

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council/
Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Subcommittee Meeting
June 15, 2022, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time**

**Idaho Resource Advisory
Council Members:**

Name	Location	Interest Represented
Present:		
Scott Nichols	Meridian	Dispersed Recreation
Leon Smith	Mackay	Federal Grazing
Chad Colter	Pocatello	Tribal Interests
Tyrone Daniels	Coeur d'Alene	Tribal Interests
Absent:		
Jeff Berend	Post Falls	Commercial Timber
William Orr	Coeur d'Alene	Energy and Minerals
Jake Rajala	Troy	Dispersed Recreation
Skip Brandt	Kooskia	Elected Official

**Proposed Lava Ridge Wind
Energy Project Subcommittee
Members:**

Name	Location	Interest Represented/Affiliation
Present:		
Leon Smith		Federal Grazing
Scott Nichols		Dispersed Recreation
Chad Colter		Tribal Interests
Dan Sakura		Japanese-American Community
Roy Prescott		BLM livestock grazing permittee
Ted MacNeil		Magic Valley ATV Riders
George Lynch		Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources
Garret Visser		Idaho Wildlife Federation
Ben Crouch		Jerome County Commissioners
Wayne Schenk		Minidoka County Commissioners
Rebecca Wood		Lincoln County Commissioners
Jack Johnson (public comment period only)		Twin Falls County Commissioners
Shauna Robinson		Historic Preservation
Brenda Pace		Archaeological and Historic Interests

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BLM Staff:

Name	Title	Office
Karen Kelleher	Idaho State Director	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
Julie Clark	Public Affairs Specialist (Detailed)	Idaho State Office
Mike Courtney	District Manager	Twin Falls District Office
Codie Martin	Field Manager	Shoshone Field Office
Heather Tiel-Nelson	Public Affairs Specialist	Twin Falls District Office
Kasey Prestwich	Project Manager	Shoshone Field Office
Eric Zechmann	Safety & Occupational Health Specialist	Twin Falls District Office
Ashley Long	Renewable Energy Archaeologist	Twin Falls District Office
Michael Houser	Realty Specialist	Twin Falls District Office
David Freiberg	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Shoshone Field Office
Jesse Rawson	Wildlife Biologist	Shoshone Field Office

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2

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Field Tour Logistics

Presenters: Karen Kelleher, BLM Idaho State Director and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC); Mike Courtney, District Manager, BLM Twin Falls District; Codie Martin, Field Manager, BLM Shoshone Field Office; Scott Nichols, Chair, BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council/Vice-Chair, Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Subcommittee (Subcommittee); Leon Smith, Member, BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council/Chair, Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Subcommittee; Eric Zechmann, Safety & Occupational Health Specialist, BLM Twin Falls District Office; and Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications, Idaho State Office.

Kelleher, Courtney, Martin, Nichols, and Smith welcomed members of the RAC and Subcommittee as well as approximately 100 members of the public to the field tour. Kelleher informed participants that she was delegating the authority to serve as DFO for the field tour and for subsequent Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Subcommittee meetings to Courtney. Courtney reviewed the primary objective of the field tour, which was to provide RAC and Subcommittee members with information about the proposed project and potential impacts of it on natural and cultural resources for use in developing recommendations to the BLM. He also requested members of the public to observe ground rules that had been provided in advance to those who had RSVP'd for the field tour. Zechmann provided a briefing about the key safety hazards that would be present during the field tour and ways to mitigate them. Jones discussed the logistics of the field tour, including the availability of maps and directions for the different stops, and the need to stay on time to ensure a return to the BLM Twin Falls District Office in time to start the public comment period at 4:45 p.m. as indicated in the Federal Register Notice that was published regarding the field tour.

Agenda Item: Overview of Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project

Presenter: Luke Papez, Magic Valley Energy

Papez provided an overview of the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project and the potential economic benefits of it to the local area. He also responded to questions from RAC and Subcommittee members about cumulative effects, as Magic Valley Energy and other companies are proposing additional wind and solar energy projects in the area, as well as the role that the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project would play in terms of power generation capacity in the region.

Agenda Item: Minidoka National Historic Site Tour and Presentations

Presenters: Wade M. Vagias, PhD, Superintendent, Minidoka National Historic Site, National Park Service; and Anna Tamura, acting Regional Program Manager for Park Planning and Environmental Compliance, National Park Service.

Vagias and Tamura led a tour of the Minidoka National Historic Site that included stops at the Honor Roll, the Fire Station, and the Visitor Center. They provided information about the history of Japanese-American internment there, the establishment of the site as a unit of the National Park Service, and the potential impacts of the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project on the site, particularly visual resources. Vagias and Tamura responded to questions from RAC and Subcommittee members about how large the turbines would be and how far away they would be from the Minidoka National Historic Site under

3

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June 15, 2022, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time**

different alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that the BLM is preparing.

Agenda Item: Wilson Butte Cave

Presenters: Ashley Long, Renewable Energy Archaeologist, BLM Twin Falls District Office; and Codie Martin, Field Manager, Shoshone Field Office.

