

WEBVTT

1

00:00:04.760 --> 00:00:16.550

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Hello, everyone! I'd like to welcome you all to the Bureau of Land Management's virtual public meeting for the Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment, and Environmental Impact statement.

2

00:00:16.990 --> 00:00:23.690

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We're going to give folks a few minutes here to join the meeting and then we'll begin the PowerPoint presentation. So please stay tuned.

3

00:00:24.090 --> 00:00:35.059

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: I do also want to note that close captioning is available by selecting the closed caption icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen. If you are joining from the Zoom web portal or Zoom app on your computer.

4

00:01:07.650 --> 00:01:18.430

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: All right again. Welcome everyone to today's meeting for the Bureau of Land Management's Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment, and Environmental Impact statement.

5

00:01:18.850 --> 00:01:26.509

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: My name is Alli Yamnitsky, and I am with AECOM, a contractor for the BLM, and I will be one of your meeting facilitators today.

6

00:01:26.950 --> 00:01:28.220

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Next slide, please.

7

00:01:30.750 --> 00:01:37.709

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: On screen now is our expected agenda. I'll first review a few meeting ground rules and some tips and tricks for using Zoom.

8

00:01:38.090 --> 00:01:42.360

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll then have a few staff introductions before our project presentation.

9

00:01:42.740 --> 00:01:46.660

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Following the presentation, we will have a question-and-answer session.

10

00:01:47.520 --> 00:01:48.600

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: next slide.

11

00:01:50.620 --> 00:01:57.449

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: So for some meeting ground rules, for the duration of this meeting, participant microphones and videos will remain turned off.

12

00:01:58.320 --> 00:02:05.279

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Written questions for the BLM about this project can be sent through the Q&A box located along your Zoom toolbar.

13

00:02:05.650 --> 00:02:15.730

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: You can submit written questions at any time. Throughout the meeting, however, BLM will only begin answering questions once we reach the Q&A session following the presentation.

14

00:02:17.070 --> 00:02:22.930

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we do also have those questions that were submitted with your registration. So, there's no need to submit those twice.

15

00:02:23.030 --> 00:02:26.559

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we do ask that you refrain from using any inappropriate language.

16

00:02:27.910 --> 00:02:37.270

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: During the meeting, if you need any technical assistance, or you're having some issues with Zoom, you can enter your message into the chat box and a technician from our team will contact you.

17

00:02:37.360 --> 00:02:49.600

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Additionally, you could also email me at [alli.yamnitsky@aecom.com](mailto:alli.yamnitsky@aecom.com).

18

00:02:50.560 --> 00:02:51.550

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Next slide.

19

00:02:53.630 --> 00:02:59.899

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: So, for some tips and tricks for using Zoom: all of the features that we'll be using today are on the screen now.

20

00:02:59.960 --> 00:03:12.209

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: These are all also available on that Zoom toolbar which again, is going to be at the bottom of your screen. You might need to either press on your tablet screen or toggle your mouse around to get that toolbar to pop up.

21

00:03:13.430 --> 00:03:23.169

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The Q&A box will be used for any questions directed to the BLM about this project. And again, you can submit those at any time throughout the presentation or during the Q&A session.

22

00:03:24.280 --> 00:03:29.069

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The chat box will be used for any technical Zoom related questions that you may have.

23

00:03:29.150 --> 00:03:39.310

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We will also be placing relevant website links, email addresses and other information in the chat throughout the meeting. So, it's a good idea to keep that open in case you wish to use those.

24

00:03:40.380 --> 00:03:52.999

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And then I do see that we have a few phone callers joining us today. So, if you are joining us by phone, once we've reached the Q&A session, you can select \*9 on your phone's keypad to submit an oral question.

25

00:03:53.500 --> 00:03:57.590

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Since you do not have access to the Q&A box or the chat box.

26

00:03:58.150 --> 00:04:02.870

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And then, lastly, closed captions are available by selecting the Live Transcript icon.

27

00:04:04.050 --> 00:04:10.399

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And with that I would like to turn it over to Pat Deibert with the BLM to get us started with some staff introductions.

28

00:04:15.170 --> 00:04:23.789

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thank you, Alli, and I welcome everyone who is attending today. We appreciate you taking time out of your day to learn more about this effort.

29

00:04:24.050 --> 00:04:36.739

Patricia Deibert - BLM: I am Pat Deibert. I am the BLM's National Sage Grouse Conservation Coordinator, and I'm providing some of the biological support for this effort. I'd like to introduce Quincy Bahr.

30

00:04:37.291 --> 00:04:42.590

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Quincy is our project manager for this Greater Sage-Grouse planning effort. Quincy.

31

00:04:42.590 --> 00:04:45.619

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Hello! How are you all doing today? Glad you can join us.

32

00:04:48.020 --> 00:04:55.414

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We also have with us several staff members who are going to be able to help us address some of the questions that may come up during the presentation.

33

00:04:55.690 --> 00:04:59.860

Patricia Deibert - BLM: and we'll introduce those as we need to later on through the presentation.

34

00:05:01.340 --> 00:05:06.159

Patricia Deibert - BLM: With that I'd like to tell you what we have done to get here today

35

00:05:06.744 --> 00:05:12.889

Patricia Deibert - BLM: What led us to this point felt that it was necessary to redo this planning effort.

36

00:05:12.920 --> 00:05:28.819

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And, as you're well aware, in 2015, we had amended all of our sage grouse amendment, excuse me, all of our RMPs to make sure that we, providing for greater conservation, as requested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service.

37

00:05:29.050 --> 00:05:32.519

Patricia Deibert - BLM: They used this information in their 2015 finding,

38

00:05:32.640 --> 00:05:42.089

Patricia Deibert - BLM: so that they could get to a not warranted determination. It was a significant contributing factor that the BLM did this, change the plans in 2015.

39

00:05:42.860 --> 00:05:54.380

Patricia Deibert - BLM: In 2019 we revisited those plans, and all those plans were amended, except for the state of Montana. Montana opted to keep their 2019 team plans in place.

40

00:05:55.450 --> 00:06:12.120

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Those 2019 plans were challenged legally, and the judge chose to enjoin those plans. So basically, they're still there. They've not been removed, but the BLM cannot use them at this point in time until those court concerns are resolved.

41

00:06:12.190 --> 00:06:16.530

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Therefore, the 2015 plan amendments are currently in effect.

42

00:06:17.560 --> 00:06:19.149

Patricia Deibert - BLM: next slide, please.

43

00:06:21.180 --> 00:06:26.140

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So why do a new effort? Why not just simply address the 2019 concerns?

44

00:06:26.460 --> 00:06:46.740

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Well, in determining how we were going to approach this, we found that there was extensive new information on Greater Sage-Grouse published in the scientific literature since 2015, and this information really helped refine how we would do management to help us understand how to better do conservation for the species and the sagebrush habitat.

45

00:06:47.580 --> 00:06:52.730

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Additionally, sage grouse numbers continued to experience long-term declines.

46

00:06:53.040 --> 00:07:15.909

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And through our monitoring reports, which was published in 2020, we determined that there were several habitat triggers that had been tripped, suggesting that there was a concern with habitat for sage grouse in certain areas, and there were 42 areas that trip population triggers which again reflects this long-term population decline of almost 37 percent, since 2002.

47

00:07:17.120 --> 00:07:33.590

Patricia Deibert - BLM: There are spatial and temporal differences in the rate of decline. Everyone's got a little bit of a different story based on their local situation. But in general, all the states across the range

of the Greater Sage-Grouse are experiencing these long term, declining sage grouse population numbers.

48

00:07:35.220 --> 00:07:40.869

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We also saw changes to a land- the sagebrush landscape due to drought and due to climate change.

49

00:07:40.890 --> 00:07:46.279

Patricia Deibert - BLM: and we wanted to make sure that plans moving forward would be robust and addressing these issues.

50

00:07:46.990 --> 00:07:54.499

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And of course, we also want to address these court concerns that would help improve our plan durability moving forward.

51

00:07:54.590 --> 00:08:03.609

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, taking all these factors into consideration, we opted to instead of trying to quote unquote, fix what the court was concerned with in 2019,

52

00:08:03.740 --> 00:08:13.359

Patricia Deibert - BLM: we wanted to move forward with the new decisions that would incorporate this new science and basically incorporate some of the lessons learned from what we had previously.

53

00:08:13.950 --> 00:08:15.489

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Next slide, please.

54

00:08:18.900 --> 00:08:22.299

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, what is our proposed action? What are we planning to do here to?

55

00:08:22.580 --> 00:08:34.770

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We are going to amend the goals, objectives, and management from our previous planning efforts in 77 resource management plans, with the intent of enhancing Greater Sage-Grouse conservation.

56

00:08:36.220 --> 00:08:42.130

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Now we're not totally throwing out what we had learned before. Nor are we totally throwing out those plans.

57

00:08:42.230 --> 00:09:01.350

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We're building on what we learned and what we did in 2015 and 2019. And we're focused on addressing the new scientific information to try to enhance the conservation for Greater Sage-Grouse on BLM administered lands. And yet, continue our responsible uses through our multiple use mandate.

58

00:09:02.970 --> 00:09:04.390

Patricia Deibert - BLM: next slide, please.

59

00:09:06.000 --> 00:09:12.469

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, this is a very general map of our planning. This is where we cover our

60

00:09:12.490 --> 00:09:26.730

Patricia Deibert - BLM: efforts to date, and if we go to the next slide-you can see that it's actually the footprints actually a little smaller, because we're looking at the range of Greater Sage-Grouse. And we're looking at the habitat management areas. And this is what's currently in effect.

61

00:09:26.790 --> 00:09:34.320

Patricia Deibert - BLM: from 2015. But these are habitat management areas that were developed in collaboration with our state wildlife management agency partners.

62

00:09:34.430 --> 00:09:38.793

Patricia Deibert - BLM: The different colors tell you the different prevalence of these habitat's

63

00:09:40.350 --> 00:10:01.050

Patricia Deibert - BLM: priorities on the landscape. The darker colors being priority habitat management areas where we're really focused on ensuring. We have good conservation happening there. The lighter color, general habitat management areas. While they still provide habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse, they may not have the value, the habitat values that the priority habitat areas do.

64

00:10:01.300 --> 00:10:15.919

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And then the blue areas are other habitat management areas. And these are typically designated by the state wildlife management agency, and what resources they provide to sage grouse and their habitats vary according to those state definitions.

65

00:10:16.810 --> 00:10:18.210

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Next slide, please.

66

00:10:27.300 --> 00:10:29.669

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, what is changing? What are we doing?

67

00:10:30.440 --> 00:10:40.849

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, our existing resource management plans from 2019 or 2015, other than those that we're going to describe here in just a minute, are not changing.

