

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting
January 25, 2023, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
In-person and virtual Via Zoom**

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

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

BLM Staff:

Name	Title	Office
Mike Courtney	District Manager	Twin Falls District Office
Kasey Prestwich	Project Manager	Shoshone Field Office
Heather Tiel-Nelson	Public Affairs Officer	Twin Falls District Office
Lisa Creswell	Field Manager (Acting)	Shoshone Field Office

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Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Welcome; Leader's intent

Presenters: Mike Courtney, District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Twin Falls District and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee (Subcommittee); Leon Smith, Member, BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council/Chair, Subcommittee; Scott Nichols, Chair, BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council/Vice-Chair, Subcommittee.

Courtney welcomed Subcommittee members and members of the public participating in-person and virtually. He informed participants that the meeting purpose is to instruct Subcommittee members in how to access the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Lava Ridge Wind Project that the BLM released for a 60-day public comment period on January 20, 2023. Courtney provided a recap of the Subcommittee's June 2022 field tour and July, August and September 2022 meetings. Courtney stated that the BLM is asking Subcommittee members to review the draft EIS to ensure that the agency has adequately addressed all the issues that the Subcommittee has been exploring.

Agenda Item: Agenda review and housekeeping

Presenter: Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Nancy Haug provided information and guidelines for Subcommittee members and members of the public to participate effectively in the meeting. She noted that members of the public would have an opportunity to address the Subcommittee during the public comment period from 11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and provided instructions to sign up to make verbal comments and submit written comments.

Agenda Item: Becoming familiar with the draft environmental impact statement

Presenter: Kasey Prestwich, Lava Ridge Project Manager, BLM

Prestwich provided an overview of the Subcommittee and BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC) roles in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The BLM is responding to an application from Magic Valley Energy for use of public lands through a right-of-way grant. The agency began the formal EIS preparation process in compliance with NEPA by conducting scoping beginning in August 2021. The BLM realized that the process of responding to the application would benefit from the input of the RAC, which established the Subcommittee to assist it. The agency is asking Subcommittee members to review the draft EIS, consider whether the information in it addresses issues that have been raised during Subcommittee meetings and stakeholder coordination, and provide a report to the RAC that outlines where the draft EIS addresses issues that have been raised and highlights areas where additional information is needed. The RAC will use the Subcommittee report to make a recommendation to the BLM.

Prestwich informed Subcommittee members how to access the draft EIS and supporting materials, such as reports, studies, and surveys. Digital copies of the draft EIS and supporting materials are on located on the BLM eplanning website at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD> Hard copies and a limited number of USB drives with digital copies that can be downloaded are available at the BLM Shoshone and Burley Field Offices, Twin Falls District Office, and Idaho State Office. Prestwich instructed Subcommittee members in how to navigate the eplanning website to view and download the draft EIS and supporting materials. He outlined

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the organization of the draft EIS into four volumes, the content of each volume, and how to search the volumes for specific topics.

Prestwich demonstrated how members of the public could submit comments on the draft EIS through the eplanning website and presented information about the in-person and virtual public meetings the BLM will host in February and March. He informed members of the public participating in the Subcommittee meeting that the BLM has received comments that have been provided previously to the Subcommittee and has included them in the project record; however, comments on the draft EIS must be submitted to the agency directly in addition to being provided to the Subcommittee and/or RAC.

Prestwich and Courtney responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding the difference between public comments submitted during scoping and on the draft EIS; the availability of hard copies of the draft EIS; the definition of the “siting corridor overlap” term used in the draft EIS; development of a compensatory mitigation plan; next steps in the NEPA process and the timeline for them; extension of the public comment period; inclusion of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) information regarding impacts of the project on local airports; and participation of the FAA in the NEPA process to date.

Agenda Item: Review draft alternatives

Presenter: Kasey Prestwich, Lava Ridge Project Manager, BLM

Prestwich provided a high-level overview of the five alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS and their main elements, including general project area size, siting corridors size, ground disturbance footprint size, wind turbine size and numbers, estimated energy generation capacity, and number of construction and operation jobs supported. The BLM has identified Alternatives C and E as the agency’s preferred alternatives. However, this does not mean that the BLM will select these alternatives and the agency will continue to consider all alternatives through the final EIS and Record of Decision. Prestwich also offered guidelines for Subcommittee members to consider information presented in the draft EIS in preparation for the next meeting.

Prestwich responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding how public and stakeholder input the BLM has received has been incorporated into the draft EIS and whether BLM would accept photos, maps and other visual products in addition to text in public comments on the draft EIS.

Agenda Item: Public comment period

Presenter: Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Eight members of the public provided comments to the Subcommittee. Four provided comments in person - Janet Keegan, Friends of Minidoka; Hubert Shaw, Dietrich farmer and rancher and Big Wood Canal Board member; John Arkoosh, BLM livestock grazing permittee, Star Lake Allotment; Brian Thomas, Shoshone-Paiute Tribe member speaking as an individual. Four provided comments virtually - Julie Abo, daughter of Minidoka War Relocation Center survivor; Diana Nielson; Scott Levy, Ketchum resident and wind energy investor; and Pat Weber, Conservation Chair, Prairie Falcon Audubon Society.

Keegan asked Subcommittee members to appeal to the Idaho RAC and the BLM for a 30-day extension of the public comment period on the draft EIS; Shaw expressed opposition to the Lava Ridge Wind Project

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due to potential impacts on the Snake River aquifer, livestock grazing operations and local communities during construction and operation as well as transmitting electricity it would generate out of state and opposition of community members in other states to wind projects in their areas; Arkoosh requested an extension of the public comment period on the draft EIS and expressed concerns over representation of livestock grazers on Subcommittee; Thomas expressed concerns about the potential impacts of the Lava Ridge Wind Project on sacred, burial and other cultural sites located on ancestral homelands of Tribal nations and the costs and benefits of renewable energy projects; Julie Abo expressed concerns about potential visual impacts of the Lava Ridge Wind Project on the Minidoka National Historic Site viewshed and requested a 30-day extension of the public comment period on the draft EIS; Diana Nielson requested the BLM to make publicly available reports by explosive engineers, geophysicists and hydrophysicists to facilitate understanding of potential impacts of body waves, shock waves, surface waves and seismic phenomena on wildlife and humans that would be created by detonations and expressed concerns about unsafe zones created by the number and location of wind turbines within the Lava Ridge Wind Project area and lack of information on the proposed six megawatt towers and also requested the BLM to highlight changes that have been made from Magic Valley Energy's original proposal; Levy expressed concerns about potential impacts of the Lava Ridge Wind Project on cultural resources and transmitting electricity it would generate out of state and recommended that the BLM request the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to run a model through its Genesis Program to determine the need for the project; Weber expressed concerns regarding the potential of the Lava Ridge Wind Project and other renewable energy projects that have been proposed in the area to fragment sagebrush steppe habitat and contribute to the listing of greater sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act.

Agenda Item: Closing remarks

Presenters: Mike Courtney, District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Twin Falls District and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee (Subcommittee)

Courtney thanked Subcommittee members and members of the public for their engagement during the meeting. He acknowledged requests to extend the public comment period and committed to convey them to BLM leadership. He reminded Subcommittee members that at their next meeting on February 8, 2023, they would discuss the draft EIS and formulate a report to deliver to the BLM Idaho RAC at their March 9, 2023, meeting.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m. Mountain Standard Time.