



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: www.rotary.org www.rotary5470.org www.paoniarotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180

Vol 54 Issue 32 September 15, 2016

LAST MEETING: September 8, 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Re Ducky Derby - well over 400 tickets sold, so we are over our revenue projection for this event. President Greg is delighted.

Our second September fund raiser will be a pancake breakfast on 9/25 during Mountain Harvest Festival. Pam Bliss' flyers are available for distribution.

At the Board meeting, the policy of fining members for absences was voted out of existence. The committee drafting a plan of action based on the strategic plan has met, will meet again and then report to the club.

The club submitted a proposal for a District grant to support A Little Help.

Anyone interested in forming or supporting a Grape Stomp team during Mountain Harvest Festival should see President Greg. The Karate Kids were our team last year.

Remember to feed the polio jar. Also, pay your dues!

PROGRAM: President Greg introduced Alex Johnson, Executive Director of the Western Slope Conservation Center to talk about the BLM Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Uncompahgre Field Office. Johnson arrived in the valley 5 years ago, just prior to the oil and gas leasing proposal from the BLM, which the local residents overwhelmingly rejected. Johnson has a degree in environmental studies and communications from the University of Montana. WSCC has been around for 39 years and has 450 members. Their three areas of interest are public lands advocacy, watershed stewardship, and youth and general public education and engagement. They have done major river restoration projects and are currently building a half mile trail from Minnesota Creek to the end of the River Park.

BLM's RMP is much more comprehensive and broad than the proposed lease sales of four years ago. The RMP will lay down the rules for use of BLM land - except for transportation - for the next 20 to 30 years. The plan impacts public health, quality of life, public lands access, recreation and conservation, healthy foodshed, tourism, and economic development. WSCC and Citizens for a Healthy Community are holding meetings around the valley to inform citizens and encourage their sending comments on the RMP to BLM by the close of the comment period on November 1. Oil and gas extraction are of greatest import to many people in the area, but there are lots of other potential impacts as well. 200 people attended the Paonia meeting.

The RMP offers several alternatives: A - change nothing from the current RMP; B - a

conservation focused plan; B-1 - the North Fork alternative, which representatives of our communities submitted with major emphasis on limiting oil and gas extraction; C - extractive industry focused plan; D - the BLM preferred plan that claims to be a compromise between Alternatives B and C. Johnson showed us maps of the North Fork area comparing D to B-1 alternatives. BLM's preferred plan D would definitely have multiple negative impacts on us. BLM needs lots of comments from individuals and organizations stating why plan D is deficient and what alternative plan we want and why. Johnson claims in proposing plan D, BLM did not analyze the unique characteristics of our valley. Identify new or inaccurate information as well as what is missing from BLM's analysis. Johnson believes the best alternative is B - 1 as 75% of the land would be closed to oil and gas extraction. Go to westernslopeconservationcenter.org for more information.

The RMP does not cover USFS, which is just beginning its planning process. Other tidbits of information: the final RMP probably won't be ready for a year or more. The mineral severance tax is a big part of BLM funds. The biggest resource area is up valley, not around Paonia.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL: The Rotary theme for September is Basic Education and Literacy. [In 2005, Razia Jan came up with a dangerous idea: to start a free private school for girls in her native Afghanistan. "I had seen the conditions and how badly the girls were treated. I had to do something. I thought, 'There are no schools for girls here. Why not build one?']

"One of the first things we do is to teach the girls how to write their father's name. Then they take it home to show their parents. The fathers have come up to me, crying: 'These girls can write my name, and I can't.' That is a big moment. I have proved to the men of these seven villages that this is the best thing that's happened for their daughters -- to become educated. The girls are more independent. They can talk to their father or talk to their mother and share their opinions. They can speak for themselves now. We were having a discussion in class one day and one of them stood up and said, 'You shouldn't worry about what the world thinks'. They couldn't say this before."

What does the future look like for these girls? "I don't want their education to end here. I would like them to go to college, but I see the difficulty in that. Next year, when the oldest girls reach 10th grade, I want to have a plan to extend their education by building a computer science center or a nursing facility. I will bring education to them if they can't attend college. I will continue to give them as much freedom as I can, and a place in society where they can speak out. Gently but surely, we will give them a more promising future."

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

September 15: McKenna Palmer and Cyrus Malek-Madani - our RYLA attendees

September 22: Jason Cleckler, CEO of Delta County Memorial Hospital

September 30: "5th Thursday" at the Larios (no meeting on 9/29)

