

Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming Resource Advisory Council Meeting

06/12/24-06/13/24 Lander, WY

RAC Coordinator: Allegra Keenoo

Name	City	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present	Notes
Jennifer Leinonen	Casper	Energy/Minerals	12/25	Y	
Craig Rood	Green River	Energy/Minerals	05/27	Y	
Colin McKee	Cheyenne	Energy/Minerals	12/25	Y	
Michael Massie	Laramie	Archeology	4/26	Y	
Mel Shumway	Afton	Dispersed Recreation	05/27	Y	
Josh Coursey	Kemmerer	Dispersed Recreation	4/26	Y	
John Espy	Rawlins	Elected Official	05/27	N	
Stephanie Kessler	Lander	Public-at-Large	4/26	Y	
Mary Thoman	Green River	Elected Official	12/25	Y	
Yufna Solider Wolf	St. Stevens	Tribal	4/26	N	

Name	Title	Office	Present
Andrew Archuleta	State Director	WY State Office	Y
Kris Kirby	Associate State Director	WY State Office	Y
Frank Keeler	Acting District Manager	High Desert District	Y
Kevin Christensen	District Manager	High Plains District	Y
Mike Phillips	Acting District Manager	Wild River Bighorn Basin	Y
Doug Clark	Assistant District Manager	Wild River Bighorn Basin	Y
Brad Purdy	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Allegra Keenoo	Public Affairs Specialist	WY State Office	Y
Azure Hall	Public Affairs Specialist	WY State Office	Y
Duane Spencer	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Jennifer Fleuret-McConchie	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Mark Goertel	Supervisory Resource Group	WY State Office	Y
June Wendlant	WY/NE Wild Horse & Burro Lead	WY State Office	Y
Doug Linn	Program Manager	Pinedale	Y
John Elliot	Lander Field Manager	Lander	Y
Clay Stott	Wild Horse & Burro Specialist	Lander	Y

Agenda Item: Welcome/Housekeeping

Presenter: Andrew Archuleta and Jennifer Leinonen

- RAC Member and BLM introductions
- Agenda Review

Agenda Item: District and Field Manager Updates

Presenter: Frank Keeler, HDD Manager, Kevin Christensen, HPD Manager, Mike Phillips, WRBBD Manager, John Elliot, Lander Field Manager

High Dessert District (HDD), Frank Keeler – District Manager

- District Hot Topic Updates
 - See attached
- Wild Horse Plan Amendment for BLM Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Office
 - Checkerboard Herd Management Area (HMA), removing HMA, removing horses -- what happens to horses after gather
 - Short-term holding
 - Adoption programs
 - Long-term holding
 - Scoping, public comments part of process for analysis, responding to comments
 - Importance of public comment, informing BLM of more details/data
 - BLM Projects all on ePlanning - <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/home>

High Plains District (HPD), Kevin Christensen -- District Manager

- District Hot Topic Updates
 - See attached
- Staffing | Recruiting
 - Field Managers in place, extensive experience, hiring and filling vacancies in good shape

Wind River Big Horn Basin District (WRBBD), Mike Phillips -- District Manager, John Elliot – Lander Field Manager

- District Hot Topic Update
 - See attached
 - Oil and Gas Well Plugging
 - Cost of wells depends on the depth of plugging and reclamation of the project
 - Process of funding – determination of orphan well, checking bonds and record title holders within the State and on a national level
 - DOI determination of funding – Wyoming has a good process of wells being added to the list for funding and allocation

- Nine-year funding
- Reclamation has more input in the process – ideally want to streamline contracting to Wyoming contractors
- BOR Muddy Ridge Withdrawal Revocation
 - Determining suitability of public land
 - Ensuring not hazardous waste sites
 - Attorneys are looking at options, 1958 law removed the land from Tribal boundary
 - Will go out for public comment after Federal Register publication

Agenda Item: Statewide Planning Efforts

Presenter: Jennifer Fleuret-McConchie, Deputy State Director, Resource Policy and Management

Rock Springs RMP Updates

- Over 35k comments received, placed in 400 categories
- Governor’s task force concerns addressed for final proposed alternative
- Decision not finalized yet, BLM listened to feedback and participated in almost all meetings, concerns will be addressed in final decision

Greater Sage Grouse RMP

- State specific Record of Decisions (RODs), minor changes, State Office has provided justifications to HQ
- BLM Wyoming content with direction of ROD

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative Update

- Wyoming Game and Fish meeting July 16-17, 2024
 - [Public Meetings | Wyoming Game & Fish Department](#)
- Working on new agreement, exploring options for holding funding
- Partnerships: Wyoming Game and Fish, State of Wyoming, and BLM
- WLCI web link - <https://wlci.gov/#/>

Agenda Item: Overview of the Western Solar Plan

Presenter: Duane Spencer, Deputy State Director, Minerals

- Web links –
 - BLM Solar <https://blmsolar.anl.gov/solar-peis-2023/>
 - Energy Information Administration (EIA) <https://www.eia.gov/>
 - Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) <https://www.onrr.gov/>
- Wyoming part of 11 states for solar planning development

- Three criteria – Open, Exclusion, and Avoidance
- Location challenges
 - 10% slope of land, excluded, removing a large portion of land for development
 - Sage-grouse habitat and lek exclusions
- Public comments through scoping are encouraged
- NEPA analysis on site specific projects
- Solar ramping up vs wind, nation-wide
- Still in process of completing plan of development for solar, nation-wide

Agenda Item: Disturbance Calculation within the BLM

Presenter: Duane Spencer, Deputy State Director, Minerals and Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair

