

Bureau of Land Management – Wyoming Resource Advisory Council Meeting

01/31/2024 Casper, WY

RAC Coordinator: Azure Hall

Name	City	Interest Represented	Term Expires	Present	Notes
Jennifer Leinonen	Casper	Energy/Minerals	12/25	Y	
Colin McKee	Cheyenne	Energy/Minerals	12/25	Y	Attended virtually
Michael Massie	Laramie	Archeology	4/26	Y	
Josh Coursey	Kemmerer	Dispersed Recreation	4/26	Y	
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	Y	Attended virtually

Name	Title	Office	Present
Kevin Christensen	District Manager	High Plains District	Y
Jason Gay	District Manager	High Desert District	Y
Matt Marsh	District Manager	Wild River Bighorn Basin	Y
Kris Kirby	Associate State Director	WY State Office	Y
Andrew Archuleta	State Director	WY State Office	Y
Azure Hall	Public Affairs/RAC Coordinator	WY State Office	Y
Brad Purdy	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Travis Bargsten	Branch Chief	WY State Office	Y
Duane Spencer	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Jennifer Fleuret-McConchie	Deputy State Director	WY State Office	Y
Bill Beck	Supervising Geologist	WY State Office	Y

Agenda Item: Welcome/Housekeeping

Presenter: Andrew Archuleta

- RAC Member and BLM introductions
- Agenda Review

Agenda Item: Statewide Planning Efforts

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

Topic: Rock Springs RMP Updates

- The Rock Springs RMP planning effort has been underway for several years and has garnered high interest from diverse stakeholders, including the governor’s office, due to its diverse resource issues.
- The Rock Springs RMP revision was initiated in 2011 to develop new management actions for the entire field office and replace the 1997 Green River RMP.
- As the BLM continued to expand the draft RMP revision, the wild horse amendment was prepared separately.
 - The record of decision for this wild horse plan amendment is currently under litigation.
- Alternative B is currently the preferred alternative.
 - Relative to all alternatives, Alternative B conserves the most land area.
- The BLM’s extended comment period concluded Jan. 17, 2024.
- Since announcing the draft RMP, the BLM has held three public meetings and participated in the Wyoming Governor’s Task Force through the Ruckelhaus Institute to address the proposed management issues.
- The BLM is now evaluating public comments and preparing a Final EIS/Proposed RMP.
 - To date, more than 15,000 comments have been received.
 - The Final EIS is anticipated to be released in late spring 2024.
- **The Wyoming RAC requested recurring updates on the Rock Springs RMP for the foreseeable future.**

Agenda Item: District and Field Manager Updates

Presenters: District Managers

High Desert District

Kemmerer Field Office

Dry Creek Trona Project

KFO anticipates a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in March 2024 to be released for public comment and cooperators review. This project is a proposed in-situ mining operation and the first new sodium lease in decades. The operation could produce approximately 5 million metric tons of marketable soda ash and 400k tons/year of sodium bicarbonate soda (baking soda) an essential material in creating glass for solar panels and lithium batteries.

Frontier Sweetwater Carbon Storage Hub CO2 Sequestration (SW Wyoming)

A Right of Way application was received from Pond Field, LLC for 44,470 acres of sub-surface pore space in Lincoln, Uinta, and Sweetwater Counties. Frontier has submitted three Class VI permit applications to Wyoming DEQ in September 2022. The wells will be located on private lands. KFO anticipates a release of an Environmental Analysis (EA) in March 2024 for public comment and cooperators review.

Southwest Wyoming CO2 Carbon Storage (Tallgrass)

The proposed project would consist of a CO2 sequestration row grant for the pore space only for 600K acres in Kemmerer and Rock Springs Field Offices. The proposal is being analyzed under an environmental assessment. Public Scoping was completed in May 2023. The company may later apply to the BLM for permission to construct other facilities such as access roads, well pads, and pipelines, on BLM-administered

public lands. KFO anticipates a release of an Environmental Analysis (EA) in March 2024 for public comment and cooperator review.

