

**U.S. Bureau of Land Management:**  
**2022 Greater Sage-grouse Planning**  
**Virtual Public Scoping Meeting Transcript**  
**January 24, 2022, 6:30-8:00pm Mountain Time**

00:00:47.760 --> 00:00:56.520

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Hello everyone, I'd like to welcome you all to the Bureau of Land Management virtual public meeting for greater sage-grouse planning.

00:00:57.120 --> 00:01:04.560

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We're going to give folks a few minutes here to join the meeting, and then we will begin the PowerPoint presentation shortly, so please stay tuned.

00:01:05.160 --> 00:01:19.860

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I do want to note that closed captioning is available by selecting the closed caption icon located at the bottom of your zoom screen, if you are using the zoom web portal or zoom app on your computer today, thank you.

00:02:32.700 --> 00:02:44.460

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Hello everyone again, I'd like to welcome you all to today's meeting. We're going to give folks just a minute or two here to join the meeting, so please stay tuned and we will start the presentation shortly.

00:02:45.060 --> 00:02:59.820

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Again, I do want to note that closed captioning is available by selecting the closed caption icon located at the bottom of your zoom screen, if you are using the zoom web portal or zoom app on your computer today, thank you.

00:04:04.950 --> 00:04:14.940

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Hello everyone, we are going to go ahead and get started with our meeting today, I would like to thank you all for joining us, we appreciate your time and participation this evening.

00:04:15.540 --> 00:04:26.790

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: My name is Amanda Biedermann with Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, a contractor for the

Bureau of Land Management, and I'm going to be one of your meeting facilitators today.

00:04:27.750 --> 00:04:34.470

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Additionally, I have several members of the BLM with me on the meeting today who will be introduced in a moment.

00:04:36.360 --> 00:04:39.960

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: On the screen is our expected agenda for the meeting today.

00:04:41.340 --> 00:04:45.180

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I will first go over some brief ground rules for today's meeting.

00:04:46.110 --> 00:04:55.770

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: The BLM will then provide some brief introductions and then a PowerPoint presentation on the planning effort, which will last approximately 20 minutes.

00:04:56.490 --> 00:05:14.160

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We will then do a quick website walkthrough of the planning website showing you how you can submit your written comments. Then the BLM will be available to answer any questions you may have about the current planning effort for about one hour in a question-and-answer session.

00:05:23.070 --> 00:05:34.050

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So before we get started with the presentation today, I'm going to go over some ground rules for the meeting. First, this meeting is being recorded as part of the project record.

00:05:35.100 --> 00:05:53.970

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Second, your microphones and videos will be turned off for the duration of the meeting today. You will only be unmuted if and when I unmute you during the question-and-answer session if you are a phone caller. All other questions will be accepted electronically using the zoom chat feature.

00:05:56.100 --> 00:06:09.990

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Questions will be addressed during the question-and-answer session after the PowerPoint presentation. We will do our best to address questions in the order they come in and to allow everyone an opportunity to voice their questions today.

00:06:11.130 --> 00:06:25.440

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And we will explain how to submit your substantive questions after the PowerPoint presentation. If you have an urgent technical question related to your zoom features such as how to access your computer audio or how to send

00:06:26.550 --> 00:06:33.810

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: a chat message to Clayton McGee, you can send a chat message to Megan Stone. She is our technical expert on the meeting today.

00:06:34.110 --> 00:06:47.520

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And she'll try to troubleshoot any issues you may be having with your zoom features today, but again any substantive questions you have for the BLM today, please hold those until after the PowerPoint presentation.

00:06:48.660 --> 00:06:57.060

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I'm now going to turn it over to Pat Deibert with the BLM, who is going to lead us through the BLM PowerPoint presentation today, thank you.

00:07:09.510 --> 00:07:17.700

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thank you Amanda and thank you everyone who is attending this evening, I appreciate your patience as we deal with our virtual world.

00:07:18.690 --> 00:07:31.320

BLM - Pat Deibert: In addition to myself this evening, I am Pat Deibert, I am the acting national sage-grouse coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management, with me later this evening will be Quincy Bahr, who is our program manager for this planning effort.

00:07:34.680 --> 00:07:47.700

BLM - Pat Deibert: I'm going to start tonight with a short presentation, a little bit of background about how we got to where we are tonight, and then do a super brief overview of the agenda items, excuse me, are the items listed in the scoping notice.

00:07:48.720 --> 00:07:50.040

BLM - Pat Deibert: It was published in November.

00:07:51.180 --> 00:08:00.000

BLM - Pat Deibert: These are the primary items for which we were seeking comments, however, we will be pleased to receive any information you may want to provide us through the scoping process

00:08:00.600 --> 00:08:16.380

BLM - Pat Deibert: that you think is pertinent to us making any kind of decisions as we move forward. I do want to emphasize that we have not made any decisions. We are truly in scoping, and we are seeking your input and your feedback to help guide our process. Next slide please.

00:08:18.870 --> 00:08:35.070

BLM - Pat Deibert: So let me give you a little bit of background about how we got to where we are today. As you all know, in 2015 the sage-grouse are, excuse me, the BLM plans were amended in the states listed on the screen to address conservation of the greater sage-grouse.

00:08:36.840 --> 00:08:49.290

BLM - Pat Deibert: Those plans were put into place, but there was a greater concern raised in 2017 that the plans might be inconsistent with some of the state planning efforts, or the state conservation planning efforts for the species.

00:08:49.890 --> 00:09:05.130

BLM - Pat Deibert: And so, in 2017 we re-entered into a planning process, which resulted in a 2019 sage-grouse plan amendments. If you'll note on your screen, you'll see that not all of the states were engaged in that amendment process that was finalized in 2019.

00:09:06.900 --> 00:09:18.120

BLM - Pat Deibert: As Montana and both of the Dakotas determined that the plan was sufficient to meet their planning needs at a local level and be consistent with their state efforts.

00:09:19.980 --> 00:09:39.390

BLM - Pat Deibert: As we implemented 2019 sage-grouse plan amendments, they were challenged and then in late 2019, the district court in Idaho ruled that we needed to revisit that planning process and enjoin the 2019 plans, and reinitiate the 2015 plan process.

00:09:41.220 --> 00:09:44.430

BLM - Pat Deibert: That's kind of how we got to where we are today. Amanda.

00:09:49.950 --> 00:10:03.390

BLM - Pat Deibert: While we can address the concerns of the court, we also realize that in the past seven years there's a lot of new information out there about greater sage-grouse and about sagebrush that we obviously could not consider in 2015.

00:10:04.470 --> 00:10:12.000

BLM - Pat Deibert: We also want to look at things that have changed from the management perspective, including things like the effects of climate change.

00:10:12.510 --> 00:10:23.370

BLM - Pat Deibert: And so, by reinitiating this planning process, we're hoping we can incorporate those different factors and collect input on those factors into our new process. Next slide please.

00:10:27.180 --> 00:10:37.080

BLM - Pat Deibert: This is our planning area and it covers the states of California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North and South Dakota, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.

00:10:37.920 --> 00:10:53.490

BLM - Pat Deibert: Although the Montana, the Dakota plans were not amended in 2019, we are going to be taking a look at their 2015 plans and determining whether or not we need to be updating the scientific information and incorporating issues such as climate change into those efforts.

00:10:54.570 --> 00:10:55.650

BLM - Pat Deibert: Next slide please.

00:10:59.940 --> 00:11:12.840

BLM - Pat Deibert: So, as with you've noticed in our scoping notice that was published last year, we had several issues that we identified that are up for consideration in this planning process. They include:

00:11:13.890 --> 00:11:21.900

BLM - Pat Deibert: addressing the sagebrush focal areas, the management and conservation of these most important of all, the sagebrush habitats, for greater sage-grouse.

00:11:22.890 --> 00:11:36.990

BLM - Pat Deibert: We also want to revisit our habitat management areas. Have those changed over time, and do we need to change things within those boundaries or change those boundaries, and how do we manage not habitat within those areas?

00:11:38.190 --> 00:11:47.040

BLM - Pat Deibert: We want to look at the habitat objectives for the greater sage-grouse, including the effects of climate change on those objectives. Next slide please.

00:11:50.610 --> 00:11:55.230

BLM - Pat Deibert: We'll be looking at the application, the mitigation hierarchy, including compensatory mitigation.

00:11:56.790 --> 00:12:09.000

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be examining approaches to minimizing disturbance to greater sage-grouse and sage brush habitats, including our existing disturbance and density caps and the buffers to protect nesting areas.

00:12:10.350 --> 00:12:17.670

BLM - Pat Deibert: We'll examine leasing and development of mineral resources on greater sage-grouse and in sagebrush habitats.

00:12:18.990 --> 00:12:19.710

BLM - Pat Deibert: Next, please.

00:12:22.350 --> 00:12:32.460

BLM - Pat Deibert: We'll be looking at the leasing and development of renewable energy resources, including the associated transmission lines on the greater sage-grouse, and all the associated sagebrush habitats.

00:12:33.630 --> 00:12:41.100

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be examining the management of livestock grazing and the wild horse and burro populations within greater sage-grouse and sagebrush habitats.

00:12:42.330 --> 00:12:51.300

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will look at strategies for restoring habitats for the greater sage-grouse and sagebrush while trying to avoid unintended consequences to other species.

00:12:51.750 --> 00:12:59.370

BLM - Pat Deibert: While we are focused on greater sage-grouse in this effort, we do not want planning for a singular species to resolve the decline of another species.

00:13:01.020 --> 00:13:01.980

BLM - Pat Deibert: Next slide please.

00:13:04.590 --> 00:13:12.780

BLM - Pat Deibert: We are looking for a process of how to do adaptive management to respond to habitat losses and population declines of the greater sage-grouse.

00:13:14.340 --> 00:13:22.860

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be looking at the role of wildland fire and invasive species and how that affects management of greater sage-grouse and sagebrush habitats.

00:13:24.630 --> 00:13:29.970

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be looking at monitoring both short term and long term of the species and the habitat.

00:13:31.500 --> 00:13:32.220

BLM - Pat Deibert: Next, please.

00:13:35.040 --> 00:13:45.150

BLM - Pat Deibert: As we noted, we want to make sure that we have included all new and relevant scientific information and does that information change how we've been considering sage-grouse management.

00:13:47.160 --> 00:13:52.890

BLM - Pat Deibert: We want to know whether we should reconsider some alternatives from our 2015 or 2019 plan amendments.

00:13:54.090 --> 00:14:02.550

BLM - Pat Deibert: And lastly, we want to know whether or not we should be considering any ACECs, that's areas of critical environmental concern nominations

00:14:02.880 --> 00:14:10.890

BLM - Pat Deibert: or similar recommendations. It doesn't mean we've decided to have them, we are simply considering whether or not that would be an appropriate management tool moving forward.

00:14:13.170 --> 00:14:14.220

BLM - Pat Deibert: Next slide please.

