – Stated there is one thing that you did say that is perfect in my opinion is the only way that you can make this pay is you have to use the land.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes.

Audience – The State has to sell that to somebody to develop it.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated no, there are other things that those lands can be managed for.

Audience – Not in Nye County.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes there are, most of the public land in Nye County has a graze allotment on it. Many of those lands, in Nye County, that are considered public lands have easements that are on there for a number of different things and they generate revenue. Exploration, mining exploration, they pay fees, they pay for the leasing. The royalties that are paid on public lands for mineral extraction, that's revenue. Those revenues, once that land is transferred to the County or to the State, those revenues become State revenues instead of Federal Revenues that we have to go beg for a piece of. But we would like to keep public land at the same or equal use as it is right now. So multiple use is the primary directive of BLM even though they do not adhere to that everywhere. Multiple use is the dictate on public lands, and that's what this group has been very insistent about putting in that report, is that we want those lands to remain, hopefully, used as they are now, so they are accessible.

EG – Stated, not me, but some people on this board spent a lot of time on our Area Plan, and we did identify what the BLM had proposed for disposable, and we already said we changed what their original plan was. So if this happens and we get those lands, all of that is out the door?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated no.

EG – Went on, it's still what we said we want to keep because we changed that. From what we want to keep and what we identified as disposable.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes and that is where (the Area Plan) we get our marching orders from on the County level. Each of the communities that have done Area Plans, just like Beatty did, or those that are coming along behind you trying to get those plans established. Those are the bible for Nye County, those become part of our master plan and that's what we live by until somebody changes it.

Audience – Stated as far as the generation of revenue is going to be used for some of the services; education etc. How would that be divided among the various counties, if you sell pieces in Nye County does that go into a pool that is divided with the rest of the counties or does that stay in the county where it (the land) was sold?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated no, it doesn't stay specific to counties simply because those lands become State managed lands. So when the State sells one of those 160 acre chunks of land up in the checkerboard the money goes into the pot for them to start up and get running. Let's say that they are already staffed and they've got everything that they need and want and somebody buys a chunk in the checkerboard then they have money in the bank. Their dictates, if they follow the report, the suggestions to the State, the State now has the money in the check book, and the outline of the beneficiaries in that report are by priority, so education first.

Audience – Clarified statewide?

Commissioner Wichman – Confirmed yes statewide.

Audience – Clarified if Nye County sells property we get our portion of the share somehow.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes somewhere down the line, but Nye County doesn't have that much for sale. We have some communities that through the years, the last couple of decades, as you did here prior to this amendment you had areas around your town that you wanted disposed of so that you could spread out a little bit. Even though it was approved by the BLM, like Round Mountain obviously I know Hadley better than I know any other communities, there is a whole aura around that town where we just need to spread out and we couldn't get anything done. The BLM says yeah okay it's on the disposal list but you couldn't get your hands on it, you couldn't sell it, you couldn't put infrastructure on it, you couldn't touch it. So there are little places like that, little pockets in Nye County of lands that are identified for disposal but compared to the 18,159 square miles in Nye County they are minute. Proceeds coming back to the County from those sales, there is a provision in there for sharing but it's a drop in the bucket.

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Audience – Stated another aspect of the same question, have you attempted to quantify the impact on private land owners who have substantial pieces of property in the County valued at x amount. What's going to happen to adjacent properties being sold off at auction from the BLM? Is there anticipated push back from that as far as pushing down property values?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated I haven't seen a situation where, I believe especially here in Nye County, I don't think there are too many places where in those towns, folks that are living in the towns and the property next to them happened to sell there might be a perception that my property value went down because I can't look at the BLM land and now it has a house on it but I don't think that's unusual.

Audience – Stated I'm thinking if you have acreage typically its worth something because the BLM land is difficult to acquire, it's a long drawn out process that inherently increases the private (land) value.

EG – Stated because if nobody can build next to your house it's more valuable.

