

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**  
**Idaho Resource Advisory Council Meeting (via Zoom)**  
**April 14, 2021**

**RAC Members:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Residence</b>	<b>Interest Represented</b>
Jeff Berend	Post Falls	Commercial Timber
William Orr	Coeur d' Alene	Energy and Minerals
Donna Bennett	Grandview	Federal Grazing
James Wills	Hailey	Commercial Outdoor Recreation
Leon Smith	Mackay	Federal Grazing
Jake Rajala	Troy	Dispersed Recreation
Robert (Bob) S. Unnasch, Ph.D.	Boise	Environmental Organizations
Scott Nichols	Meridian	Dispersed Recreation
Brenda R. Pace	Idaho Falls	Archaeological & Historic Interests
Rocky (Skip) Brandt	Kooskia	Elected Official
Bernard Brown	Hailey	Public-at-Large
Preston Buckskin	Fort Hall	Tribal Representative
Robert (Bob) P. Breckenridge, Ph.D.	Idaho Falls	Academia
<b>Absent:</b> Shell L. Howard	Twin Falls	Dispersed Recreation
Jeff Buck	Eagle	Public-at-Large

**BLM Staff:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Office</b>
John F. Ruhs	Idaho State Director	Idaho State Office
Peter J. Ditton	Idaho State Associate Director	Idaho State Office
Jennifer Jones	Deputy State Director, Communications	Idaho State Office
June Shoemaker	Deputy State Director, Resources and Science	Idaho State Office
Dennis Strange	State Fire Management Officer	Idaho State Office
Nicole Baker	Deputy State Director, Support Services	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
Heather Tiel-Nelson	Public Affairs Specialist	Twin Falls District Office
Mike Williamson	Public Affairs Specialist	Boise District Office
Tanya Thrift	District Manager (Acting)	Boise District Office
Mike Courtney	District Manager	Twin Falls District Office
Mary D' Aversa	District Manager	Idaho Falls District Office
Kurt Pindel	District Manager	Coeur d' Alene & Spokane (WA) District Offices

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**Meeting Minutes**

**Agenda Item: Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**Presenters:** Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications and John F. Ruhs, Idaho State Director, BLM and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC).

- Meeting called to order by Jennifer Jones at 9:02 a.m. Mountain Time
- John F. Ruhs welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed appreciation and importance of RAC member participation in the first formal meeting of the BLM Idaho statewide RAC.

**Agenda Item: Zoom/Agenda Overview**

**Presenter:** Jennifer Jones, Deputy State Director, Communications, Idaho State Office, BLM  
Discussed the full agenda and details of using Zoom.

**Agenda Item: Introductions**

**Presenters:** BLM Idaho key Leadership and Staff; RAC Members  
Introductions by the key BLM Leadership and RAC members in attendance (see participant list, p. 1).

**Agenda Item: RAC Chair/Vice-Chair Election**

**Nominations:** Nominations were presented from the floor. Vote was unanimous for both:

- **Chairman:** Robert (Bob) S. Unnasch, Ph.D.
- **Vice-Chairman:** Robert (Bob) P. Breckenridge, Ph.D.

**Agenda Item: State Director Updates**

**Presenter:** John F. Ruhs, Idaho State Director, BLM

John F. Ruhs provided an overview of key Department of Interior (DOI) and BLM leadership, including Interior Secretary Deb Haaland; Laura Daniel-Davis, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Mineral Management; Nada Wolff Culver, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Exercising the Delegated Authority as the BLM Director, and; Michael Nedd, Deputy Director of Operations.

Ruhs also highlighted DOI priorities:

- Identifying steps to accelerate responsible development of renewable energy on public lands and waters.
- Strengthening the government-to-government relationship with sovereign Tribal nations.
- Making investments to support the Administration's goal of creating millions of family-supporting and union jobs.
- Working to conserve at least 30% each of our lands and water by 2030.
- Centering equity and environmental justice.

In addition, Ruhs discussed BLM operational adjustments in response to COVID-19 and provided an update on the status of revisions to national Livestock Grazing Regulations.

**Agenda Item: District Updates**

**Presenters:** Tanya Thrift, District Manager (Acting), Boise District; Mike Courtney, District Manager, Twin Falls District; Mary D' Aversa, District Manager, Idaho Falls District; Kurt Pindel, District Manager,

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Coeur d' Alene and Spokane (WA) Districts.

Tanya Thrift provided an overview of the following key programs, projects, and activities on the Boise District:

- Fuels Management, Habitat Restoration, Recreation Management, Lands and Realty Management, and Minerals
- Landscape Level Projects
- Challenges – Recreational Shooting – Trail Congestion – Travel Management – Trash Dumping

Mike Courtney provided an overview of the following key programs, projects, and activities on the Twin Falls District:

- Livestock Grazing, Rights of Ways, and Minerals
- Fire Management – Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation and Hazardous Fuel Treatments
- Cedar Fields Project
- Renewable Energy Development – Proposed Lava Ridge and Salmon Falls Wind Energy Projects

Mary D' Aversa provided an overview of the following key programs, projects, and activities on the Idaho Falls District:

- Livestock Grazing, Phosphate Mining, and Recreation
- Vegetation Management – Forestry Program, Weeds, and Hazardous Fuel Treatments
- Threatened & Endangered Fish
- Lands Program
- Renewable Energy – Wind and Solar Farm projects
- Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisitions

Kurt Pindel provided an overview of the following key programs, projects, and activities on the Coeur d' Alene District:

- Forestry Program
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface
- Recreation

**Agenda Item: 2021 Wildfire Season Outlook /Preparedness**

**Presenter:** Dennis Strange, State Fire Management Officer, Idaho State Office

Dennis Strange provided an overview of the Great Basin Coordination Center Predictive Services Outlook from April through July, 2021. The outlook is showing normal potential for significant wildland fires for Idaho during that timeframe – however, the outlook is updated monthly and conditions can and often do change quickly and significantly. Strange also provided an overview of BLM Idaho's wildfire suppression assets (engines, dozers, aircraft, etc.), partnerships with cooperators, and operational adjustments in response to COVID-19.