Rawlins Field Office

Two Rivers Wind Project

Two Rivers Wind submitted a ROW application to the BLM RFO requesting a 30-year ROW grant on 4,505 acres for the wind development areas (for Phases I-III only as Phase IV is located on private land). The ROW request also includes a temporary 200-foot-wide ROW (125-foot permanent ROW) where the proposed transmission lines cross 7.6 miles of BLM-administered public lands. Project components proposed on BLM-administered public lands for the wind development areas and the associated transmission lines include the installation of up to 37 wind turbine generators (WTGs), 25.1 miles of project roads, 27 miles of electrical collection lines and communication cables, one operations and maintenance building, one substation, and 7.6 miles of transmission lines. All components of this Project would share electric collection and transmission infrastructure. This draft EA analyzes potential effects for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the commercial wind energy facility proposed on lands administered by the BLM that are interspersed with private and state lands.

Lucky Star Wind Project

The Project comprises development of two wind powered electric 30 generation facilities (Lucky Star Phase I and II) with a capacity of 188 to 460 MW in Phase I and 31 313 to 682 MW in Phase II. Project components proposed on private and public lands include the installation of up to 200 wind turbine generators, consisting of 74 WTGs in Phase I and 110 WTGs 33 in Phase II. Ancillary facilities include two operations and maintenance buildings, two 34 substations, two concrete batch plants, two laydown yards, 12 Met towers (7 permanent and 5 temporary), 184.7 miles of access roads, 275.6 miles of electrical collection and communication 36 system lines, 14.4 miles of an electrical transmission trunk line that connects Phase II to the 37 Phase I substation, and 24.8 miles of a Gen-tie transmission line connecting the Project to 38 PacifiCorp's Aeolus substation. The project area is located southeast of Medicine Bow, WY and includes approximately 79,651 acres of private, State and BLM lands (16,291 BLM acres).

SE WY Carbon Sequestration Project

The Southeast Wyoming Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Sequestration Project is being proposed by Tallgrass Carbon Storage, LLC. They submitted a proposal to permanently sequester CO₂ in subsurface federal pore space in Laramie County in southeast Wyoming. The project affects 480 acres of pore space beneath federally managed lands. This analysis only evaluates the federal lands and not the state or private lands. The next step in the process would be for Tallgrass Carbon Storage to apply for Class VI Underground Injection Control well permits to construct and operate CO₂ injection wells, which are permitted and regulated by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. The Rawlins Field Office went out for public scoping period ending December 15th, 2023.

Rock Springs Field Office

Jackalope Type III Wind Project

The BLM has received a Type 3 Development application for a wind development from NextEra Energy. The proposal covers a total of 225,671 acres (130,575 acres federal) and includes a total of about 200 wind towers. The project is located on the boundary of the Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Offices, south of I-80 and north of Adobe Town. The BLM has determined an EIS level analysis will be required and has initiated planning internally. A formal Federal Register Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS is anticipated in early 2024.

Application for Permit to Drill Summary

Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) Report 10/1/2022 to 9/30/2023

BLM Admin State	Field Office	APDs Received	APDs Approved	APDs Other Than Approved	Total APDs Processed	APDs Pending	Wells Spud	Wells Completed
WYOMING	Kemmerer Field Office	7	6	0	6	11	4	3
	Pinedale Field Office	19	17	1	18	13	6	27
	Rawlins Field Office	40	34	6	40	40	14	42
	Rock Springs Field Office	30	41	1	42	1	6	38
WYOMING Totals		96	98	8	106	65	30	110
Totals		96	98	8	106	65	30	110

Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) Report 10/1/2023 to 12/13/2023

BLM Admin State	Field Office	APDs Received	APDs Approved	APDs Other Than Approved	Total APDs Processed	APDs Pending	Wells Spud	Wells Completed
WYOMING	Kemmerer Field Office	0	1	0	1	10	0	0
	Pinedale Field Office	7	3	0	3	17	6	5
	Rawlins Field Office	2	0	9	9	42	3	1
	Rock Springs Field Office	2	0	0	0	3	1	23
WYOMING Totals		11	4	9	13	72	10	29
Totals		11	4	9	13	72	10	29

High Plains District

Newcastle Field Office

Newcastle and Nebraska RMP Revisions

The BLM Newcastle Field Office is preparing a resource management plan (RMP) revision and associated environmental impact statement (EIS) for BLM lands in Crook, Niobrara, and Weston Counties, Wyo., and the State of Nebraska. The revision would replace the existing Newcastle RMP (2000) and Nebraska RMP (1992). A Notice of Intent to start the planning process was issued in July 2023. The BLM held public scoping meetings in August during the 45-day scoping period. *Internal reviews of a Preliminary Draft EIS are currently underway and will be followed by cooperating agency review. BLM anticipates publishing the Draft RMP/EIS in late spring or early summer 2024, which will open a 90-day public comment period.*