- Prompted item from prior meeting. How disturbance is calculated for all surface disturbing activities such as wildlife, grazing, mining, oil and gas, solar, etc.
- BLM tracks disturbance and reclamation in designated Greater Sage-grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas
 - The Surface Disturbance Analysis and Reclamation Tracking Tool is used for this request
- BLM has no mechanism to track disturbance post reclamation currently
 - Interim reclamation vs final reclamation is a challenge
 - Difficult to track ROWs due to permitting requirements
- Public Lands Rule has provided some guidance for tracking reclamation
- Adaptive management is currently being used by the BLM

Agenda Item: Formal Recommendation Process from RAC to BLM/Working Groups

Presenter: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair

- Review of RAC Charter document
- Wild horse working group
 - RAC members meeting in a smaller group and bringing recommendations forward (working group) for full RAC consideration
 - Developing letter for BLM, estimated for September meeting
- RAC creates working group(s) – following Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
- Working group(s) cannot be members outside of the RAC members
- Requested input from the RAC members per Andrew
 - Recreation Blueprint
 - <https://www.blm.gov/national-office/strategic-plan/blueprint-21st-century-outdoor-recreation>

- PDF - [The Bureau of Land Management's Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation \(blm.gov\)](#)
- Dispersed use on public lands (hunting/hiking/camping off site/off roading) and management for public lands/resources damage
 - Difficult to patrol
 - Non-fee areas
 - Additional costs for staff, infrastructure, and maintenance
- [Camping | Bureau of Land Management \(blm.gov\)](#)

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Presenters: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair and Allegra Keenoo, Public Affairs Specialist/RAC Coordinator

- Public included – Joe Sylvester, Wyo-Ben (Zoom), Nick Dobric (Zoom), Aaron Foster, Freemon County Weed & Pest (in-person), and Lindy Linn (in-person)
- Comments included -
 - Available use of products for invasive species, approval of certain products can be a lengthy process
 - Drone usage restrictions around USA manufacturing, specifically spray drones for invasive species areas
 - Cooperative agreements vs contracts for funding
 - Agreements provide for a partnership
 - Processes are becoming more challenging around application, approvals, and paperwork
 - Contracts take more time vs sub-contractor use under agreements
 - HPD receiving approvals on drone usage – use on fire assignments and ability to access more areas for monitoring
- Agriculture representation on the RAC
 - John Espy, unable to attend meeting – RAC member representing agriculture

Agenda Item: Overview of U.S. Code Provision 43 U.S.C. 1737©, DOI donations

Presenter: Collin McKee, RAC Member

- Cap on funding amount
- BLM holds less authority to change code
- Possible opportunity with Public Lands Foundation
 - [Public Lands - Keep public lands, in public hands.](#)
- BLM MS1105 Fundraising - [Guidance Related to the Implementation of Manual Section 1105: Donations, Solicitation, and Fundraising | Bureau of Land Management \(blm.gov\)](#)

Agenda Item: June 13 Overview of Wild Horse Program
Presenter: June Wendlandt, Wild Horse & Burro Program Lead

- Adoptions, halter or saddle started horses
 - CFD July 2024, mix of halter and saddle started horses. Record of 100% adoption event with the Mantles
 - Honor Farm September 2024, mix of halter and saddle started horses
- Events at State/County fairs
 - Not high adoption rates
 - Moved to Mustang Days
 - Option of having a booth at State/County fairs for education on adoption process
- Adoption numbers keeping up with numbers of animals
 - Need of facilities
 - Large number of animals to the public
- BLM follow up after adoption
 - Six-month incentive – compliance check from BLM
 - One year title sign off – BLM or authorized veterinary compliance check
 - Random mandatory compliance check – first time adopters, BLM field or State Office
 - Covering Wyoming and Nebraska
- Percentage of failure on compliance check – less than 1% per year
 - Mitigate red flags before application process
 - Educate false application form penalties, explain can and cannot practices with animal(s), Wild Horse & Burro staff are a phone call away for any help/questions on adopted animals

Agenda Item: Topics for Future RAC Meetings/Action Items

Presenter: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair

Future Topics:

- District updates (60-90 minutes)
- BluePrint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation
 - [Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation | Bureau of Land Management \(blm.gov\)](https://www.blm.gov/blueprint)
- Public Lands Foundation Representative – outlook, agency fundraising
- Rule Implementation of all recent rules released by BLM– will include the Public Lands Rule, Oil & Gas Rule, and Conservation Rule (two hours)
 - Guidance and explanation of the rules
- Rock Springs RMP
 - Final, steps of objection period, high points

- Greater Sage Grouse RMP
- Recommendation letter from RAC, Wild Horse working group

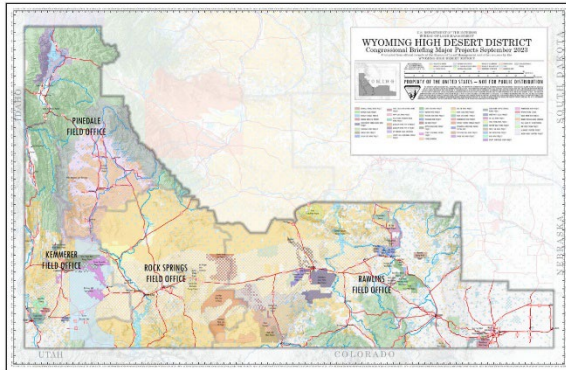
Action Items:

- BLM – Federal Register covering one-year of meetings
- BLM – Pinedale meeting, September 18-19, 2024
- BLM – titles of presenters rather than department numbers, include Charter document with printouts
- BLM – Pinedale field trip
- RAC – review BluePrint Recreation Plan
 - PDF - [The Bureau of Land Management's Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation \(blm.gov\)](#)
- RAC – Wild horse letter recommendation for September 2024 meeting
- RAC – email BLM (BLM_WY_912@blm.gov) if planning to observe North Lander Complex gather starting July 1, 2024



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

High Desert District



District Quick Facts

District Office Location: Rock Springs, Wyoming

BLM Managed Surface: 9.4 Million Acres

BLM Managed Mineral Estate: 10.8 Million Acres

Field Offices: Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins & Rock Springs

Full Time Employees: 225

High Desert District (HDD): *Acting District Manager, Frank Keeler*

The HDD encompasses the southern and western parts of Wyoming, featuring a variety of landscapes and nearly every resource that BLM manages. HDD has four field offices, a single engine air tanker base, the National Sign Shop, and the BLM Wild Horse holding facility. HDD has recently been the leader in renewable energy for Wyoming to include transmission, wind energy, solar development and CO2 sequestration projects.