00:14:18.960 --> 00:14:24.900

BLM - Pat Deibert: Our comment process, our scoping process, will close on February 8 of this year, in a few weeks here.

00:14:25.620 --> 00:14:31.860

BLM - Pat Deibert: There are several different ways, you can submit comments. It's through the ePlanning effort, and Amanda will show you how that will happen.

00:14:32.550 --> 00:14:43.470

BLM - Pat Deibert: You may also use mail and you can look at the address here on the screen send an attention to myself to the BLM office building Utah State Office in Salt Lake City, Utah.

00:14:44.520 --> 00:14:48.960

BLM - Pat Deibert: We are looking for your written comments, they will be extremely helpful as we make

00:14:49.500 --> 00:15:03.600

BLM - Pat Deibert: planning decisions moving forward. We want to hear from you, we want to information, we want pertinent information that will address planning, so that we can produce the greatest suite of alternatives moving forward.

00:15:06.600 --> 00:15:08.910

BLM - Pat Deibert: I believe that is the end of our

00:15:09.990 --> 00:15:13.170

BLM - Pat Deibert: presentation here, I will turn it back to Amanda.

00:15:17.940 --> 00:15:24.030

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that presentation, I'll go ahead and stop your video and put you on mute.

00:15:24.690 --> 00:15:30.990

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: At this time, we're going to go ahead and move on to that website walk through that I mentioned earlier.

00:15:31.800 --> 00:15:41.550

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, we're now going to do that quick website walkthrough showing you how you can submit written comments via the ePlanning website. So to submit

00:15:42.120 --> 00:15:51.930

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: your written comments via ePlanning, you can go to the project website, which is listed on the screen, and we'll also send that out via the chat feature.

00:15:52.830 --> 00:16:01.620



EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: You can just see that Megan Stone just sent that out via the chat feature and for our phone callers I can read out that planning,

00:16:02.100 --> 00:16:27.090

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: ePlanning website address really quickly, so it is [eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510](http://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510).

00:16:28.830 --> 00:16:39.210

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: You can then navigate to the participate now tab located on the left-hand side of the ePlanning page and click on the participate now tab.

00:16:45.690 --> 00:17:01.260

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Once you click on that tab, you will then be taken to the participate now webpage. Once you are on this page, you can scroll to the far-right hand side of the page and click on the green participate now button.

00:17:06.780 --> 00:17:19.560

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Clicking on this button will take you to the commenting webpage where you can type your written comment into the box at the top of the page. So you can see this box here, you can type your written comment there.

00:17:20.790 --> 00:17:27.630

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: You can also upload any attachments associated with your written comments in the upload files section.

00:17:29.400 --> 00:17:39.960

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: You can either drag and drop your files or you can click on this browse files button here and search for the files on your computer that you want to upload associated with your comment.

00:17:43.350 --> 00:17:53.640

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Once you have finished writing your comment and uploading your associated attachments, you can scroll to the bottom of the page and fill out any personal information you would like.

00:17:55.080 --> 00:18:06.270

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Please note that providing personal information is optional. Additionally, you can select whether you want

to provide additional contact information by clicking on this box here.

00:18:09.210 --> 00:18:20.400

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Selecting this option will allow you to fill out additional information such as street address, email address, whether you represent an organization and, if so, which organization.

00:18:22.230 --> 00:18:23.280

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, you can see here.

00:18:25.680 --> 00:18:30.240

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: You can check on this box, if you want to state if you are representing an organization.

00:18:31.500 --> 00:18:37.290

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And then you can also select this option here to be added to the project mailing list.

00:18:45.240 --> 00:18:50.970

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And then, lastly, lastly, you can submit any additional submitters at the bottom of the page.

00:18:52.680 --> 00:19:04.410

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And again, I do want to note that providing any personal information is optional; however, by providing at least your name and address the BLM can contact you with updates on this project

00:19:04.740 --> 00:19:17.520

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: and you can create a record of your participation in this project. Your documented participation helps to demonstrate standing and future administrative remedy or appeal proceedings.

00:19:18.540 --> 00:19:31.350

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Once you have finished providing your written comment and whatever optional information you choose to fill in, you can click on the preview button located at the very bottom of the page on the right-hand side. Right here.

00:19:35.970 --> 00:19:46.800

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And then on the next screen, you can review your comment text and any information you have provided before

clicking on the submit button on the bottom right-hand side of the screen.

00:19:47.850 --> 00:19:55.830

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Please note that before providing your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment

00:19:56.340 --> 00:20:01.530

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information.

00:20:01.980 --> 00:20:14.790

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: may be publicly made available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review by selecting the no option on the screen,

00:20:15.450 --> 00:20:17.970

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

00:20:18.870 --> 00:20:33.540

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: If you have made an error in your comment text or see any information that you would like to change, you can go back and edit your comment text and information by selecting the edit button to cancel your comment entirely you can click on the cancel button.

00:20:34.680 --> 00:20:39.150

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And again, comments must be received by February 8, 2022.

00:20:40.260 --> 00:20:54.300

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, we have now walked you through how to submit your written comments via the ePlanning page. If you have any additional questions regarding how to submit your written comments, you can submit those during the Q and A session that we are about to begin shortly.

00:21:03.270 --> 00:21:06.750

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, I'm going to move on to our next slide here.

00:21:13.920 --> 00:21:21.000

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Okay, so at this time we are going to begin that Q and A portion of the meeting that I mentioned earlier.

00:21:21.540 --> 00:21:40.170

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And, as I said earlier, this Q and A portion will last approximately one hour, and the intent of this question-and-answer session is to answer any substantive questions you have for BLM staff regarding the greater sage-grouse planning effort. If you submitted a question upon registration

00:21:41.610 --> 00:21:55.110

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: we're going to ask that you submit those questions during the meeting today again electronically if you're using the zoom web platform or zoom app by using the zoom chat feature located at the bottom of your zoom screen.

00:21:56.190 --> 00:22:04.230

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, I will first go over instructions for how to submit a question using the chat function if you are using the zoom web platform or zoom app.

00:22:04.920 --> 00:22:14.550

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: After we have gone through questions submitted using that zoom chat feature, we'll move on to any participants calling in over the phone today who would like to ask a question.

00:22:14.940 --> 00:22:24.870

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So please stay tuned for those instructions. So at this time, if you have a question and you are using the zoom web platform or a zoom app

00:22:25.320 --> 00:22:35.880

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: please go ahead and click on the chat icon located at the bottom of your zoom screen. If you hover your mouse over the bottom of your zoom screen that chat icon should appear.

00:22:36.690 --> 00:22:44.820

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And you may need to exit out of your full screen view in zoom in order to see the chat icon, and I have included a graphic on the screen

00:22:45.360 --> 00:22:56.370

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: of where you can find that chat icon you can then type your question into the chat box and please send it to one of the co-hosts of the meeting Clayton McGee.

00:22:57.450 --> 00:23:04.860

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I will then read the question aloud for all participants to hear and a BLM staff member will respond to your question aloud.

00:23:05.610 --> 00:23:16.200

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Again, we will try to answer your questions in the order that they are received, but please note there may be a pause between asking your question and a BLM staff member answering your question.

00:23:17.220 --> 00:23:29.580

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And again, please note that, due to the high volume of participants, today we have about 186 participants, we are going to do our absolute best to get through as many questions as we can today.

00:23:30.000 --> 00:23:37.980

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So please be mindful of the number of questions you submit and the length of your questions, and please try to submit your questions one-at-a-time.

00:23:39.060 --> 00:23:55.050

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, at this time I'll pause to see if we have any questions coming in, via the zoom chat feature and I'm also going to turn on Pat Deibert and Quincy Bahr's videos with the BLM because they're going to be responding to your questions today.

00:24:06.090 --> 00:24:12.660

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, there we go I see Pat. I'll just wait to make sure that Quincy can turn on his video, there we go as well.

00:24:15.630 --> 00:24:19.650

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: All right, please hold while we get our first few questions lined up here.

00:24:27.930 --> 00:24:38.160

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Okay, so we did have a question that was asked during registration that was just resubmitted so I'll go ahead

and ask that one and it looks like Pat's going to take the response on that one.

00:24:38.550 --> 00:24:51.240

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So the question is, how will the BLM use new science to evaluate the effectiveness of the plans and identify updates necessary for conservation? So Pat I'll go ahead and ask you to unmute.

00:24:53.520 --> 00:24:55.050

BLM - Pat Deibert: You bet, thanks Amanda.

00:24:56.310 --> 00:25:06.270

BLM - Pat Deibert: So that's a great question, and since 2015 there have been over 300 new publications, scientific peer reviewed published papers on the greater sage-grouse.

00:25:06.810 --> 00:25:14.070

BLM - Pat Deibert: We are reviewing these papers, with the assistance of some of our friends from USGS (United States Geological Survey)

00:25:14.700 --> 00:25:22.620

BLM - Pat Deibert: and we're looking at new information. Is there something new that would maybe cause us to rethink buffer distances, or something new

00:25:23.010 --> 00:25:34.560

BLM - Pat Deibert: that we may, cause us to rethink habitat objectives for this species? Is there a new information out there, that would make us rethink about restoration efforts and whether or not they're being effective?

00:25:37.410 --> 00:25:45.570

BLM - Pat Deibert: This will help us identify as we move forward in this planning process any updates that we may need to make in some of our alternatives

00:25:46.050 --> 00:25:55.950

BLM - Pat Deibert: to better conserve this species, while considering other multiple land uses. I would strongly encourage any of you who have additional information

00:25:56.730 --> 00:26:06.450

BLM - Pat Deibert: or have scientific publications that you think we should be considering as we move forward, so we can make the proper

adjustments, I would really encourage you to please submit these during our scoping process.

00:26:09.540 --> 00:26:18.060

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Pat, for that response. I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted here as we go to our first question submitted by participants today.

00:26:18.480 --> 00:26:31.290

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, question number one is: Cattle grazing is the major factor in habitat destruction affecting sage-grouse. So the question is: what will be done to reduce the effect cattle are having on sage-grouse?

00:26:33.000 --> 00:26:34.380

BLM - Pat Deibert: So, livestock grazing

00:26:34.470 --> 00:26:49.080

BLM - Pat Deibert: is a primary use of federal lands and we understand that, particularly in certain areas, livestock grazing either cattle or sheep or other animals, other ungulates, can have negative impacts on the greater sage-grouse.

00:26:49.530 --> 00:27:02.160

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be working with our range staff, we will be working with our livestock grazers, we will try to identify where those problems are, what caused those problems, and how can we change that as we move forward in our management process.

00:27:05.610 --> 00:27:25.500

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Pat, for that response. We'll go ahead and move on to our next question here question number two, which is: Is the thought that each state will develop their own EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) amendment independently? I will go to Quincy Bahr to respond to that question.

00:27:26.400 --> 00:27:27.330

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Good question.

