

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council Meeting
November 10, 2021, 9:00 a.m. –12:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
Virtual via Zoom**

RAC Members:

Name	Residence	Interest Represented
Jeff Berend	Post Falls	Commercial Timber
William Orr	Coeur d' Alene	Energy and Minerals
Leon Smith	Mackay	Federal Grazing
Jake Rajala	Troy	Dispersed Recreation
Scott Nichols	Meridian	Dispersed Recreation
Brenda R. Pace	Idaho Falls	Archaeological & Historic Interests
Rocky (Skip) Brandt	Kooskia	Elected Official
Chad Colter	Pocatello	Tribal Interests
Tyrone Daniels	Coeur d'Alene	Tribal Interests
Absent: Jeff Buck	Eagle	Public-at-Large

BLM Staff:

Name	Title	Office
Peter Ditton	Idaho State Director (Acting)	Idaho State Office
Katie Stevens	Idaho Associate State Director (Acting)	Idaho State Office
June Shoemaker	Deputy State Director, Resources and Science	Idaho State Office
Jennifer Jones	Deputy State Director, Communications	Idaho State Office
MJ Byrne	Special Assistant	Idaho State Office
Hannah Cain	Public Affairs Specialist	Idaho State Office
Bruce Hallman	Public Affairs Specialist	Idaho Falls District Office
Suzanne Endsley	Public Affairs Specialist	Coeur d' Alene District Office
Rachael Hibbard	Public Affairs Specialist (Acting)	Twin Falls District Office
Mike Williamson	Public Affairs Specialist	Boise District Office
Tanya Thrift	District Manager (Acting)	Boise District Office
Mike Courtney	District Manager	Twin Falls District Office
Todd Kuck	Associate District Manager	Idaho Falls District Office
Kurt Pindel	District Manager	Coeur d'Alene & Spokane (WA) District Offices
Codie Martin	Field Manager	Shoshone Field Office
John Sullivan	Supervisory Realty Specialist	Idaho State Office

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Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Welcome, Introductions

Presenters: Peter Ditton, Acting BLM Idaho State Director and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC); Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications, Idaho State Office; BLM Idaho key Leadership and Staff; and RAC Members.

Jennifer Jones called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mountain Standard Time. Ditton welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for participating. He expressed appreciation to the five RAC members whose terms expired and were not reappointed (Bob Unnasch, Bob Breckenridge, Donna Bennett, Bernard Brown, and Kjell Howard) as well as the two RAC members whose terms expired and were reappointed (Leon Smith and Scott Nichols). Ditton also welcomed the two newly appointed RAC members (Chad Colter and Tyrone Daniels). All RAC members in attendance introduced themselves (see participant list, p. 1)

Agenda Item: Housekeeping, Review Agenda, Approve August 11, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Presenter: Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications, Idaho State Office

Jones provided an overview of the agenda and discussed logistics and “housekeeping” items for the virtual meeting. Minutes of the August 11, 2021, RAC meeting were emailed to RAC members to review prior to the meeting. Skip Brandt suggested that since the terms of both the RAC Chair (Bob Unnasch) and Vice-Chair (Bob Breckenridge) expired, and they were not reappointed that the RAC elect a new Chair and Vice Chair.

Motion to nominate Scott Nichols as RAC Chair – Skip Brandt; Second – Leon Smith

Motion to nominate Skip Brandt as Vice Chair – Scott Nichols; Second – Leon Smith

BLM Idaho RAC members voted unanimously in favor of both motions.

Motion to approve minutes of the August 11, 2021, RAC meeting – Brenda Pace; Second – Bill Orr

Agenda Item: State Director Updates

Presenter: Peter Ditton, Idaho State Director (Acting)

Ditton provided an update on the status of the BLM Idaho RAC. There are currently five vacant positions on the RAC and the terms of two RAC members expire in March 2022. BLM Idaho is working to publish a Federal Register Notice as soon as possible to solicit nominations for current and upcoming vacancies.

Ditton also provided information about the confirmation of Tracy Stone-Manning as BLM Director in September, required COVID-19 vaccinations for federal employees and contractors, and development of Department of the Interior (DOI) and BLM return to work plans. In addition, Ditton discussed DOI priorities that have been identified since the August RAC meeting (addressing the drought crisis, wildland fire preparedness, and tackling the climate crisis) and provided updates on 2021 wildfire response, development and implementation of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation plans, and completion of the Owyhee Land Exchange.

