



# Lava Ridge Wind Project

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### ***What is the Lava Ridge Wind Project?***

The Lava Ridge Wind Project is a proposed commercial-scale wind energy project that, as proposed, may include up to 400 wind energy generating turbines, up to seven new substations, approximately 248 miles of 34.5 kilovolt (kV) collector lines, 34 miles of 230 kV transmission lines, 19 miles of 500 kV transmission lines, 486 miles of new road, a battery energy storage system, three operations and maintenance facilities, five permanent meteorological towers, and construction-related staging yards. Engineering is preliminary, but the turbines may have a maximum height (including the rotor) of up to 740 feet.

The project is located primarily on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Shoshone Field Office, approximately 25 miles northeast of Twin Falls, Idaho, within Jerome, Lincoln and Minidoka counties. The project area spans 197,474 acres and all project components would be sited within a series of one-half mile wide corridors. These corridors encompass approximately 84,385 acres, of which 75,760 acres are located on BLM-managed public lands, 2,910 acres are on state lands managed by the Idaho Department of Lands, 5,417 acres are on private lands, and 288 acres are on lands managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. All wind turbines, powerlines, and associated infrastructure would be located on lands managed by BLM and Idaho Department of Lands. Bureau of Reclamation and private lands would include the use of existing public access roads, but no other project-related infrastructure. The project infrastructure proposed within the corridors is estimated to have a 2,374-acre footprint and a total disturbance area of 9,114 acres.

The project's planned 500 kV transmission line may interconnect at the existing Idaho Power Company's Midpoint substation approximately 7 miles south of Shoshone, Idaho, or at an alternative location inside the right-of-way corridor for the not yet constructed Southwest Intertie Project – Northern Portion.

### ***Where can I get more information about the project?***

The Plan of Development for the Lava Ridge Wind Project provides a detailed description of the project. You may download a copy of the Plan of Development from the BLM's project webpage at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>. Updated versions of the Plan of Development will be posted online as they are available.

### ***Who is the project proponent or applicant?***

Magic Valley Energy, LLC is the project proponent or applicant and is a subsidiary of LS Power. For more information about the company, please contact Magic Valley Energy via their website at <https://www.magicvalleyenergy.com/>.

### ***What is NEPA?***

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider environmental effects of their decisions, which may include, among others, impacts on social, cultural, and economic resources, as well as natural resources.

### ***What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and why is one being prepared?***

Under NEPA, an EIS is prepared for major Federal actions that may have a significant effect on the environment. When Magic Valley Energy submitted their application to the BLM for a right-of-way grant to build and operate the Lava Ridge Wind Project on public lands, the BLM determined an EIS would be necessary before a decision could be made on whether or under what conditions to approve the right-of-way grant for the project. An EIS identifies and analyzes potential impacts from the project on the natural and human environment. The BLM will use the information in the EIS to make an informed decision about the project. See “A Citizen’s Guide to NEPA, Having Your Voice Heard,” at <https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/get-involved/citizens-guide-to-nepa-2021.pdf> for more information on the EIS process.

The EIS document is not a decision document, but it will inform the decision made by the BLM.

### ***Who is involved in preparing the EIS document?***

The BLM’s Shoshone Field Office is the agency responsible for preparing the EIS for the Lava Ridge Wind Project and making a decision on whether to grant a right-of-way. Its authority comes from the Federal Land Policy and Management Action of 1976, which requires that public lands be managed for multiple uses in a manner that uses the lands in a combination that would best meet the present and future needs of the people.

Agencies who have special expertise or jurisdiction by law over resources that may be affected by the project have been invited to participate in the development of the EIS as “Cooperating Agencies.” Cooperating Agencies involved in the Lava Ridge Wind Project EIS include the following:

- National Park Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Idaho Governor’s Office of Energy and Mineral Resources
- Idaho Governor’s Office of Species Conservation
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- Idaho State Historical Society
- Jerome County, Idaho
- Lincoln County, Idaho
- Minidoka County, Idaho

The BLM has also initiated Government-to-Government consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, and the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation about the Lava Ridge Wind Project.

***What has been done to include the public so far? Does my comment matter?***

The EIS is a public document, and the public is encouraged to provide input throughout the development of the EIS. The NEPA EIS process includes coordinated and intensive public comment periods at key milestones in the development of an EIS.

A scoping period for the Lava Ridge Wind Project EIS was held from August 20 – October 20, 2021 to gather input from the public on what should be analyzed in the EIS. Originally intended to be only 30 days, the scoping period was extended to provide additional time for the public to provide input. A *Scoping Report* was prepared and is available for download at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>. The *Scoping Report* summarizes the issues identified in the public comments. The BLM is using the *Scoping Report* to shape the analysis in the EIS document.

The public will also be invited to comment on the draft EIS when it is released in January 2023. The BLM will schedule public meetings when the date of the public release of the draft EIS is known.

Under NEPA, the BLM is required to document and respond to all public comments received on the draft EIS. Public comments will be documented and used to refine and finalize the EIS. All public comments on the draft EIS, as well as the BLM’s response to comments, will become part of the project record.