00:27:28.380 --> 00:27:32.850

BLM - Quincy Bahr: As we've gone through the previous two planning efforts, each one of them followed a similar

00:27:33.300 --> 00:27:42.540

BLM - Quincy Bahr: approach where there's coordination across state boundaries because there is a range wide perspective, there is similarities range wide, but we also recognize that there are differences

00:27:43.410 --> 00:27:51.360

BLM - Quincy Bahr: in this effort much similar to the 2017 effort. As we go through scoping, we haven't set a specific approach.

00:27:52.470 --> 00:28:01.710

BLM - Quincy Bahr: We are asking input from the public and from our partners and from the states and tribes about how

00:28:02.250 --> 00:28:09.780

BLM - Quincy Bahr: a best planning effort would look, whether this would be a nationwide or range wide, I should say a range wide approach, state-by-state, or regions.

00:28:10.440 --> 00:28:15.720

BLM - Quincy Bahr: These are some of the things that we're seeking input on throughout scoping obviously as we go forward.

00:28:16.500 --> 00:28:26.640

BLM - Quincy Bahr: The BLM has requirements and both through NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) and to our other laws of coordinating with state local and

00:28:27.210 --> 00:28:33.540

BLM - Quincy Bahr: other federal and tribal governments and so those obviously will play a large role in as we develop

00:28:34.140 --> 00:28:45.660

BLM - Quincy Bahr: whatever management outcomes, we will be coordinating with those state and local plans. So, at this point there's not a specific approach set, we are asking for input, as part of our scoping process.

00:28:48.330 --> 00:28:52.740

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute.

00:28:53.100 --> 00:29:05.700

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And we'll move on to question three before I do so, I did see that I got a message from a participant, I think I



incorrectly said backslash for the web address apologies for that it is just a slash.

00:29:06.210 --> 00:29:18.630

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We did copy and paste that into the zoom chat feature, so you can just easily copy and paste that out of that zoom chat feature into your web browser but for any phone callers who might have written that address down

00:29:18.870 --> 00:29:28.500

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: it is just a slash so thank you for that correction, so we'll go ahead and move on to question number three then which is: Riparian areas are vitally important

00:29:29.190 --> 00:29:41.700

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: especially for the sage-grouse chicks. Will you be implementing a comprehensive program to restore and improve these riparian habitats? And I will go back to Pat to respond to that question.

00:29:42.330 --> 00:29:43.440

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda.

00:29:44.520 --> 00:29:50.460

BLM - Pat Deibert: As folks undoubtedly know riparian areas, particularly in the sagebrush ecosystem, are an incredibly valuable area

00:29:51.120 --> 00:29:57.210

BLM - Pat Deibert: not only for sage-grouse checks, which they are essential, but also for a lot of variety of other species

00:29:57.600 --> 00:30:04.050

BLM - Pat Deibert: and probably will provide resiliency in the future, as we move in through the different potential changes from climate change.

00:30:04.560 --> 00:30:13.650

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be considering how our management affects these riparian areas. We will definitely be looking at what we can do to conserve and protect them.

00:30:14.460 --> 00:30:20.790

BLM - Pat Deibert: We recognize their value on the landscape. I cannot tell you specifically how that will happen.

00:30:21.180 --> 00:30:32.550

BLM - Pat Deibert: But we are aware of their value. We are aware that many of our management actions affect the riparian areas both positively and negatively, and we will definitely be considering that as we move forward in our planning process.

00:30:35.160 --> 00:30:53.190

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute and we'll move on to question number four, which is: Is this the only public comment period or will there be another chance besides February 8 to provide comments? And I will go to Quincy to respond to that question.

00:30:54.420 --> 00:31:06.270

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Good, it's a good question. The planning process and the National Environmental Policy Act, it requires the government to go through specific processes and provide opportunities for public input.

00:31:07.200 --> 00:31:19.980

BLM - Quincy Bahr: The first one is the scoping process, which is what we're in now. It opened back in November, November 22nd with the issuance of a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

00:31:21.450 --> 00:31:38.520

BLM - Quincy Bahr: During that scoping period we seek input on what kind of issues, what kind of information, what kind of alternatives should be considered as we study and consider a proposed action, in this case potential amendments to the land use plans for sage-grouse.

00:31:40.140 --> 00:31:47.400

BLM - Quincy Bahr: As we move past the February 8 deadline, and that is to help us be able to collect that information and move to the next step

00:31:48.000 --> 00:32:00.900

BLM - Quincy Bahr: where we consider that input. We look at, make sure that we haven't missed issues, specifically, you know questions that need resolution in regards to sage-grouse management in this instance.

00:32:01.710 --> 00:32:15.150

BLM - Quincy Bahr: We prepare an environmental impact statement with our partners and property agencies, and then we go back to the public

with, for a public comment period on that draft EIS, draft Environmental Impact Statement.

00:32:15.810 --> 00:32:22.530

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That will be a 90-day public comment period that will likely occur later this year towards fall/winter.

00:32:24.690 --> 00:32:28.470

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Basically, as we compile that information and work with our partners.

00:32:29.340 --> 00:32:44.520

BLM - Quincy Bahr: When we've completed that, we'll go to the public for an opportunity for a review of that document and additional public comment on it. Did we miss anything? And so there will be another public comment opportunity in looking at the document that

00:32:45.540 --> 00:32:51.120

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the BLM and its partners have developed based on input gathered during scoping.

00:32:54.690 --> 00:33:03.480

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute and we will move on to our next question, question number five.

00:33:05.160 --> 00:33:20.550

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Let's see it's kind of a long question, so the question is: while reviewing the USGS status report for greater sage-grouse, it is apparent that the largest threats to sage-grouse in the great basin revolve around fire and invasives.

00:33:21.210 --> 00:33:28.320

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, I'm going to skip down to the question here and Pat, you can address the rest of the question, as part of your response, but the main question is:

00:33:28.650 --> 00:33:45.540

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: you know, given this fact, how does the BLM plan to address the millions of acres already lost to annual grasses through the LUPAs? So pat I'll go back to you to kind of provide some information on what an LUPA is and provide any additional input on that response.

00:33:46.620 --> 00:33:54.840

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda and that's actually a great question there's, no, no question that, while fire and the cheatgrass cycle are a huge

00:33:55.530 --> 00:34:04.860

BLM - Pat Deibert: factor for consideration not only in our planning effort, but in the management of multiple species and lifestyles across the western United States, particularly in the Great Basin,

00:34:05.940 --> 00:34:11.430

BLM - Pat Deibert: The Bureau of Land Management will be revisiting how we manage those lands.

00:34:12.000 --> 00:34:20.130

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will be looking at whether we can do changes through this planning process that will help address and/or restore those areas.

00:34:20.460 --> 00:34:28.680

BLM - Pat Deibert: Restoration itself is not going to be a specific planning decision, other than the fact that we do plan on continue to working with our partners,

00:34:29.100 --> 00:34:36.390

BLM - Pat Deibert: federal, tribal, state, private to try to do what we can to allocate resources to restore those areas.

00:34:37.140 --> 00:34:45.240

BLM - Pat Deibert: The person who asked the question, said that if we don't make a concerted effort in this they're concerned for the species, they have a great concern for the future of the species.

00:34:45.780 --> 00:34:56.790

BLM - Pat Deibert: And we don't necessarily disagree with that, but we plan on continuing our efforts. We're well aware of the situation, we will continue efforts, working with our partners and trying to find solutions as we move forward in this effort.

00:34:57.180 --> 00:35:04.020

BLM - Pat Deibert: And again, I encourage people who have any kind of suggestions or ideas of how we can do that through a planning process, we would love to hear from you.

00:35:08.670 --> 00:35:17.040

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted here as we move on let's see to question number six.

00:35:17.940 --> 00:35:30.360

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: chaining and pinon juniper removal, so called firebreak construction, and other range improvements destroy sagebrush habitats; how can these be justified in the sage-grouse areas?

00:35:35.700 --> 00:35:47.730

BLM - Pat Deibert: So, these are definitely management actions or management tools that have been used in the past to either set back succession, ecological succession

00:35:48.390 --> 00:35:52.950

BLM - Pat Deibert: or open-up areas or to create fuel breaks for the safety of our wildland firefighters.

00:35:53.790 --> 00:36:00.900

BLM - Pat Deibert: These actions are all different management tools which can be considered in the management of western rangelands and management sagebrush ecosystems.

00:36:01.350 --> 00:36:12.210

BLM - Pat Deibert: Their application will be determined on a case-by-case basis and a project or a field office level, based on the situation that they are facing at that point in time.

00:36:12.930 --> 00:36:21.390

BLM - Pat Deibert: We will do what we can to make sure that those types of management actions are part of our, not part of our planning, but are considered

00:36:22.020 --> 00:36:31.410

BLM - Pat Deibert: as we move forward in our planning objectives. So if we have areas that we're trying to conserve specifically for greater sage-grouse there may be additional restrictions on those areas

00:36:32.070 --> 00:36:41.730

BLM - Pat Deibert: that would not necessarily disallow those actions but definitely require a higher standard to be met in those areas should that need arise.

00:36:42.840 --> 00:36:49.860

BLM - Pat Deibert: It's very hard to address some of the specifics on this one, so, because a lot of those decisions have to make a case-by-case basis.

00:36:50.190 --> 00:37:02.400

BLM - Pat Deibert: But we appreciate being alerted to the concern. We are aware, and we'll try to do what we can, through our planning process and our habitat management areas to address these concerns to ensure we don't cause additional damage.

00:37:05.400 --> 00:37:14.400

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute, and we'll move on to our next question here let's see question number seven.

00:37:15.060 --> 00:37:31.650

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: with the major damage of overgrazing within the HMAs (habitat management areas), will the BLM also assess the management of the HMAs to understand the unintended consequences of overpopulation of wild horses

00:37:32.010 --> 00:37:38.700

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: on other species of plants and animals? And Quincy I'll go back to you to respond to that question.

00:37:39.000 --> 00:37:46.140

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Sure. So, within the sage-grouse management as Pat already talked about, we'll be looking at management of livestock grazing.

00:37:46.860 --> 00:37:54.510

BLM - Quincy Bahr: In addition, we will be looking at impacts to greater sage-grouse from management of wild horses and burros.

00:37:55.080 --> 00:38:09.240

BLM - Quincy Bahr: As far as the NEPA document, the Environmental Impact Statement, we will be analyzing the direct and indirect effects of those management activities that are considered on both sage-grouse and the sagebrush biome.

00:38:10.710 --> 00:38:21.810

BLM - Quincy Bahr: As far as impacts to other species, the focus of this one is on sage-grouse and sagebrush. Obviously, that includes

some other species, so there could be some additional indirect impacts that are looked at

00:38:22.590 --> 00:38:33.060

BLM - Quincy Bahr: as far as what is considered impacts from the changes we propose but, again, the thrust of this planning effort, the purpose and need, is looking at the management

00:38:33.480 --> 00:38:42.330

BLM - Quincy Bahr: for sage-grouse and sagebrush and so as other species use those areas that also you are used by sage-grouse those will, those can be

00:38:42.990 --> 00:38:57.480

BLM - Quincy Bahr: included in that analysis, but as far as specifically looking at all those other species, it would be indirectly affected by whatever is managed for the biome itself or for the habitat for sage-grouse.