Long provided an overview of the Wilson Butte Cave, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an archaeological site and is located within the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy project area. She discussed the laws and regulations governing management of cultural resources on public lands that the BLM manages, such as the National Historic Preservation Act. Long explained the processes that the agency uses to identify cultural resources; to assess potential adverse effects and significant impacts of proposed projects on cultural resources; and to determine ways to minimize or mitigate adverse effects and significant impacts. She discussed a number of significant issues that have been raised regarding potential physical impacts to historic properties and cultural resources within the proposed project area as well as to wildlife, vegetation, and water resources that are of religious or cultural significance to Tribes and that are subject to Tribal Treaty rights. Long highlighted the work that BLM is doing to consult and collaborate with the Shoshone-Paiute, Shoshone-Bannock, and Northwestern Band of Shoshone Tribes; the Japanese American communities; and other parties on the proposed project. Martin discussed the potential impacts of the proposed project on the multiple livestock grazing allotments located within the project area and the permittees who are authorized to graze their livestock on them. He explained that permittees have expressed concerns about restrictions on livestock grazing during the construction phase of the proposed project, increased traffic on new access roads that would be constructed, increased wildfire potential from improved access to the project area, and decreased possibility of aerial firefighting due to the presence of wind turbines. Long responded to questions from Resource Advisory Council and Subcommittee members about how the BLM would respond to discovery of new cultural resources within the proposed project area. Martin responded to questions from Resource Advisory Council and Subcommittee members about the length of time that livestock grazing permittees would be displaced during construction of the proposed project.

Agenda Item: Sid Butte

Presenters: Michael Houser, Realty Specialist, BLM Twin Falls District; David Freiberg, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM Shoshone Field Office; Jesse Rawson, Wildlife Biologist, BLM Shoshone Field Office.

Houser discussed the availability of public land that the BLM manages for multiple uses, including proposed renewable energy developments. He also provided an overview of the agency's Right-of-Way authorization and National Environmental Policy Act analysis processes to respond to proposals to site renewable energy projects on public lands. Rawson provided an overview of the known and expected wildlife resources and habitats in the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy project area. At the broadscale, it is sagebrush steppe habitat, although much of it is currently dominated by grasslands due to wildland fire. A variety of wildlife species may be present on the landscape year round or seasonally. The BLM is conducting analysis to understand the potential impacts of the proposed projects on sensitive species, such as Greater sage-grouse, St. Anthony Dunes Tiger Beetle, bats, migratory birds, big game, and Monarch butterfly. Specifically, the BLM is determining how the proposed project will influence mortality, displacement, populations, and the extent and quality of habitats. Freiberg discussed how potential changes to recreation experiences and opportunities, as well as scenic quality, were identified as important issues during the scoping process on the proposed project. He explained how BLM staff use the Recreation Setting Matrix to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project on recreation

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experiences and opportunities within the project area, including off-highway vehicle riding, hunting, trapping, photography, wildlife viewing, and horseback riding. Freiberg also outlined how BLM has completed a current Visual Resources Inventory, which identifies the scenic quality of the proposed project area as it currently exists. Resource Advisory Council and Subcommittee members inquired about the availability of studies on the impacts of wind energy projects on wildlife and asked if the BLM is gathering information on the impacts of existing wind energy projects on bird populations.

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

14 members of the public provided comments to the RAC and Subcommittee: John Robison, Chuck Collins, Steve Miller, Chet Brackett, Don Lappen, John Ochi, Diana Nielson, Tori Orgain-Wakewood; Brian Smith; Stephanie Novack; Andrew McKay; Kim Brackett; Janet Bolish; and David Luper.

Robison encouraged participants to withhold judgment on the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project until the BLM releases the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. All others who provided comments expressed opposition to the proposed project on a variety of grounds. These included impacts on visual resources; the lack of recycling of wind turbines and electric cars at the end of their lifecycles; bird kills from wind turbines; impacts on Tribal treaty rights; impacts on the Minidoka National Historic Site and the Japanese-American community; impacts on the nature of Idaho as an outdoor recreation destination as opposed to a wind and solar farm location; lack of benefit to Idaho residents of the power that would be generated by the proposed project; lack of ability to store power generated by wind turbines for future use; impacts on hunting, fishing, and other types of outdoor recreation; impacts of roads that would be constructed to support the proposed project; impacts on livestock grazing; potential conflict with Idaho Statutes pertaining to planning and zoning; and impacts on water resources, particularly the Snake River Aquifer. Detailed notes of individual comments were captured and provided to the BLM Project Manager.

Agenda Item: Wrap-Up

Presenters: Jones thanked RAC and Subcommittee members and members of the public for participating in the field tour and expressed appreciation to BLM and National Park Service leadership and staff for hosting it. She reminded participants that additional Subcommittee meetings will be held virtually via Zoom on Thursday, July 7; Thursday, August 25; and Thursday, September 22. Jones also informed participants that the next RAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 19 and that agendas and Zoom registration information for all of the upcoming meetings would be available 30 days in advance of each meeting on the RAC and Subcommittee websites.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. Daylight Mountain Time.