Kemmerer Field Office (KFO): *Acting Field Manager, Brandon Teppo*

KFO encompasses about 1.4 million federal surface acres and 1.6 million federal mineral acres spanning three counties (Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta). The field office spans three large drainages (Great Basin/Upper Colorado/Snake River) containing an abundance of blue-ribbon streams. It is home to several cutoff sections of the California, Oregon, Mormon pioneer trail system including several types of recreation opportunities. KFO manages for every kind of resource except hard rock mining and houses the largest H2S/CO2 processing plant in the state.

Pinedale Field Office (PFO): *Acting Field Manager, Perry Wickham*

PFO manages approximately 924,000 acres of public land surface and 1.2 million acres of federal mineral estate in northwest Wyoming across four counties (Fremont, Lincoln, Sublette, and Teton). The largest fluid mineral developments in our area are the Pinedale Anticline and Jonah natural gas fields which are major energy sources for the nation. The field office is home to the headwaters of the Upper Green River basin and the first officially designated migration corridor for big game. Contains prime habitat for fishing, hunting and recreation among the Wind River and Wyoming mountain ranges.

Rawlins Field Office (RFO): *Field Manager, Tim Novotny*

RFO manages four large counties within its planning area (Carbon, Albany, Laramie, and Sweetwater) counties. It includes approximately 3.5 million acres of public land surface and 4.5 million acres of federal mineral estate. RFO is home to the National Sign Center, which fabricates a large variety of custom signs for other government agencies and cooperators. RFO handles a vast array of programs. The largest development item in that area is non-renewable energy. Recreation opportunities include hunting, hiking, water sports, historic trails, but the most popular one is the Continental Trail

Rock Springs Field Office (RSFO): *Field Manager, Kimberlee Foster*

RSFO manages more than 3.6 million acres of public land surface and 3.5 million acres of public subsurface minerals among five counties (Fremont, Lincoln, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Uinta) in southwest Wyoming. Recreation, geological formations, and Killpecker Sand Dunes open play area bring travelers from across the nation to visit. The world's largest sodium leasing area accounts for 90% of the total domestic soda ash production and 30% of global production is located 35 miles west of the field office. The Field Office contains a large swath of land grants issued as part of the transcontinental railroad that remains in a permanent checkerboard pattern of alternating public and private land ownership.



High Desert District - Hot Topics

High Dessert District

Rock Springs Resource Management Plan

The Rock Springs RMP planning effort has garnered high interest from diverse stakeholders due to its diverse resource issues. The RMP revision was initiated in 2011 to develop new management actions for the field office and replace the 1997 Green River RMP. The Draft EIS was released in August 2023, with Alternative B as the Preferred Alternative. The BLM's extended public comment period (150 days) concluded in January 2024. Since announcing the Draft RMP and EIS, the BLM held three public meetings and participated with the Wyoming Governor's Task Force through the Ruckelshaus Institute to address proposed management actions. BLM is now evaluating public comments and preparing a Final EIS/Proposed RMP. The BLM is estimating announcing a Notice of Availability of the final in July 2024. The RSFO covers portions of five counties: Sweetwater, Fremont, Lincoln, Sublette, and Uinta.

Wild Horse Plan Amendment for the BLM Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Offices

In response to a 2013 consent decree between the BLM and the Rock Spring Grazing Association, the BLM developed a plan amendment for the Rock Springs and Rawlins field office RMPs to address wild horses in Herd Management Areas (HMAs) that overlap the checkerboard land pattern in southwest Wyoming. BLM Wyoming issued a Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment in May 2023. The Plan Amendment responds to the requirements of the Consent Decree by removing all checkerboard land from three HMAs. Total Appropriate Management Levels under this Plan Amendment would be 464 to 836 wild horses, a roughly 60 percent decrease from previous AMLs of 1,481 to 2,065. This record of decision is in full force and effect and will begin implementation in August 2024 with the White Mountain HMA gather. The ROD is subject to current litigation that is ongoing. The RMP Amendment covers portions of Sweetwater and Carbon counties.

CO2 Sequestration Projects

Southwest Wyoming CO₂ Carbon Sequestration Project (Moxa Carbon Storage): The Kemmerer and Rock Springs Field Offices have received a ROW application for the use of over 600,000 acres for the permanent geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide into subsurface federal pore space in southwest Wyoming in Sweetwater, Lincoln and Uinta Counties. The proposal is being analyzed under an environmental assessment. Public Scoping was completed in May 2023. Moxa Carbon Storage is applying for Class VI Underground Injection Control well permits to construct and operate CO₂ injection wells, which are permitted and regulated by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Surface facilities will be required, and area of disturbance will be calculated over the course of the project but will be unknown until final project design. Final design can't be completed until Moxa Carbon Storage has obtained the federal subsurface ROW and has secured private pore space leases. Cooperating agencies review recently concluded and the draft environmental assessment was sent on June 3, 2024 to the solicitor's office for final review. The environmental assessment will also undergo a 30-day public comment period before being finalized.

