

JONAH INTERAGENCY MITIGATION & RECLAMATION OFFICE

1625 West Pine
PO Box 768
Pinedale, Wyoming 82941
Attention: Project Coordinator 307-367-5386

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

(use additional sheets if necessary)

1. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: Pinedale Range Water Improvement Project (Solar Conversion & Reservoir Maintenance)

General Location (distance and direction from nearest city/town, attach map at a scale not less than 1/2" = 1 mile):

These projects are located in several different BLM allotments south, west, and southwest of Pinedale.

Legal Location of Project (attach map at a scale not less than 1" = 2,000').

All projects are located in Sublette County.

Twin Peaks Well T28N R112W Sec 19 SWNE
Buckhorn Well #2 T28N R109W Sec 31 SESE
South Piney Well T29N R113W Sec 22 NESE
J. William Bloom Well T28N R109W Sec 16 NWNW
Cowboy Well/Buckhorn Well #1 T29N R107W Sec 5 NWSE
Log Well/Buckhorn Well #3 T28N R108W Sec 5 NESW)
Telephone Cabin Well #2 T29N R107W Sec 17 SWSE
Burma Well #3 T29N R109W Sec 23 SESW
James Ryegrass Well T34N R112W Sec 27 SWNW
Aspen Ridge Pit Reservoir T34N R112W Sec 28 SESE
Soaphole #2 Det-Dam T34N R112W Sec 21 SWSE
Aspen Ridge Reservoir T34N R112W Sec 30 SWNE

Surface Ownership (check all that apply): Federal State Private

**If project includes a mosaic of land ownerships (e.g., mix of federal, state and/or fee lands), provide a breakdown for each specific owner by acres and percent of total project area.

Contact Information for Affected Parties or Agencies:

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name/Organization: Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office (PFO)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 768

City: Pinedale *State:* WY *Zip Code :* 82941

Daytime Phone # 307.367.5346 (Summer) 307.367.5304 (Travis) 307.367.5378 (Windy) *Fax #* 307.367.5329

Email Address: summer_schulz@blm.gov william_ames@blm.gov WKelle@state.wy.us

Point of Contact (if different from above) Summer Schulz; Travis Ames; Windy Kelley

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

General Project Type (check all that apply): Wildlife _____

Land Use/Livestock _____ Land Use/Recreation _____

Cultural _____ Other (air and sound quality) _____

Describe Project Proposal (e.g., mechanical treatment, water improvement, etc.)

This is a landscape scale water improvement project, which includes converting nine generator or windmill powered wells to solar powered wells. The old windmills will be removed from newly converted solar wells, which will mitigate the impacts of nesting ravens on adjacent sage-grouse, a species of particular interest to the Jonah Infill Project Field Office and the state of Wyoming. Low-profile water storage tanks will be used and painted an approved color, where needed (i.e., Burma Well #2 and Buckhorn Well #3).

Additionally, the project encompasses reviving three reservoirs that have held little to no water in at least four years in the Ryegrass area, and which are strongly associated with the 3-pasture rest rotation of the affected James Ryegrass Grazing Allotment (#12102). This specific allotment has constant pronghorn use, spring and winter mule deer use, and sage-grouse use which were also reasons for conducting habitat treatments (sagebrush mowing) since 2005. The reservoirs will provide water to all 3 pastures and only require incorporation of bentonite lining to seal the bottoms.

This project will result in extended, season-long (frost to frost) access to water by wildlife, as well as water for livestock (one to two months of livestock use, area dependent). Maintaining these wells and extending the duration of available water will help to disperse impacts to adjacent resources by wildlife and livestock.