Staff – Stated it's not so much that, as it is if your property is valued at one hundred thousand dollars and the BLM sells a piece of property right next to you for forty thousand dollars yours may not be worth that one hundred thousand anymore.

Commissioner Wichman – Clarified comparables.

EG – Stated or vice versa if you can't build next to your house because it's a BLM or whatever and it can't be purchased then your property might be worth more because there is nobody going to be on the other side of you.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated if anybody gets held up in that situation it's going to be me because I'm surrounded on three sides by Forrester Service, the bottom side by BLM and nobody can build anywhere around me. However when the State has control of that land the land is to be sold at fair market value. We had some folks that were asking us about preferential treatment, like right of birth, first refusal and things like that because they live next to lands that may be disposed of. I have no idea how they are going to work that out. I understood the concept and I understood what the concerns were but myself I would just like to let the market take care of it.

DG – Agreed let the market do it.

Commissioner Wichman – Went on, fair market value is established throughout the State by those comparable sales.

Audience – Stated this would be a whole new dynamic. Is there any plan or hope of Nye County acquiring ownership of some of the SEZ's the Solar Energy Zones designated that are currently federal land?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated if there is a transfer of ownership on those it would be to the State. They generate revenue, so imagine those would be something that the State is going to hold on to. The counties in particular will not be holding titles to the land unless the State decides, and even if the County (Nye) decides it needs that piece property for something the County is trying to do then I would imagine that the County would go to the State.

Audience – Stated so it could be the State could end up owning some of these solar energy sites.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes I hope so.

EG – Stated if they are on federally owned lands they will if this happens.

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Commissioner Wichman – Stated here is what the fear seems to be everywhere I go and with everybody I talk to; we're going to wake up one morning and all of the vistas that we've been looking at are now all belonging to the State and what's going to happen? You might know where the BLM boundaries are and you might not, I don't know I can't say for sure, but the landscape is not going to change just because the management of the landscape changes. The only thing that I hope you will see over a period of time is that we will truly have some resource range land experts out there managing the land for what it needs instead of the situation of where the kid comes up fresh from college a graduate out of Minnesota and decides everything is in a drought and take off all the ranchers because it doesn't look like what he is accustomed to seeing in Minnesota. We have folks here that are good, educated, they've spent generations on this land they know what the land needs, they know when to take their cattle off, and they know when to put them on. There's always a bad one in every bunch and yes the one bad apple makes the whole bunch look bad but as a general rule Nevadans know how to manage Nevada lands. Nevada takes care of Nevada lands, we live here we are the best stewards of that land ever. I don't care how many people you bring from the east coast the people who lived on that land are the people who know that land and that's the one thing that keeps me propelled in the same direction. In 1971 when the advocates for wild horses decided that it was appalling to see those herds culled and being managed by the ranchers and she went before the federal legislators and she got that passed (Wild Horse and Burro Act) to protect them. That was one of the biggest injustices I have ever seen take place in my lifetime. Not because it did anything for or to the horses. What it did do was it took the active management of those herds and moved it to the east coast and they have this wonderful beautiful vision of the flowing manes and tails running across these open parries but they don't see a forty acre stand of White Sage that's been eaten down to nothing and they watch those horses paw at the roots until they have absolutely decimated that resource and they don't move them off when they see that those things are happening and that we (Ranchers) would do and we did prior to 71. We handled that we took care of it. I don't care if you live in Nevada or Idaho or Timbuktu the people who live in Timbuktu know how to handle Timbuktu, the people who live in Idaho know how to handle Idaho, the people who live in Nevada know how to live in Nevada.

DG – Recognized Shirley

Shirley – Stated in our area plan we designated an area of critical environmental concern will that be honored?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes your area plans that each of the communities is putting together and being adopted into Nye Counties master plan that's our marching orders.