Southeast Wyoming CO₂ Carbon Sequestration Project (Tallgrass High Plains Carbon Storage): The Rawlins Field Office received a ROW application for the use of 480 acres of federal pore space in southeast Wyoming for the permanent geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide. The proposal is being analyzed in an environmental assessment. Public scoping was completed in



High Desert District - Hot Topics

December 2023. The ROW application involves the use of BLM-administered federal pore space and does not currently involve use of the surface for related infrastructure. Tallgrass Carbon Storage is applying for Class VI Underground Injection Control well permits to construct and operate CO₂ injection wells, which are permitted and regulated by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Rawlins Field Office anticipates a release of an Environmental Analysis in July 2024 for public comment and cooperator review.

Sweetwater Carbon Storage Hub CO₂ Sequestration Project (Pond Field LLC, Frontier Carbon Solutions): The Kemmerer Field Office received a ROW application for the use of 44,347 acres of federal pore space in Lincoln, Uinta, and Sweetwater Counties for the permanent geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide. Frontier Carbon Solutions has submitted three Class VI permit applications to Wyoming DEQ. The wells will be located on non-federal lands. Public scoping for the project concluded in September 2023 and a cooperating agency meeting recently concluded in May 2024. Wyoming DEQ approved the three Class VI wells. This project NEPA will tier to the Southwest Wyoming CO₂ Carbon Sequestration Project EA.

Wind Energy Projects

BLM Wyoming is currently working on six different wind energy projects in Wyoming. Three of the projects are type 2 applications which are used by wind energy companies to test areas for wind potential and may or may not result in a plan of development and further NEPA analysis. BLM is preparing NEPA documents on the following proposed wind energy projects in Wyoming.

Two Rivers Wind Energy Project (Blu Earth Resources): The Two Rivers wind energy project is a 20,381-acre (4,507 acres of BLM managed lands) project located in the Rawlins Field Office. The project consists of 79 wind turbines, a 34.5 kV collection system, two 230 kV transmission lines and other project related infrastructure.

BLM and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the Two Rivers Wind Energy Project EA for a 30-day public comment period in November 2022. BLM and USFWS worked together to draft an alternative that analyzes curtailment strategies that may include seasonal closures of turbines near eagle nests and mitigation strategies like bird detection/avoidance systems. The BLM received an updated layout in March 2023 that indicated a need for additional paleo and cultural surveys. Since then, the BLM has held multiple tribal consultations and site visits, changing the project design and layout significantly to avoid cultural and Tribal resources identified by the tribes.

Due to the extensive changes to the project, a supplemental Draft EA will likely be necessary for additional public comment. Due to adverse affects caused by the project to the landscape, a memorandum of agreement will be required between BLM, the proponent, Tribes and consulting parties.

Jackalope Type III Wind Application (Jackalope Wind LLC): The project includes about 213 wind turbines located on approximately 166,100 acres of BLM managed lands. BLM opened a public scoping period on the project in March 2024 and extended the comment period by 15 days to May 2, 2024. BLM held two public scoping meetings in Rawlins and Rock Springs in April 2024. The BLM received approximately 300 public comments and is reviewing comments to determine issues for analysis in the EIS. The BLM estimates the Draft EIS to be published in January 2025. The project is located in Sweetwater County.



High Desert District - Hot Topics

Lucky Star Wind Energy Project (Blu Earth Resources): The Lucky Star Wind Project has been modified to remove all facilities and infrastructure from Federal lands other than 2 large powerlines.

Maestro Wind Energy Project (Baywa): The Maestro Wind Energy Project is still early in the process with the proponent working with the BLM on a final plan of development. The project is approximately 25,000 acres and consists of 94 wind turbines and associated transmission and project infrastructure. BLM estimates that the agency will begin scoping the project in 2024. The Initial Action Notice is in process and the Notice of Intent is anticipated in August 2024.

Solar Projects

Rawlins Uplift Solar Project

ROW for ~1000 MW utility-scale solar PV generation project. The project area comprises approximately 9,703 acres including 4,166 acres of BLM-administered federal land, and 5,508 acres of private land and 29 acres of state land. Working through Cost Recovery Questions raised by the proponent with the State Office and HQ. Map needs updated to show avoidance of the Red Rim / Grizzly Wildlife Habitat Management Area Boundary.

Pumped Storage Projects

BLM Wyoming is currently working with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on five different hydropower projects located on BLM-administered public lands in Wyoming. These projects would store energy and generate electricity from the flow of water between two reservoirs at different elevations. During times of off-peak energy demand, excess electric capacity would be used to pump water from the lower reservoir to the upper reservoir, and then the water would be released through a turbine to generate electricity when electricity demand is high.

Seminole Pumped Storage Project: The project farthest in the licensing application stage is Black Canyon Hydro LLC's Seminole project, located in the Rawlins Field Office. BLM is a cooperating agency on FERC's Seminole Environmental Impact Statement FAST-41 project. In March 2023, FERC issued a deficiency letter, requesting the proponent address conformance with the Rawlins Field Office RMP.

The Rawlins Field Office has determined the RMP will need to be amended for the BLM's right-of-way authorization. Resource concerns include Visual Resource Management, water quality, old growth timber communities, access roads, wildlife, and noise. The BLM Wyoming State Office met with the proponent in March 2024 to discuss the projected timeline, current holdups, and way forward. FERC currently estimates that a notice of intent for the EIS will be published in February 2025.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Projects

LaBarge Restoration Landscape (IRA 2023 \$9.9M): The BLM will invest \$9.9 million from the Inflation Reduction Act to protect native vegetation/remove invasive species, restore streams, and create climate resilience on public lands in Wyoming. Conservation success in the LaBarge Restoration Landscape rests on significant collaboration and cross fence-line partnership. We're working together to manage for wildlife habitat and conserving and restoring priority habitat for the greater sage-grouse. BLM investment will work to reinforce cooperative partnerships and work to remove invasive species, control erosion and protect water sources.