Total Project Acres (if applicable) n/a

Acres Indirectly Affected (if applicable, explain) n/a

4. OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT, AND BENEFITS TO JIO OFF-SITE MITIGATION STRATEGIC GOALS.

Project objectives are to maintain and/or improve important existing water resources on the landscape to maintain and/or improve associated ecosystem function and use. The water well conversions to solar would provide continued benefit to sage-grouse, pronghorn, and mule deer through improved availability of water and removal of tall nesting-/perching-type structures in the areas of Ryegrass, South Desert, Blue Rim Desert, etc. Additionally, upgrading the wells to season long use and reviving reservoirs that are currently not functioning will help to distribute wildlife species and livestock across the landscape. This project would also allow for continued coordination and cost-sharing with local and federal entities on improving the PFO landscape through water improvement maintenance.

5. DIRECT/INDIRECT EFFECTS ON OTHER RESOURCES. (if applicable)

Cooperatively, the BLM, the Grazing Board, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department have been converting wells to solar power over the past 4 years across the PFO. Continued solar conversions will allow

for better water management, pasture management, and improved availability of water and use of associated forage resources for wildlife and livestock. Water storage tanks would be painted, if not already, to decrease visual impacts. Placement of bird ramps would be ensured in associated water troughs. Also, nesting platform-type structures associated with windmills would be removed, thereby, removing raven/raptor nesting opportunities in the associated sage-grouse areas. Additionally, the conversions from generator to solar operated wells will help to mitigate air and sound pollution associated with generators.

Several of the well conversions and reservoirs are within big game migration corridors, crucial mule deer winter range, sage-grouse core area, and/or located near sage-grouse leks that are currently occupied (see attachment). All of these species will benefit from the water improvement project to some degree. Additionally, as described above, the PFO has conducted wildlife treatments around the reservoirs since 2005. Relining the reservoirs to enable them to hold water will maintain/improve wildlife habitat and help with the success of the existing wildlife treatments.

6. POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE EXPANSION OF PROJECT. Explain

There are many range and water improvements currently on the ground (having been built since the 1930's), which the BLM and Sublette County Conservation District are diligently working to inventory (update locations, condition, bird ramps, etc.). As these improvements are inventoried, there will be sustained need to meet the goals/objectives of this project through continued maintenance and upgrading of prioritized water improvements.

The reservoirs in the James Ryegrass Allotment could be connected to adjacent water wells with a pipeline. This would enable water to be pumped from the wells to the reservoirs during drought years. Additionally, several of the water developments are within sage-grouse core areas. In the future, if a need is identified to improve sage-grouse habitat by adding green areas the appropriate steps can be taken.

7. LIST ALL PROJECT PARTNERS/COOPERATORS, THEIR ROLES AND/OR CONTRIBUTIONS

JIO: Monetary contribution \$77,301

BLM: (Landowner) In-kind contribution of labor for converting windmill/generator powered wells to solar (\$5,640). **Permittees:** Potential funding might be available from some of the permittees (amount unknown). Additionally, one of the permittees will line the three reservoirs with bentonite to seal the bottom (in-kind) (\$564).

Grazing Board (Area 5): Potential funding might be available from the area Grazing Board; a formal request will need to be made at their next meeting (anticipated spring 2011).

8. PROJECT MONITORING AND REPORTING (Describe how monitoring and reporting will be done, and how it relates to the objectives)

Permittees will monitor the condition of the water improvement projects a minimum of four times per year. Monitoring will occur when the wells are turned on in late spring/early summer, when livestock are put-on and removed from the pastures, and late summer/fall when the wells are turned off. Permittees will report any issues to BLM personnel. Additionally, BLM and WDA staff will periodically check on the rangeland improvement projects.