Buffalo Field Office

Application for Permit to Drill Summary

Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) Report 10/1/2023 to 1/18/2024

BLM Admin State	Field Office	APDs Received	APDs Approved	APDs Other Than Approved	Total APDs Processed	APDs Pending
WYOMING	Buffalo Field Office	151	84	1	85	337
	Casper Field Office	88	54	4	58	242

	Newcastle Field Office	4	2	0	2	27
WYOMING Totals		243	140	5	145	606

Wild River Bighorn Basin District

2nd Quarter Oil and Gas Lease Sale: June 2024

The Wind River/Bighorn Basin District portion of this lease sale consists of 10 parcels totaling 6882.61 acres of federal mineral acres from the “Expression of Interest” nominations. Only the Lander Field Office within the district received nominated parcels. No parcels were recommended for deletion or deferral during the lease parcel review process.

Cody Field Office Topics

McCullough Peaks Wild Horse Bait Trap Gather and Fertility Control

Operations have begun, with staff using bait to lure horses into pens on the range. The purpose of the gather is to return the population to its high appropriate management level (AML) of 140 horses while maintaining genetic diversity; selectively remove approximately 35 horses for placement into the adoption program; and capture, treat and release horses for application of fertility treatment. Operations may continue into March.

Lander Field Office Topics

North Lander Wild Horse Gather

The LFO is preparing for a July-August wild horse gather in the North Lander Complex in Fremont County. The combined appropriate management level of the Complex is 320-536 horses; a survey conducted in August 2023 determined the population to be approximately 2,593 horses. The complex is almost entirely composed of Greater Sage-Grouse priority habitat and much of the area is categorized as winter/yearlong or crucial mule deer/pronghorn range. The upcoming gather is part of a 10-year plan to return the complex to within its AML and implement population growth suppression methods.

Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction

Wyoming Game and Fish Department is evaluating the potential to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Sweetwater Rocks area of central Wyoming, onto public land managed by the LFO and private land owned by Pathfinder Ranch (the ranch that proposed the reintroduction). The LFO will need to review a proposal and complete analysis to define and disclose any impacts that may occur. WGFD has not yet submitted a formal proposal to the BLM. The LFO has provided data to WGFD about allotments in the area of interest, including permitted sheep use permits.

Worland Field Office Topics

Orphaned Well Plugging

The WFO has been granted Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to execute the plugging, abandonment and site reclamation of 11 orphaned O&G wells. The NEPA process is complete. The BLM has prepared a statement of work for these projects, with plans to award contracts and complete plugging and abandonment activities from 2024–2025, followed by additional contracts for reclamation. The majority of the wells are located within the Black Mountain Oil Field, east of Lucerne in Hot Springs County, with a few others scattered throughout the field office area. BIL funds help tackle the long-

standing problem of orphaned wells on public lands by supplementing BLM's annual appropriated funding to address this problem across the nation.

Agenda Item: BLM's implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act & the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Presenter: Jennifer Fleuret-McConchie, Deputy State Director

- 21 Restoration Landscapes across the 11 Western states
- \$161 million directed to the BLM for ecosystem restoration and resilience on public lands & strengthening the communities and economies that rely on public land
- Projects should improve ecological function on public land that have been degraded due to
- Invasive species, unprecedented wildfire, unregulated use, and climate change
- 2 Restoration Landscapes in Wyoming

IRA in Wyoming – Greater LaBarge

- \$10 million to be invested over 10 years
- Prevent further degradation, erosion, and habitat loss within the project area watershed(s)
 - Naturally erosive soils
 - High volume rainfall
 - Surface disturbance
- Re-establish, maintain, and improve natural vegetation and ecological functions

IRA in Wyoming – Muddy Creek

- \$10 million to be invested over 10 years
- Prevent further degradation and habitat loss in the watershed
 - Naturally erosive soils
 - High volume hydrologic events
 - Surface disturbance
- Improve natural vegetation function, native fish populations, and ecological functions

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Overview

- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act contains provisions to fund DOI initiatives and benefit communities and tackle major issues
- Wildland Fire
- Increase salaries, funding for fuels treatments, partnerships
- Forest Management
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Orphaned Well clean up
- Clean Energy Technologies on mine lands