High Desert District - Hot Topics

Muddy Creek Restoration Landscape (IRA 2023 \$10M): Muddy Creek, an important tributary of the Little Snake River, supports a community of native fish and the landscape holds core sagebrush habitat. Restoration investments will include fuels reduction, riparian and wetland enhancement, fence conversion and erosion control, all aimed at restoring natural ecologic function in the headwaters of the Colorado River basin. To date, almost \$3,500,000 have been obligated to contracts, agreements and project work. The first projects have begun with the Baggs Juniper Encroachment work and the JO Ranch Fence Conversion.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) -- Project Approval and Rounds of Funding

BIL established multiple funding themes for resource project submissions that focused on restoration of ecological health, invasive species treatments, resilient recreation, mine lands revegetation and national seed strategy implementation. The Agency has multiple committees for each BIL theme that evaluates the project proposals alignment with the theme's focus, Agency and Department priorities, and other criteria including partner involvement, tribal engagement, funding mechanisms, etc. Then the proposed projects go to Department and OMB for final approval.

LaBarge Watershed Project (BIL Round 2)

The LaBarge project will be in support of BIL-Ecosystem Restoration's efforts to grow sagebrush systems that create fire-resilient ecosystems and promote biodiversity. Currently, there are significant watershed erosion problems in the LaBarge area of Sublette and Lincoln counties. The project is approximately 105,470-acres encompassing 533 miles of stream channels within the LaBarge/Big Piney areas, including range allotments and oil and gas fields. Within the LaBarge Watershed Restoration Project area there are four additional areas of concern for restoration: Bird Draw Restoration, Birch Creek Low-Tech Restoration, Black Canyon Creek Watershed Restoration, and Yose Canyon Dam Removal.

Wild Horse Gather Updates 2024

White Mountain HMA (Sweetwater County)

HMA currently has an AML set at 205-300 within our planning documents. The gather is planned for August 2024. RSFO plans to gather 586 horses, no gathered horses will receive fertility treatments, nor will any be released back in the HMA. This is due to the pending litigation and Rock Springs Grazing Association (RSGA) revoking their consent to have horses in the White Mountain HMA. All the gathered horses will be processed at the Rock Springs Holding Facility and follow our normal processes.

Salt Wells and Adobe Town HMAs (Sweetwater and Carbon Counties)

The BLM will begin planning for this proposed gather in May 2024 with a public scoping notice. These 'herd areas' were formerly 'herd management areas' and were converted through the 2024 Record of Decision for the Wild Horse Amendment to be managed for zero population of wild horses. The BLM plans to initiate a gather in the fall of 2024 to remove all wild horses from the entirety of the Salt Wells HA and all wild horses within the Rock Springs portion of the Adobe Town HA. The remainder of the former Adobe Town HMA within the Rawlins field office will be maintained as an HMA with a new AML in accordance with the 2024 ROD.

Transmission Line Projects



High Desert District - Hot Topics

Gateway South

The Gateway South transmission line is a 400-mile, 500 kV AC transmission line and ancillary facilities that would cross public lands in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. Construction in Wyoming is nearly complete. Activity in 2024 will be focused on project reclamation.

Gateway West Segment D1

The D1 segment is a portion of the GWW Transmission Line Project and consists of Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) north of the Shirley Basin Substation to the Windstar Substation and to the Dave Johnston Power Plant Substation. The Project comprises the construction and operation and maintenance of two alternating current (AC) 230- kilovolt (kV) transmission lines. Construction is underway and it is anticipated to be completed in 2024.

TransWest Express (TWE)

TWE submitted an application to construct a 500 and a 600 kV high voltage direct current and alternating current transmission line to carry up to 3,000 MW of renewable energy generated from the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project. The proposed route crosses 725 miles, beginning in south-central WY and terminating in Las Vegas, NV. Initial construction began in Wyoming in August of 2023. TWE is delaying most construction on this project due to the availability of materials needed for construction. In 2024, construction will be limited to the Wyoming terminal on private lands.

Anticline to Shirley Basin (formerly D2)

A 500kV transmission line to transport electricity from the existing Shirley Basin Substation to the existing Anticline Substation. The original preferred route for this project traversed Priority sage-grouse habitat and was not in compliance with the Rawlins RMP or the Governor's Sage-grouse Executive Order and will not be analyzed in detail. A southern route is currently the proposed alternative. This route closely follows the Gateway West Route. An EIS will be needed for this project. In service date is 2036.

New Trona Mines

Dry Creek Trona Mine: Dry Creek Trona Mine is a proposed in-situ trona mine consisting of both federal and private sodium leases. The proposed mine is located on approximately 6,000 acres south of the town of Green River, Wyoming in Sweetwater County. Mining could occur for up to 25 years. The project proposal includes construction of mining facilities and would employ solution mining technologies to mine leased trona on BLM-administered land. The Notice of Availability for the draft EIS is scheduled for release the end of June 2024. Project description involves sodium/brine pipelines, a water line, access roads, power lines, railroad spur, plant site and mining area. The project is located in both Lincoln and Sweetwater Counties. Public meetings were held for the competitive lease sale in 2019 and for the Notice of Intent on June 2, 2022. Ongoing cooperating agency meetings take place the first Thursday of the month.

