

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council Meeting
February 16, 2022, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
Virtual via Zoom**

RAC Members:

Name	Location	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
June Shoemaker	Associate State Director (Acting)	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
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, BLM Idaho State Director (Acting) and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC); Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications, Idaho State Office, BLM; BLM Idaho key Leadership and Staff; and RAC Members.

Agenda Item: Housekeeping, Review Agenda, Approve November 10, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Presenter: Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications, Idaho State Office, BLM
Jones provided an overview of the agenda and discussed logistics and “housekeeping” items for the virtual meeting. Draft minutes of the November 10, 2021, RAC meeting were emailed to RAC members to review prior to the meeting.

Motion to approve minutes of the November 10, 2021, RAC meeting – Scott Nichols; Second – Brenda Pace.

Agenda Item: State Director Updates

Presenter: Peter Ditton, Idaho State Director (Acting), BLM
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 provided updates on Department of the Interior leadership, priorities, and key initiatives, including the Memorandum of Understanding to Accelerate Reviews of Clean Energy Proposals on Public Lands, the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names, and the Foundation for America’s Public Lands. Ditton also discussed national BLM leadership, priorities, and key initiatives, including 2021 Greater Sage-grouse Land Use Plan Amendments and Wild Horse and Burro Management. In addition, Ditton highlighted current BLM Idaho programs, activities, and events, including COVID-19 procedures, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Great American Outdoors Act, and recreation fees.

Agenda Item: District Updates

Presenters: Mary D’Aversa, District Manager, Idaho Falls District, BLM; Tanya Thrift, District Manager, Boise District, BLM; Mike Courtney, District Manager, Twin Falls District, BLM; Kurt Pindel, District Manager, Coeur d’Alene, and Spokane (WA) Districts, BLM.

D’Aversa provided updates on key issues, programs, and activities on the Idaho Falls District, including recreation; the Upper Snake East Travel Plan; gold, copper, molybdenum, and phosphate mining proposals; upcoming acquisitions of land and a conservation easement using Land and Water Conservation Fund monies; and the St. Anthony Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan.

Thrift provided updates on key issues, programs, and activities on the Boise District, including the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan Record of Decision; Simco Training Area Expansion; acquisition of land in the Harris Ranch area using Land and Water Conservation Fund monies; the DeLamar Mine; the new Owyhee Field Office building and Bruneau Fire Station; the Bruneau-Owyhee

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Sage-grouse Habitat project; fee proposals for the Jump Creek and Cove recreation sites; and the Steck Park Agreement.

Courtney provided updates on key issues, programs, and activities on the Twin Falls District, including the virtual fencing trial on the Davis Mountain allotment; Wood River Valley trails and seasonal closures/restrictions; Cedar Fields Plan Amendment for the Monument Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement; livestock grazing permit renewals; proposed trail system in the Balanced Rock/Salmon Falls Creek/Devil Creek area; proposed renewable energy projects; fuels projects; and wildfire response.

Pindel provided updates on key issues, programs and activities on the Coeur d' Alene District, including timber sales and use of the Good Neighbor Authority on the Trail Creek Timber Sale; fuels projects; and recreation improvement projects, including the Ross Point Day-Use Site, Lower Salmon River boat ramps, and Huckleberry Campground.

Agenda Item: Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project/Subcommittee Update and Planning

Presenters: Codie Martin, Field Manager, Shoshone Field Office, BLM; Kasey Prestwich, Project Lead, Shoshone Field Office, BLM; Scott Nichols, Chair, BLM Idaho RAC; Skip Brandt, Vice-Chair, BLM Idaho RAC; Leon Smith, Member, BLM Idaho RAC and Chair, BLM Idaho RAC Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Subcommittee.

Martin and Prestwich provided an overview of the Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project that Magic Valley Energy is proposing and development of the Environmental Impact Statement to analyze it. They also discussed public scoping that was conducted from August 20, 2021 through October 20, 2021 as part of the Environmental Impact Statement Development process and identified numerous issues, including potential impacts to the Minidoka National Historic Site, wildlife, and livestock grazing operations. The BLM is developing five Alternatives for consideration in the Environmental Impact Statement, including the Proposed Action and a No Action alternative. The BLM is working to release the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public comment this summer.

