

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting
February 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
In-person and virtual Via Zoom**

**Lava Ridge Wind Project
Subcommittee Members:**

Name	Interest Represented/Affiliation
Present:	
Leon Smith	Federal Grazing
George Lynch	Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources
Dan Sakura	Japanese American Community
Ted MacNeil	Magic Valley ATV Riders
Chad Colter	Tribal Interests
Garret Visser	Idaho Wildlife Federation
Wayne Schenk	Minidoka County Commissioners
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:	
Scott Nichols	Dispersed Recreation

BLM Staff:

Name	Title	Office
Mike Courtney	District Manager	Twin Falls District Office
Codie Martin	Field Manager	Shoshone Field Office
Lisa Creswell	Assistant Field Manager	Shoshone Field Office
Kasey Prestwich	Project Manager	Shoshone Field Office
Heather Tiel-Nelson	Public Affairs Officer	Twin Falls District Office

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting
February 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
In-person and virtual Via Zoom**

2

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Agenda review and housekeeping

Presenter: Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Haug provided information and guidelines for Subcommittee members and members of the public to participate effectively in the hybrid in-person/virtual meeting. She noted that members of the public would have an opportunity to address the Subcommittee during the public comment period from 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and informed participants about ways to sign up to make verbal comments and to submit written comments. She requested Subcommittee members participating in-person and virtually to introduce themselves and they proceeded to do so.

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 (RAC) Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee (Subcommittee); Leon Smith, Member, BLM Idaho RAC/Chair, Subcommittee; Scott Nichols, Chair, BLM Idaho RAC/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 discuss the Lava Ridge Wind Project draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and to formulate recommendations to ensure it adequately addresses issues that the Subcommittee has been exploring. The Subcommittee will present its recommendations to the BLM Idaho RAC at their March 9, 2023, meeting and the RAC will use them to make recommendations to the BLM. Dan Sakura requested 10 minutes to present information regarding the incarceration of Alaska Natives at the Minidoka War Relocation Center. Courtney agreed to accommodate this request. Courtney reported that he conveyed requests made by Subcommittee members and members of the public during the January 25, 2023, Subcommittee meeting to extend the public comment period on the draft EIS to BLM leadership, however at this time the BLM does not intend to extend it.

Agenda Item: Draft environmental impact statement alternatives: Have issues been adequately addressed?

Presenter: Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Haug explained that the objective is to discuss by category issues that the Subcommittee has been exploring and to develop recommendations that can be presented to the BLM Idaho RAC. She asked Subcommittee members to focus discussion on where the Lava Ridge Wind Project draft EIS is missing information, analysis and details and identify how the BLM can strengthen analysis of the project proposal.

County Commissioners Jack Johnson, Wayne Schenk and Ben Crouch expressed their concern that Subcommittee members have not had adequate time to review the draft EIS and their belief that it is premature for the Subcommittee to formulate recommendations to present to the BLM Idaho RAC while the public comment period on the draft EIS is still open. Courtney clarified that the BLM intends to consider the BLM Idaho RAC recommendations with all of the other public comments the agency receives on the draft EIS.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting
February 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
In-person and virtual Via Zoom

Issues - Tribal perspective/cultural resources and Minidoka National Historic Site/Japanese American community

Subcommittee members raised and discussed the following points: Potential revision of the draft EIS Purpose and Need Statement to include protection of the Minidoka National Historic Site and Native American cultural resources; potential impacts on unidentified cultural resources within the proposed project area due to lack of cultural resource surveys; potential impacts of the proposed project on Tribal treaty rights; capacity to transmit power that would be generated by the proposed project; the need to identify additional mitigation measures for potential impacts to cultural resources and Tribal treaty rights, including land acquisition, and implementation of that; the need to consider impacts, including social, health, and emotional effects, of the proposed project on Alaska Natives incarcerated at the Minidoka War Relocation Center as well as members of the Japanese American community; the need to include all information about potential impacts to cultural resources into one section in the draft EIS; conformance of the proposed project with Federal Land Policy and Management Act and Monument Resource Management Plan requirements; participation of Tribal members in cultural resource inventories; development of a process to resolve conflicts over mitigation of impacts of the proposed project on cultural resources; availability of documents referenced in the Programmatic Agreement pertaining to management of historic resources; the need to consider the potential impacts of the proposed project on other types of cultural resources in addition to Native American sites, Tribal treaty rights, and the Minidoka National Historic site in a larger area; appropriate utilization of ethnographic studies; lack of information regarding potential impacts of the proposed project on Native American and Japanese American communities in the Environmental Justice section of the draft EIS; and the lack of inclusion of all of the applicable authorities in the authorities section of the draft EIS.

BLM leadership and staff responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding the status of National Environmental Policy Act analysis and cultural resource surveys on the two lines that would transmit power generated by the proposed project; how BLM protection of cultural resources would vary under different alternatives presented in the draft EIS; whether BLM or Magic Valley Energy would determine what organization conducts cultural resource surveys; and the lack of information in the draft EIS regarding potential impacts of the proposed project on local airports and businesses that utilize them.

Subcommittee members suggested ten recommendations to address these points that Lisa Creswell recorded in a document. Subcommittee members reviewed and edited the recommendations and approved final draft versions of them.