Project West: Project West is a proposed private in-situ trona mine. The processing plant and the mine will be located on private lands in the checkerboard area, near Granger, Wyoming in Sweetwater County. The federal undertaking considers linear applications for access roads, injection and brine pipelines, powerlines, a natural gas pipeline, future fluid transportation pipeline extensions, and a water pipeline to the Green River. Cooperating Agency meeting was held January 30, 2024. The public scoping meeting was held March 20, 2024. The draft EA is currently in progress with final review planned to take place summer of 2024.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

High Plains District



District Quick Facts

District Office Location: Casper, Wyoming

BLM Managed Surface: 2.37 Million Acres

BLM Managed Mineral Estate: 11.1 Million Acres

Field Offices: Buffalo Field Office, Casper Field Office, and Newcastle Field Office

Full Time Employees: 180

High Plains District (HPD): *District Manager, Kevin Christensen*

HPD consists of the Buffalo, Casper, and Newcastle field offices. The HPD has a multi-district interagency fire dispatch center, a single engine airtanker/large airtanker base, the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, and the Wheatland Off-Range Corral. The HPD boasts among the highest levels of fluid mineral development in the BLM and is home of the nation's largest coal mines. Split estate and off-lease (fee-fee-fed) drilling dominate the fluid mineral development in the HPD. The NHTIC interprets the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express National Historic Trails and serves roughly 25,000 visitors per year.

Buffalo Field Office (BFO): *Field Manager, Todd Yeager*

BFO's 780,000 surface acres and 4.8 million sub-surface acres are spread across Campbell, Johnson and Sheridan Counties. This office contains almost all of the coal mining in the HPD. The BFO borders the Big Horn National Forest and is valued for several recreational interests including hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting. The area is rich in minerals such as coal, oil, and gas.

Casper Field Office (CFO): *Field Manager, Larry Sandoval*

CFO manages 1.3 million surface acres and 4.6 million sub-surface acres in Platte, Goshen, Natrona, and Converse Counties. Converse County is projected to be a major oil and gas player in the near future. This expectation has driven a permitting workload that places the CFO within the top three permitting offices in the BLM. Fee-Fee-Fed drilling is the norm in Converse County, and CFO's experience has driven the most recent national guidance on the subject. CFO is also notable for having the second highest number of grazing allotments in the state, at 564, and for managing an extremely popular segment of the North Platte River, a Blue Ribbon Trout Stream.

Newcastle Field Office (NFO): *Field Manager, Chad Krause*

NFO manages 292,000 surface acres and 1.7 million sub-surface acres in Weston, Niobrara and Crook Counties, including 6,700 surface acres and 247,000 sub-surface acres in Nebraska. The NFO is initiating a new RMP. This document will provide further guidance for managing the bentonite and fluid mineral development within the office. Additionally, analysis will look at extensive cultural resources, such as Whoopup Canyon and the Antelope Trap.



High Plains District - Hot Topics

High Plains District

Casper Airtanker Base Construction

The HPD, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, Wyoming State Forestry Division and Casper-Natrona International Airport (CNIA), are nearing completion of a new Airtanker Base at the CNIA. The base will house Single Engine Airtankers (SEAT) contracted through WSFD and be capable of refueling Large Airtankers. *A ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the opening of the base is scheduled for June 14, 2024.*

Rural Fire Readiness (RFR)

The HPD has received two new Type 6 fire engines and plans to donate one surplus Type 6 engine to Crook County in June. A second surplus Type 6 engine will be donated to the Powder River Fire District in Kaycee at a later date. The Bar Nunn Fire Department will also receive a surplus engine from the BLM High Desert District. The RFR program allows government agencies to donate excess equipment to rural and volunteer fire departments at no cost to the receiving department.

Casper Field Office

Marton Ranch Land Use Planning

The BLM purchased the 35,668-acre Marton Ranch in 2022 with funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, connecting 40k acres of existing BLM and State of Wyoming lands and creating a 75k-acre contiguous block of public land. Since the purchase, BLM has managed the property the same as adjacent BLM-managed lands, per existing management decisions. Through public input and cooperating agency coordination, the BLM will determine if changes are needed to existing management decisions applied to this area. The BLM hosted public and cooperating agency meetings in November to provide information and solicit feedback. The BLM is currently analyzing public and cooperator comments and will determine next steps.

Converse County Direct Land Sale

The CFO is analyzing a proposal by a ranch in northern Converse County to dispose of approximately 760 acres of BLM-managed land. All parcels identified for sale are land locked with no public access and were marked for disposal by the 2007 Casper RMP. Bohlander Ranch has a grazing lease for the parcels in consideration.

Muddy Mountain Road Improvement Project

Construction is beginning on a cooperative project between the CFO and Natrona County Road and Bridge to improve Casper Mountain Circle Drive (Casper Mountain Road) and Muddy Mountain Road south of Casper. The projects are being completed through Federal Lands Access and Federal Lands Transportation programs overseen by the Federal Highway Administration. Natrona County will repave and improve approximately 5 miles of road on Casper Mountain, while BLM will resurface roughly 7 miles of road on Muddy Mountain. Construction is anticipated to continue throughout the summer and into the fall.

Newcastle Field Office

Newcastle and Nebraska RMP Revisions

The BLM Newcastle Field Office is preparing a resource management plan (RMP) revision and associated environmental impact statement (EIS) for BLM lands in Crook, Niobrara, and Weston Counties, Wyo., and the State of Nebraska. The revision would replace the existing Newcastle RMP (2000) and Nebraska RMP (1992). A Notice of Intent to start the planning process was issued in July 2023. The BLM held public scoping meetings in August during the 45-day scoping period. *Cooperating agency review of the Preliminary Draft EIS was*



High Plains District - Hot Topics

completed May 17th. BLM anticipates publishing the Draft RMP/EIS in late summer 2024, which will open a 90-day public comment period.