Nichols, Brandt, and Smith discussed the Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Subcommittee, which the BLM Idaho RAC voted to establish during their August 2021 meeting to compile information and conduct research in accordance with the BLM Idaho RAC Charter. The Subcommittee is comprised of the following individuals:

Leon Smith, Subcommittee Chair and member, BLM Idaho RAC, Federal Grazing; Scott Nichols, Subcommittee Assistant Chair and member and Chair, BLM Idaho RAC, Dispersed Recreation; Chad Colter, Member, BLM Idaho RAC, Tribal Interests; Dan Sakura, Japanese-American Community Representative; Roy Prescott, 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; John Crozier, Jerome County Commissioner; Wayne Schenk, Minidoka County Commissioner; Rebecca Wood, Lincoln County Commissioner; Shauna Robinson, Historic Preservation Representative; Brenda Pace, Archaeological and Historic Interest Representative.

The BLM will be working with the Subcommittee Chair and members to develop a meeting schedule and identify meeting dates. Federal Register Notices will be published for all Subcommittee meetings where

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substantive matters pertaining to the Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project will be discussed and those meetings will be open to the public and will include public comment periods.

Agenda Item: Camping Overstays on Public Lands

Presenter: Becky Andres, Idaho Chief Ranger, BLM

Andres discussed the impacts of public land users occupying BLM administered public lands beyond the 14-day stay limit on public lands and other users (recreationists, permittees, etc.). She explained that the BLM has seen an increase in overstays as a result of financial hardship and rising housing costs/ Andres discussed how BLM teams up with Sheriff's Offices to find solutions to overstays on a case-by-case basis, including partnering with local aid networks and local government agencies to connect individuals to resources.

Agenda Item: BLM Collaboration with University of Idaho

Presenter: Karen Launchbaugh, Director, Rangeland Center, University of Idaho

Launchbaugh provided an overview of the Rangeland Center, current projects, and interactions with BLM. Projects include those focused on preparing for fire, wildland fuels management, grouse, and grazing. She discussed five research sites across Idaho - Brown's Bench, Sheep Creek, Pahsimeroi Valley, Big Butte, and Jim Sage. Launchbaugh explained that the University of Idaho, BLM, and other partners are currently in the eighth year of a 10-year study on the impacts of livestock grazing on sage-grouse. She also discussed collaboration on the Rock Creek Ranch, where the University of Idaho and BLM are working together on Outcome Based Land Management. Launchbaugh explained that the goal of the Rangeland Center is to provide actionable information for land managers.

Agenda Item: Travel Management Planning

Presenters: Shannon Bassista, Trails and Travel Planning State Lead, Idaho State Office, BLM; Tanya Thrift, District Manager (acting), Boise District; and Jeremy Casterson, Field Manager, Upper Snake Field Office

Bassista provided an overview of travel and transportation management planning, including goals; process; and challenges. Casterson discussed the Upper Snake East Travel Management Plan, which includes 850 miles of inventoried routes on 126,300 acres. Thrift discussed travel management planning on the Boise District, including Owyhee County Travel Plans and Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Travel Plans. She explained that the goal is to finalize National Environmental Policy Act analysis and issue decisions in Fiscal Years 2023/2024.

Agenda Item: Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Processes Governing Mining on BLM-Managed Land

Presenter: Kyle Rybacki, Geologist, Idaho State Office, BLM

Rybacki provided an overview of the Mining Law Administration Program, including the impacts and benefits of mining on public lands; Mining Law Administration Program Authority, including the Mining Law of 1872 as amended and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act; Program Areas; and Mining Law Administration Program priorities.

Agenda Item: Unprotected Lands During Wildfire in Idaho

Presenter: Marty Adell, Deputy State Fire Management Office, Idaho State Office, BLM

Adell provided an overview of the challenges associated with the approximately 1.2 million acres of unprotected lands in Idaho, which do not have a designated entity designed for wildfire suppression, as

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well as under-protected lands, which do have a designated entity for wildfire suppression, but lack the available equipment and/or funds to do so completely. This is an important issue because when agencies take wildfire suppression action on lands outside of their lawful responsibility, it invites charges of misuse of funds and/or dereliction of duty. The BLM and USDA Forest Service are working to highlight this issue and encourage the exploration of solutions, including formation of fire departments/districts and rangeland fire protection associations.

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Diana Nielson, Stephanie Novacek, and Shauna Robinson made comments on the potential impacts of the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project. Luke Papez, with Magic Valley Energy, made a comment that he is available to respond to questions from members of the public or RAC members.

Agenda Item: Wrap-Up

Presenters: Peter Ditton, Idaho State Director (Acting), BLM; Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director for Communications, Idaho State Office, BLM; Scott Nichols, RAC Chair; Skip Brandt, RAC Vice Chair. Peter Ditton thanked RAC members, BLM leadership and staff, and members of the public for participating. He encouraged members of the public who commented on the potential impacts of the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project to contact the Shoshone Field Office and ask to be placed on the project mailing list.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time