68

00:10:40.870 --> 00:11:02.720

Patricia Deibert - BLM: There was a lot of good work, a lot of good effort that those plans, and that the science didn't suggest that those needed changing. We chose not to do that, or if our state wildlife agency partners also provided us to the substantive information that showed that these are still working, we chose not to change those at all.

69

00:11:03.340 --> 00:11:13.859

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, we're not bringing forward the entirety of those plans. We are bringing forward portions of those plans, either the science identified or were identified by our state partners.

70

00:11:14.720 --> 00:11:29.439

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We did review the habitat management area boundaries, and we updated those as appropriate. And that was based not only on the new science but also on state agency input, so we make sure we're doing the conservation, the best conservation for the species in the right place.

71

00:11:30.510 --> 00:11:31.930

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Next slide, please.

72

00:11:35.120 --> 00:11:49.979

Patricia Deibert - BLM: What are some of the science that we considered? There was a lot of science published in about 3 years. We had over 350 new publications that were put out there, and they have continued to accumulate since 2020, 2021, when we started this effort.

73

00:11:50.250 --> 00:11:58.159

Patricia Deibert - BLM: But there were some key pieces that really helped form, particularly looking at where we should be looking at habitat management area boundary chains.

74

00:11:58.520 --> 00:12:06.549

Patricia Deibert - BLM: There's a lot of new information on the genetic makeup of the species, and how those genetics change across the landscape.



75

00:12:06.690 --> 00:12:16.359

Patricia Deibert - BLM: and what really highlighted to us was there's a lot of information now on important areas of genetic diversity which is important for maintaining the species on the landscape long term.

76

00:12:16.980 --> 00:12:24.030

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We also had models of breeding habitats, and where leks had persisted and where they likely to persist into the future.

77

00:12:24.210 --> 00:12:27.070

Patricia Deibert - BLM: so that we were ensure we were conserving those areas.

78

00:12:27.620 --> 00:12:33.390

Patricia Deibert - BLM: There was a lot of information available to us on Greater Sage-Grouse abundance, and how that had changed over time.

79

00:12:33.810 --> 00:12:40.559

Patricia Deibert - BLM: a lot of information regarding the impacts of climate change, and where we are likely to see good, healthy, robust sagebrush.

80

00:12:40.760 --> 00:12:43.680

Patricia Deibert - BLM: habitats to sustain sage grouse in the future.

81

00:12:44.600 --> 00:13:09.079

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And then there's a lot of information on local conditions, and how those had changed and coordination. We identified those in coordination with our local partners. Were there changes in local conditions that would then affect how we would do management or even consider whether or not we would consider a priority management or general management in those areas based on those local conditions and what our partners brought to us in that conversation.

82

00:13:11.150 --> 00:13:12.850

Patricia Deibert - BLM: next slide, please.

83

00:13:15.490 --> 00:13:21.020

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, what are we going to talk about? What are we considering changing in this planning effort that we're under right now?

84

00:13:21.060 --> 00:13:36.109

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We've already talked about the habitat management area alignments. And within that we realize that there are non-habitat areas. So what are the criteria for defining that non habitat? And how would that help us identify what management actions to consider in those areas?

85

00:13:36.610 --> 00:13:43.990

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We wanted to look at the mitigation process. We learned a lot about mitigation, and our state partners have also expanded their mitigation tools.

86

00:13:44.400 --> 00:13:56.650

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Habitat objectives. I think that's everyone's favorite topic. Again, we have learned a lot on what we had done previously, and there's a lot of new information out there on how to address objectives.

87

00:13:57.180 --> 00:13:58.600

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Disturbance caps.

88

00:13:59.228 --> 00:14:08.039

Patricia Deibert - BLM: What level of disturbance to Sage-Grouse, tolerate what level disturbance of the habitat, or can still occur, and still provide habitat for the species?

89

00:14:08.900 --> 00:14:23.090

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Fluid mineral development and leasing objectives. We know that fluid mineral development can be challenging to manage and still maintain conservation for sage grouse. We wanted to make sure we were accurately incorporating the information for that.

90

00:14:23.630 --> 00:14:29.769

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Right along with that goes oil and gas waivers, exceptions, and modification, and how those may change with management.

91

00:14:30.600 --> 00:14:49.060

Patricia Deibert - BLM: one that was brought to us by our state partners that they really wanted to address in this coming effort was renewable energy development and the associated transmission as you know, this is a priority for our current administration and our state partners. We're concerned with how that would be affecting the development of those resources.

92

00:14:50.162 --> 00:14:59.339

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Livestock grazing. We brought that forward primarily, because we're also addressing wild horse and burro management, although they're not significant changes in livestock grazing.

93

00:14:59.540 --> 00:15:05.349

Patricia Deibert - BLM: But wild horse and burro management continues to be an issue of discussion within the BLM. And with our publics.

94

00:15:06.680 --> 00:15:23.250

Patricia Deibert - BLM: an additional topic that our partners brought forward to us were threats from predation. BLM as an agency does not manage predators directly, but we can help with addressing threats from predation where they are causing an issue with Greater Sage-Grouse persistence.

95

00:15:23.540 --> 00:15:24.740

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Excuse me.

96

00:15:24.970 --> 00:15:27.529

Patricia Deibert - BLM: and then our adaptive management approach

97

00:15:28.830 --> 00:15:30.179

Patricia Deibert - BLM: next slide, please.

98

00:15:34.870 --> 00:15:40.149

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We also recognize that this is a vast area that we are proposing changes across.

99

00:15:40.270 --> 00:15:49.840

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And there are ecological differences across those areas that we can't just do a one size fits all. There are also differences between states, either through

100

00:15:50.010 --> 00:15:58.319

Patricia Deibert - BLM: their existing Sage-Grouse management plans or other management plans for their states, including some of the considerations for state economies.

101

00:15:58.740 --> 00:16:06.779

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, we have identified there are some state specific circumstances. And again, our partners brought this forward to us, as well as some internal conversation.

102

00:16:06.840 --> 00:16:22.919

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And they're on the screen here. I can run through them here real quickly. Colorado was concerned with management scales and lek buffers, lek buffers in Colorado don't necessarily apply, as we see in other states, simply because of their topography.

103

00:16:23.439 --> 00:16:28.470

Patricia Deibert - BLM: They also would like some clarifying language and some consistency across resources.

104

00:16:28.510 --> 00:16:36.600

Patricia Deibert - BLM: In Idaho there was concerns with saleable minerals management, and that was a lesson learned about an error that we had made in our previous planning efforts.

105

00:16:37.040 --> 00:16:44.179

Patricia Deibert - BLM: They're also concerned about lek buffers as well as the potential development of nuclear and hydrological energy in that state.

106

00:16:44.760 --> 00:16:49.839

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Montana and Dakotas are just looking to increase the consistency across their different offices.

107

00:16:50.370 --> 00:16:52.819

Patricia Deibert - BLM: In Nevada, and in California,

108

00:16:53.190 --> 00:17:05.030

Patricia Deibert - BLM: a lot of updates on their priority habitat. They have a very precise way of determining priority habitats that's not consistent with how other states do it not necessarily wrong, just inconsistent.

109

00:17:05.461 --> 00:17:08.749

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Fire and vegetation, treatments and coordination on that

110

00:17:09.210 --> 00:17:16.359

Patricia Deibert - BLM: accessions to allocations, and then non energy, leasable minerals management. These are things like uranium and lithium.

111

00:17:17.030 --> 00:17:22.369

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Oregon has research natural areas. They also had concerns that reservable minerals management

112

00:17:23.042 --> 00:17:28.929

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Utah has been deciding whether or not they would continue to include general habitat management

113

00:17:29.000 --> 00:17:38.560

Patricia Deibert - BLM: area management. And then, in the state of Wyoming- Wyoming state added new category called stewardship areas, and those will be included in 2 of our alternatives.

114

00:17:40.580 --> 00:17:42.229

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Next slide, please.

115

00:17:43.570 --> 00:17:49.199

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And, Quincy, I'm going to turn this over to you to talk about where we are headed. With this planning effort.

116

00:17:49.760 --> 00:18:01.439

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Thank you very much. Good background. As we move from what we're considering, I'm going to be covering how the DEIS considers it. And really, that's what we're looking for, as far as input from the public is.

117

00:18:01.590 --> 00:18:04.640

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Have we considered the right alternatives?

118

00:18:04.850 --> 00:18:17.670

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Are we considering the right information when it comes to impact analysis, and when it comes to the alternatives to start with, here, we considered 6 alternatives and briefly, through these, Alternative One

119

00:18:17.960 --> 00:18:26.510

Quincy Bahr - BLM: is based on. So, it's not all of our 2015 management decisions. As Pat said, we're carrying several of those forward unchanged.

120

00:18:26.870 --> 00:18:31.859

Quincy Bahr - BLM: For those items, Pat just raised those items that we are considering.

121

00:18:31.910 --> 00:18:35.720

Quincy Bahr - BLM: It is those management actions from those 2015 plans

122

00:18:36.600 --> 00:19:00.039

Quincy Bahr - BLM: from those plan amendments. Alternative 2, is our no action alternative. It is what our 2019 plan amendments include. That is, the plan. That is the language that's in our plans. And, as Pat mentioned, while it's been enjoined, those weren't overturned. And so those are still the management language that's in our plans that we would be considering amending.

123

00:19:00.430 --> 00:19:13.160

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As you go forward, if you have interest in in how each state has those no action language, you'll notice in Chapter 2 we summarize a lot of those. Some of that language. Oh, back one, not yet.

124

00:19:13.170 --> 00:19:25.759

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There you go! So we summarize a lot of the Alternatives 1 and 2, because it does vary, state to state this, the specific details of Alternatives 1 and 2 are present in Appendix 2

125

00:19:26.070 --> 00:19:31.869

Quincy Bahr - BLM: rather lengthy appendix because it includes all those existing management actions from each of the states.

126

00:19:31.890 --> 00:19:37.970

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and includes those side by side as well as identifying which management actions we're not considering for change.

127

00:19:38.680 --> 00:19:52.550

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Alternatives 3, 4, 5, and 6 in our well, 1 in included, are our action alternatives. 3 is preservation based. Under Alternative 3, all Sage-Grouse habitat management areas

128

00:19:52.810 --> 00:19:55.049

Quincy Bahr - BLM: would be managed as PHMA

129

00:19:55.470 --> 00:20:06.389

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And under that alternative, that PHMA would be managed with the with the greatest levels of restriction. And so that's where you have a lot more closures to future potential activities.

130

00:20:06.610 --> 00:20:11.799

Quincy Bahr - BLM: You also have some ACEC boundaries that are included within Alternative 3 as well.

131

00:20:12.970 --> 00:20:14.730

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Alternative 4

132

00:20:14.970 --> 00:20:36.520

Quincy Bahr - BLM: looks to incorporate adjustments to the balance of PHMA/GHMA. Based on that available science along with Alternative 5 in coordination with our partners. The biggest difference between 4 and 5, as we're looking at the management actions is the degree for some flexibility during implementation.