***How can I voice my concerns about the project?***

You may submit a comment at any time about the Lava Ridge Wind Project in the following ways:

When it is completed, the draft EIS will be available on the project website at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>. You will be able to click on the “Participate Now” button to the right of the document link to provide a comment online.

By email to: [BLM\\_ID\\_LavaRidge@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ID_LavaRidge@blm.gov)

By mail to: Kasey Prestwich, Project Manager, BLM Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352

***What is being analyzed in the EIS?***

The more than 1,400 public comment submissions received during the scoping period in the fall of 2021 were captured in a *Scoping Report* to inform the range of issues being analyzed in the

EIS. The topics summarized in the *Scoping Report* provide the basis for the topics analyzed in the draft EIS.

The general topics that are being analyzed in the EIS include, but are not limited to:

- Cultural and Historic Properties, including Minidoka National Historic Site
- Wildlife and Sensitive Species
- Visual Resources
- Livestock Grazing
- Socioeconomics
- Transportation
- Communications
- Recreation
- Wildfire Management
- Soil and Vegetation

You may download a copy of the *Scoping Report* at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>.

***How are the impacts to the Minidoka National Historic Site and other historic properties being addressed?***

Effects to historic properties are being addressed in two ways. First, cultural resources and historic properties will be assessed in the EIS document. Second, specialists and stakeholders interested in the preservation of historic properties are developing a Programmatic Agreement under the authority of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Programmatic Agreement will provide detail for how historic properties that may be affected by the Lava Ridge Wind Project will be identified, evaluated, and assessed for effects. The Agreement will also lay the groundwork for how those properties will be avoided, where feasible, or where effects will be minimized or mitigated.

The Advisory Council on Historic Properties and State Historic Preservation Office as well as National Park Service and interested stakeholders are involved in the discussions to develop the Programmatic Agreement. A draft of the Programmatic Agreement will be available for public review as an appendix to the draft EIS.

For more information about the relationship between Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the development of an EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act, see [https://www.achp.gov/integrating\\_nepa\\_106](https://www.achp.gov/integrating_nepa_106). For information on Section 106-related agreements, see <https://www.achp.gov/initiatives/guidance-agreement-documents>

***What alternatives are being considered?***

Under NEPA, the BLM is required to analyze a No Action Alternative, the scenario where the project is not approved. The BLM may also consider other reasonable Action Alternatives involving modifications to the project that could avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

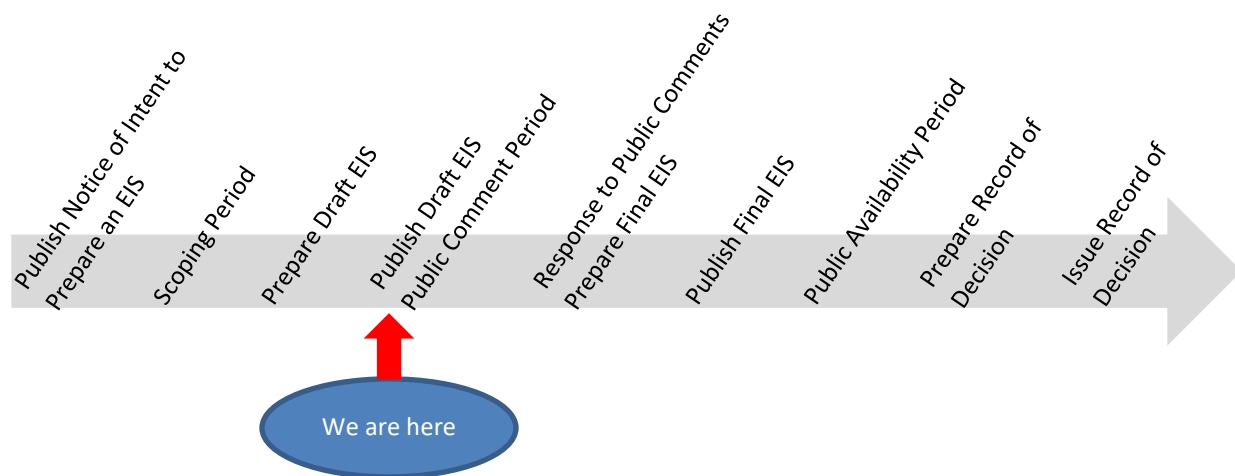
In preparing the draft EIS, the BLM has developed a range of alternatives to resolve resource conflicts by considering: 1) issues raised through the public scoping period and consultation and coordination with participating and cooperating agencies and American Indian tribes, 2) issues raised by agency resource specialists, and 3) applicable planning criteria. This process has resulted in the identification of three alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in addition to the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative.

***Who makes the decision about whether to approve the project?***

The Federal lands on which the project would be built, if it is approved, are managed by the BLM. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires the BLM to decide whether and under what conditions to authorize Magic Valley Energy’s Proposed Action on these lands. The BLM’s decision must be in conformance with the BLM Shoshone Field Office’s 1986 Monument Resource Management Plan, as amended, as well as with other land use plans and regulations.