00:39:00.360 --> 00:39:06.660

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll put you on mute and move on to our next question, question number 28.

00:39:07.260 --> 00:39:26.280

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: how does the BLM expect to examine the role of climate change on sage-grouse habitat quality and quantity, such as the role of drought and increasing CO2 concentrations on the spread of invasive annual grasses? And I will go back to Pat to respond to that question.

00:39:27.930 --> 00:39:28.650

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks, Amanda.

00:39:29.760 --> 00:39:32.670

BLM - Pat Deibert: Climate change is definitely a factor we will be considering

00:39:32.730 --> 00:39:42.750

BLM - Pat Deibert: moving forward here. Changes in precipitation, changes in temperature, we're already seeing some of these changes in a drought that were experienced across most of the sagebrush.

00:39:43.800 --> 00:39:47.580

BLM - Pat Deibert: We are working very closely with climate researchers.

00:39:48.150 --> 00:39:55.440

BLM - Pat Deibert: As you are aware, there are so many projections about how climate change is going to affect the condition of sagebrush ecosystems

00:39:55.770 --> 00:40:02.280

BLM - Pat Deibert: into the future, and we're working with the researchers to identify the best models for examining those questions

00:40:02.850 --> 00:40:13.860

BLM - Pat Deibert: as we move forward in this process. Once we have a good handle on what the, what reliable durable models are, we're going to be looking at how we can best build

00:40:14.610 --> 00:40:24.960

BLM - Pat Deibert: resiliency into the sagebrush ecosystem through our management actions. We also had a similar question here if you'd like me to go ahead and address that.

00:40:26.940 --> 00:40:28.260

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Sure, that would be great Pat.

00:40:28.740 --> 00:40:29.730

BLM - Pat Deibert: Right thanks Amanda.

00:40:31.080 --> 00:40:34.260

BLM - Pat Deibert: The question was: whether or not we had a year by year

00:40:35.550 --> 00:40:42.960

BLM - Pat Deibert: impact of climate change as part of the process? And, quite frankly, I just don't think that information exists.

00:40:43.650 --> 00:40:50.250

BLM - Pat Deibert: If you're aware of sagebrush ecosystems are very slow to respond to any kind of changes or perturbations

00:40:50.640 --> 00:40:57.360

BLM - Pat Deibert: in their, their structure and then sage-grouse are also. There's a timeline in that response.

00:40:57.690 --> 00:41:15.900



BLM - Pat Deibert: So, I don't know that we can publish as requested any, year by year, information on the impact of climate change, but we will consider those changes as they occur across the landscape and are detailed to us through our partners in the climate research world in our planning process.

00:41:18.750 --> 00:41:26.340

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for those responses. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute so that we can move on to our next questions received.

00:41:26.910 --> 00:41:35.430

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And I just want to note to everyone, I know it can be a little bit confusing, we have a few different co-hosts today, as well as me Amanda,

00:41:35.670 --> 00:41:45.990

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: your host, but just a reminder, please send your questions to Clayton McGee, and you can select Clayton's name if you go to that chat feature, and in that to

00:41:46.320 --> 00:41:58.770

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: box, that drop down box, you can select Clayton McGee. We want to make sure that we can send all of our questions over to Clayton so that they don't get lost among the other co-hosts today, thanks everyone.

00:42:01.500 --> 00:42:19.950

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so we'll go ahead and move on to our next question here question number nine which is you did not mention the 2020 draft or final SEISs (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements), including the USGS annotated bibliography through 2019.

00:42:21.360 --> 00:42:31.620

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, the question is: what is their status and how will they be incorporated into the process? And let's see, I will go first to Quincy to respond to that question.

00:42:33.390 --> 00:42:45.450

BLM - Quincy Bahr: From the front half of that, the 2020 supplements finishing up, those included additional analysis, the intent of those was in replying to the preliminary injunction.

00:42:46.110 --> 00:42:55.860

BLM - Quincy Bahr: There wasn't a change in management as a result of those and as a result of that where we're sitting in relation to that is the

00:42:56.700 --> 00:43:02.940

BLM - Quincy Bahr: 2019 plans are still enjoined from being implemented and that's why we're still implementing the 2015 plans.

00:43:03.510 --> 00:43:13.680

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So those didn't result in a change in management. Obviously, any information considered during those, science, information, additional details,

00:43:14.160 --> 00:43:27.030

BLM - Quincy Bahr: those will obviously be considered as part of this effort, supplements in the 2019 EIS or in the 2015 EIS. Those will all be considered as will be additional science too that Pat has mentioned.

00:43:29.130 --> 00:43:33.180

BLM - Quincy Bahr: As far as the annotated bibliography, Pat are you going to jump on that one?

00:43:35.070 --> 00:43:36.810

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Sure, I can unmute Pat here.

00:43:38.130 --> 00:43:42.540

BLM - Pat Deibert: Sure, you bet. I mentioned earlier about the new science question about new science

00:43:43.200 --> 00:43:54.420

BLM - Pat Deibert: now being incorporated and said there were over 300 new publications. That includes all the publications that were identified in both 2015 and 2019 USGS annotated bibliographies

00:43:54.810 --> 00:44:10.800

BLM - Pat Deibert: as well as an additional 70 articles that have been reviewed by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies that are looking at doing an update of that literature. So we are including consideration of that information and those that were provided in those bibliographies.

00:44:14.160 --> 00:44:21.870

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat and Quincy for those responses. I'll go ahead and put you both back on mute, and we'll move on to our next question here.

00:44:25.500 --> 00:44:38.670

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, let's see which I think is question number 10 we are up to, we have received about 25 questions so far. Again, we do have a lot of participants so we're just working our way through these questions, one at a time.

00:44:42.720 --> 00:44:59.010

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so question number 10 is: will the BLM publish the impact of livestock on sage-grouse habitat and the year-by-year impact of livestock? What form will publishing of the impact of livestock take? And Quincy I'll go back to you for that response.

00:45:00.960 --> 00:45:06.480

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And I do want to bring in Pat a little bit of the scientific side, but as far as the planning decision,

00:45:08.340 --> 00:45:24.990

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the decisions that that the BLM makes at the land use plan level are different than the decisions that the BLM makes at the implementation level, and that can be frustrating, at times, but it also makes sure that we're making the right decision at the right scale, with the right information.

00:45:26.220 --> 00:45:31.950

BLM - Quincy Bahr: At this, at the land use plan level, the decisions that are made for livestock grazing

00:45:32.610 --> 00:45:39.750

BLM - Quincy Bahr: are limited to areas that are available for livestock grazing and some broad guidance for how local decisions would be made.

00:45:40.230 --> 00:45:55.500

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And so, as we're looking at a year-by-year impact obviously that year-by-year impact would vary based on climate, would vary based on market conditions, and a lot of different factors so we'll be looking at it from the RMP-level of decision making.

00:45:56.670 --> 00:46:11.820

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Should livestock be allowed, and so, under what general conditions? A lot of those more site-specific decisions are left appropriately to the site-specific field managers and range folks working with locals who are familiar with what's going on, on the ground.

00:46:14.790 --> 00:46:19.680

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy and I'll also unmute Pat, to see if she has any additional input here.

00:46:21.600 --> 00:46:25.200

BLM - Pat Deibert: I do not. Quincy did a great job answering that so thank you.

00:46:26.100 --> 00:46:33.510

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, excellent so then we'll move on to our next question here, and again just a reminder right now we are working our way

00:46:34.050 --> 00:46:47.580

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: through those questions submitted via the zoom chat feature. We will read through instructions for phone callers here in a bit, because I do see that we have a handful of phone callers on the meeting today.

00:46:48.030 --> 00:47:00.750

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, we will read through those instructions here in a little bit, we have just about 45 minutes remaining in our Q and A. We're going to continue to work our way right now through questions received via that zoom chat feature.

00:47:02.400 --> 00:47:21.090

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, we're going to move on to question number 11 here received from participants, which is: will the BLM's development of data and the use of management tools for sage-grouse undergo scientific critique by peer review? And Pat I'll start off with you for the response.

00:47:22.680 --> 00:47:23.550

BLM - Pat Deibert: You bet, thanks.

00:47:25.020 --> 00:47:31.650

BLM - Pat Deibert: The information that BLM will be using in their planning process will be scientific literature.

00:47:32.580 --> 00:47:42.450

BLM - Pat Deibert: We need to be considering all the new publications out there, we need to be looking at whether or not the science we have employed in the past is current

00:47:43.140 --> 00:47:55.980

BLM - Pat Deibert: as we said previously, or whether we need to update this. So we will be looking at the most current scientific information that's available to us.

00:47:56.520 --> 00:48:01.650

BLM - Pat Deibert: A planning process is typically not going to go through a peer review.

00:48:02.100 --> 00:48:12.210

BLM - Pat Deibert: This is, it's a public comment, it's a public review process, so if we do employ a specific tool if we decided to come up with information, is not yet gone out

00:48:12.870 --> 00:48:22.530

BLM - Pat Deibert: through the scientific process, we will definitely submit that for peer review to make sure or make sure it gets submitted for peer review, to make sure that we are using the most current science available.

00:48:27.120 --> 00:48:33.450

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute, and we'll move on to our next question here.

00:48:35.760 --> 00:48:40.680

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Let's see and the question is: is the USGS planning to update their 2016

00:48:41.760 --> 00:48:47.760

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Mineral Potential Report? And let's see I'm going to go to Quincy to respond to this question.

00:48:50.130 --> 00:49:03.840

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So, this is actually connects to a couple other questions that we've gotten in the past. The USGS Mineral Report was developed as part of Environmental Impact Statement

00:49:04.320 --> 00:49:15.210

BLM - Quincy Bahr: analyzing withdrawal of the sagebrush focal areas as recommended from the 2015 plans. That effort was, that Environmental Impact Statement was terminated,

00:49:16.020 --> 00:49:25.140

BLM - Quincy Bahr: that action was taken to court, and the court told the BLM that we improperly terminated EIS. We have reinitiated

00:49:25.770 --> 00:49:35.310

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the EIS process to consider that withdrawal that is a separate process than this planning process.

00:49:35.910 --> 00:49:46.290

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Short answer yes, we are really working with USGS to update it, but that is not specifically related to this planning process. The sagebrush focal areas,

00:49:46.920 --> 00:49:52.950

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the withdrawal of the sagebrush focal areas is being considered in that planning process, it is a specific purpose and need as

00:49:53.940 --> 00:50:02.310

BLM - Quincy Bahr: pushed forward, or as recommended from those 2015 plans. The purpose of need for this effort is looking at it, are there changes that are needed

00:50:02.910 --> 00:50:18.990

BLM - Quincy Bahr: to the prioritization or management for sage-grouse management throughout the sage-grouse range that could consider potential changes to sagebrush focal areas and management, but that is not specifically tied to the recommendation for withdrawal.