133

00:20:36.580 --> 00:20:46.779

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, 4 is a little more restrictive in relation to how much flexibility is allowed or considered available for consideration.

134

00:20:47.530 --> 00:20:58.689

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and then 5 has some additional flexibilities when it comes to looking at site specific conditions in relation to the allocations that are present.

135

00:20:59.410 --> 00:21:05.819

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Alternative 6 is based on Alternative 5 as far as most of the PHMA management.

136

00:21:05.990 --> 00:21:11.510

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The difference being under Alternative 6, we add those ACEC boundaries.

137

00:21:11.540 --> 00:21:15.830

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And then have additional management for those ACEC areas.

138

00:21:16.220 --> 00:21:37.320

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Those are both described in Chapter 2, as far as what the management for those ACECs would be, and really what it comes down to is it varies state by state, as far as which how different it is from PHMA. But in across the board in general, those ACECs is a little more restrictive than the associated PHMA identified for Alternative 6.

139

00:21:38.448 --> 00:21:46.329

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We have identified Alternative 5 as our preferred alternative. And now next slide. So this is, I wanted to highlight

140

00:21:46.440 --> 00:21:49.469

Quincy Bahr - BLM: some of the key details associated with that preferred alternative.

141

00:21:50.230 --> 00:21:52.813

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So the habitat management areas.

142

00:21:53.781 --> 00:22:06.750

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There are updates again, working with our state partners to update looking at the science that's present. We looked at how that new science aligns or doesn't align in relation to the

143

00:22:06.840 --> 00:22:09.919

Quincy Bahr - BLM: previous habitat management area boundaries.

144

00:22:10.220 --> 00:22:15.179

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and then made adjustments based on that, and then in coordination with our partners.

145

00:22:15.250 --> 00:22:20.509

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Under Alternative 5, if a state agency had provided us a

146

00:22:20.530 --> 00:22:24.900

Quincy Bahr - BLM: habitat management area boundaries, those are the ones that we included under Alternative 5.

147

00:22:25.822 --> 00:22:36.477

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Again, if you have interest in the differences between the states when it comes to habitat management areas, and how the different states applied those are explained under Appendix 3.

148

00:22:36.930 --> 00:22:40.779

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Where, as Pat noted in those maps earlier.

149

00:22:40.800 --> 00:22:46.200

Quincy Bahr - BLM: there are differences, everyone has priority in general. But, however, every state

150

00:22:46.640 --> 00:22:57.890

Quincy Bahr - BLM: define those or the strategy they took was adapted in coordination with the state partners, and in in relation to available information and ecology, topography, etc.

151

00:22:58.910 --> 00:23:01.449

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The habitat objectives,

152

00:23:01.630 --> 00:23:07.809



Quincy Bahr - BLM: is one of the changes between how we're currently managing and what we're going forward with.

153

00:23:08.260 --> 00:23:23.440

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We had to have that management objectives in 2015 and 2019 and 2024. In this effort the action alternatives look at creating a multi-scale set of objectives, and they're more qualitative in nature, informed by quantitative data.

154

00:23:23.810 --> 00:23:25.420

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Appendix,

155

00:23:25.890 --> 00:23:37.079

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Oh, let me double check here. Really quick. Appendix 8 explains how the specific science from the local settings, the local ecologies,

156

00:23:37.270 --> 00:23:45.779

Quincy Bahr - BLM: is taken into account to inform the site scale, and then the other fine scale and mid-scale

157

00:23:45.990 --> 00:23:59.479

Quincy Bahr - BLM: habitat objectives, and how those play in to help and make sure that as we consider projects going forward, we're considering the effect on the suitability of Sage-Grouse management, and Sage-Grouse habitat.

158

00:24:00.470 --> 00:24:12.369

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The disturbance cap is one that we have made some adjustments in how we calculated again, every plan had a disturbance caps in 2015 and 2019.

159

00:24:13.213 --> 00:24:21.889

Quincy Bahr - BLM: How the changes we're proposing- there was differences, especially at the larger scale, in how those caps were calculated.

160

00:24:22.642 --> 00:24:25.170

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The scale at which

161

00:24:25.220 --> 00:24:29.710

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the 3 percent or 5 percent was calculated, varied state by state.

162

00:24:30.184 --> 00:24:41.915

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Every state at this point does still maintain a project scale and a larger scale in 2015 it was referred to as BSU, or biologically significant units.

163

00:24:42.340 --> 00:24:47.249

Quincy Bahr - BLM: In this effort we are adjusting that larger scale to align with

164

00:24:47.300 --> 00:24:48.034

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the

165

00:24:48.960 --> 00:24:58.520

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the habitat assessment framework, fine scale boundaries, and what those represent is the seasonal habitats associated with a given population.

166

00:24:58.610 --> 00:25:04.529

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so, we felt that for some biological consistency in that biologically defined area,

167

00:25:04.840 --> 00:25:06.870

Quincy Bahr - BLM: as it goes throughout the range,

168

00:25:07.160 --> 00:25:13.619

Quincy Bahr - BLM: provides a bit more consistency in in approach. Again, every area isn't the same size, because

169

00:25:14.090 --> 00:25:23.279

Quincy Bahr - BLM: all the seasonal habitats that a population uses, it varies as you go from the prairies to the mountain and valley, and basin and range, and plateaus.

170

00:25:23.770 --> 00:25:33.330

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But the concept of the seasonal habitats that support those populations was the intent of what we were trying to capture there, that scientifically or that biologically defined area.

171

00:25:33.980 --> 00:25:48.929

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And then the other adjustment from what we've done previously in the preferred alternative is that we do provide for considerations in relation to local conditions, and so that we do provide for an exception to the disturbance cap

172

00:25:49.190 --> 00:25:56.219

Quincy Bahr - BLM: under some specific conditions that are outlined there, and in Chapter 2, that

173

00:25:56.250 --> 00:26:11.389

Quincy Bahr - BLM: if those conditions can be demonstrated, and that as a result, we want to have effects to the population of the grouse in that area, we could allow the cap to be exceeded again, case by case, project by project, and has to be documented.

174

00:26:11.870 --> 00:26:22.570

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We've also made adjustments in adaptive management in 2015 and 2019. All the states had adaptive management projects or approaches strategies

175

00:26:23.117 --> 00:26:27.500

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the triggers varied substantially as did the responses.

176

00:26:27.740 --> 00:26:29.769

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so what you would end up with is

177

00:26:29.940 --> 00:26:35.149

Quincy Bahr - BLM: a population or habitat hitting a trigger on one side of a state line.

178

00:26:35.210 --> 00:26:41.189

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The same population, The birds that walk across that state line on the other side aren't meeting.

179

00:26:41.380 --> 00:26:49.859

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We looked to address some of that, so we wanted consistent thresholds across those political boundaries. While still making sure we had flexibility to consider

180

00:26:50.060 --> 00:26:59.670

Quincy Bahr - BLM: state and local data as far as identifying whether a trigger has been hit, whether there is a real problem and what our response to that should be.

181

00:27:00.610 --> 00:27:11.219

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Wind Solar. In this effort we've made adjustments in in the preferred alternative. Looking at avoidance, most of the habitat was closed in the previous 2015 and 2019

182

00:27:11.676 --> 00:27:18.803

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and so in the preferred alternative, that is an adjustment. It is an avoidance with a high level

183

00:27:19.430 --> 00:27:40.409

Quincy Bahr - BLM: criterion, basically that that we're not excluding it. But in order to proceed, we would need to demonstrate that there is not going to be an effect on the population, and so it provides some flexibility, and considering where, but it still maintains that protection of being able to demonstrate at that project level that the protections will be in place.

184

00:27:41.020 --> 00:27:49.730

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And then, lastly, oil and gas leasing and development. The new preferred alternative does not close new areas to leasing,

185

00:27:50.150 --> 00:28:02.499

Quincy Bahr - BLM: but it does clarify how we would go forward in a strategy, in relation to leasing- leasing as well as during development, the conditions under which we would consider

186

00:28:03.912 --> 00:28:06.160

Quincy Bahr - BLM: waivers, exceptions, and modifications.

187

00:28:06.270 --> 00:28:14.760

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so it's- there's a little bit more detail identifying the conditions under which such exceptions could be considered.

188

00:28:14.790 --> 00:28:27.200

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Again, looking to make sure that impacts to the grouse again are maintained, and that those exceptions would be granted in situations where the protections can be maintained going forward.

189

00:28:28.080 --> 00:28:29.900

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Let's go ahead and look at the next slide, please.

190

00:28:31.690 --> 00:28:38.130

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, without showing there are maps in the in the Draft EIS under Appendix A

191

00:28:38.150 --> 00:28:40.019

Quincy Bahr - BLM: or sorry Appendix

192

00:28:40.330 --> 00:28:50.400

Quincy Bahr - BLM: One. I think that's how we number them here. Appendix One has all the maps. But here is an outline of how the acreages vary.

193

00:28:51.320 --> 00:28:59.160

Quincy Bahr - BLM: You can see as you go across the range of alternatives, obviously under Alternative 3, all the HMAs would be managed as priority.

194

00:28:59.480 --> 00:29:03.029

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And then, as you look at the other alternatives, various adjustments.

195

00:29:03.478 --> 00:29:18.520

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As you do look between the alternatives, you'll see in state to state there are scenarios where something may have been mis-mapped as habitat, and now it's removed, or vice versa. It may have been missed and added.

196

00:29:18.710 --> 00:29:27.789

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There may be situations where, in looking at the data we've adjusted, whether priority to general or general to priority, or important as the case may be.

197

00:29:28.200 --> 00:29:38.660

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, looking here at the range of alternatives and making sure that we're trying to align and put the management where it makes the sense prioritization wise going forward.

198

00:29:40.100 --> 00:29:41.290

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Next slide.

199

00:29:42.690 --> 00:29:49.009

Quincy Bahr - BLM: This is tied to our ACECs. So, Congress, under the Federal Land Policy Management Act

200

00:29:49.447 --> 00:29:59.109

Quincy Bahr - BLM: requires the BLM to consider ACECs that'd be areas of critical environmental concern. They define them specifically as public lands where special management is required

201

00:29:59.130 --> 00:30:02.480

Quincy Bahr - BLM: to protect and prevent irreparable, irreparable damage.

202

00:30:02.560 --> 00:30:13.080

Quincy Bahr - BLM: In this effort the ACEC evaluation process is identified in Appendix 5. And it outlines how we went about that.

203

00:30:13.350 --> 00:30:34.550

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We did receive nominations from the public in relation to ACECs, and so to respond to those nominations, and as well as meeting our regulatory and legal obligations, we evaluate as habitat. Now, the ACECs we received- the ACEC nominations we received were large, expansive throughout the range.