9. RESEARCH POTENTIAL n/a

10. PERMITS AND AUTHORIZATIONS REQUIRED PRIOR TO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (including but not necessarily limited to the following):

PERMIT OR AUTHORIZATION	REQUIRED		SUBMITTED		APPROVED	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cultural Resource Inventory	X			X*		
COE Section 404 Permit		X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cooperative Agreement(s)	X			X*		
NEPA Analysis	X		X		X	
Pesticide Application Permit		X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Private Landowner Agreement(s)		X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sensitive Species Clearance		X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Surface/Ground Water Permits		X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
T/E Species Clearance		X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Other (explain) ***Please note:** A Cooperative Agreement has been completed, submitted, and approved for all of the projects. The existing agreements will be updated to reflect the current status of each water development.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Compliance: The proposed range improvements are to occur in areas of existing development and disturbance. Existing range improvements that post date 1930 are defined as “Non-sites” for the purposes of Section 106 (State Protocol Appendix D, Items 3 and 8) and as such are precluded from consideration for National Register of Historic Places eligibility. A preliminary project proposal review by Robert Schweitzer, BLM PFO Staff Archaeologist, indicates that the proposed activities are considered “Actions Exempt From Case-by-Case Review” as per State Protocol Appendix B, Item 9. However, when these projects are approved for funding and implemented a Cultural ‘existing data review’ and notification to the State of Wyoming National Historic Preservation Society will be completed. Additionally, the existing Cooperative Agreements will be updated to reflect the current status of each water development. “Minor, routine, or preventative operations and maintenance activities on BLM facilities, lands, and resource developments requiring no new surface disturbance and where facilities being maintained are not historic properties”. NHPA compliance documentation of this through the Wyoming CRMTracker system will be required prior to project implementation. This documentation will be submitted as “Notify and Proceed” and the projects can be undertaken immediately upon submittal.

11. TOTAL PROJECT COST (Attach detailed budget)

Project Planning and Design	\$ <u>n/a</u>
Project Implementation	\$ <u>83,505</u>
Project Operation and Maintenance	\$ <u>n/a</u>

Total Required \$ 83,505

12. MATCHING FUNDS ANTICIPATED IN CASH (list source and amount)
A formal request for matching funds from the Area 5 Grazing Board will be made at their next board meeting (anticipated Spring 2011). The anticipated amount is unknown.

13. ANTICIPATED "IN KIND" MATCHING FUNDS (list source, valuation, and valuation method)
BLM High Desert District: \$5,640; two employees at \$27/hour and two employees at \$20/hour for a total of 240 hours (60 hours/employee)
James Ryegrass Allotment Permittee: \$23.50/hour for 24 hours

14. PERCENTAGE OF FUNDING ON HAND OR COMMITTED n/a

15. TOTAL JIO FUNDING REQUESTED: \$77,301

16. EXPECTED/ANTICIPATED LIFE OF PROJECT (LOP)
Perpetual _____ > 50 Years _____ 25-50 Years X _____ < 25 Years _____

Explain Basis for Projected LOP:
The anticipated longevity of the solar panel and pump units is at least 25 years, with normal wear and tear (i.e., climate). Similarly, the expected life of the maintenance to the reservoirs (i.e., bentonite) is at least 25 years, due to effects associated with naturally occurring conditions (e.g., sedimentation build-up).

17. PROJECT TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE. Explain
We will begin implementing the project once funding is approved, which is expected to be in late spring or early summer 2011. We have already coordinated with BLM High Desert District staff to ensure the projects are on their work plan, contingent on funding approval. We anticipate the project will be fully implemented by the fall of 2012.

18. ATTACHMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
Project Design n/a _____
Letters of Support n/a _____
Management Plan n/a _____ Long Term _____ Short Term _____ 1
Monitoring Plan n/a _____ Long Term _____ Short Term _____ 1
Relevant Past Experience n/a _____ Other X _____ Explain: 1) Maps (10); 2) Budget
1 Long term is defined as greater than (>) 5 years; short term is less than (<) 5 years.

19. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR JIO CONSIDERATION

The Cooperative Agreements for these wells and the reservoirs will be updated to ensure proper care and maintenance of the improvements. Additionally, all well agreements will state that water at the proposed sites will be available for wildlife throughout the duration of the operating season (i.e., frost to frost, dates dependent on well location and year).

20. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signed

Printed Name

Title

Date