Buffalo Field Office

Quarter Circle 7 Land Exchange

The BFO and the Quarter Circle 7 Ranch propose to exchange non-federal land for isolated federal parcels in northwest Campbell County. The Ranch has offered approximately 2,300 acres for exchange; BLM has identified approximately 4,678 acres of isolated and scattered BLM-administered parcels that could be utilized in various configurations to achieve equal value for the exchange. If approved, the exchange would create a 10,347-acre contiguous block of public land, a portion of which was nominated through the Dingell Act. The Ranch and the Department of the Interior’s Appraisal and Valuation Services Office are coordinating to finalize the appraisal before the field office can proceed. The BFO plans to issue a draft environmental assessment analyzing the exchange for a 15-day public comment period.

Buffalo Resource Management Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

The BLM has issued a final supplemental environmental impact statement and proposed amendment to its Buffalo Field Office resource management plan. The BLM’s proposed alternative, Alternative A, would amend the plan to make BLM-managed coal resources in the planning area unavailable for future leasing. Federal coal production is expected to continue through 2041 under existing leases. Publication of the final SEIS/Proposed amendment initiates a 30-day public protest period and 60-day governor’s consistency review prior to issuing a record of decision.

Welch Ranch Special Recreation Management Area/Tongue River Restoration

The BLM proposes to restore the natural function of the Tongue River within the Welch Ranch area and surrounding landscape by stabilizing segments of the riverbank, lowering high banks and establishing gentle-sloping surfaces to increase floodplain connectivity, establishing side-channel connections and wetlands to improve aquatic habitat, and creating conditions that support native plant species. Project design was completed in FY 2023. *An environmental assessment analyzing the process has been completed, with a decision record issued in February. Funding has been received to complete a portion of the project. Additional funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is also anticipated.*

Application for Permit to Drill Summary

Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) Report 10/1/2023 to 6/3/2024

BLM Admin State	Field Office	APDs Received	APDs Approved	APDs Other Than Approved	Total APDs Processed	APDs Pending	Wells Spud	Wells Completed
WYOMING	Buffalo Field Office	267	217	12	229	309	52	79
	Casper Field Office	172	153	41	194	184	83	62
	Newcastle Field Office	8	14	0	14	19	4	9
Totals		447	384	53	437	512	139	150

Note: Updates are denoted in *italics*.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Wind River/Bighorn Basin District



District Quick Facts

District Office Location: Worland, Wyoming

BLM Managed Surface: 5.7 Million Acres

BLM Managed Mineral Estate: 7 Million Acres

Field Offices: Cody, Lander and Worland

Full Time Employees: 120

Wind River/Bighorn Basin District (WRBBD): *Mike Phillips, District Manager*

WRBBD consists of the Cody, Lander and Worland field offices. The WRBBD has a multi-district interagency fire dispatch center, a single engine air tanker base, nine wild horse herd management areas (HMAs), and numerous Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Extensive Recreation Management Areas. An abundance of wildlife includes 25% of Wyoming's Greater Sage-grouse, found primarily on BLM-managed public lands. The WRBBD contains nationally significant cultural and paleontological resources and is home to the majority of the world's bentonite mines. Uranium and O&G development round out the district's energy and minerals profile.

Cody Field Office (CYFO): *Chris Durhum, Field Manager (Acting)*

The CYFO manages 1.1 million surface acres and 1.5 million sub-surface acres in Park and Big Horn counties. As outdoor recreation continues to grow in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the CYFO area is valued for endless hiking, mountain biking, camping, fishing and hunting opportunities. The McCullough Peaks Herd Management Area has been managed successfully since 2011 with fertility control via field darting and small bait trap removals.

Lander Field Office (LFO): *John Elliott, Field Manager*

The LFO manages 2.5 million surface acres and 2.7 million sub-surface acres in primarily Fremont County, as well as smaller portions of Natrona, Carbon, Sweetwater and Hot Springs counties. These public lands contain some of best-preserved segments of the California, Mormon Pioneer, Oregon and Pony Express national historic trails in the nation, as well as the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. In addition to O&G development, the Gas Hills and Sheep Mountain uranium mines have been mined since the 1950s. Unique to BLM Wyoming, the LFO bears fiduciary responsibility for Tribal mineral development on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The LFO, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Northern Arapaho Tribe cooperate on O&G inspection and enforcement operations through a memorandum of understanding.

Worland Field Office (CYFO): *Mike Peck, Field Manager (Acting)*

The WFO manages 2.1 million surface acres and 2.7 million sub-surface acres in Washakie, Big Horn, Hot Springs and Park counties. Among other things, the WFO balances a robust range program, bentonite mining, cultural and paleontological resource protection, and a growing demand for increased recreational opportunities, including the proposed 95-mile Bighorn River Blueway Trail.



Wind River/Bighorn Basin District - Hot Topics

Wind River/Bighorn Basin District Topics

Fire and Fuels

The district fire program partnered with Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) and the University of Wyoming to hire an Invasive Annual Grass Coordinator Position. The IAG Coordinator works with the BLM, County Weed and Pest Districts, Wyoming Game and Fish, private landowners and other State and Federal agencies to advance a cohesive cross boundary strategy to address the threat of cheatgrass. While the coordinator position will focus on IAG projects, they will have the opportunity to assist in addressing the other primary threats affecting the sagebrush steppe ecosystem such as conifer expansion and wet meadow/riparian habitat degradation.

Oil and Gas Well Plugging

Plugging is a demanding workload on both Federal and Tribal lands. The Cody and Worland field offices have plugged 16 wells so far in fiscal year 2024. The Lander Field Office has plugged 17 Federal wells and 18 Indian wells so far in FY 2024. There are currently two additional rigs plugging in the LFO area which will add an additional 15 wells.

Cody Field Office Topics

Mining Plans

A total of 30.5 new acres of bentonite mining have been approved so far in FY 2024. Two other bentonite plans of operation are under review, which together involve a total of 933.2 acres of new bentonite mining. An additional bentonite plan of operations, which has been on hold by the mining company, will most likely be revised and resubmitted for review by WyoBen in FY 2024 for a total of approximately 175 acres. Two gypsum plans of operation are also under review for a total of 126.9 acres.