204

00:30:34.690 --> 00:30:45.090

Quincy Bahr - BLM: To make sure we didn't miss anything we did evaluate as our starting point all Sage-Grouse habitat, and so that would meet the first criteria of relevance.

205

00:30:45.160 --> 00:30:52.299

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Then we identified through the data what of those areas meet importance, the importance criteria

206

00:30:52.650 --> 00:30:56.249

Quincy Bahr - BLM: that is that it has a substantial significance.

207

00:30:56.980 --> 00:31:18.649

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As we went through that process, again documented in Appendix 5, we identified potential ACECs and then carried those into the EIS for consideration to determine whether or not that those areas and associated management would provide necessary protection. And so we have some alternatives that include them, Alternatives 3 and 6,

208

00:31:18.680 --> 00:31:20.669

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and some alternatives that don't, those others.

209

00:31:20.700 --> 00:31:28.430

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so, in comparing the effects between those we can determine if that special management is required,

210

00:31:28.700 --> 00:31:33.139

Quincy Bahr - BLM: to protect and prevent that damage to Sage-Grouse habitat.

211

00:31:34.745 --> 00:31:50.380

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The RMPs define ACEC management. There's not a set ACEC management package that automatically gets applied once you put an ACEC label on it. And so that management is identified. I believe I had that up here. It's in- it's in section

212

00:31:50.770 --> 00:31:53.089

Quincy Bahr - BLM: (2.5.12)

213

00:31:53.140 --> 00:32:04.830

Quincy Bahr - BLM: of Chapter 2, identifies the management. It does vary between Alternatives 3 and Alternative 6. It's more restrictive under 3. The boundaries, we did not vary.

214

00:32:05.810 --> 00:32:15.309

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The ACECs differ from PHMA in that the ACECs need to demonstrate the importance that they meet those importance criteria.

215

00:32:15.690 --> 00:32:36.400

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And specifically, as it talks about that having substantial significance especially as it's looking at significance that is more than locally significant. And so, as we were looking at the various data we were looking to identify those areas that started to have those data sets that overlapped and started to indicate that beyond, I hate to say just sage grouse habitat,

216

00:32:36.400 --> 00:32:47.389

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But across the range there is aspects and characteristics associated with those areas that are that are different than perhaps the Sage-Grouse habitat throughout the range.

217

00:32:48.690 --> 00:32:57.749

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And again, I mentioned looking at Appendix 5, for the Draft EIS summary of the evaluation process again, looking for comments on that as well.

218

00:32:57.900 --> 00:32:59.040

Quincy Bahr - BLM: next slide

219

00:33:02.270 --> 00:33:08.570

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As we've gone through this process, the Draft EIS and the preferred alternative,

220

00:33:08.800 --> 00:33:11.949

Quincy Bahr - BLM: we do recognize the populations are still declining.

221

00:33:12.465 --> 00:33:21.450

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As we go forward, we recognize this is not the end. This is not the end answer. This is a planning component for public lands.

222

00:33:21.800 --> 00:33:35.369

Quincy Bahr - BLM: BLM administers a little less than half of those we want to work with our partners going forward to make sure that we can continue to react quickly to changes and to propose to management actions as we go forward in implementation.

223

00:33:36.000 --> 00:33:37.610

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Our preferred alternative

224

00:33:38.158 --> 00:33:42.229

Quincy Bahr - BLM: reflects the most recent and relevant science

225

00:33:42.623 --> 00:33:47.450

Quincy Bahr - BLM: as well as giving us the opportunities to be able to adjust and adapt to climate change.

226

00:33:47.770 --> 00:34:04.529

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We feel that this gives us and sets us on the stage to be able to move forward with conservation as well as effective conservation, as well as being able to adjust to local specific circumstances as we look at implementing projects for conservation as well as uses of public lands.

227

00:34:05.970 --> 00:34:13.020

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We've carried forward or left unchanged the items from 2019, 2015 that have been successful.

228

00:34:13.815 --> 00:34:19.340

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We've wanted to make sure that we include the important pieces that are,

229

00:34:19.440 --> 00:34:29.019

Quincy Bahr - BLM: that have new science that are that are associated with the issues and uses that are of interest to our state partners and our local land users.

230

00:34:30.080 --> 00:34:48.019

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Finally, we want to make sure that these plans are durable. We want to make sure that as we continue given changes in use



and changes in climate, we want to make sure that we're able to make sure that we can balance that consistent management approach for sage grouse conservation while addressing the unique circumstances across the range.

231

00:34:48.580 --> 00:34:58.470

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There has been a long-term relationship as the BLM, doesn't manage the species itself. We manage the habitat. We need to work together,

232

00:34:58.900 --> 00:35:10.020

Quincy Bahr - BLM: as well as with our neighbors, to make sure that these birds that don't recognize those boundaries but recognize the available resources on the landscape and can continue to use them.

233

00:35:11.190 --> 00:35:12.699

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Next slide, please.

234

00:35:13.950 --> 00:35:20.920

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, we are in a public comment period it opened March 15th. It continues for 90 days through June 13th.

235

00:35:21.470 --> 00:35:28.990

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We have in oh, next previous, we encourage comments to be submitted to our ePlanning page.

236

00:35:30.029 --> 00:35:30.790

Quincy Bahr - BLM:

237

00:35:31.470 --> 00:35:41.819

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The code here that I keep forgetting the name of, because I'm a technophobe. The code here will take you to the comment page on the documents and the ePlanning page.

238

00:35:42.100 --> 00:35:45.259

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and you can submit your comments there on that- on that document.

239

00:35:46.210 --> 00:35:49.719

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We're looking to, as we obtain this input

240

00:35:50.230 --> 00:35:53.990

Quincy Bahr - BLM: on the Draft EIS, we want to make sure that we're considering

241

00:35:54.120 --> 00:35:57.099

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the items that will help us make an informed decision.

242

00:35:57.430 --> 00:36:03.400

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We will address all substantive, all substantive comments in the Final EIS.

243

00:36:03.870 --> 00:36:05.589

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Respond to those.

244

00:36:05.810 --> 00:36:11.699

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And we will provide a Final EIS for public review later this fall.

245

00:36:12.702 --> 00:36:20.570

Quincy Bahr - BLM: In that, we need to identify proposed plans. So in the draft, we identify a preferred in the final, we identify proposed plans.

246

00:36:20.580 --> 00:36:28.970

Quincy Bahr - BLM: It's anticipated that, given the state specific circumstances and conditions that vary, it's likely that we'll see state specific proposed plans.

247

00:36:29.390 --> 00:36:35.309

Quincy Bahr - BLM: In the Final EIS will provide to the public that it initiates a 30-day

248

00:36:35.450 --> 00:36:45.810

Quincy Bahr - BLM: protest period as well as a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review. Identified in the regulations to make sure that we're as consistent as we can be with state and local plans.

249

00:36:47.230 --> 00:36:48.420

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Next slide.

250

00:36:51.910 --> 00:36:57.479

Quincy Bahr - BLM: This one was put in here as a preemptive. We anticipate getting questions on this issue.

251

00:36:57.500 --> 00:37:09.220

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So in 2015, as the 2015 efforts concluded, there was another effort that was initiated to consider withdrawal from locatable mineral entry

252

00:37:10.428 --> 00:37:14.439

Quincy Bahr - BLM: these sagebrush focal areas, say SFAs,

253

00:37:15.339 --> 00:37:25.320

Quincy Bahr - BLM: that that effort was terminated in 2017, and we were directed by the courts to finish that NEPA to reinitiate and finish that NEPA.

254

00:37:25.660 --> 00:37:30.429

Quincy Bahr - BLM: That is a separate process, with a separate end decision.

255

00:37:30.940 --> 00:37:38.779

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We are considering whether to withdraw some, none, or all of those sage brush vocal areas as identified in 2015,

256

00:37:39.190 --> 00:37:41.280

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and publication of that draft

257

00:37:41.290 --> 00:37:45.909

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and request of public review and comment is anticipated later this year as well.

258

00:37:47.320 --> 00:37:53.120

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Next one. And I believe that might be just about it. Okay, so turning it back to you, Alli.

259

00:37:54.300 --> 00:37:55.000

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy.

260

00:37:55.660 --> 00:38:07.169

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. We'll go ahead and get started with our question-and-answer session. I'm going to review some instructions on how exactly to do that, and then we will begin providing some answers.

261

00:38:07.600 --> 00:38:21.559

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: So again, to submit a written question, you can go ahead and pull up the Q&A box that's going to be located at the bottom of your Zoom screen along the toolbar, and you may need to toggle your mouse around or press on your tablet screen to get that toolbar to pop up.

262

00:38:22.000 --> 00:38:31.130

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: You can then go ahead and type your question into the Q&A box and submit it to us and our team. And we will compile that with all the other questions we've been receiving today.

263

00:38:32.020 --> 00:38:51.759

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And I do note that we have a few phone callers joining us today. So, if you are joining by phone and you do not have access to the Q&A or the chat box, you can go ahead and submit a verbal question. You can press \*9 on your phone's keypad, and that will raise your hand and indicate to me that you would like to submit a verbal question.

264

00:38:51.940 --> 00:39:04.299

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: I do want to be clear that there will not be any back and forth or discussion with the question that you submit. We will simply accept the question and add it to the list of questions we've received, and then answer it in order.

265

00:39:05.367 --> 00:39:12.570

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: So, if I do see any hands raised from our phone callers, I will then walk through the steps with you to unmute to accept that verbal question.

266

00:39:13.149 --> 00:39:23.360

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And then, lastly, we do have those questions that were submitted with registration. We will be answering those first before we enter any of the questions that we've received during this webinar today.

267

00:39:24.560 --> 00:39:30.399

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: So, with that, I think we will go ahead and begin answering some questions and go to the next slide.

268

00:39:32.720 --> 00:39:39.869

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. So again, we'll start with the questions that were submitted with registration. Our first question is:

269

00:39:39.970 --> 00:39:46.689

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Is "improper grazing" avoided and minimized under every alternative?

270

00:39:46.980 --> 00:39:54.879

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The EIS is unclear on no action versus action, alternatives for grazing, and we'll go to Quincy for that answer.

271

00:39:55.660 --> 00:40:03.710

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Thank you. So short answer, I would say, is, yes.  
Section 2.5.10 of the draft EIS

272

00:40:03.720 --> 00:40:19.020

Quincy Bahr - BLM: includes the range of alternatives for livestock grazing. There's also an appendix if you give me just a second- Appendix 15 includes some additional best management practices and some background information on livestock grazing.

273

00:40:19.360 --> 00:40:34.010

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Our no action alternative is Alternative 2. As I had mentioned previously, and each of the alternatives do focus on addressing that threat again, if you go back to 2015. The big push was making sure we've addressed the threats

274

00:40:34.380 --> 00:40:52.579

Quincy Bahr - BLM: to livestock grazing or to sage grouse from the various land uses in this instance, improper livestock grazing. What we've tried to do in this range of alternatives is make sure that we're focusing on, not just grazing but the improper component and the conditions

275

00:40:52.810 --> 00:40:59.300

Quincy Bahr - BLM: under which that could occur. And then how we would address that as we go forward through those implementation actions.