Issues - Wildlife/avian

Subcommittee members raised and discussed the following points: potential impacts of the proposed project on BLM special status species and habitat; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service process for issuing take permits for eagles; monitoring of avian populations; reporting requirements for eagle mortality; inclusion of information in the draft EIS regarding the influx of eagles into the Hagerman area in recent years; lack of information in the draft EIS regarding potential impacts of the proposed project on population connectivity, as well as habitat connectivity, population risk, and recent population declines in the local area; use of 15+ year old data in Idaho Department of Fish and Game/Idaho Transportation Department models in the affected environment section 318 of the draft EIS; potential impacts of the proposed project on pronghorn migration that would result from implementation of all alternatives presented in the draft

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting
February 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
In-person and virtual Via Zoom

EIS; lack of an alternative presented in the draft EIS that avoids both sage grouse habitat and pronghorn migration routes; lack of details in the draft EIS regarding installation of temporary fencing; lack of information in the draft EIS regarding potential increases in private land depredation that could result from wildlife displacement and costs associated with that; lack of detailed analysis in the draft EIS of wildlife movement and mitigation information; lack of compensatory mitigation specific to local area proposed for bats and other species in the draft EIS; and lack of information in the draft EIS regarding how potential impacts of the proposed project on wildlife would affect Native American treaty rights for hunting and fishing on public lands.

BLM leadership and staff responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding analysis in the draft EIS of cumulative effects of all proposed renewable energy projects within the BLM Twin Falls District on wildlife and avian habitat and populations as well as the impact on the draft EIS if the little brown bat is listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Subcommittee members suggested twelve recommendations to address these points that Lisa Creswell recorded in a document. Subcommittee members reviewed and edited the recommendations and approved final draft versions of them.

Agenda Item: Public comment period

Presenter: Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Five members of the public provided comments to the Subcommittee. Two provided comments in person - Diana Nielsen and Jerry Holton. Three provided comments virtually – John Robison, Idaho Conservation League; Patricia Weber, Prairie Falcon Audubon Society; and Sarah Lurie.

Nielson expressed concerns regarding potential impacts of the proposed project on local residents, particularly low income and underserved populations; lack of presentation of studies in the draft EIS on the impacts of wind turbine noise on cattle; economic impacts of the proposed project on grazers; lack of combined data in the draft EIS regarding impacts of potential increases in traffic within the proposed project area; and potential impacts of the proposed project on open space and viewsheds. Holton expressed concerns about potential impacts of the proposed project on wildlife, including displacement due to increased traffic and depredation on private lands. Robison expressed support for renewable energy projects that protect the quality of life and what makes Idaho special to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the state's wildlife, water, and economy; urged BLM to refine alternatives in the draft EIS to first avoid impacts then minimize and mitigate them; urged BLM to adopt a comprehensive approach to renewable energy project siting that identifies appropriate and inappropriate locations for proposed projects, possibly through Area of Critical Environmental Concern designation or other mechanisms. Weber expressed support for modifying the preferred alternatives presented in the draft EIS to reduce the size of the proposed project area, reduce the number of turbines and avoid sensitive lands; for including information about population connectivity in the draft EIS; for detailed proactive measures to reduce impacts to species to reduce risk of being listed under the ESA; and for siting power generation facilities close to communities where the power will be consumed. Lurie urged County Commissioners on the Subcommittee to ask state leaders to adopt renewable energy portfolio standards as Idaho is one of the only states that doesn't have state level standards.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting
February 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
In-person and virtual Via Zoom

Issues - Outdoor recreation

Subcommittee members raised and discussed the following points: discrepancy in the draft EIS between the length of impacts on outdoor recreation as 34 years and other resources as 84 years; lack of information in the draft EIS regarding the impacts of displacement of outdoor recreationists from the proposed project area onto other nearby lands; lack of inclusion in the draft EIS of maps of existing routes that may be closed during construction and maps of routes that would be open and closed under the different alternatives; and lack of information in the draft EIS regarding potential impacts of the proposed project on upland bird and sage grouse hunting within the proposed project area.

Subcommittee members suggested four recommendations to address these points that Lisa Creswell recorded in a document. Subcommittee members reviewed and edited the recommendations and approved final draft versions of them.

BLM leadership and staff responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding the participation of highway districts in the draft EIS development process.

Agenda Item: Closing remarks

Presenters: Mike Courtney, District Manager, BLM Twin Falls District and DFO for the Subcommittee.

Courtney thanked Subcommittee members and members of the public for their engagement during the meeting. He reported that BLM Idaho will grant Subcommittee members' request for additional time to review the draft EIS prior to formulating and finalizing recommendations to the BLM Idaho RAC. The Subcommittee will convene to complete its work during the March 9, 2023, BLM Idaho RAC meeting. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Dan Sakura requested BLM Idaho to provide information on the solar energy programmatic EIS that the agency is developing and how BLM will implement Inflation Reduction Act provisions pertaining to fossil fuel projects in regard to the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project during the March 9, 2023, meeting. Leon Smith requested the BLM to help secure a livestock grazing permittee to replace former Subcommittee member Roy Prescott.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m. Mountain Standard Time, instead of 4:45 p.m. Mountain Standard Time as scheduled, due to a statewide BLM computer network disruption that precluded virtual participation of Subcommittee members and members of the public.