

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council  
Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee Meeting  
March 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time  
In-person and virtual Via Zoom**

**Lava Ridge Wind Project  
Subcommittee Members:**

Name	Interest Represented/Affiliation
<b>Present:</b>	
Leon Smith	Federal Grazing
Dan Sakura	Japanese American Community
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
<b>Invited Guest:</b>	
John Arkoosh	Livestock Grazing
<b>Absent:</b>	
George Lynch	Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources
Ted MacNeil	Magic Valley ATV Riders
Scott Nichols (participating in concurrent RAC meeting)	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

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**Meeting Minutes**

**Agenda Item:** Agenda review and housekeeping

**Presenter:** Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Haug provided information and guidelines for BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and Lava Ridge Wind Project Subcommittee (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 RAC and Subcommittee during the public comment period from 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and informed participants about ways to sign up to make verbal comments and to submit written comments.

**Agenda Item:** Welcome and meeting structure

**Presenters:** Karen Kelleher, BLM Idaho State Director and Designated Federal Official (DFO) for the RAC; Mike Courtney, BLM Twin Falls District Manager and DFO for the Subcommittee; Scott Nichols, RAC Chair; Leon Smith, Subcommittee Chair.

Kelleher welcomed RAC and Subcommittee members and members of the public and explained that the RAC and Subcommittee will meet concurrently in different physical and virtual rooms until they reconvene for the public comment period. She informed participants that the RAC will meet on Friday, March 17 to receive the Subcommittee's report and consider recommendations to the BLM on the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project. Nichols requested RAC members to identify public land management topics that they are interested in exploring at future meetings and encouraged them to inform other members of communities of interest that they represent about BLM programs, activities, and issues discussed at RAC meetings.

Courtney informed participants that Subcommittee members will finish formulating recommendations to the RAC to ensure the Lava Ridge Wind Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) adequately addresses issues that the Subcommittee has been exploring.

RAC and Subcommittee members adjourned to their respective physical and virtual rooms. Courtney provided Subcommittee members with a summary of public comments on the Draft EIS that the BLM has received to date. These include 221 comments delivered in person or by mail, 288 comments submitted through the BLM eplanning website; and 4,670 comments sent via email, most of which resulted from "Support Lava Ridge" and ShareTrails.org campaigns.

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

**Presenter:** Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Subcommittee members continued discussions started during their February 8, 2023, meeting of issues by category that they have been exploring and development of recommendations to present to the RAC, with a focus on identifying areas where the Draft EIS is missing information, analysis and details and how the BLM can strengthen analysis of the project proposal.

Issues – Wildlife/avian

Subcommittee members reviewed draft recommendations developed during their February 8, 2023, meeting and determined they did not need additional edits at this time.

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Issues – Outdoor recreation

Subcommittee members raised and discussed the following points: potential impacts of the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project on the alpine ski experience at the Sun Valley resort due to changes in the viewshed from Seattle Ridge; potential cumulative impacts of increased outdoor recreation traffic and construction/operation traffic on wildlife and cultural resources in the proposed project area; potential for increased human-caused wildfires and decreased aerial firefighting capability within the proposed project area; potential impacts on tourism due to changes in the viewshed from Highway 93, which is a designated Scenic Byway, and scenic values in the proposed project area; potential cumulative impacts of increased outdoor recreation traffic and construction/operation traffic on commuters that utilize Highways 93 and 75; potential impacts of increased outdoor recreation within the proposed project area on Tribal treaty rights for fishing, hunting, trapping, and gathering and lack of information in the Draft EIS regarding seasons for these activities which differ from those for the general public; potential impacts of increased outdoor recreation traffic on livestock grazing operations; and potential impacts of the proposed project on local airports and businesses that depend on them as well as general aviation.

BLM leadership and staff responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding installation of temporary and permanent fences within the proposed project area; reclamation of areas that would be disturbed during construction; creation of firebreaks along roads; analysis of construction of new roads, including potential impacts of blasting; potential impacts of construction and operation of proposed project on forage and livestock grazing; lack of information in the Draft EIS regarding compensatory mitigation for livestock grazing permittees; and development of a travel management plan for the proposed project area.

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

Issues – Grazing

Smith introduced John Arkoosh, who was invited to provide a perspective of a livestock grazing permittee with experience operating within the proposed project area.

Subcommittee members raised and discussed the following points: potential economic impacts of the proposed project on livestock grazing permittees; potential disruptions in ranching operations due to need to graze livestock at long distances away from base property and rangeland improvements during construction of the proposed project; and potential impacts of increased human and power generation infrastructure caused wildfires, increased fuel loads, and reductions in aerial firefighting capability on livestock grazing within the proposed project area.

BLM leadership and staff responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding lack of information in the Draft EIS regarding Magic Valley Energy's proposed compensation to permittees for potential impacts of the proposed project on livestock grazing operations.

Subcommittee members suggested two recommendations to address these points that Lisa Creswell recorded in a document. Subcommittee members reviewed and edited the recommendations and approved

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draft versions of them.