Shirley – Clarified that (plan) will be in place as long as you know.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes until you amend it (Beatty Area Plan) yourself if anybody tries to change that on the County level or the State level I'll be one of your loudest mouth pieces for keeping it as it is. The ground up is where this stuff needs to come from, that's the best management, that's the best concept, ground up from here (Beatty) up.

Audience – Clarified, no matter what happens, we all pick on the BLM for a lot of things, one of the biggest things are the extreme environmentalists. When you take the land over you're still subject to federal law, NEPA, historic preservation act (listed several more acts).

Commissioner Wichman – Stated some of those, Nevada has its own NEPA.

Audience – Asked so does that mean that some of those will go way?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated that they don't go away, it's just that we have process in place that they already go through on the State level, by the time they get through with all of that and they have to do NEPA, they are already in compliance.

Audience – Asked do you plan on handling the lawsuits that you are going to get.

Commissioner Wichman – Replied you know what? That is a really good question but should we not do it because we are going to get sued?

Audience – Stated no but it has to be in the plan.

Commissioner Wichman – Agreed it does.

Audience – Asked if one more thing could be explained? If we put this together and everybody comes together across the State all of the counties, then it goes in front of the legislature, from then on out it's out of our control.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated actually we have put almost a year into developing that report; we have to have it turned in to the Legislative Committee on public lands in September. We go to them and we hand them our final report, do you know that they can drop it?

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Audience – Asked can they change it without public opinion?

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes, the same as any legislature.

Audience – Clarified so the State Legislature, we're at the mercy of the State Legislature.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated yes, but here is my argument, currently we are at the mercy of Washington, DC. Do you know what it costs me every time I have to go to Washington, DC and argue? Do you know what it costs me to go to Carson City and argue? The price, and that's tax payers dollars, if nothing else they are easier to reach, I know most of them personally and you can get to know them too. They're folks just like you and I, they are within reach and they have a constituency that lives here.

EG – Stated as a tax payer and we know this is going on and somebody doesn't think the legislature should just make that decision on their own. We can petition them to put it to a vote. If you guys don't like this that's something you can do and say we (the public) don't think you should do this without a vote of the State or the Counties and we can commission our County Commissioners to say we don't think you should make this decision until the citizens of Nye County vote on it either.

Audience – Stated because its close and its going to the State our votes become more powerful because we will be able to vote for the Senators and the Assembly and now when we vote for Washington, DC Senators and Congressmen our little vote doesn't count much but our vote, if they get control, will count a heck of a lot more.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated exactly those folks back there in DC are after 400,000 or 500,000 votes, here at the State level our Senators and Congressmen are looking for the 20,000 to 30,000 votes at my level I'm just looking for 9,000 votes.

Audience – Stated I understand that we can end up getting a lot of problems because of the federal laws that are already in place.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated we still have to adhere to the federal laws.

Audience – Went on, I know you do your going to have control over the land and your making it sound like it's all going to change but with all those environmental laws that are already in there and the way the EPA controls stuff, that's not going to change so there is a lot of

EG – Stated the State EPA and Fish and Wildlife all those State agencies are still going to be managing whatever we get because those agencies will stay in place because they are State agencies, it won't be the federal ones, it will be the State ones that will be primary.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated but they still will have to adhere to federal law.

EG – Stated but they will be the primary ones managing the lands, right now it's the federal ones.

Commissioner Wichman – Stated you know when I was selected to be the representative on the task force for Nye County, what I thought was going to happen at that time, is well this will be a great thing to get publicity but even that publicity I thought would bring some of the issues forward. In the process of working the details and figuring out how to get this whole thing to work, somewhere along the line my aspirations have changed and I truly do believe now the best people to manage this is us.

DG – Stated at this time because we do have a Board meeting coming up in seven minutes I'm going to move to the second public comment.

6 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (Three-minute time limit per person.) Action will not be taken on the matters considered during this period until specifically included on an agenda as an action item

None

7 Adjournment

Workshop adjourned at 6:25pm