276

00:41:03.250 --> 00:41:04.419

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Right. Thanks, Quincy.

277

00:41:05.040 --> 00:41:14.199

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is: How will the BLM manage the overlap of solar projects on sage grouse habitat?

278

00:41:14.220 --> 00:41:16.639

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

279

00:41:17.780 --> 00:41:31.417

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks Alli. We have section 2.5.8. I know probably a lot of sense if I don't have the document open right now, but these are outlined the comparison between alternatives in Chapter 2 of the draft EIS

280

00:41:32.255 --> 00:41:42.034

Patricia Deibert - BLM: but it does out that particular set does outline how we're and other renewables be addressed across the range of alternatives.

281

00:41:42.550 --> 00:41:46.977

Patricia Deibert - BLM: they include exclusion or avoidance in PHMA

282

00:41:47.720 --> 00:41:56.289

Patricia Deibert - BLM: it's depending on alternative. They all include either avoidance or open minimization. And GHMAs, it is very specific to the alternative,

283

00:41:57.110 --> 00:42:03.889

Patricia Deibert - BLM: which you can review in that document. I do want to assure folks that we've been working very closely with the solar PEIS folks,

284

00:42:04.020 --> 00:42:12.969

Patricia Deibert - BLM: so that we're not going to have conflicting plans. When this all over, we are making sure that our planning effort is consistent with how they're moving forward in that effort.

285

00:42:16.770 --> 00:42:17.520

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Pat.

286

00:42:18.440 --> 00:42:22.620

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is.

287

00:42:22.640 --> 00:42:26.370

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How does the mitigation work for impacts to sage grouse habitat?

288

00:42:26.410 --> 00:42:28.789

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll just go back to Pat for that answer.

289

00:42:29.730 --> 00:42:30.440

Patricia Deibert - BLM: You bet.

290

00:42:31.260 --> 00:42:43.749

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So we're going to apply, you know, we talk about mitigation. We're not just talking to our compensatory mitigation, wntend

to fully apply mitigation hierarchy to direct and indirect impacts. So that is a way

291

00:42:43.840 --> 00:42:49.049

Patricia Deibert - BLM: the minimization and compensatory mitigation that the first do not work.

292

00:42:49.990 --> 00:42:51.649

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Again, the alternative

293

00:42:51.890 --> 00:43:07.890

Patricia Deibert - BLM: on which component of the mitigation strategy is primary approach, Alternative 3 is primarily focused on avoidance. Alternatives 4, 5 and 6 measure impacts in most areas. But they do provide for minimization

294

00:43:08.230 --> 00:43:16.919

Patricia Deibert - BLM: in some circumstance or minimization circumstances and then a PHMA, where evidence and minimization is not completely addressed and impact

295

00:43:17.090 --> 00:43:21.380

Patricia Deibert - BLM: compensatory mitigation will be targeted at no net loss, although

296

00:43:21.570 --> 00:43:22.630

Patricia Deibert - BLM: visual resources

297

00:43:22.740 --> 00:43:30.260

Patricia Deibert - BLM: may have their mitigation strategy and may require more. That and the BLM. Will defer to them if they do require more.

298

00:43:31.280 --> 00:43:36.749

Patricia Deibert - BLM: I'm going to apologize, my internet is not working well. so I'm going to turn off my picture, but I will be here.

299

00:43:39.220 --> 00:43:40.799

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Sounds great. Thanks, Pat.

300

00:43:42.550 --> 00:43:51.180

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. We'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is, how would they handle BLM lands surrounded by private land?

301

00:43:51.260 --> 00:43:56.490

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: how would restrictions be applied and managed?  
And we'll hear from Quincy for that answer.

302

00:43:57.510 --> 00:43:59.520

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So to start with.

303

00:44:00.252 --> 00:44:13.600

Quincy Bahr - BLM: These plans only apply to BLM Administered lands sort of surface to state and mineral states. Obviously, we. We do not administer or cannot impose management off of these off of public lands.

304

00:44:14.177 --> 00:44:17.240

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We also recognize that there's scenarios where

305

00:44:17.480 --> 00:44:39.779

Quincy Bahr - BLM: we there is mixed ownership where the public lands is in very close proximity, or some in many instances, minority compared to adjacent lands. And so in those scenarios we recognize that there could be effects especially based on which alternative is selected or considered. We try and make sure we disclose those impacts.

306

00:44:40.240 --> 00:44:48.899

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Again, for example, the effects of closing an area to mineral estate when there is split ownership in that area,

307

00:44:49.506 --> 00:44:50.600

Quincy Bahr - BLM: could affect

308

00:44:51.760 --> 00:45:01.640

Quincy Bahr - BLM: development opportunities on private lands, or non BLM, I should be, I should be careful with so private state or other Federal. So,

309

00:45:01.760 --> 00:45:07.999

Quincy Bahr - BLM: in short, it doesn't change the management of those adjacent lands. It doesn't apply to those.

310

00:45:08.550 --> 00:45:31.070

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But it could affect it and the opportunities for development on those adjacent lands. And so we've tried to make sure that we describe across these range of alternatives how in those types of scenarios, the effects could occur, especially on the economic side. How-



how the different alternatives and those mixed ownerships could affect those adjacent lands.

311

00:45:35.070 --> 00:45:36.510

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, thanks, Quincy.

312

00:45:37.320 --> 00:45:45.340

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, how will the preferred alternative affect Greater Sage-Grouse population levels and habitat availability?

313

00:45:45.350 --> 00:45:47.649

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

314

00:45:49.855 --> 00:46:17.670

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So the BLM is, as Quincy pointed out, the BLM, only has management for about half of the species range a little bit less than half of the species range. And what we're trying to do is implement strategies that on the BLM-administered lands will slow or stop the decline of the species on those lands. The preferred alternative incorporates some of the cons- or incorporates these conservation measures that will do so.

315

00:46:18.169 --> 00:46:42.580

Patricia Deibert - BLM: But we also are a multiple use agency and have a multiple use mandate. So we are trying to be accommodating of those other uses of our lands. By looking at our local flexibilities- Where is it that we can adjust some of those conservation actions under our preferred alternatives on a local level? So that we can still meet that multiple use mandate and still provide that conservation for sage grouse.

316

00:46:42.600 --> 00:46:59.649

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, the intent is to implement these conservation actions across the range of sage grouse, and where we need to have that resolution, we're going to incorporate local information and local knowledge, to make the best choices there, to ensure that we are minimizing or removing the impact to sage grouse.

317

00:47:04.710 --> 00:47:05.519

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Pat.

318

00:47:06.700 --> 00:47:22.109

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is, will the BLM reinstate the areas of critical habitat concern for Greater Sage-Grouse that were adopted during the Obama administration? And we'll go back to Pat for that answer.

319

00:47:22.740 --> 00:47:30.489

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks, Alli. I I'm going to make an assumption here that the questioner was actually asking about the sagebrush focal areas.

320

00:47:30.530 --> 00:47:36.199

Patricia Deibert - BLM: That were identified and in court included in the 2015 BLM planning effort.

321

00:47:36.613 --> 00:47:52.695

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Sagebrush focal areas are a part of the range of alternatives. They were brought forward from the previous planning efforts. And we are considering the currently, the new science. The best science has been submitted, or has been published since then,

322

00:47:53.200 --> 00:47:58.510

Patricia Deibert - BLM: to identify, designate and manage habitat needs for sage grouse conservation.

323

00:47:58.680 --> 00:48:06.489

Patricia Deibert - BLM: That, said the sagebrush focal area determinations are actually going to be handled under a different

324

00:48:07.140 --> 00:48:08.970

Patricia Deibert - BLM: environmental impact statement.

325

00:48:09.640 --> 00:48:12.659

Patricia Deibert - BLM: The consideration of drawing those areas

326

00:48:12.700 --> 00:48:31.670

Patricia Deibert - BLM: from mineral location and entry associated with the Mining Law of 1872. Will be addressed in the separate effort. We're still collecting input to develop the Draft EIS on that effort, and we will have a separate public review and comment period for that effort later this year.

327

00:48:35.010 --> 00:48:43.440

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, thanks, Pat, and I do want to quickly note before I get to our next question, although we are still in our registered questions.

328

00:48:43.440 --> 00:49:12.619

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We are receiving a couple of live questions through the chat box. And I just want to make sure folks are submitting questions through the Q&A box that helps us track things a little bit better in the background and make sure that we are answering all the questions that we received. So again, if you have technical or like Zoom related questions, you're having issues with audio and video, you can send those to our Zoom support team through the chat. But if you have questions directed to the BLM. About this project, please go ahead and submit those to the Q&A box.

329

00:49:14.910 --> 00:49:28.840

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. So, moving on to our next preregistered question this question is: What is the best message to relate to hunters across the West as these proposals move forward? and we'll go back to Pat for that answer.

330

00:49:30.470 --> 00:49:43.048

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So sage grouse hunting is not managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Sage grouse are managed by state wildlife agencies, and therefore they manage all the hunting or non-hunting of that species across the range.

331

00:49:43.837 --> 00:50:01.950

Patricia Deibert - BLM: They will determine how and when hunting will occur, if it will occur, and I really encourage folks to talk to your state wildlife management agencies about the hunting of Greater Sage-Grouse try to get additional information from them simply because we don't have that management authority.

332

00:50:06.810 --> 00:50:08.199

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Pat.

333

00:50:09.190 --> 00:50:17.370

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, how large is the economic impact for improving transportation infrastructure within this proposal.

334

00:50:17.380 --> 00:50:20.190

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we will go to Quincy for that answer.

335

00:50:22.340 --> 00:50:34.899

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Okay on this one. The there was a question I had, as far as the question itself. This project doesn't propose any transportation infrastructure improvements.

336

00:50:35.517 --> 00:50:39.352

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There's no roads specifically addressed. There's no-

337

00:50:40.547 --> 00:50:45.032

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There's no proposals related to transportation infrastructure. So

338

00:50:45.530 --> 00:51:11.660

Quincy Bahr - BLM: it's unclear what is specifically being referenced there, however, I would notice- that I would note that the socioeconomic impact analysis area is described in Appendix, 13 the baseline socioeconomic baseline report. It describes the areas where we were analyzing the economic and social impacts from this plan amendment, so as far as the size of the impacts

339

00:51:11.730 --> 00:51:17.622

Quincy Bahr - BLM: from what we are considering are described in that appendix. There's some maps there as well, and includes

340

00:51:19.160 --> 00:51:28.830

Quincy Bahr - BLM: social and economic characteristics summarized both as far as existing as well as potential effects from the range of alternatives that we are considering.