**Agenda Item: Great Basin Fuel Breaks and Fuels Reduction and Rangeland Restoration  
Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements**

**Presenter:** Shannon Bassista, Project Lead, Idaho State Office

Shannon Bassista presented an overview of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements and explained that they are intended to help expedite fuel breaks and fuels reduction and rangeland restoration projects in Idaho and several other Great Basin States by providing analysis of common project elements. Local BLM offices can tier to this analysis to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements for specific on-the-ground projects.

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**Agenda Item: BLM Idaho Recreation Site Management, Fees, and Associated Amenities**

**Presenters:** John F. Ruhs, Idaho State Director, BLM, DFO; Ken Crane, Burley Field Office; Jeremy Casterson, Field Manager, Upper Snake Field Office

John F. Ruhs provided an overview of the RAC's role and responsibility under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) to make recommendations to the DFO to approve, revise, or disapprove proposals to change fees at BLM recreation sites.

Ken Crane provided an overview of proposed fee changes as outlined in a business plan for the Lud Drexler Park and Milner Historic Recreation Area. The business plan includes a comparison of the costs of operating the sites, and the fee revenues currently generated at the sites, which results in a significant deficit. The business plan also includes a comparison of proposed fees with fees charged at similar recreation sites in the area and the results of the public comment solicitation process.

RAC Chair Robert (Bob) S. Unnasch asked for a motion from the RAC members on the proposed Lud Drexler Park and Milner Historic Recreation Area fee changes. Brenda Pace made a motion proposing that the RAC recommend approval to the BLM DFO of the Lud Drexler Park and Milner Historic Recreation Area Business Plans and proposed fee changes. Scott Nichols seconded the motion. The roll-call vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Jeremy Casterson, Field Manager for the Upper Snake Field Office, provided an overview of proposed fee changes as outlined in a business plan for the South Fork of the Snake River Recreation Fee Program. This program involves state and federal partners that manage ten developed sites. The business plan includes a comparison of the costs of operating the sites, and the fee revenues currently generated at the sites, which results in a significant deficit. The business plan also includes a comparison of proposed fees charged at similar recreation sites in the area and the results of the public comment solicitation process completed to date (additional public comments still need to be solicited to meet BLM requirements).

RAC Chair Robert (Bob) S. Unnasch asked for a motion from the RAC members on the proposed South Fork of the Snake River Recreation Fee Program fee changes. Bob Breckenridge made a motion proposing that the RAC recommend approval to the BLM DFO of the South Fork of the Snake River Recreation Fee Program Business Plan and proposed fee changes. Donna Bennett seconded the motion. The roll-call vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**Miscellaneous Information:**

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

- The next BLM Idaho RAC meeting will be held Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time either virtually or in-person with a virtual participation option.
- RAC members were asked to email Jennifer Jones by May 31, 2021 with any specific topics they would like to discuss or learn more about at either the August or future meetings.
- Jennifer Jones discussed payment of RAC member travel expenses.
- Jennifer Jones informed RAC members that they would soon be contacted regarding their availability for potential meeting dates in fall, 2021 and winter, 2022.

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**Agenda Item: Great American Outdoors Act Update**

**Presenter:** Nicole Baker, Deputy State Director, Support Services, Idaho State Office

Nicole Baker discussed funding that BLM Idaho is receiving in Fiscal Year 2021, which began October 1, 2020, for deferred maintenance projects through the Great American Outdoors Act. These include replacement of the Shoshone Field Office and road maintenance within the Boise, Twin Falls, and Idaho Falls Districts. Additional information is available on the DOI website at

<https://www.doi.gov/budget/gaoa#:~:text=The%20Great%20American%20Outdoors%20Act,the%20Bureau%20of%20Indian%20Education.&text=List%20of%20FY2022%20Projects%20by%20DOI%20Bureau>

**Agenda Item: Public Comment Period**

**Individuals providing public comments:**

Four individuals provided public comments. Two public comments concerned equestrian trails and safety, one concerned recreational shooting and safety, and one concerned mountain bike trails and safety.

**Agenda Item: Wrap-up**

**Presenter:** John F. Ruhs, Idaho State Director, BLM, DFO

John F. Ruhs expressed thanks to all of the BLM State and District Office staff that helped with the RAC meeting. He also expressed the importance of RAC input to the BLM and appreciation of support for fee changes at recreation sites in the Burley and Upper Snake Field Offices. John F. Ruhs also expressed appreciation to the members of the public who participated in the public comment period and the importance of their input to the RAC and to the BLM.

**Agenda Item: Adjourn**

RAC Chairman Robert (Bob) S. Unnasch asked if there was any objection to a motion to adjourn; with no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. mountain time.