00:50:22.290 --> 00:50:23.850

BLM - Quincy Bahr: I think that hits everything in that one.

00:50:25.200 --> 00:50:31.410

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great, thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute and we'll move on to our next question.

00:50:31.740 --> 00:50:38.850

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I do want to note that we have received about 38 questions, there are some duplicates here and there, that we're trying to weed through.

00:50:39.150 --> 00:50:48.810

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: But at this time, we're going to go ahead and turn off that chat feature, because we want to catch up to the questions that have been currently submitted by our participants.

00:50:49.080 --> 00:50:54.900

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, we're going to turn off that chat feature briefly work our way through the questions we've received so far.

00:50:55.170 --> 00:51:08.580

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And then, once we've caught up to our list of questions we're going to go ahead and reopen that chat feature and move on, so for now I'm going to restrict it as we catch up to all of the ones that have been submitted so let's see we are on question number

00:51:09.900 --> 00:51:33.810

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: 13 which is let's see: what type of monitoring was carried out to arrive at the data in the BLM document titled Greater Sage-grouse Five-year Monitoring Report Rangewide Monitoring Report for 2015 to 2020? And so I will go let's see to, back to Quincy to respond to this question.

00:51:35.970 --> 00:51:57.600

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That report was generated, all of the 2015 plans included a monitoring framework appendix. In that monitoring framework appendix, it outlined how the BLM would be monitoring methods, what questions we were looking to answer that five-year report took those, took that monitoring framework

00:51:58.650 --> 00:52:02.250

BLM - Quincy Bahr: all the monitoring, as described in there and

00:52:03.240 --> 00:52:17.100

BLM - Quincy Bahr: summarized that, outlined and summarized the results. It actually, if you read that, as you read that five-year report, you'll actually see there is a section on methodology in each of them, followed by a section on results. Those sections on methodologies

00:52:17.730 --> 00:52:25.710

BLM - Quincy Bahr: coupled with the monitoring framework appendices from 2015, outlined how the BLM gathered that information.

00:52:29.730 --> 00:52:37.500

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute, and we'll move on to our next question received here.

00:52:38.730 --> 00:52:44.790

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Again, I have restricted that chat feature for now we're going to work on catching up to our currently

00:52:45.360 --> 00:52:59.220

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: submitted questions. Again, for our phone callers, I do see that we have a handful. Once we work our way through our list of currently submitted questions, we'll make sure that we reserve some time for any questions you may have that you want to submit verbally.

00:53:10.500 --> 00:53:11.130

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright.

00:53:14.790 --> 00:53:17.640

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, again we're just getting those questions lined up.

00:53:18.750 --> 00:53:24.180

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And figuring out which BLM staffer is best suited to respond to those questions, so please hold.

00:53:31.620 --> 00:53:39.960

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so our next question, question number 15, we've received a couple of duplicates here and there, so I think we're on question number 15.

00:53:40.380 --> 00:53:54.360

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Is: when will cooperating agencies be asked to participate, since it hasn't been decided if a state-by-state effort or kind of range wide effort is best? So, Quincy I'll go back to you to respond to this one.

00:53:58.320 --> 00:54:14.190

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So right now, we're in the process of extending invitations to our cooperating agencies. At this point we're looking at any agency that had participated in the 2015 or 2019 Environmental Impact Statement processes. We're extending those invitations again.

00:54:15.780 --> 00:54:26.370



BLM - Quincy Bahr: Those relationships with folks who are on the ground who are familiar with local conditions, as well as some of the jurisdiction by law, both like county and in the states,

00:54:27.300 --> 00:54:36.060

BLM - Quincy Bahr: we are currently organizing them. As far as when we start to reach out, this becomes an issue as we finish up the scoping process and look at

00:54:37.680 --> 00:54:48.000

BLM - Quincy Bahr: what the, what the planning process will look like, that will help inform the nature of those relationships. We plan on reaching out, we plan on engaging we will, we need

00:54:48.420 --> 00:54:57.990

BLM - Quincy Bahr: that special expertise and that jurisdiction that those various agencies do have. At this point how they would be engaged will depend on

00:54:58.530 --> 00:55:07.320

BLM - Quincy Bahr: how the planning process is setup and so right now, we would encourage our cooperating, those who were seeking that cooperating agency relationship to

00:55:07.920 --> 00:55:16.380

BLM - Quincy Bahr: reach out to their local, the state BLM implementation leads; they are the ones who are heading up the effort to

00:55:16.890 --> 00:55:25.380

BLM - Quincy Bahr: send the letters, as well as identify those who will be participating. We'll be following that up with memorandums of understanding, establishing that relationship

00:55:26.220 --> 00:55:36.810

BLM - Quincy Bahr: and then we'll move into specifically engaging in preparation of the Environmental Impact Statements. Unfortunately without knowing exactly what it's going to look like

00:55:37.770 --> 00:55:48.240

BLM - Quincy Bahr: it's hard to put a specific time frame, but I would anticipate definitely late winter early spring, that we will need to be getting those relations or that interaction

00:55:48.870 --> 00:55:55.530

BLM - Quincy Bahr: because we'll be moving through the scoping process in the comments and looking at actually starting to prepare those Environmental Impact Statements.

00:55:57.270 --> 00:56:07.560

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response, and I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted here. I think I accidentally skipped over a question number 14 so we're going to go back to that and then go to question 16.

00:56:07.920 --> 00:56:23.880

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, question 14 is: will the BLM consider changes in grazing regulations if the environmental analysis indicates that current grazing regulations are insufficient to deal with the impacts of and extent of improper grazing?

00:56:26.130 --> 00:56:31.170

BLM - Quincy Bahr: I want to make sure I'm careful in my use of terms here the term regulation.

00:56:32.460 --> 00:56:39.060

BLM - Quincy Bahr: In my world it means those code of federal regulations, the rules that are created to implement laws.

00:56:39.660 --> 00:56:57.420

BLM - Quincy Bahr: We're not looking to do that, that is, that, in this effort, we are looking at managing and changes to management of the land use plan decisions now as we look at providing guidance and management of public lands in relation to livestock grazing.

00:56:58.530 --> 00:57:04.800

BLM - Quincy Bahr: If we're looking at the, what is necessary to be able to manage that use of public lands

00:57:06.360 --> 00:57:08.490

BLM - Quincy Bahr: in relation to protection of

00:57:09.930 --> 00:57:13.980

BLM - Quincy Bahr: greater sage-grouse, we will definitely be looking at alternatives,

00:57:15.570 --> 00:57:30.300

BLM - Quincy Bahr: a range of alternatives of how given uses, including livestock grazing, could be managed to protect greater sage-

grouse in their habitat. That is, that is entirely within our mission of multiple use and trying to find the balance between them.

00:57:33.330 --> 00:57:36.660

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That's number 14 do you want me to hit the next one?

00:57:38.280 --> 00:57:40.830

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: um let's see it looks like maybe Pat was going to take the

00:57:40.830 --> 00:57:43.560

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: response on this one, question number 16, thanks

00:57:43.560 --> 00:57:43.980

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Quincy.

00:57:45.090 --> 00:58:00.990

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so question number 16 is: with the downward trend of the greater sage-grouse population, will the BLM initiate consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the planning effort? And Pat, I'll ask you to unmute.

00:58:01.920 --> 00:58:02.790

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda.

00:58:04.140 --> 00:58:15.180

BLM - Pat Deibert: I'm going to make an assumption on this question that they asked, the person who asked the question is referring to a formal or informal consultation on the Endangered Species Act.

00:58:16.410 --> 00:58:25.860

BLM - Pat Deibert: So, a couple clarifications, the US Fish and Wildlife Service does not consult on species that are not considered listed, and secondly

00:58:26.400 --> 00:58:30.600

BLM - Pat Deibert: since sage-grouse are not listed at this time, greater sage-grouse are not a listed species.

00:58:31.410 --> 00:58:38.700

BLM - Pat Deibert: They are under the management authority of the states, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has no management authority for the greater sage-grouse.

00:58:39.360 --> 00:58:46.080

BLM - Pat Deibert: That said, we have been working very closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to address their concerns to identify what they are.

00:58:46.860 --> 00:58:51.810

BLM - Pat Deibert: But we're also working very closely with our state partners, our state wildlife management agencies.

00:58:52.500 --> 00:59:04.920

BLM - Pat Deibert: We sit on different committees with them, different teams with them, so that we can understand what their concerns are. We can learn from them some options that might be implemented into our planning process to help address this decline.

00:59:08.880 --> 00:59:15.720

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute as we move on to our next questions received here.

00:59:20.670 --> 00:59:25.890

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Let's see so it looks like there was a brief a follow up to question number 14

00:59:26.310 --> 00:59:38.910

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: that Quincy just responded to so part of the, kind of a related question to that one that we'll group together is: will the BLM recognize that disturbance needs to include livestock grazing disturbance

00:59:39.240 --> 00:59:46.890

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: and develop a strong plan that actually controls grazing? So, Quincy I'll go back to you to kind of provide some additional follow up there.

00:59:48.000 --> 00:59:53.700

BLM - Quincy Bahr: One of the first things I want to hit on this question, and all the questions of what will the BLM do?

00:59:54.540 --> 01:00:04.230

BLM - Quincy Bahr: What's what, we're still scoping, that's what we're looking at saying, what should we be looking at? We don't have answers sitting in a document

01:00:04.710 --> 01:00:13.860

BLM - Quincy Bahr: waiting to go through this process, so we're asking, what should we be looking at when it comes to management of sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat?

01:00:14.490 --> 01:00:19.770

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And so, when it comes to that, though I mean we're looking at the range of

01:00:20.700 --> 01:00:29.790

BLM - Quincy Bahr: of actions that could impact sage-grouse and that could include everything from, I mean, there's all these pieces of all these literature and the summaries,

01:00:30.690 --> 01:00:41.130

BLM - Quincy Bahr: we're not short on identifying what those various actions are so as far as what those actions are and how they should be managed, that's what we're asking from the public is, what are the recommendations?

01:00:41.730 --> 01:00:53.460

BLM - Quincy Bahr: What specifically should we be looking at, specific potential alternatives that we could consider? So it's hard to answer, this is what we're thinking of doing because that's what we're asking from the public is

01:00:53.820 --> 01:00:58.350

BLM - Quincy Bahr: is how should, what should we be looking at as we move forward into this effort?

01:01:01.710 --> 01:01:09.720

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute and we'll move on to our next question here.