Issues – Other

Subcommittee members raised and discussed the following points: potential impacts of the proposed project on public safety communications and emergency services; the need for special designations to protect important natural and cultural resources from the impacts of other proposed renewable energy development projects, such as designation of the Minidoka National Historic Site as a Traditional Cultural Property and designation of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect public lands around the site while preserving current multiple uses and subject to valid existing rights for livestock grazing, outdoor recreation, and other activities; lack of social and economic data in the Draft EIS from counties that the Fort Hall Reservation is located in; potential impacts of the proposed project on Alaska Natives who were incarcerated at the Minidoka War Relocation Center; lack of information in the Draft EIS regarding potential impacts of the proposed project on Townsend’s big-eared bats; requirements for compensatory mitigation for eagle take and engagement of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in development of compensatory mitigation proposals; agreements between Magic Valley Energy and Japanese American and Alaska Native communities, local highway and irrigation districts, and private landowners to provide compensation for potential losses due to construction and operation of the proposed project; and potential impacts of the proposed project on the Snake River aquifer and wells.

BLM leadership and staff responded to questions from Subcommittee members regarding the capacity of powerlines to transmit energy that would be generated by the proposed project.

Subcommittee members suggested 11 recommendations to address these points that Lisa Creswell recorded in a document. Subcommittee members reviewed and edited the recommendations and approved draft versions of them.

**Agenda Item:** Compile information and research into a report for the Idaho Resource Advisory Council

**Presenter:** Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Subcommittee members reviewed and edited recommendations developed during the February 8, 2023, meeting and the current meeting in all issue categories (Tribal perspective/cultural resources, Minidoka National Historic Site/Japanese American community, wildlife/avian, outdoor recreation, grazing, and other) and finalized them.

Smith distributed ballots to Subcommittee members and requested them to complete them to indicate whether they believed that critical issues could be mitigated or not and which of the alternatives presented in the Draft EIS they supported.

**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 informed participants that the Subcommittee will present their recommendations to the RAC during their next meeting on March 17 and that the RAC will determine whether to accept, decline, or modify them. The RAC will then submit recommendations to the BLM and the agency will consider them along with all other public comments it receives on the proposed project. The BLM expects to issue a Final

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EIS by fall 2023 or early winter 2024.

**Agenda Item:** Rejoin Idaho Resource Advisory Council meeting

The Subcommittee and RAC reconvened in one physical and virtual room at 3:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.

**Agenda Item:** Public comment period

**Presenter:** Nancy Haug, Facilitator

Six members of the public provided comments to the RAC and Subcommittee. Four provided comments in person – Jerry Holton, Ralph Kinchloe, Janet Keegan and Dave Lawley. Two provided comments virtually – Diana Nielson and Connie Kinchloe.

Holton expressed concerns regarding potential impacts of the Lava Ridge Wind Project and other proposed renewable energy development projects on mule deer, antelope, sage grouse, pygmy rabbits and other wildlife habitat populations as well as hunting opportunities; Ralph Kinchloe, Jerome County Airport Advisory Board member, expressed concerns regarding potential impacts of the Lava Ridge Wind Project on the airport's new Master Plan that has been submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration for approval; the Jerome County Airport's training area; aircraft approaches; navigable airspace; aircraft separation; electromagnetic fields; communications; and safety. He requested a study of the impact of each turbine within the proposed project area on aviation and stated that Alternative A is the only one presented in the Draft EIS that would not impact aviation. Keegan, Friends of Minidoka Board member, stated that the organization submitted a Traditional Cultural Property study of the Minidoka National Historic Site to the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, which has accepted it as eligible for the National Historic Register. She stated that the organization has also submitted an Area of Critical Environmental Concern nomination to the BLM to help protect the Minidoka National Historic Site viewshed and maintain current uses of public lands surrounding the site. Lawley expressed concerns regarding proposed reclamation plans and bonds, potential impacts of blasting, and potential impacts on soil and birds. He also expressed adamant opposition to the proposed project. Nielson, an active participant in the Stop Lava Ridge movement, expressed concern regarding lack of information in the Draft EIS about the potential impacts of the proposed project on shallow wells that feed wetlands; the quality of the wetland assessment presented in the Draft EIS; lack of information in the DEIS on impacts of the proposed project on infrasound, subsound, or other radio frequencies, microwaves and electromagnetic fields; the creation of fugitive dust from blasting that would contain known carcinogens; and impacts of the proposed projects on dairies. Connie Kinchloe expressed concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed project on aviation, safety, multiple uses on public lands, private property rights, and wildlife and expressed support for Alternative A.

**Agenda Item:** Subcommittee Status Update

**Presenter:** Leon Smith, Subcommittee Chair

Smith informed participants that the RAC created the Subcommittee to compile information and conduct research on the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project and provide their findings to the RAC which will then make recommendations to the BLM. He identified Subcommittee members and provided an overview of the Subcommittee's work over the last nine months, including summaries of presentations delivered and

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topics discussed during June 2022 RAC/Subcommittee field tour and July, August and September 2022 and January 2023 Subcommittee meetings. Smith also discussed the Subcommittee's development during their February 8, 2023, and March 9, 2023, meetings of draft recommendations that focus on ensuring that the Draft EIS adequately addresses issues that the Subcommittee has been exploring. The Subcommittee will present their recommendations to the RAC during their March 17, 2023, meeting so that the RAC can consider them in making recommendations to the BLM on the proposed project.