341

00:51:32.170 --> 00:51:33.570

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Quincy.

342

00:51:34.450 --> 00:51:40.280

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, what will the application or review process look like?

343

00:51:40.430 --> 00:51:44.320

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: timeline requirements, etc, and I'll pass it back to you, Quincy.

344

00:51:44.320 --> 00:51:48.581

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Yep. So as we're looking at

345

00:51:49.540 --> 00:52:04.584

Quincy Bahr - BLM: that there's no specific implementation decisions that we're making in this, these are RMP decisions. I would imagine I don't want to assume what the what their questioner was asking, but there's not specific

346

00:52:05.040 --> 00:52:08.560

Quincy Bahr - BLM: timeframes established in this RMP.

347

00:52:08.919 --> 00:52:20.110

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As far as the decisions as we do go forward much like with other RMP decisions, we'll, BLM, will need to conduct plan, evaluate or non-plan evaluation, a plan conformance

348

00:52:20.748 --> 00:52:25.830

Quincy Bahr - BLM: when there's an authorization requested, we'll need to look at the plan conformance and make sure that

349

00:52:25.900 --> 00:52:30.259

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the authorization as requested, complies with all the different components of the plan.

350

00:52:30.380 --> 00:52:32.160

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So,

351

00:52:32.260 --> 00:52:39.819

Quincy Bahr - BLM: how that- the amount of time that would take is going to vary, based on the specifics in relation to the project.

352

00:52:43.020 --> 00:52:46.719

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. We'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is.

353

00:52:46.810 --> 00:52:55.919

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: It's difficult to determine how the density cap applies to PHMA under the alternatives in the DEIS by state?

354

00:52:56.330 --> 00:52:57.769

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and I'll pass that back to you, Quincy.

355

00:52:57.770 --> 00:53:07.767

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Yep. So there's there have been a lot of questions as we've gone through this effort of folks saying it's not clear, I can't find this given decision.

356

00:53:10.610 --> 00:53:35.459

Quincy Bahr - BLM: If there's if- there's a management action that we've selected or elected not to carry forward in our amendment process, that management would defer or default back to the no action. So, in this instance, we're specifically focusing on the disturbance cap. The density cap management would be- would retain or would remain the as described in the no action alternative.

357

00:53:38.880 --> 00:53:50.630

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. And our next question is: How will the plan impact wildfire system hardening and operation and maintenance activities on transmission and distribution?

358

00:53:50.660 --> 00:53:52.860

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And again. I'll pass that back to you, Quincy.

359

00:53:52.860 --> 00:54:09.570

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Okay, this, this plan amendment shouldn't impact those types of activities. Most of the fire management, vegetation management, most of the lands and realty management, most of those are ones that we're not considering changing. So the management

360

00:54:09.600 --> 00:54:12.240

Quincy Bahr - BLM: tied to those types of activities

361

00:54:12.460 --> 00:54:15.489

Quincy Bahr - BLM: are unchanged through this effort.

362

00:54:16.233 --> 00:54:27.866

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There are, as we look at what we are considering, and that list of items that Pat had identified. We are looking at potential mitigation disturbance cap issues like that.

363

00:54:28.390 --> 00:54:33.330

Quincy Bahr - BLM: What may be needed on a local basis to be able to demonstrate a no net loss,

364

00:54:33.743 --> 00:54:38.579

Quincy Bahr - BLM: as we're looking at those types of implementation level activities.

365

00:54:38.850 --> 00:54:40.030

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Beyond that

366

00:54:40.438 --> 00:54:52.179

Quincy Bahr - BLM: most of the actions on this relate to allocations of a larger scale, not necessarily the maintenance of existing infrastructure, so that would default back to 2019.

367

00:54:54.730 --> 00:55:04.949

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. And then our last question that was submitted with registration is, what is the difference between ACEC and PHMA management.

368

00:55:06.410 --> 00:55:15.501

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And I touched on this a little, knowing that this knowing that this question was there, I touched on this a little in in my presentation slide. It varies by alternative.

369

00:55:16.080 --> 00:55:22.899

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And it also varies by state, because right now PHMA management does vary by state, depending on the issue.

370

00:55:23.500 --> 00:55:28.780

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Obviously under Alternative 3 PHMA management and ACEC management are the same.

371

00:55:29.445 --> 00:55:38.389

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Under Alternative 6. It would be different. The PHMA management is less restrictive than the ACEC management under 6.

372

00:55:41.590 --> 00:55:48.949

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But because the PHMA management does vary by state under 6, the nature of that difference also varies.

373

00:55:49.300 --> 00:55:58.759

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So to look at specifically how it? How the ACEC management, as described in Alternative 6, which doesn't vary by state,

374

00:55:58.790 --> 00:56:04.022

Quincy Bahr - BLM: when you, when you'd be looking at how that varies from PHMA, you'd have to look at

375

00:56:04.700 --> 00:56:13.510

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the allocations associated with the given state that's going to be up in the top of the habitat management areas and allocation section,

376

00:56:13.610 --> 00:56:25.048

Quincy Bahr - BLM: that's described under 2.5.2. And then you'd also want to look at some of the state specific circumstances. Some of the state specific circumstances includes specific

377

00:56:26.060 --> 00:56:35.789

Quincy Bahr - BLM: specific allocation and management of PHMAs, so in general high to summarize ACEC management under 6 is going to be less

378

00:56:36.264 --> 00:56:50.289

Quincy Bahr - BLM: it's going to be more restrictive and it is going to be a little less flexible than PHMA management. The nature of that restriction difference, and the nature of the flexibility is going to differ as you go throughout the range, based on the differences state to state.

379

00:56:54.250 --> 00:57:07.239

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright thanks, Quincy, and that will wrap up all the questions that we received during registration for this meeting. So we'll now go ahead and move on to those questions that have been submitted while we've been in the webinar.

380

00:57:07.820 --> 00:57:10.089

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: So, our first question here is,

381

00:57:10.150 --> 00:57:14.840

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thank you for providing this presentation and giving an opportunity to engage on this matter.

382

00:57:15.010 --> 00:57:22.580

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Can staff provide additional information about how priority habitat management areas were identified and confirmed?

383

00:57:22.850 --> 00:57:33.009

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Anecdotally, our experience has been that large swaths of land previously identified as sage grouse habitat through aerial survey, is not suitable for the species.

384

00:57:33.350 --> 00:57:42.410

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Have areas identified in the draft been confirmed in person or through additional verification measures? And we will hear from Pat for that answer.

385

00:57:47.372 --> 00:57:50.769

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thank you, Alli. Excuse me. I was trying to clear my throat there.

386

00:57:52.706 --> 00:58:07.763

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, Appendix 3 in the Draft EIS does provide details on the map processes that have been used by each state and



overall, the BLM did work with our state partners and with our people on the ground

387

00:58:08.190 --> 00:58:17.919

Patricia Deibert - BLM: to try to identify using existing maps to try to identify the most important areas for sage grouse. We also considered range-wide models in that.

388

00:58:20.440 --> 00:58:34.769

Patricia Deibert - BLM: That local information and experience really helped us identify through the models where they were accurate for density, habitat quality, connectivity. We know we have areas of hygiene diversity, so, what are the habitats associated with that.

389

00:58:35.110 --> 00:58:42.890

Patricia Deibert - BLM: however, we also understand that habitat is dynamic and absolutely impossible to perfectly map every single habitat.

390

00:58:43.509 --> 00:58:48.600

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Each state, also, when working with our state partners had different methodology to do so.

391

00:58:48.960 --> 00:59:10.520

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, our plan does allow us to identify areas of non-habitat. And you'll find that in Table 2 - 4, we can identify areas of non-habitat within habitat management areas, and there will be different provisions for that non habitat in those areas if they meet, if a project meets certain criteria

392

00:59:11.237 --> 00:59:31.100

Patricia Deibert - BLM: this also concludes consideration of no indirect impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse. But in some of those areas of non-habitat, the project may be able to perceive forward as planned or described by the project proponent, simply because some areas of habitat designation are very large circles.

393

00:59:31.190 --> 00:59:34.589

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, I mean the answer- the question is

394

00:59:34.600 --> 00:59:54.080

Patricia Deibert - BLM: we are working hard with our state partners. I'm sorry, that's the answer, not the question- very hard with our state partners to make sure that we have accurately mapped habitat to the extent that we can, and where there is some areas that are questionable, we will be working with our local information to make sure that we can make appropriate adjustments

395

00:59:54.120 --> 01:00:05.989

Patricia Deibert - BLM: as needed, based on a project-by-project basis to make sure, though, that if development does happen in those areas, we're not having direct or indirect impacts on sage grouse.

396

01:00:09.970 --> 01:00:12.490

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Pat, for those answers.

397

01:00:13.050 --> 01:00:20.359

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is: Are special management plans included with the proposed designations?

398

01:00:20.470 --> 01:00:22.719

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and I'll pass this over to Quincy.

399

01:00:25.910 --> 01:00:33.010

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And this is another one of those where a little detail and that would be helpful, because when we talk about special management plans.

400

01:00:33.407 --> 01:00:36.802

Quincy Bahr - BLM: it's a little unclear exactly what's being specified there.

401

01:00:38.530 --> 01:00:55.960

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The allocations identified for each HMA are identified under section 2.5.2. There are also allocation differences for the ACECs identified, as far as what differences for those special areas that special designation, the ACEC,

402

01:00:57.810 --> 01:00:58.890

Quincy Bahr - BLM: excuse me.

403

01:00:59.730 --> 01:01:00.940

Quincy Bahr - BLM:

404

01:01:01.380 --> 01:01:09.689

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the specific, as far as special management plans beyond what we've identified in the in the allocations,

405

01:01:10.210 --> 01:01:18.210

Quincy Bahr - BLM: are not identified. Anything beyond those management identified in Chapter 2 would remain the same as what was in the no action.

406

01:01:18.280 --> 01:01:28.520

Quincy Bahr - BLM: If there are additional management necessary in a given area, there are ACEC plans that can be developed at the implementation level.

407

01:01:30.050 --> 01:01:41.380

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Perhaps more applicable is as we get specific projects, there are special management plans, or there are management plans identified and developed, associated with development to the specific project.

408

01:01:41.680 --> 01:02:00.290

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, this RMP doesn't identify any beyond the ACECs, it does- it doesn't identify additional management and special management associated with any given area. However, as we do go forward, some of those could be identified during implementation, especially during project development.

409

01:02:04.030 --> 01:02:05.070

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy.

410

01:02:05.120 --> 01:02:08.340

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we'll go ahead and move on to our next question.

411

01:02:08.770 --> 01:02:17.700

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: As you noted, the populations are still declining. So, what are the pieces from 2015 and 2019 that you consider to have been successful?

412

01:02:17.980 --> 01:02:23.480

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Why do you think additional flexibility for allowing disturbance benefits the sage grouse?