01:01:16.470 --> 01:01:20.760

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright let's see we'll start with question number 17,

01:01:21.300 --> 01:01:34.830

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: which the participant expressed concern about how the social impacts of this planning effort will be measured, so the question is: how will the BLM measure and address the social impacts hitting some communities

01:01:35.100 --> 01:01:44.160

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: and residents of the sage-grouse planning area? And I'll first go to Pat for your response and then Quincy if you want to add anything I'll unmute you as well.

01:01:47.070 --> 01:01:55.110

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda. This, this is a really challenging question, there's no question about that, this is a tough one to answer. However,

01:01:56.610 --> 01:02:05.130

BLM - Pat Deibert: we at the Bureau of Land Management are a multiple use sustained yield management agency, this is what we are, we are put in place to do.

01:02:05.490 --> 01:02:12.120

BLM - Pat Deibert: And that means we have to consider the economic as well as wildlife values as we move forward into this planning process.

01:02:12.810 --> 01:02:24.570

BLM - Pat Deibert: We recognize that local communities are a huge component of our public lands, and their needs and interests need to be considered as we move through our planning process.

01:02:25.710 --> 01:02:34.830

BLM - Pat Deibert: Beyond that that it's really tough, we will be doing some social economic analyses move forward with planning, but I don't have a specific answer to the question at this point in time.

01:02:35.310 --> 01:02:40.830

BLM - Pat Deibert: Other than we will be engaging the concerns of these local communities as we move forward and recognizing their value.

01:02:43.290 --> 01:02:47.910

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat, and Quincy, I'll unmute you as well, in case you have any additional input.

01:02:48.750 --> 01:02:54.000

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Say it's a bit of a broken record but as we move into this, EIS

01:02:55.500 --> 01:03:04.830

BLM - Quincy Bahr: we need to disclose the economic impacts of our various actions, and we need to address and disclose the social impacts.

01:03:06.210 --> 01:03:16.050

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Those are, those are part of what is taken into account when the BLM and when the federal government makes a decision, and when we prepare these Environmental Impact Statements is

01:03:16.560 --> 01:03:26.850

BLM - Quincy Bahr: to make an informed decision, both on all aspects of the human environment which includes both the natural, as well as the social and economic, so those are things that,

01:03:27.330 --> 01:03:34.020

BLM - Quincy Bahr: if there's components that we need to make sure we consider. I will say social becomes a challenge, because it is, there's a

01:03:34.830 --> 01:03:49.560

BLM - Quincy Bahr: as you look from Montana down to Nevada, there's a lot of different social settings in there, so if there are conditions and information that we should be considering when preparing the EIS we ask for that input.

01:03:52.050 --> 01:03:58.620

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy and Pat for those responses. I'll go ahead and move on to our next question received here.

01:03:59.220 --> 01:04:06.540

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is let's see, ACECs (Areas of Critical Environmental Concern) is that acronym, were analyzed in the 2015

01:04:07.440 --> 01:04:23.790

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: plans and largely found to be inconsistent with FLPMA, the Federal Land Policy Management Act, and local cultural needs, including livestock grazing. So the question is: how has this changed? And let's see I'll go first to Pat, to see if you have a response to that.

01:04:33.210 --> 01:04:37.890

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Nope sorry Pat, I think I unmuted myself instead of unmuting you, there we go.

01:04:40.950 --> 01:04:55.350

BLM - Pat Deibert: No problem, no problem at all, and so you know I will be honest with you, I was not involved on the BLM side of 2015 plans, and so I don't know about the consistency with the Federal Land Management Planning Act, however,

01:04:56.010 --> 01:05:02.220

BLM - Pat Deibert: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are one management tool within the suite of management tools

01:05:02.550 --> 01:05:11.580

BLM - Pat Deibert: that the Bureau of Land Management has in their consideration. I have no idea what we're going to do with the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. I do not know if any will be nominated

01:05:11.880 --> 01:05:19.500

BLM - Pat Deibert: or how we will act on them. However, we don't want to disclose, or we don't want to exclude any options at this point in our process

01:05:20.220 --> 01:05:33.870

BLM - Pat Deibert: that something may be a useful management tool in some specific areas across the species range, so we don't want to leave them off the table at this point in time but does not mean that they will be part of our final planning effort.

01:05:37.830 --> 01:05:44.250

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute and we'll move on to our next question here.

01:05:46.830 --> 01:06:00.120

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Let's see, I think we are up to question number 19, let me just find it really quickly here. Again I have restricted that chat feature, for now, as we try and catch up to our currently submitted questions. If we catch up to those

01:06:00.900 --> 01:06:08.520

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: we will open back up that chat feature and work our way through any new questions and again we'll try and save some time here for our phone callers.

01:06:08.790 --> 01:06:23.070

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: For now, I'll go ahead and move on to let's see question number 19, which is: what is the most influential way for



a viewpoint or idea to be conveyed during the scoping process? And I will go to Quincy to respond to that question.

01:06:24.420 --> 01:06:29.640

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So, one of the things we try very carefully and with the BLM with the federal government,

01:06:32.190 --> 01:06:42.330

BLM - Quincy Bahr: it's the value of the question of the other comment, not who it comes from necessarily. Not, it's the content of the input so as you provide input,

01:06:43.140 --> 01:06:55.290

BLM - Quincy Bahr: detail about the decision to be made, it's going to be informative to helping us disclose impacts of our actions and so

01:06:55.890 --> 01:07:10.260

BLM - Quincy Bahr: as far as whether or not sending it through ePlanning or sending it a hard copy that doesn't matter, we need the comment however you can get it to us. I will tell you it's a little easier in this day and age when it comes electronically.

01:07:11.310 --> 01:07:21.990

BLM - Quincy Bahr: If it comes hard copy, we're going to scan it so that's not an influence question that's just a functionality question so at this point we try to treat all those questions and input,

01:07:23.610 --> 01:07:30.960

BLM - Quincy Bahr: again, looking at the content of the information and how it can inform analysis, how can inform alternatives.

01:07:34.200 --> 01:07:40.080

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute and move on to question number 20.

01:07:40.770 --> 01:07:47.760

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And let's see so the question says, great progress has been made on private land and through privately funded projects

01:07:48.030 --> 01:08:04.050

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: in Nevada's portion of the great basin through compensatory mitigation banks. So the question is: does the BLM plan to keep these tools and others like them in place as acceptable compensatory mitigation tools in the LUPAs?

01:08:05.100 --> 01:08:08.220

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And let's see Pat, I will go to you to respond to that one.

01:08:09.690 --> 01:08:10.620

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda.

01:08:13.200 --> 01:08:15.030

BLM - Pat Deibert: We have,

01:08:16.080 --> 01:08:28.200

BLM - Pat Deibert: we have reinstated the 2016 mitigation policy which allows for content or compensatory mitigation to occur, and therefore has a place for these mitigation banks on the landscape.

01:08:28.890 --> 01:08:39.210

BLM - Pat Deibert: I'm thoroughly aware that we do have some great mitigation happening in different parts of the range of the greater sage-grouse and we have no intent of shutting those efforts down

01:08:40.260 --> 01:08:45.660

BLM - Pat Deibert: through our planning process. It's not our intent, our intent is to see where we can

01:08:47.040 --> 01:08:56.520

BLM - Pat Deibert: where necessary, where can we support through our planning process and mitigation hierarchy, that is how we can we avoid and minimize first before we have to go to compensatory mitigation.

01:09:00.360 --> 01:09:17.130

BLM - Pat Deibert: So, we have, I also want to acknowledge that states may have separate mitigation plans, mitigation policies and strategies, they are different from those of the BLM are implementing, even though we are aware they exist, neither one of them are planning decisions.

01:09:18.210 --> 01:09:30.330

BLM - Pat Deibert: But like I said, we do intend to continue working through the mitigation hierarchy and where mitigation is necessary and is consistent with a 2016 mitigation policy, we will definitely implement that.

01:09:35.490 --> 01:09:56.220

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thanks for that response, Pat, and I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted for this next one question 21 which is: is the BLM considering new studies that have/are being done by area agricultural research stations and local collaboratives and partners with local BLM districts?

01:09:57.810 --> 01:10:07.950

BLM - Pat Deibert: Absolutely any of the research coming through our partners, such as the agricultural research stations or other entities doing the research out there and on the ground,

01:10:08.460 --> 01:10:18.210

BLM - Pat Deibert: is definitely information that we will consider moving forward, so they are considered. Our partners, they've been helpful in our monitoring efforts, and we will consider their information.

01:10:22.050 --> 01:10:28.830

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Excellent thank you Pat for that response, we will go ahead and move on to question number 22.

01:10:29.250 --> 01:10:42.330

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: will the needs of pinyon-juniper dependent species be part of planning when pinyon-juniper management to benefit sage-grouse is carried out? And I will go to Quincy to respond to that question.

01:10:43.290 --> 01:10:46.590

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Yes, short answer is yes. One of the issues that

01:10:46.590 --> 01:10:53.520

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Pat raised or that Pat covered in the NOI from the Notice of Intent, sorry about the acronym use,

01:10:54.300 --> 01:11:00.960

BLM - Quincy Bahr: was management to sage-grouse habitat, including management of vegetation or implementation of vegetation management actions,

01:11:01.800 --> 01:11:11.970

BLM - Quincy Bahr: making sure that as we manage for one species, we don't end up doing detrimental actions or impacts to another, and so this is one of the challenges of a single species management.

01:11:12.780 --> 01:11:20.430

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And so, this is one of the reasons why we've been specific as we were talking about this planning effort. We're looking at sage-grouse management and sagebrush habitat.

01:11:20.970 --> 01:11:40.530

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And so, one of the, one of the impacts we will be looking at is, as we are analyzing proposed actions in the range of alternatives, is not only the impacts to sage-grouse but also impacts to the other resource species and resources that could be affected by those actions.

01:11:43.080 --> 01:11:58.680

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Quincy for that response. We'll go ahead and move on to question number 23 which is: will the BLM be considering predator control options within a land use plan amendment? And I will go to Pat to respond to that.

01:12:04.170 --> 01:12:08.700

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, let me ask you to unmute again, you might be double muted on your end Pat, there we go.

01:12:09.660 --> 01:12:22.350

BLM - Pat Deibert: There we go I got it, yeah so, the BLM is very much aware of the research regarding predators and impacts on greater sage-grouse but also very much aware of the fact that sage-grouse are prey, and they do not die from old age.

01:12:23.250 --> 01:12:33.060

BLM - Pat Deibert: The Bureau of Land Management does not manage predators, we do not have the management authority to manage predators that may be affecting greater sage-grouse populations.

01:12:34.350 --> 01:12:42.780

BLM - Pat Deibert: We are mostly focused on improving the habitat, which is the best thing we can do to reduce the impacts of predation on greater sage-grouse.

01:12:43.530 --> 01:12:56.070

BLM - Pat Deibert: So, we don't have that authority, we have been working with partners to address localized situations, but in general, we do not have predator control options, because we don't have a management responsibility for them.

01:12:59.730 --> 01:13:03.660

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Pat, for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute.

