

Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming Resource Advisory Council Meeting

09/18/24-09/19/24 Pinedale, WY

RAC Coordinator: Allegra Keenoo

Name	City	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present	Notes
Jennifer Leinonen	Casper	Energy/Minerals	12/25	Y	
Craig Rood	Green River	Energy/Minerals	05/27	Y	
Colin McKee	Cheyenne	Energy/Minerals	12/25	Y	
Michael Massie	Laramie	Archeology	4/26	Y	
Mel Shumway	Afton	Dispersed Recreation	05/27	Y	
Josh Coursey	Kemmerer	Dispersed Recreation	4/26	N	
John Espy	Rawlins	Elected Official	05/27	N	
Stephanie Kessler	Lander	Public-at-Large	4/26	Y	
Mary Thoman	Green River	Elected Official	12/25	Y	
Yufna Solider Wolf	St. Stevens	Tribal	4/26	N	

Name	Title	Office	Present
Andrew Archuleta	State Director	WY State Office	Y
Kris Kirby	Associate State Director	WY State Office	Y
Frank Keeler	Acting District Manager	High Desert District	Y
Kevin Christensen	District Manager	High Plains District	Virtual
Mike Phillips	Acting District Manager	Wind River Bighorn Basin	Y
Brad Purdy	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Allegra Keenoo	Public Affairs Specialist	WY State Office	Y
Doug Linn	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Bill Beck	Supervisory Geologist	WY State Office	Virtual
Sandy Blackburn	Branch Chief, Fluid Minerals	WY State Office	Virtual
Jennifer Fleuret-McConchie	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Virtual
Stewart Cogswell	Pinedale Field Manager	Pinedale	Y
David Richey	Assistant Field Manager	Pinedale	Y
Mark Thonhoff	Wildlife Biologist	Pinedale	Y
Ross Dary	Forestry Technician	Pinedale	Y
Janet Bellis	Physical Scientist	Pinedale	Y

Agenda Item: Welcome/Housekeeping

Presenter: Andrew Archuleta and Jennifer Leinonen

- RAC Member/BLM introductions and agenda review.

Agenda Item: Statewide Planning Efforts

Presenter: Jennifer Fleuret-McConchie, Deputy State Director, Resource Policy and Management

Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP)

- Protest period end date September 23, 2024. Comments to be reviewed and the Governor's Consistency Review to be completed.
- Moving from the draft to the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and proposed RMP there were over 30k public comments, and several meetings with the Governor's Task Force. Public comments were reviewed, responded to, and incorporated into the final plan.
- ACECs were briefly discussed and all information on the Rock Springs RMP is publicly available on ePlanning - <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/13853/570>.
- After the Governor's Consistency Review, the BLM can issue the Record of Decision (ROD), including incorporating any potential changes.

Greater Sage Grouse RMP

- Final EIS and proposed RMP is estimated to be released in October/November.
- The final will have a consistency review, and a protest period will be held before the ROD is issued.
- ePlanning - <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/570>
 - https://eplanning.blm.gov/public_projects/2016719/200502020/20105921/251005921/GRSG_DEIS_Vol1_508.pdf

Agenda Item: District Updates

Presenter: Frank Keeler, HDD Manager; Kevin Christensen, HPD Manager; Mike Phillips, WRBBD Manager

High Desert District (HDD), Frank Keeler – District Manager

- The Wild Horse Plan Amendment for the Rock Springs and Rawlins field offices: In August 2024 the US District Court upheld and affirmed the ROD plan amendment for removing all checkerboard land from three Herd Management Areas (HMAs).
 - Implementation of the ROD began with the White Mountain gather in August 2024. The gather removed 586 wild horses to reach the low Appropriate Management Level (AML).

- Next gathers for the Salt Wells and Adobe Town Herd Areas are being planned for 2025, pending court appeals, estimated for early 2025.
- C02 Sequestration Projects: There is complexity surrounding location/ownership of the land – land being State land or within the checkerboard. BLM coordinates with the State of Wyoming and respects land ownership.
- Wind Energy Projects:
 - Two Rivers – accommodation of cultural and visual resources. Expecting a proposed final Environmental Assessment (EA) later this year.
 - Jackalope – incorporating cultural resources and estimating the Draft EIS to be published in April 2025.
- Solar Projects:
 - Early in process. One project has been scoped and a notice of intent was issued on the Rawlins Uplift Solar Project.
- Pumped Storage Projects:
 - BLM is coordinating with Wyoming Game and Fish Department and moving forward on the Seminoe Pumped Storage Project, estimating a notice of intent for the EIS to be published early 2025.
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Projects:
 - IRA - LaBarge restoration work has included youth crews installing over 230 low-tech structures throughout the watershed to help curtail erosion and stabilize streambanks. Earthwork is currently underway at the Wildcat Canyon Stock Pond Dam to recontour the dam and repair erosional features in the area.
 - IRA - Muddy Creek restoration work includes projects with the Baggs Juniper Encroachment work and the JO Ranch Fence Conversion. Youth crews have installed over 60 low-tech structures to help curtail erosion and stabilize streambanks.
 - BIL – LaBarge restoration efforts to grow sagebrush systems that create fire-resilient ecosystems and promote biodiversity. Addressing significant watershed erosion in the area. This work is ongoing.
- Helium Projects:
 - Project proposal submitted from Blue Spruce Operating, still in early stages.
- Land Exchanges:
 - Miller Mountain – exchange is moving forward and would substantially increase recreation opportunities and resource conservation on lands rich in recreation, cultural heritage, and wildlife habitat values. The exchange will be a benefit to public lands.
 - Snake River – the three parcels identified in this area are challenging for the BLM to manage. Under the Proposed Action, the BLM would lease or convey the three parcels to Teton County for development of recreation sites, including installation of such improvements as paved paths, restrooms, information kiosks and other amenities.
- Transmission Line Projects:

- TransWest Express – Large project with construction in 2024 limited to work on private lands.
- Anticline to Shirley Basin – still in planning stages.
- Trona Mines – Dry Creek Trona is in the EIS stage and moving forward. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was posted for public comment on Project West, where most land is privately owned. The federal undertaking considers linear applications for Rights of Ways (ROWs).
- BLM Projects are on ePlanning - <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/home>

High Plains District (HPD), Kevin Christensen -- District Manager

- Casper Airtanker Base opened in June, has proven to be a great support base in responding to fires this season.
- Rural Fire Readiness (RFR) - The HPD donated one Type 6 engine to Crook County and one Type 6 engine to Johnson County (Powder River Fire District) in August. The Bar Nunn Fire Department also received an engine from the BLM High Desert District. The RFR program allows government agencies to donate excess equipment to rural and volunteer fire departments at no cost to the receiving department. These engines were immediately called into service for a busy fire season across the district.
- Casper Field Office
 - Marton Ranch Land Use Planning – BLM received feedback from hosting public and cooperating agency meetings. Based on feedback, which ranged from full development of recreation facilities to less developed and primitive uses, the BLM plans to engage the public this fall or winter to fine tune this input.
 - Converse County Direct Land Sale - The environment analysis (NEPA) is ongoing but nearing completion, and the BLM is working on completing other requirements including the fair market appraisal.
 - Muddy Mountain Road Improvement – the project was completed in August, resulting in an increase in recreation and public use.
- Newcastle Field Office
 - Newcastle and Nebraska RMP Revisions - BLM anticipates publishing the Draft RMP/EIS in fall 2024, which will open a 90-day public comment period.
- Buffalo Field Office
 - Quarter Circle 7 Land Exchange – BLM plans to issue a draft EA analyzing the exchange for a 15-day public comment period.
 - Buffalo Resource Management Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – Protest Resolution Report is in progress and will be available online, <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/public-participation/protest-resolution-reports>.
- Applications for Permits to Drill (APDs) – BLM anticipates similar activity from the chart below will continue next year.

Application for Permit to Drill Summary

Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) Report 10/1/2023 to 9/11/2024

BLM Admin State	Field Office	APDs Received	APDs Approved	APDs Other Than Approved	Total APDs Processed	APDs Pending	Wells Spud	Wells Completed
WYOMING	Buffalo Field Office	285	312	13	325	231	78	135
	Casper Field Office	267	198	45	243	230	136	115
	Newcastle Field Office	14	14	1	15	24	9	12
Totals		566	524	59	583	485	223	262

Wind River Big Horn Basin District (WRBBD), Mike Phillips -- District Manager

- Cody Field Office
 - Mining Plans – In 2024, 140 new acres of bentonite mining has been approved, four plans of operation are under review. Together, there are approximately 2,000 acres of new bentonite mining.
 - Heart Mountain Relocation Center Conveyance – EA is being prepared and requisite Federal Register documents.
 - Cryptocurrency Mining Application – right-of-way application and processing fees in progress. The mining sites would be a location of the energy production which is used for creating bit coin.
- Lander Field Office
 - North Lander Wild Horse Gather – 2,577 gathered. Approximately 108 horses to be returned after stallions are gelded and mares treated with fertility control.
 - This gather is part of a 10-year plan to return the complex to within its AML and implement population growth suppression methods.
 - BOR Muddy Ridge Withdrawal Revocation - The BLM is working with BOR for a complete application and will then need to determine whether the lands proposed for revocation (surface estate only) are suitable for return to the public domain.
 - Carbon Sequestration Project - the proponent’s application has been reviewed, a plan of development and further review is pending with the Wyoming State Office.
- Worland Field Office

- BIL Funded Orphaned Well Plugging - funding to execute the plugging, abandonment and site reclamation of 11 orphaned oil and gas wells. BLM anticipates all 11 wells will be plugged in 2024.
- Gooseberry Improvements - funds from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) enabled the completion of major improvements at the Gooseberry Badlands Scenic Overlook Trail. The project includes improved trail surfaces, rerouted sections of trail, new steps and bridges, sheltered picnic areas, benches and permanent binoculars at the scenic overlook. The parking lot and upper trail are all accessible to people with disabilities.