BIL in Wyoming

- Through Rounds 1 and 2 BLM WY received \$1.3M to fund 10 Restoration Projects in 5 Field Offices
- Projects included Native Seed Collection, Invasive Annual Grasses, Recreation Site Improvements, and Shoreline Stabilization
- Expect Round 3 projects to be announced in February
- BLM WY Received \$1.5M for Orphaned Well cleanup
- BLM WY has received \$12.2M for Fuels Reduction and Fire Mitigation

Landscape Scale Approach

- Launching a revised approach to restoration on BLM lands in Wyoming
- Previous approach-
- Disconnected, program silos in directing funding and projects
- Postage stamp approach on the statewide scale
- Coordination with partners was present, but not the focus
- Revised approach –
- Developing an overlapping, collaborative approach to identify funding for projects that result in a landscape approach and additive benefits for BLM managed lands across Wyoming
- Coordination across agencies (federal, state, local) will be instrumental

Vision

- Intentional coordination approach to habitat projects
- Improve resource distribution to benefit the health of public lands in Wyoming
- Timeline – target to reach a fully engaged approach is FY27
- Program Coordination
- Intentional Prioritization
- Monitoring

Agenda Item: Energy Development Trends

Presenters: Travis Bargsten, Branch Chief, and Bill Beck, Supervising Geologist

Leasing

- Leasing Process

Expressions of Interest (EOI), Parcelization, Parcel review (NEPA, etc.), Public review, Sale, Lease issuance

- Leasing pause 2021-22
- Deferred parcel backlog (2022)
- New leasing policies 2023

- EOI fees
- New screening guidance
- Restart of leasing 2023
 - Lower nominations and bids
 - Curious gap between parcels offered (with paid EOI fee) and leases sold

Permitting

- New APDs
 - New APDs are dominantly in the Powder River Basin following recent activity
 - Peak in FY2021, particularly evident in FY21Q1
 - Slow rise in new APDs visible 2022-24, again, particularly in Q1 new submissions
- APD Processing
 - Generally follows New APD trends
 - Peak in 2021
 - Gentle rise from 2022-24
 - Rise in new APD submissions should ultimately see sharper rise in APD processing
 - Relative efficiency of Field Offices to quickly process APD submissions
 - Drop-off from 2021-22 seems to indicate impact of litigated leases on permitting
 - court direction & guidance to not approve APDs

Drilling

- Data show spudded Federal wells
- Dramatic decrease in drilling in 2020 during COVID
- Slow upward trend in FED well drilling tracking overall drilling
- Heaviest drilling occurs in the Powder River Basin in the BFO & CFO
- Other areas of drilling include
 - Pinedale Anticline (gas) PFO
 - DJ Basin in SE Wyoming (gas) RFO
 - Wamsutter area (gas) RSFO/RFO

Federal Oil & Gas Production in Wyoming

- Total Oil & Gas Production generally in decline

- Maturing fields...
- Fewer new plays, although they continue to appear and be developed
- Slowing in leasing and permitting will likely sharpen the decline

Crude Oil Production

- Overall US main basin crude oil production increasing
- Top 3 Basins: Permian, Bakken, Eagle Ford
- Wyoming mixed in with remainder of the main US basins with relatively flat production between ~90-100MMBO
- Permian production continues to grow with record daily production rates
- Rest of the main US basins and Wyoming production curves are either flat or very gently declining

Natural Gas Production

- Overall US main basin gas production increasing
- Top 3 Basins: Appalachia (Marcellus/Utica), Permian, Haynesville
- Again, Wyoming mixed in with remainder of the main US basins
- Top basins continue to increase annual production since 2021
 - Growth supported by LNG exports?
- Rest of the main US basins and Wyoming gently trend down since 2020

Site Closure

- New policy from 2021 to 2024 direct actions for post-production namely idled well management.
- Plug or produce wells that have been idled >4 years (~4300 FED wells)
- Address the long outstanding Abandoned (ABD) status to Final Abandonment Notice (FAN) status (~8200 FED wells)

Solid Minerals Production

- Leasable Minerals
 - Coal
 - Sodium
 - Locatable Minerals (also known as Mining Law)
- Mineral Materials

Coal Leasing & Pending Actions

- No new coal leases have been issued since 2009.
- Pending lease by applications: N. Hilight at Black Thunder Mine and W. Antelope III at Antelope Mine.
- Pending lease by modification applications: two additional acreage areas at the Buckskin Mine.