413

01:02:23.580 --> 01:02:25.999

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

414

01:02:26.700 --> 01:02:49.740

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks, Alli. So, the pieces that we're bringing forward from 2015 and 2019 aren't necessarily successful in saving sage grouse. If I can be that blunt to my terminology. But we simply have no information that either publish new or otherwise. No published

literature that suggests that those management prescriptions were incorrect.

415

01:02:49.850 --> 01:03:09.840

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We have no information from our experiences that those management prescriptions were resulting in a decline of Greater Sage-Grouse. There really was not a basis for us to bring them forward for any kind of change and consideration or consideration of change for differences in conservation management, simply because the data did not support it.

416

01:03:10.799 --> 01:03:17.940

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Additional flexibility is actually something that we would apply at the local level.

417

01:03:18.315 --> 01:03:35.174

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And I can give you a quick example, and I'm going to pick on the state of Colorado, not because I don't like Colorado, just because they have a great example there, where, if you put a buffer, on an oil and gas facility, there, a buffer on a lek, there for oil and gas facility development,

418

01:03:35.490 --> 01:03:58.250

Patricia Deibert - BLM: their topography is such that those buffers don't necessarily encompass the area where sage grows occur, because the development may occur in the very deep ravines or deep canyons associated with the adjacent plateaus where sage grouse occur, and so, being able to provide that flexibility, if you consider those local circumstances,

419

01:03:58.260 --> 01:04:08.399

Patricia Deibert - BLM: allows us to meet our multiple use mandate while still providing conservation benefits for sage grouse. In that situation,

420

01:04:08.500 --> 01:04:20.330

Patricia Deibert - BLM: excuse me, I mentioned that oil and gas development can probably occur without any disturbances for us at all still be because the topographical diff distances in that area or differences in that area.

421

01:04:20.520 --> 01:04:42.810

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And therefore we want to make sure that we aren't inhibiting that kind of development in places where we can manage locally to remove the impact to Greater Sage-Grouse. So that was our intent with the additional flexibility. It was not to just, you know, remove any of our conservation actions is simply to consider the local information, to inform the best.

422

01:04:47.740 --> 01:04:49.000

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Pat.

423

01:04:50.020 --> 01:04:53.169

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll move on to our next question, which is

424

01:04:53.270 --> 01:05:00.710

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: this presentation identifies renewables and associated transmission as priority considerations.

425

01:05:01.080 --> 01:05:07.339

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: However, communities in this management area depend on other critical utility infrastructure.

426

01:05:07.590 --> 01:05:13.550

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How will these draft changes, impact existing and future powerline, and utility of rights of way?

427

01:05:13.820 --> 01:05:19.060

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: for example, will renewals of rights-of-way be delayed or otherwise affected?

428

01:05:19.140 --> 01:05:21.640

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll hear from Quincy for that answer.

429

01:05:22.990 --> 01:05:33.178

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Thank you. Some of this will go back to the- there is existing management, and looking that question came from the Nevada.

430

01:05:33.640 --> 01:05:54.810

Quincy Bahr - BLM: I know that there's management in the existing Nevada plan amendments related to renewals. I think most states do have mention to the difference between new projects, and how renewals will be considered as we go forward this amendment only applies to future authorizations.

431

01:05:55.195 --> 01:06:06.920

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, we would not be applying these management actions to existing authorizations unless there is those renewals, in which case we would default back to the language that's in the current plans.

432

01:06:08.670 --> 01:06:23.040

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The management for this right to the right of way management, for these alternatives are specific to the major transmission lines associated with those renewable energy development projects. Those lines that move the electricity from where it's developed to where it's used.

433

01:06:23.743 --> 01:06:27.829

Quincy Bahr - BLM: It doesn't specifically address the distribution lines.

434

01:06:27.860 --> 01:06:32.609

Quincy Bahr - BLM: It's looking at that larger scale, those transmission power lines.

435

01:06:32.660 --> 01:06:49.170

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so, this wouldn't change the existing sage grouse management. This is where I just want to be clear. It's not that we're not putting any management on those. It's that this effort doesn't change the existing management associated with distribution lines and renewals.

436

01:06:49.593 --> 01:06:52.630

Quincy Bahr - BLM: For those you would need to look at, the no action alternative.

437

01:06:55.600 --> 01:06:57.080

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Quincy.

438

01:06:57.830 --> 01:07:06.630

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we'll move on to our next question, which is: How wedded are you to the preferred alternative? And we'll go back to Quincy for that answer.

439

01:07:09.880 --> 01:07:22.409

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As described in this, and I'm going to point it to the section here- I've got this line till death do you part- although it's not going to be that. Section 2.4 in in the draft EIS.

440

01:07:22.740 --> 01:07:32.490

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Identifies the selection of the preferred alternative. And it also includes several sentences and paragraphs related to how that preferred alternative

441

01:07:32.984 --> 01:07:47.090

Quincy Bahr - BLM: fits in relation to the process as we go forward. So, there's no legal requirement that we retain the preferred alternative. In fact, as we take public input on the Draft EIS

442

01:07:47.130 --> 01:07:48.540

Quincy Bahr - BLM: we can

443

01:07:48.610 --> 01:08:02.838

Quincy Bahr - BLM: select different alternatives. We can select different components of different alternatives, as informed by public comment and coordination with our state and cooperating agencies. So as we do go forward, I would anticipate

444

01:08:03.910 --> 01:08:10.099

Quincy Bahr - BLM: we will need to look at the public comments, and how, as they inform.

445

01:08:11.350 --> 01:08:30.350

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Whether or not we need to make some changes. We'll work with our partners to say, what makes sense. Given that ecology in the different areas given consistency with state plans in different areas. And so long story short, it's our, it's our indication of what our preferences at the draft stage. But we can adjust that as we go forward, based on input.

446

01:08:33.600 --> 01:08:35.140

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Quincy.

447

01:08:36.430 --> 01:08:38.610

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is:

448

01:08:38.630 --> 01:08:52.329

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The preferred alternative does not include any stipulations about the timing or prioritization for NEPA analysis of grazing permit renewal- permit renewals or land health evaluations.

449

01:08:52.859 --> 01:09:04.689

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Given that over 80 percent of grazing permits in sage grouse habitat have not had new NEPA analysis in over 10 years, and many now going on 20 to 30 years without analysis,

450

01:09:04.830 --> 01:09:13.169

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and a full 47 percent of priority habitats failing land health standards, mostly due to livestock grazing

451

01:09:13.229 --> 01:09:17.030

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: with another 24 percent having never been assessed,

452

01:09:17.229 --> 01:09:27.309

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How can the BLM ensure that management of livestock grazing will not continue to negatively impact sage grouse and their habitat? And we'll hear from Quincy for that answer.

453

01:09:28.020 --> 01:09:36.809

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So this hits on an issue that that is broader than grazing, but it applies to grazing a lot because of the nature of decision making and grazing.

454

01:09:36.960 --> 01:09:41.109

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So the timing and prioritization

455

01:09:41.160 --> 01:09:42.410

Quincy Bahr - BLM: of

456

01:09:42.907 --> 01:10:00.739

Quincy Bahr - BLM: term permit renewals, of land health evaluations, those are covered by BLM regulation and BLM policy. This is the aspect that this is an important planning process, because it does establish and set some goals, objectives and management actions needed to guide,

457

01:10:00.860 --> 01:10:04.219

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But it's not the end of the conservation effort.

458

01:10:04.826 --> 01:10:31.920

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There are policies. There are regulations, there are implementation actions, and there's coordination that needs to continue. And in order for this to be successful, to going forward. So, we have- We've worked hard in this RMP effort to limit our decisions to the scope of an RMP decision. Recognizing that for some resources that our resource uses that does leave

459

01:10:32.380 --> 01:10:38.669

Quincy Bahr - BLM: there's a window of other decisions that need to be made in other venues.

460

01:10:39.000 --> 01:10:45.139

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So in that scenario the RMP can't be the solution in all scenarios and all uses.



461

01:10:45.170 --> 01:10:57.020

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We try to set the stage and try to establish and point to the land health evaluations, and how those can be informed by regulation, our raising needs to comply with those,

462

01:10:57.210 --> 01:11:05.579

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and how those land health evaluations and those land health standards include special status species management,

463

01:11:05.620 --> 01:11:12.459

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and habitat, special status species habitat, and that special set of species includes sage grouse.

464

01:11:12.830 --> 01:11:18.929

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so, as we apply and align with those regulations going forward

465

01:11:19.010 --> 01:11:35.719

Quincy Bahr - BLM: looking to local data as informed by various data sources, including the habitat assessment framework, informing whether or not we're meeting or making progress towards meeting those land health standards, that is a stepped process

466

01:11:35.720 --> 01:11:50.410

Quincy Bahr - BLM: as we work with grazing authorizations as we work with permittees, range cons, and making sure we're making those annual adjustments in relation to local conditions. This is an issue that that, as you look, range wide.

467

01:11:50.680 --> 01:11:55.932

Quincy Bahr - BLM: while there is grazing throughout the range the nature of the environments,

468

01:11:56.450 --> 01:12:03.080

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Southern Nevada, Southern Utah very, very different than Montana.

469

01:12:03.200 --> 01:12:18.610

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The precipitation rates and the ecologies- those need to be taken into account during implementation decision making. And so we've tried to set our stage here to be able to best inform and provide the side boards for those future decisions.

470

01:12:22.050 --> 01:12:24.960

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And I'm going to stay on this one. So.

471

01:12:25.260 --> 01:12:33.670

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Perfect Yup. Our next question is, would you please speak to the different comment periods for the ACECs versus the complete EIS?

472

01:12:34.500 --> 01:12:42.449

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, BLM planning regulations identify that we include a 60-day comment period for ACECs.

473

01:12:42.810 --> 01:12:45.240

Quincy Bahr - BLM: That's where that 60 days come from.

474

01:12:45.730 --> 01:12:54.320

Quincy Bahr - BLM: I will tell you that NEPA regulations require we consider all substantive comments within provided during the comment period.

475

01:12:54.550 --> 01:13:09.990

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so, while there is a 60-day comment period for ACECs as identified in BLMs regulations substantive of comments related to ACECs is provided after that, but within the planning within the overarching comment period, we will need to consider those as well.

476

01:13:15.070 --> 01:13:28.450

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Our next question is, how does the preferred alternative for Greater Sage-Grouse amendment affect the BLM's Western Solar Plan Amendment preferred alternative, and we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

477

01:13:28.970 --> 01:13:39.700

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks, Alli. So the Western Solar Plan Amendment defers to the Greater Sage-Grouse amendments for solar energy management in Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.

478

01:13:40.155 --> 01:13:47.060

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, our preferred alternative will, in fact, be one with the Solar PEIS. When we both get to that point

479

01:13:47.180 --> 01:13:54.959

Patricia Deibert - BLM: outside a sage grouse habitat air management would be described as is drafted in the Western Solar Plan.