Agenda Item: District Updates

Presenters: Todd Kuck, Associate District Manager, Idaho Falls District; Mike Courtney, District Manager, Twin Falls District; Tanya Thrift, District Manager (Acting), Boise District; Kurt Pindel, District

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Manager, Coeur d'Alene and Spokane (WA) Districts.

Kuck provided an overview of key issues, programs and activities on the Idaho Falls District, including Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisitions; Husky 1 North Dry Ridge Phosphate Mine and Reclamation Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement; Timber sales; Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan; Travel Management Plans; and Fuels projects.

Thrift provided an overview of key issues, programs and activities on the Boise District, including the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan Record of Decision; wildfire response; fuels projects; Four Mile Herd Management area wild horse gather and Owyhee County Herd Management Area 10-year plans; drought response; and upcoming projects and planning (DeLamar Mine, Mormon Cricket treatments, seed collection, and Wilson Creek Trailhead improvements).

Courtney provided an overview of key issues, programs and activities on the Twin Falls District, including Cedar Fields Plan Amendment Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Monument Resource Management Plan public comments; renewable energy projects; and wildfire response.

Pindel provided an overview of key issues, programs and activities on the Coeur d'Alene District, including timber sales, fuels projects, recreation site improvements, and the Cougar Bay wetlands enhancement project.

Agenda Item: Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Scoping Results

Presenter: Codie Martin, Field Manager, Shoshone Field Office

Martin discussed the results of public scoping on the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy project, which began when the Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on August 20, 2021 and concluded on October 20, 2021. The BLM hosted two virtual public meetings during the scoping period, which had a combined total of 190 participants. The BLM received nearly 1,500 letters resulting in approximately 1,100 comments. Scoping identified more than 30 issues, including potential impacts to the Minidoka Historic Site which generated more than 240 comments. The BLM and project contractor are drafting a formal Scoping Report that will be available to the public when it is finalized. They are also analyzing all of the public comments received during the scoping period and will use those to start developing a range of alternatives to be analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Agenda Item: BLM Idaho Land and Water Conservation Fund Acquisitions

Presenter: John Sullivan, Supervisory Realty Specialist, Idaho State Office

Sullivan presented an overview of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, which was Congressionally enacted in 1964 to provide for open space and recreation and includes a State and Federal program. He also outlined LWCF proposal considerations, partnerships, and funding process, LWCF project areas in Idaho, and recent acquisition examples in the State. In addition, Sullivan provided information about the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act which allows BLM to retain revenue from some types of land sales and use them to acquire lands that meet specific criteria.

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Bernard Brown of Hailey, Idaho commented that impacts of the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project on wildlife, particularly sage-grouse, must be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement that the

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BLM is developing.

Agenda Item: Wrap-Up

Presenters: Peter Ditton, Idaho State Director (Acting); Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director for Communications, BLM Idaho State Office; Scott Nichols, RAC Chair; Skip Brandt, RAC Vice Chair. Jones discussed the need for the new RAC members, Chad Colter and Tyrone Daniels, to receive orientation and training. The BLM will work to schedule this as soon as possible. Nichols expressed the desire to move forward with establishing a Lava Ridge Wind Energy Subcommittee as the RAC voted to do during the August 11, 2021, meeting. The BLM will set up an administrative call with Nichols and Brandt to discuss requirements for Subcommittees, develop a strategy to meet them, and identify potential members and meeting dates.

Jake Rajala commented that per the BLM Idaho RAC Charter, the focus of RAC meetings should focus more on issues for the RAC to make recommendations on that the BLM might benefit from and less on information presentations. He suggested that issues for the RAC to make recommendations on could be identified by RAC members as well as BLM leadership and staff.

Jones noted that the next RAC meeting is currently scheduled for February 16, 2022, in Twin Falls. The BLM is hoping that it can be held in person with a virtual participation option but that will depend on BLM COVID-19 guidance, which currently does not permit in-person RAC meetings. She said that BLM Idaho will soon send a doodle poll to RAC members to identify additional 2022 meeting dates. Ditton thanked everyone for participating.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. Mountain Time