Heart Mountain Relocation Center Conveyance

The BLM will convey the Heart Mountain Relocation Center to the non-profit Heart Mountain Foundation through a Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) patent. This conveyance is one of the CYFO's top RMP implementation priorities. The complete R&PP application from the Foundation, necessary for the NEPA review, was received in February 2024. The CYFO is preparing the environmental assessment and requisite *Federal Register* documents.

Cryptocurrency mining application:

JJ Bunkirt Oil & Gas Corporation submitted an application and plan of development in March 2024 to mine crypto on public land in Big Horn County, approximately 6 miles south of Byron. The proponent currently operates four wells in the same field, which would provide the natural gas to power the proposed crypto mining site. The generator and crypto mining container would be constructed on a site already disturbed from previous operations. The CYFO is processing the right-of-way application.

BIL Mineral Site Reclamation

With ecosystem restoration funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CYFO has begun work to reclaim three sites disturbed by mineral extraction: (1) the Nicholls and Lewis Pit, a limestone quarry southeast of Lovell on the west flank of Little Sheep Mountain; (2) the Eagle Pass Community Pit, a mined-out 9-acre gravel pit in the Oregon Basin Sage-Grouse Core Area; and (3) the Clarks Fork Pit Reclamation Site north of Clark, within the National Historic Nez Perce Trail viewshed and Clarks Fork River watershed. The environmental analysis is underway and reclamation work (recontouring, spreading topsoil and seeding) could begin as early as October 2024. The projects will restore native vegetation, natural topography and functionality of drainages.



Wind River/Bighorn Basin District - Hot Topics

Lander Field Office Topics

North Lander Wild Horse Gather

The LFO is preparing for a July-August wild horse gather in the North Lander Complex in Fremont County. The combined appropriate management level of the Complex is 320-536 horses. Based on a survey conducted in August 2023, and accounting for this year's foal crop, the BLM estimates the population to be 3,035 horses. More than 2,700 horses could be removed as part of this operation. The complex is almost entirely composed of Greater Sage-Grouse priority habitat and much of the area is categorized as winter/yearlong or crucial mule deer/pronghorn range. The upcoming gather is part of a 10-year plan to return the complex to within its AML and implement population growth suppression methods.

BOR Muddy Ridge Withdrawal Revocation

The Bureau of Reclamation proposes to revoke the withdrawal of approximately 56,296 acres on Muddy Ridge, west of Boysen Reservoir in Fremont County, and within the boundary of the Wind River Indian Reservation. The mineral estate was returned to the Tribes by legislation passed in 1958, but BOR continues to manage the surface. The lands, part of a larger BOR withdrawal of 254,417 acres called the Riverton Reclamation Project, are no longer needed for the original purposes of the withdrawal.

The BLM is working with BOR for a complete application and will then need to determine whether the lands proposed for revocation (surface estate only) are suitable for return to the public domain. Additional land surveys and updates to the land status records are necessary to accurately describe the lands in the proposed withdrawal revocation. Once the land surveys and supplemental plats are completed, approved and officially filed, the BLM will prepare a *Federal Register* notice for publication with the updated land descriptions and requesting public comment. Thereafter, a NEPA compliance review may be conducted with a decision to follow—all done jointly with the BOR.

O&G Development and Pipeline Project on Green Mountain

International Petroleum and Exploration Operating Corporation plans to develop O&G leases on the south side of Green Mountain. International currently has one well in drilling status and one well in drilling shut-in status and holds 40 leases. International has updated plans for their pipeline from a separate line running to the Williams Hansen Lake Compressor Station near Wamsutter to now applying for a smaller pipeline which will tie into an existing line in the Crooks Gap area. Application submissions on this pipeline and additional APDs are expected in the near future.

Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CCS) Project

Capture Point Solutions proposes a CCS project in areas East of Hudson and East of the Wind River Reservation boundary North of HWY 136 in Fremont County. The LFO has reviewed and responded to the proponent's pore-space-only application and plan of development. After obtaining a Class IV permit from Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Capture Point will submit another application for the surface use and infrastructure. The project lies in Greater Sage-grouse priority habitat. The LFO is communicating with the proponent and the Wyoming State Office about the challenges that lie ahead with this proposed project.



Wind River/Bighorn Basin District - Hot Topics

Worland Field Office Topics

BIL-Funded Orphaned Well Plugging

The WFO was awarded Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to execute the plugging, abandonment and site reclamation of 11 orphaned oil and gas wells. The NEPA process is complete. The BLM plans to award contracts this year and complete plugging and abandonment activities from 2024–2025, followed by additional contracts for reclamation. The majority of the wells are located within the Black Mountain Oil Field, east of Lucerne in Hot Springs County, with a few others scattered throughout the field office area.

Gooseberry GAOA Improvements

Funds from the Great American Outdoors Act enabled the WFO to complete major improvements at the Gooseberry Badlands Scenic Overlook Trail. The project includes improved trail surfaces, rerouted sections of trail, new steps and bridges, sheltered picnic areas, benches and permanent binoculars at the scenic overlook. The parking lot and upper trail are all accessible to people with disabilities. The popular site was open throughout construction, with only temporary closures of sections of the trail.

Tag Western Land Sale

The WFO proposes a 1-acre sale (for not less than fair market value) to TAG Western Properties to allow resolution of inadvertent, unauthorized development of public lands by a previous landowner, currently operated by the proponent as an essential component of the adjoining ranch operations. The WFO needs to prepare a resource management plan amendment with an associated environmental assessment for the sale because the parcel was not identified for disposal at the time the RMP was written. The *Federal Register* notice announcing the proposed sale was published on May 2, 2024, beginning a 45-day public scoping period which will close on June 17.