Sodium Leasing & Production

- Three pending new lease applications Sisecam, TATA, and American Soda.
- Soda ash production remains the highest commodity produced.

Locatable Minerals

- Between fiscal years 2019 through 2023:
 - 49 authorized activities (23 Mine Plans, 26 Notice Level)
 - 10 pending actions (3 Mine Plans, 7 Notice Level)
 - Most plans of operations and notices received are for exploring and mining for bentonite

Mineral Minerals

- BLM administers common varieties of rock (sand, clay, limestone, etc.), as identified in the Materials Act of 1947, through a sales contract to a private entity or through a free use permit (FUPs).
- FUPs can be issued to any governmental agency (Federal, State, County, etc.) or a non-profit organization. There is no cost to the entity receiving this material.
 - There is no volume limit to a government and can last up to ten years.
 - Non-profits may receive up to 5,000 cubic yards or weight equivalent for 12 months.

Sales fall into three categories – negotiated, competitive, and non-exclusive.

- Non-exclusive are sales out of a designated site known as a community pit or common use area. These are an over-the-counter sale made in the BLM's public room amounting to small volume needs of individual members of the public.
- Negotiated and competitive sales are site specific determined by the contract volume. Any contract that equals to or exceeds 200,000 cubic yards (or tons equivalent), per 43 CFR 3602.31(a), requires a competitive sale.

Wind and Solar Energy Development, Interstate Transmission Lines, Pumped Storage Projects, and Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage

Foote Creek Rim Wind Energy Project (41 MW capacity)

- ROW grant issued Feb 1998, generation began Apr 1999

- Total rent collected: \$860,075
- Total MW capacity fees collected: \$469,915

Sweetwater Solar Energy Project (80 MW capacity)

- ROW grant issued Jul 2018, generation began Dec 2018
- Total rent collected: \$48,212
- Total MW capacity fees collected: \$642,235

Under current laws, the BLM does not share revenues collected from FLPMA ROWs with the state.

Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs)

- Closed-loop pumped-storage hydropower
- Projects that are not continuously connected to a naturally flowing water feature
- Permitted by FERC under Section 24 of the Federal Power Act
- May involve BLM ROWs for appurtenant infrastructure located on public lands
- Currently, BLM-Wyoming is considering five PSPs (BLM field office):
 - Black Canyon Hydro’s Seminole PSP (Rawlins FO)
 - PacifiCorp’s Box Elder PSP (Casper FO)
 - Great Divide Energy Park’s Great Divide PSP (Lander FO)
 - PacifiCorp’s Rocky Ridge PSP (Casper FO)
- PacifiCorp’s South Fork PSP (Kemmerer FO)

Carbon capture, utilization, and storage

Disposal of CO₂ associated with oil and gas operations

- ExxonMobil Corp’s Shute Creek 5-2 injection well (authorized)
- ExxonMobil Corp’s Shute Creek 7-34 injection well (pending)

Permanent geologic sequestration of CO₂ (all pending)

- Tallgrass High Plains Carbon Storage – Southeast Wyoming
- Moxa Carbon Storage – Southwest Wyoming
- Pond Field – Sweetwater Carbon Storage Hub

Agenda Item: Public Comment Period

Presenters: Azure Hall, Public Affairs Specialist/RAC Coordinator

- Roughly five members of the public were present for the public comment period, including one member of the media and three representatives from Wyoming senators' offices
- No public comments were made

Agenda Item: Topics for Future RAC Meetings/Action Items

Presenter: Chair, Jennifer Leinonen

Future Topics:

- Western Solar Plan: information on solar PEIS streamline process
- How disturbance is calculated for wild, oil and gas, solar, etc.
- RAC Chair will be coordinating with BLM Wyoming on further future topics and agenda for next meeting.
- Next meeting date was requested for April 25-26, 2024 in Lander, WY.
- Duration and topics of meeting TBD.

Action Items:

- RAC requested information on forming a sub-committee to discuss wild horse and burro issues
- RAC requested matrix and mechanism for measuring success of restoration projects
- RAC suggested more tracking and public information on reclamation and orphaned web program progress/successes