***What is the status of the decision-making process? Has the BLM approved the project?***

There are a number of steps involved in preparing an EIS before an agency finalizes its decision. The graphic below shows the status of the EIS for the Lava Ridge Wind Project. The BLM will make its decision and publish the Record of Decision no less than 30 days after the final EIS has been published, sometime in the fall of 2023.



### ***Why don't you just stop the project?***

Federal law requires the BLM to analyze the impacts and benefits of the proposed project before making a decision. NEPA provides the framework for conducting the analysis, which will inform the BLM's decision. Once the analysis is finalized, the BLM will decide whether to grant, grant with conditions, or deny the application for a right-of-way. If the BLM issues a grant, the BLM Authorized Officer may include terms, conditions, and stipulations determined to be in the public interest.

### ***When will the draft EIS be published?***

The draft EIS will be made available for download in January 2023 on the BLM's [eplanning.gov](https://eplanning.gov) web portal at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>.

### ***Why has the schedule changed?***

The BLM estimates the dates of milestones in the schedule, such as the publication of the draft EIS and the Record of Decision, based on when decisions are made about how to do the analysis and when information about the proposed project and potentially affected resources is available. Delays in gathering information for the analysis caused delays in the preparation of the draft EIS. The schedule is subject to change when these factors change.

### ***When will the Record of Decision be issued?***

Based on the current schedule, the Record of Decision will be issued in the fall of 2023.

### ***How can I participate and stay informed?***

1. Sign up for the project mailing list by completing the form on the BLM's [eplanning.gov](https://eplanning.gov) web portal at <https://forms.office.com/r/NDsr6rhtbs>. You may also send a request to be added to the mailing list by emailing your contact information to: [BLM\\_ID\\_LavaRidge@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ID_LavaRidge@blm.gov).
2. Plan to attend the draft EIS public meetings to learn more about the analysis and provide comments. Public meetings will be held a minimum 15 days after the Notice of Availability for the draft EIS is published in the *Federal Register*. Dates, times, and locations will be announced via email, news releases, and mailers and on the project website at <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>.
3. Plan to provide comments on the draft EIS, when it is published. Public comments can be submitted in the following ways:

Visit the BLM's project website <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>. When the draft EIS is published, click on the "Participate Now" button to the right of the document link. Enter your comment and information, then click "Submit."



By email to: [BLM\\_ID\\_LavaRidge@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ID_LavaRidge@blm.gov)

By mail to: Kasey Prestwich, Project Manager, BLM Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352

### ***What is the best way to provide a comment?***

The most effective comments are those that provide useful information to the agencies. Comments are not counted as votes or as a part of a referendum on the BLM's decision. To make the best use of your input, consider the following:

- Clear, concise, and relevant comments are the most effective and useful way to improve the EIS and inform the BLM's decision.
- Keep your comments focused on the proposed project and what is being analyzed.
- Describe the significance of the potential impacts and how they affect you, others, places, and activities; provide any new information that is relevant to the project [e.g., potential affected resources]; and discuss modifications to existing alternatives or suggest other reasonable alternatives with justification.
- Remember to provide detailed information and references to back up your comment.
- Avoid comments that simply state, "I am in favor of this project," or "I am opposed to this project."
- Make sure you submit your comments within the timeframe announced. This ensures the BLM will have all concerns documented for use in preparing the final EIS.

### ***Whom should I contact if I have questions about the NEPA process or EIS?***

For more information regarding the proposed project, contact Kasey Prestwich, BLM's EIS Project Manager, phone 208-732-7204, email [kprestwich@blm.gov](mailto:kprestwich@blm.gov).

### ***Whom should I contact if I have questions about the Section 106 process for historic properties?***

For more information about the Section 106 process, contact Ashley Long, BLM's District Renewable Energy Archaeologist, phone 208-732-7290, email [along@blm.gov](mailto:along@blm.gov).

### ***What is the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council?***

The BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council is a statutory advisory committee established under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The Council, and its subcommittees, serve in an advisory capacity and develop recommendations for the BLM with respect to land use planning, classification, retention, management, and disposal of public lands within the area for which the advisory council is established. The Idaho Resource Advisory Council consists of up to 15 members from diverse interests, selected for their ability to provide informed, objective advice on a broad array of public lands issues and for their commitment to collaboration in seeking



solutions to those issues. More information about the Resource Advisory Council is available here: <https://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/idaho>.

***How is the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council related to the decision-making process for the Lava Ridge Wind Project?***

The BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council voted at their August 11, 2021 meeting to form a subcommittee to compile information and conduct research regarding the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project. In accordance with the BLM Idaho Resource Advisory Council Charter, the Proposed Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project Subcommittee will report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. The Subcommittee will not provide advice or work products directly to the BLM. Information about the Subcommittee is available here:

<https://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/idaho/lava-ridge-subcommittee>.

***Why do we have to deal with all the impacts with relatively no benefit to Idaho?***

The EIS document will provide an analysis of the impacts and benefits of the project on the human and natural environment. The BLM encourages everyone who is interested to review the draft EIS when it is ready, and to provide comment on the completeness and quality of the analysis of impacts and benefits.