01:13:04.020 --> 01:13:16.350

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And we'll move on to question number 24, and then I'm going to pause and see if any of our phone callers have questions, because we do have about 15 minutes remaining and I want to make sure that they have an opportunity

01:13:16.620 --> 01:13:37.050

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: to ask their questions, but for now I'll ask question number 24 which is: will the BLM consideration of climate change impacts involve the burning of fossil fuels and the sale of oil and gas leases by the BLM for extracting those fossil fuels? And Quincy, I'll go to you for that response.

01:13:37.890 --> 01:13:41.070

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So, the, one of the things as we've as we've,

01:13:42.270 --> 01:13:55.950

BLM - Quincy Bahr: short answer yes, we will be analyzing effects from the management actions that we're proposing. If one of those management actions is considering leasing of potential fossil fuels,

01:13:56.760 --> 01:14:07.710

BLM - Quincy Bahr: we would analyze the effects from that, both direct impacts from the development itself and the footprint and loss of habitat, as well as indirect effects, as well as those longer,

01:14:08.820 --> 01:14:16.380

BLM - Quincy Bahr: broader indirect effects as far as impact and contribution to climate, climate change, and that is something that

01:14:17.760 --> 01:14:18.900

BLM - Quincy Bahr: is part of

01:14:19.920 --> 01:14:21.210

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the

01:14:22.500 --> 01:14:32.430

BLM - Quincy Bahr: NEPA, National Environmental Policy Act, impact analysis process, is looking at both direct, indirect, as well as those cumulative effects from a proposed action.

01:14:32.940 --> 01:14:43.620

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So, if we are considering alternatives that consider potential leasing, we will be analyzing the potential impacts from that leasing, both directly, indirectly, and cumulatively.

01:14:47.190 --> 01:14:54.960

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Quincy, for that response. I'll go ahead and put you on mute and I'll pause here to see if our phone callers

01:14:55.290 --> 01:15:06.900

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: have a question that they would like to ask. I do see that we have a handful, so if you're a phone caller and you have a question that you would like to ask, since you don't have access to that zoom chat feature,

01:15:07.350 --> 01:15:19.170

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: we ask that you press star nine on your phone keypad. That will access the raise hand feature and will show us on our end that you have a question that you would like to ask verbally.

01:15:19.680 --> 01:15:24.300

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We will then unmute you so that you can verbally ask your question for BLM staff.

01:15:24.660 --> 01:15:32.610

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We'll then put you back on mute and a BLM staffer will respond to your question. So star nine to access that raise hand feature.

01:15:32.940 --> 01:15:40.980

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And then we'll ask you to press star six to unmute yourself, so star nine if you have a question, star six to unmute yourself.

01:15:41.700 --> 01:15:47.130

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I'll identify you by the last four digits of your phone number before I unmute you.

01:15:47.850 --> 01:15:54.720

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, at this time, I'll just keep a lookout for raised hands from our phone callers. I don't see any at the moment.

01:15:55.140 --> 01:16:09.300

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, while I kind of just continue to look out for those raised hands, we're just going to continue to move on to our questions received via that zoom chat feature, but again star nine on your phone keypad.

01:16:10.410 --> 01:16:25.890

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Alright, so we will move on to question number 25 for now, which is: what are the target dates for the draft Environmental Impact Statement documents for the SFA withdrawal and the planning process? And Pat I'll go to you for that response.

01:16:28.020 --> 01:16:35.820

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda, for a planning process we are hopeful that we can get a draft EIS out later this year, maybe sometime this fall.

01:16:36.600 --> 01:16:53.550

BLM - Pat Deibert: The SFA process is again, it's a separate process. It's not part of this planning effort but we're on a similar timeline with the SFA that we hoped, the sagebrush focal areas, we hope to have that out also by early fall this year, at least the draft EIS.

01:16:56.880 --> 01:17:01.320

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Pat, for that response. We'll move on to our next questions here.

01:17:04.950 --> 01:17:20.910

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Let's see it looks like question number 26 relates to sagebrush focal areas, so I'll read the question and then Pat, I'll go back to you to start us off with the response so question number 26 is: are the boundaries of sagebrush focal areas going to be reconsidered?

01:17:24.420 --> 01:17:36.330

BLM - Pat Deibert: So again, the boundaries for sagebrush focal areas was not part of this planning process. It is, however, part of our SFA, sagebrush focal areas, process, is a separate process.

01:17:37.350 --> 01:17:43.740

BLM - Pat Deibert: Just a quick reminder that sagebrush focal areas were also part of priority habitat management areas.

01:17:44.310 --> 01:17:51.330

BLM - Pat Deibert: And absolutely we will be taking a look at those to make sure that we have used the best information to get those priority habitat management areas

01:17:52.110 --> 01:18:05.250

BLM - Pat Deibert: properly delineated on the landscape for this planning effort. We will be looking at the boundaries for the sagebrush focal area to determine if, in fact, they are still appropriate for the conservation of the greater sage-grouse.

01:18:08.340 --> 01:18:17.730

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. I'll go ahead and just continue to move on to our questions currently received. I don't see any raised hands from our phone callers.

01:18:18.030 --> 01:18:27.630

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We have a little under 15 minutes remaining. Again we're going to try to get through as many questions as we can that were submitted before I turned off that chat feature

01:18:27.930 --> 01:18:35.520

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: in the hopes that we can turn back on that chat feature to go through any new questions that participants might have today.

01:18:36.870 --> 01:18:47.790

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: But for now, again we're just going to keep moving through our questions that were submitted before I turned off that chat feature. So let's see question number 27: the 2015

01:18:48.690 --> 01:18:59.130

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: BLM sage-grouse conservation strategy incorporated rangewide guidelines for sage-grouse conservation produced by a team of scientists and sage

01:18:59.940 --> 01:19:12.480

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: sagebrush experts included in the conservation objectives team or COT report. So the question is: how will this information be incorporated into the new sage-grouse plans?

01:19:12.870 --> 01:19:30.900

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And another part of that question is: should each state be permitted to produce its own sage-grouse conservation plan, and would adherence to peer reviewed science be



required for plans to be accepted and approved? So, Pat I'll go to you to kind of respond to all of those questions.

01:19:33.240 --> 01:19:39.630

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda, hopefully I won't forget any here so first of all, the conservation objectives report

01:19:40.230 --> 01:19:48.750

BLM - Pat Deibert: was information that was produced in 2013 that looked at threats to the species, to greater sage-grouse, based on the population were contained in

01:19:49.500 --> 01:19:59.640

BLM - Pat Deibert: Great information in that report, and we will be considering any information from that report that is still current. We are looking to make sure we have the most updated information

01:20:00.000 --> 01:20:13.380

BLM - Pat Deibert: as to how either the population or threats to those populations have changed or how the threats themselves have changed, whether or not there are other things that we can be incorporating into that consideration, updated information.

01:20:14.490 --> 01:20:26.190

BLM - Pat Deibert: As far as whether or not each state should be permitted to produce its own sage brush or sage-grouse conservation plan, every single state within the range of greater sage-grouse does have their own sage-grouse conservation plan at this time.

01:20:26.940 --> 01:20:39.300

BLM - Pat Deibert: We have been actively engaging with the states, trying to understand what those plans are. They were a big part of our discussions in the past, and we will definitely be considering the elements of those plans as we move forward in this effort.

01:20:40.890 --> 01:20:42.180

BLM - Pat Deibert: And would adherence

01:20:43.260 --> 01:20:52.890

BLM - Pat Deibert: for the state sage-grouse plan, adherence to peer reviewed science be necessary to accept these plans or not.

01:20:54.270 --> 01:21:06.180

BLM - Pat Deibert: Whether or not the state plans are accepted is actually under the purview of the state, but all the state plans are

currently based on some of the best available science for those states.

01:21:06.750 --> 01:21:19.020

BLM - Pat Deibert: With all the local nuances considered, all the local situations considered, and development of their strategies, including some of the social economic impacts of their planning efforts.

01:21:22.500 --> 01:21:33.660

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Excellent. Thank you, Pat, for that response. I'll go ahead and put you back on mute. Again, I don't see any raised hands so we're going to move on to our next question, question number 28.

01:21:34.140 --> 01:21:46.170

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: will the BLM consider the use of traditional ecological knowledge or TEK in evaluating changes and management? And Quincy I'll go to you for that response.

01:21:47.280 --> 01:22:00.510

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Thank you, so I mentioned earlier, our outreach to our cooperating agencies to counties, to states, to other federal agencies, I failed to mention at that point we've also reached out to

01:22:00.570 --> 01:22:00.990

BLM - Quincy Bahr: our

01:22:01.080 --> 01:22:02.700

BLM - Quincy Bahr: our tribal partners or

01:22:02.760 --> 01:22:05.100

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the sovereign governments that

01:22:06.990 --> 01:22:18.720

BLM - Quincy Bahr: are, have lived on these lands for a long time and have a lot of that traditional knowledge and so as part of this process, we are definitely reaching out to obtain that traditional ecological knowledge.

01:22:19.770 --> 01:22:24.060

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Good heavens, that traditional ecological knowledge

01:22:25.440 --> 01:22:34.800

BLM - Quincy Bahr: as part of our process and making sure that, whether it be the scientific traditionally collected scientific knowledge or whether it be that traditional ecological knowledge.

01:22:35.250 --> 01:22:43.920

BLM - Quincy Bahr: We want to make informed decisions, and so we are seeking that information as well, both as part of the scoping process, as well as part of our tribal consultation.

01:22:48.540 --> 01:22:54.720

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted here for question number 29,

01:22:55.110 --> 01:23:10.740

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: which is: many of the responses indicate that much discretion is given to range personnel and BLM employees so as part of this planning process, how does the development of sage-grouse management policies deal with this discretionary impact?

01:23:12.360 --> 01:23:19.560

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And this is a challenge with land use planning because there are multiple levels of decision making within anything.

01:23:20.280 --> 01:23:24.090

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Whether it be municipal governments or BLM public land use management.

01:23:24.750 --> 01:23:34.050

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And so, it's trying to find that balance between providing guidance and some of the certainty associated with conservation, but also making sure that there is

01:23:34.440 --> 01:23:44.520

BLM - Quincy Bahr: consideration for local differences as you move through the range of sage-grouse. There are honest to goodness differences as you look at, you know, you can't say that

01:23:45.300 --> 01:23:53.850

BLM - Quincy Bahr: some of the Montana habitats are going to be the same as some of the southern Utah or southern Nevada great basin habitats, so it's making sure that there is some guidance,

01:23:54.180 --> 01:24:02.100

BLM - Quincy Bahr: some consistency for conservation, but also some of that flexibility to make sure that local conditions can be taken into account when making decisions.

01:24:03.330 --> 01:24:23.670

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That is built into the, as you read, the BLM land use planning handbook. What is an RMP decision versus what is an implementation decision is identified, and so in those aspects, we will be making those land use plan decisions per that that guidance in our handbook.