Agenda Item: Foundation for America’s Public Lands

Presenter: Marni Salmon, External Affairs

- Charitable partner of BLM chartered by Congress. The Foundation’s mission is to connect people to public lands and waters and sustain special places for the benefit of the present and future generations.
- The Foundation’s board was filled in August 2024 and is still in the early stages.
- Contacting the Foundation – connect with local Field Managers, the managers will coordinate with Doug Linn, who will then connect with the Foundation.
- Focus of the Foundation is to create awareness on what BLM does (Lands to Love campaign). Funding will come from donors for project support or through Congress approved cooperative agreements.
- The Foundation is not a government entity. Project partnership across entities was a discussion point.
- Foundation website - <https://americaslands.org/>
 - Lands to Love Campaign - <https://americaslands.org/lands-to-love/>

Agenda Item: Rule Implementation

Presenter: Doug Linn, Deputy State Director Lands and Minerals and Jennifer Fleuret-McConshie, Deputy State Director Resources

- Oil and Gas Leasing Rule
 - Updated regulations to reflect changes made by the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
 - Bonding – review of bonds, BLM will notify companies of bond increases.
 - Leasing – BLM will evaluate expressions of interest for leasing preference at scoping for leasing, like existing policy in IM 2023-007. BLM works closely with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.
 - [Evaluating Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale Parcels for Future Lease Sales | Bureau of Land Management \(blm.gov\)](#)
 - Period of Approved APD – valid now for three years instead of two years.
 - Working relationship between State and Federal on idle wells where there is dual jurisdiction.

- Leasing Rule - <https://www.blm.gov/onshore-oil-and-gas-leasing-rule>
- Public Lands Rule (PLR)
 - The BLM is implementing regulations that will guide balanced management of America's public lands now and for the future.
 - Land health standards are expanded to all programs under PLR. Ecosystems are unique to each state and will be identified by states.
 - Conservation Leasing – no impact on existing leases.
 - Policy and Implementation – bulletins, memos, and manual sections
 - <https://www.blm.gov/public-lands-rule>

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Presenters: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair and Allegra Keenoo, Public Affairs Specialist/RAC Coordinator

- Public on Zoom – Joyce Purtzer, Monika Leininger (TNC-WY), Janelle, Dagny Signorelli, and Linda W.
- Comments included – can the BLM facilitate land swaps with ranchers for horses to stay on land within the checkerboard and if there will be public comment for heard management areas within the checkerboard.
 - BLM responded land exchanges are value for value vs acre for acre in a mutual agreement for exchange. No private entity has pursued a land exchange with the BLM within the checkerboard. There has not been private consent for wild horses on private land within the checkerboard – where horses roam between public and private land. The Wild Horse RMP Amendment was issued for public comment and comments were reviewed and considered earlier this year.

Agenda Item: Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation Plan

Presenters: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair

- BLM will host a meeting for building an action plan for Wyoming in early 2025.
- The Foundation is supporting workshops on the Outdoor Recreation Plan and has been involved in developing the plan from the beginning.
- It was discussed a strategy for Wyoming will be important in developing a recreation plan, looking at the areas of traffic to recreation areas and how much and the possible level of future development.
- The RAC suggested a list of pre-work options so the meeting could be beneficial for groups around Wyoming. Specifically looking to overall outcomes, input/cooperation, and keeping Wyoming recreation specific to Wyoming. The RAC offered to create a list of specific groups that could be contacted prior to the meeting.
- The Blueprint is not a formal planning or rulemaking document, and it does not change BLM's multiple-use mission or management. It is a path forward to help BLM envision sustainable and equitable recreation on public lands for years to come.

Agenda Item: Formal Recommendation Process from RAC to BLM

Presenter: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair

- A wild horse recommendation letter was reviewed, and edits were suggested between the RAC members. The RAC will finalize the letter and send it to the BLM State Director. Once received, the letter will be added to the RAC webpage - [Wyoming | Bureau of Land Management \(blm.gov\)](https://www.blm.gov).

Agenda Item: Topics for Future RAC Meetings/Action Items

Presenter: Jennifer Leinonen, RAC Chair

Future Topics:

- Foundation project recommendations from the RAC
- Working group recommendations from the RAC
- BLM District updates, Statewide planning, recreation update
- Legislature update, bills BLM is tracking
- Solar PEIS update
- Land exchange
- Oil and gas EOI report and lease suspension

Action Items:

- BLM – Federal Register covering one-year of meetings
- BLM – Nomination process summer 2025 in preparation for 3 member terms expiring December 2025
- RAC – possible Conservation Rule working group
- RAC – possible Foundation working group
- RAC – support letter on local involvement for review (led by Mary Thoman)
- RAC – List of groups for contact on pre-meeting items for Wyoming recreation

2025 Tentative Meeting Dates – final dates and locations will be posted on the RAC website prior to each meeting - [Wyoming | Bureau of Land Management \(blm.gov\)](https://www.blm.gov)

- January 29-30, 2025
- April 23-24, 2025
- July 9-10, 2025
- October 21-22, 2025