01:24:26.280 --> 01:24:35.040

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And beyond that it's making sure that that we provide sufficient guidance between the goals and objectives, our desired outcomes of what we'd like to see.

01:24:36.360 --> 01:24:48.210

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That, as you go through implementation, if there is not specificity in the land use plan decision, there is still the desired outcome that describes for that local manager and local staff

01:24:48.840 --> 01:25:02.460

BLM - Quincy Bahr: to see what the desired objective, and the desired condition, that the plan is working towards. That helps guide the local managers and specialists in their decisions on the ground.

01:25:05.640 --> 01:25:11.640

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll put you on mute, and we're going to move on to question number 30.

01:25:11.970 --> 01:25:18.540

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And that is the end of the questions that were submitted before I turned off that chat feature earlier.

01:25:18.960 --> 01:25:26.820

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: I know I said that we had 38 but due to some duplicate questions and some questions that were combined together, we have reached the end of that list.

01:25:27.120 --> 01:25:30.630

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: So, at this time, I'm going to open back up that chat feature.

01:25:30.870 --> 01:25:37.320

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And we're going to try and grab just a handful more of questions. Again I know we have a lot of participants today and we're going to do our best

01:25:37.530 --> 01:25:52.050

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: to get all of the questions that are submitted responded to during our time frame. So, I've opened back up that chat feature again, please send those questions over to Clayton McGee, who is a co-host for today's meeting.

01:25:52.620 --> 01:26:04.380

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: In the meantime, I'll check again for any raised hands from phone callers. I don't see any. Again, you can press star nine on your phone keypad to access that raise hand feature.

01:26:05.370 --> 01:26:15.420

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: While we wait for new questions to come in. I'm going to move to our last previously submitted question before I turned off that chat feature, question number 30.

01:26:15.810 --> 01:26:33.810

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: will the BLM's NEPA schedule accommodate consideration of the WAFWA part two management strategies report scheduled for final release late in 2022? And I will go to Pat to respond to that question.

01:26:35.550 --> 01:26:45.390

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thanks Amanda. The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies is going to submit the part two of their sagebrush conservation strategy

01:26:45.750 --> 01:26:55.290

BLM - Pat Deibert: to peer review, I believe, within the next couple of months and we are hopeful, we have been working very closely with them, as well as many BLM employees being

01:26:56.220 --> 01:27:02.610

BLM - Pat Deibert: members of different teams, have different portions of that strategy. We're very hopeful we can get that information back

01:27:03.300 --> 01:27:19.020

BLM - Pat Deibert: to us, so we can get those documents back to us before we hit the end of our planning process, hopefully before we get to our draft EIS stage. So, we're hopeful, and they are aware of our

process and our timeline, and they are working very hard to meet that and we're on it.

01:27:21.000 --> 01:27:35.880

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat for that response. We already received a new question, so I'll move on to that one question number 31 which is: will the BLM be preparing new habitat management maps? And I will go back to Quincy to respond to that one.

01:27:37.440 --> 01:27:46.260

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So again, the nature of the question, I just want to make sure we're not set on what we're doing. We're asking for input on what we should be doing.

01:27:47.100 --> 01:27:52.590

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And then, I'll point to the notice of intent, one of the one of the issues identified there does include

01:27:53.070 --> 01:28:03.720

BLM - Quincy Bahr: the designation of priority in general habitat management areas so looking at, and working obviously with our state partners who were integral and in helping draw those maps and in some of

01:28:04.290 --> 01:28:09.330

BLM - Quincy Bahr: those maps but working as a team to draw and identify what are important for sage-grouse,

01:28:10.200 --> 01:28:18.990

BLM - Quincy Bahr: taking an opportunity right now to evaluate those areas in context of the various literature that's been out there, looking to see how to adapt them over time,

01:28:19.980 --> 01:28:31.110

BLM - Quincy Bahr: looking to see how do we address non-habitat within those areas. These are all issues that have come up over the past seven years and have, we've seen

01:28:32.190 --> 01:28:40.890

BLM - Quincy Bahr: issues that need to be resolved, questions that have come up as we've implemented these plans, and so those are all things we're looking at in this process.

01:28:41.490 --> 01:28:46.800

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Whether we do or don't depends on what the information is we received from scoping, what the science directs. So

01:28:47.310 --> 01:28:58.020

BLM - Quincy Bahr: we will be considering, those are on the table for consideration, whether we will be or not, that is yet to be determined as we go through scoping and working with our partners to develop alternatives.

01:29:00.720 --> 01:29:18.300

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy, and I'll go ahead and keep you unmuted here for this next question, question 32 which is: regarding management of wild horses, how will the BLM established that overpopulation of wild horses and burros can be scientifically established?

01:29:20.070 --> 01:29:29.280

BLM - Quincy Bahr: So, on this I may turn to Pat, I know there's some new research regarding wild horses and impacts to sage-grouse, but again when it comes to this effort,

01:29:29.730 --> 01:29:41.670

BLM - Quincy Bahr: we're looking at management of sage-grouse and minimization of threats to them. That can include wild horses and burros as we're looking at the, where they're located and how

01:29:42.240 --> 01:29:49.710

BLM - Quincy Bahr: many there are. And so that is one of the issues we will be looking at. Pat, you want to hit on some of the new research there?

01:29:51.180 --> 01:30:06.120

BLM - Pat Deibert: Yeah, thanks Quincy. We do have some new research that shows when wild horses and burros are above appropriate management levels in the herd areas, that we do see some negative impacts on greater sage-grouse, so this is definitely

01:30:07.410 --> 01:30:14.760

BLM - Pat Deibert: a consideration in our planning moving forward, working with our wild horse and burro staff to make sure that we are

01:30:15.360 --> 01:30:31.890

BLM - Pat Deibert: forming our planning decisions, as we move forward on this. Part of the question was whether or not those numbers can be scientifically established, and I will be quite honest, we have to go

to our rangeland experts in our wild horse and burro experts to determine the exact

01:30:33.120 --> 01:30:42.480

BLM - Pat Deibert: science on that to develop a new scientific estimate of what should be out there. I will say it's a very challenging question given the mobility of those horses

01:30:42.990 --> 01:30:52.830

BLM - Pat Deibert: and the fact that they may move frequently across the landscape. They don't respect land ownership, and often don't respect fences, so it's very challenging to come up with those numbers.

01:30:53.280 --> 01:31:01.350

BLM - Pat Deibert: But we will be considering their impact on our planning process, even if we don't have the exact science to estimate their abundance down.

01:31:04.740 --> 01:31:11.970

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Pat and Quincy for those responses. So, we're going to end on question number 34 here.

01:31:12.660 --> 01:31:28.470

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Which is: at the end of this process, how would the BLM translate new livestock grazing management guidelines from the new NEPA effort to the many grazing allotments without formal allotment management plans? And Quincy I'll go to you for this one.

01:31:29.250 --> 01:31:43.920

BLM - Quincy Bahr: Okay, and as applicable to livestock grazing, I will also broaden this response to all public land uses. The BLM is required to manage public lands, according to our resource management plans.

01:31:45.090 --> 01:31:54.570

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That is, that's the Congressional direction through FLPMA, through the Federal Land Policy Management Act. So, as we move forward with management actions,

01:31:55.380 --> 01:32:05.520

BLM - Quincy Bahr: authorizing management actions, whether it be oil and gas leases, whether it be recreation permits, whether it be livestock grazing permits, that action must be in compliance with our land use plan.



01:32:06.810 --> 01:32:20.640

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That planning or that implementation process will also have, the so as we go through that decision, and again with in particular relation to livestock grazing, and not every

01:32:22.440 --> 01:32:31.980

BLM - Quincy Bahr: allotment has an allotment management plan. Some of them are authorized through the permit, the tenure grazing permit and so as those permits become

01:32:32.430 --> 01:32:39.660

BLM - Quincy Bahr: up, then that is when, and that was when the BLM would consider alignment conformance with its land use plan

01:32:40.500 --> 01:32:55.230

BLM - Quincy Bahr: and would look at implementing those specific management actions. Again whether it be grazing, or any other land use. Any permitted authorization, authorized action must be in compliance with those lands plans, so that would happen as we move forward.

01:32:56.550 --> 01:33:03.420

BLM - Quincy Bahr: That's again similar with, pick a land use, and there's not a,

01:33:04.830 --> 01:33:15.090

BLM - Quincy Bahr: there's not an effort to brand or to go back and put the new management on all those previous authorizations. It is, what plan is in place when the authorization is granted?

01:33:16.650 --> 01:33:30.060

BLM - Quincy Bahr: And then obviously monitoring associated with the condition of range, whether it be grazing or any other use, looking to make sure that those, that the monitoring is moving us towards our desired conditions.

01:33:32.670 --> 01:33:40.080

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great thank you Quincy for that response. I'll put you on mute, and I'm going to turn it over to Pat here for this last slide.

01:33:40.590 --> 01:33:45.990

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: We have reached the end of our Q and A session. Thank you to everyone for those questions.

01:33:46.980 --> 01:33:56.850

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: And I think we just about got through our entire list of questions that were submitted tonight. I appreciate everyone's patience with allowing us to turn on and off that chat feature.

01:33:57.150 --> 01:34:06.000

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: But I'll turn it over to Pat for her to explain some ways that if you didn't get your questions answered tonight, how you can submit them as written comments.

01:34:07.770 --> 01:34:12.060

BLM - Pat Deibert: Thank you Amanda, and I want to thank all of you for attending and your patience, as we work through

01:34:12.480 --> 01:34:24.870

BLM - Pat Deibert: this process. We clearly do not, we have not selected any alternatives, we have not made any decisions and your participation in the scoping process is essential to inform us as we move forward.

01:34:26.070 --> 01:34:33.630

BLM - Pat Deibert: There's a website listed on the slide right now that takes you into the planning process that Amanda explained to you how to participate.

01:34:34.080 --> 01:34:40.440

BLM - Pat Deibert: We are also willing to take written comments through the mail and that address has been provided in our scoping notice.

01:34:40.890 --> 01:34:49.170

BLM - Pat Deibert: I strongly encourage you that if you have additional comments, if you have additional information that may be helpful in our planning process, we would love to hear from you

01:34:49.500 --> 01:34:58.050

BLM - Pat Deibert: and look forward to reviewing your comments. But I want to thank you for your time this evening, particularly later on a Monday evening, that's a big one, so thanks everybody.

01:35:01.500 --> 01:35:09.750

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: Great. Thank you, Pat, at this time I'll go ahead and leave this slide up here for a few minutes, and we will

01:35:10.170 --> 01:35:19.110

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: try and chat out this link to everyone, again, so that you can copy and paste that link out of the chat and into your web browser as needed.

01:35:19.440 --> 01:35:29.190

EMPSi - Amanda Biedermann: After a few minutes, I'll go ahead and shut down the zoom meeting, but again thank you everyone for your participation and great questions tonight, I hope you have a great rest of your evening.