480

01:13:58.340 --> 01:13:59.200

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Pat.

481

01:14:00.360 --> 01:14:20.129

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright for this next question. We have a couple of questions that were submitted that are essentially the same question, or at least along the same line. So, I'm going to combine them, and then we'll hear from Pat for the answer. These questions are, how do we get a copy of the slideshow, and also the new document outlining the new proposals for EIS?

482

01:14:20.610 --> 01:14:32.259

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and then, can the BLM please provide maps where sage grouse habitat and proposed ACECs overlap with existing OHV recreation areas and designated routes.

483

01:14:34.530 --> 01:14:51.170

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, all this information is going to be available on the E-planning web page. So, I really encourage folks to take advantage of that opportunity to go there. Take a look at the slideshow presentation. You can also access the Draft EIS at that page as well.

484

01:14:51.787 --> 01:15:10.010

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Shapefiles for all these allocations are also going to be available on the ePlanning website, both for range wide and state specific circumstances. You can look at the shape files for the tribal allocations to see the relationship between proposed ACECs under Alternative 6,

485

01:15:10.607 --> 01:15:14.779

Patricia Deibert - BLM: and how that may affect recreation areas and designated routes.

486

01:15:15.282 --> 01:15:26.260

Patricia Deibert - BLM: The ePlanning site is really a great resource for getting a lot more detailed information, and I encourage folks to go there for that information and then circle back of additional questions.

487

01:15:28.760 --> 01:15:47.369

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, thanks, Pat, and just for everyone's awareness. We've added that ePlanning link to the chat in Zoom. So, if you open up the chat box. There'll be a link there, and if you click on it or you may need to copy and paste into your browser, it'll take you directly to the eplanning web page, where you can find all the information about the project.

488

01:15:49.590 --> 01:15:59.660

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, moving on to our next question, which alternatives include Wyoming's proposed stewardship areas. And how would those areas be managed on the ground?

489

01:15:59.670 --> 01:16:02.250

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Quincy for that answer.

490

01:16:07.260 --> 01:16:11.187

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Sorry about that. I'm a bit slow coming off that.

491

01:16:12.180 --> 01:16:18.700

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, the SHMAs are managed- they are specific to Wyoming. They're part of the Wyoming

492

01:16:19.210 --> 01:16:29.470

Quincy Bahr - BLM: state specific circumstances, and I am going to ask Matt Holloran, and if he's available to be able to pop on as well so they are under both Alternatives. 5 and 6.

493

01:16:31.060 --> 01:16:33.380

Quincy Bahr - BLM: no variance between those 2.

494

01:16:33.781 --> 01:16:44.690

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As far as how they're managed on the ground, I know Matt has been involved in those meetings with those partners up in Wyoming. Are you on, Matt?

495

01:16:45.960 --> 01:16:47.689

Matthew Holloran - BLM: I am. Yes. Can you hear me?

496

01:16:47.690 --> 01:16:54.820

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Can you? Can you go into just a little bit of detail in relation to how those SHMAs are anticipated to apply going forward.

497

01:16:55.954 --> 01:17:00.929

Matthew Holloran - BLM: Yeah, so SHMAs will be managed the same as a GHMA.

498

01:17:01.630 --> 01:17:08.519

Matthew Holloran - BLM: The primary objective in the SHMA is to support a landowner-led

499

01:17:09.150 --> 01:17:13.870

Matthew Holloran - BLM: conservation benefits agreements in SHMAs.

500

01:17:22.570 --> 01:17:22.940

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Right.

501

01:17:23.420 --> 01:17:23.959

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Thank you.

502

01:17:24.950 --> 01:17:28.640

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy and Matthew, for those questions, or for those answers.

503

01:17:29.620 --> 01:17:40.010

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll move on to our next question, which is, can you explain how the Lek buffers are treated both in distance and management between Alternatives 3 and 6.

504

01:17:40.430 --> 01:17:48.169

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: If lack buffer treatment changes across the range, can you explain why? Thank you, and we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

505

01:17:48.670 --> 01:17:58.279

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks, Alli. For the most part this effort is not changing. Lek buffer management. Lek buffers are tied to our mitigation hierarchy.

506

01:17:58.895 --> 01:18:23.264

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So as you're aware, an alternative 3, we are considering almost 100% avoidance to reduce impact to leks. But an Alternatives 4 through 6, we consider avoidance minimization, and as necessary compensation. So, Alternatives 4 through 6 lek buffers are really a minimization measure, part of the mitigation strategy or the hierarchy.

507

01:18:24.040 --> 01:18:41.054

Patricia Deibert - BLM: There is a mix of allocation. There's a lek buffer appendix in the Draft EIS, that's going to give you more detail on every situation can be managed, but, as I described earlier, one size does not fit all,

508

01:18:41.480 --> 01:19:01.669

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Again. Going back to the Colorado example, there may be areas where a 4-mile lek buffer is, actually extends 2 miles beyond the edge of where the lek occur- the edge of the plateau where the lek occurs and works down into a rather deep valley, and activities in that valley are not affecting activity on that lek.

509

01:19:01.910 --> 01:19:27.430

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, putting a one size fits all on our lek buffers is not appropriate. But we do want to make sure we're using it as an effective minimization tool. And we do have that left buffer appendix that helps provide the parameters for when that would be applied, in what circumstances? Again, I want to go back to the fact that we also want to provide that local flexibility, so that we can make sure we are providing for that conservation

510

01:19:27.550 --> 01:19:30.960

Patricia Deibert - BLM: as needed and is adjusted by local conditions.

511

01:19:34.660 --> 01:19:35.510

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Pat.

512

01:19:36.460 --> 01:19:44.830

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll move on to our next question, which is the reported disturbances are generally much below the proposed disturbance caps

513

01:19:44.840 --> 01:19:46.980

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: proposed in the preferred alternative.

514

01:19:47.000 --> 01:19:49.520

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Yet the sage grouse continues to decline.

515

01:19:49.610 --> 01:19:58.979

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: What is the basis for the 3 percent and 5 percent disturbance caps given the monitoring information? And we'll go back to Pat for that answer.

516

01:20:00.000 --> 01:20:16.159

Patricia Deibert - BLM: There's really no definitive piece of literature out there, no definitive science whatsoever on the precise level of disturbance that above which we have negative impacts on Greater Sage-Grouse. We do know they don't like disturbance, but the amount of disturbance

517

01:20:16.210 --> 01:20:19.120

Patricia Deibert - BLM: there's just that literature just isn't out there.

518

01:20:19.460 --> 01:20:32.569

Patricia Deibert - BLM: 3 percent is emerging in other literature on a range of sagebrush associated species, such as mule deer. But the science again, is really spotty. We're just learning these things.

519

01:20:32.590 --> 01:20:37.129

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And it doesn't consider sage grouse in most of those publications.

520

01:20:37.450 --> 01:21:05.660

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Where 5 percent is the range, and there is a couple of publications that suggest that 5 can be tolerated by sage grouse in certain areas. And typically, 5 percent is considered in our planning effort- that 5 percent is more inclusive of disturbance. For example, it does include disturbance and habitat losses as a result of wildfire, whereas the 3 percent does not always do that.

521

01:21:06.580 --> 01:21:19.140

Patricia Deibert - BLM: I do want to clarify that disturbance is not the only factor that assessed, that affects sage grouse persistence, and trends. For example, we know that sage grouse trend with weather, they trend with climate

522

01:21:19.464 --> 01:21:44.739

Patricia Deibert - BLM: and the long-term declines are suggesting that it is probably something to do with the weather, but also habitat loss from wildfires and invasive is a concern, and BLM is actively working with our partners to see what we can do to minimize wildfire occurrence and to reduce the level of invasives. And that's outside of this planning effort, but it is an important component of what our folks do day to day on the ground.

523

01:21:45.010 --> 01:21:54.730

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Additionally, BLM cannot manage management activities on private and state lands or other land ownerships where impacts to sage grouse may be occurring

524

01:21:54.940 --> 01:21:57.520

Patricia Deibert - BLM: that negatively affecting the bird there.

525

01:22:03.120 --> 01:22:04.479

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks. Pat.

526

01:22:05.750 --> 01:22:07.919

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is:

527

01:22:08.100 --> 01:22:19.190

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The DEIS includes a map appendix showing open avoidance and exclusion areas for various types of potential development activities on BLM land.

528

01:22:19.720 --> 01:22:25.399

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The Solar Development maps 2.50 to 2.55, I believe,

529

01:22:25.620 --> 01:22:32.499

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: show vast exclusion and avoidance areas that don't appear to correlate with Greater Sage habitat management areas.

530

01:22:32.720 --> 01:22:44.120

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: It looks like those maps may actually correlate with the 2012 western solar plan rather than with Greater Sage specific management actions being considered in the DEIS.

531

01:22:44.700 --> 01:22:47.599

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: These maps have created a good deal of confusion.

532

01:22:47.700 --> 01:22:59.110

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Can you clarify whether these maps merely reflect the 2012 Western Solar Plan, or whether they instead reflect, proposed Greater Sage-Grouse management actions considered in the DEIS?

533

01:22:59.670 --> 01:23:12.069

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: If you could address this question by distinguishing between the A maps and the B maps that would be really helpful. IE, how should we interpret the A maps, and how should we interpret the B maps for each alternative.

534

01:23:12.300 --> 01:23:14.950

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and I'll turn it over to Quincy for that answer.

535

01:23:15.290 --> 01:23:19.640

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Thank you. Thank you. And then and this is something that

536

01:23:19.740 --> 01:23:29.159



Quincy Bahr - BLM: It's clear, based on public input that we need to clarify that in Appendix One. So the A maps reflect

537

01:23:29.360 --> 01:23:41.610

Quincy Bahr - BLM: where we're proposing changes through this amendment process. It is usually limited. It's clipped to the sage grouse habitat management areas associated with that given alternative.

538

01:23:41.980 --> 01:23:43.380

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The B maps

539

01:23:43.600 --> 01:23:45.199

Quincy Bahr - BLM: is everything else

540

01:23:45.840 --> 01:23:49.549

Quincy Bahr - BLM: within the planning area that that we have information on.

541

01:23:49.920 --> 01:23:53.650

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The importance of those 2 maps together

542

01:23:53.710 --> 01:24:00.259

Quincy Bahr - BLM: is that it helps us identify the cumulative effects associated with the decisions we're considering.

543

01:24:00.700 --> 01:24:02.319

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So the B maps

544

01:24:02.360 --> 01:24:06.699

Quincy Bahr - BLM: do not relate to management actions we're proposing.

545

01:24:06.710 --> 01:24:10.820

Quincy Bahr - BLM: They are management that is the same under every alternative.

546

01:24:11.340 --> 01:24:23.270

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And it is generally where we've tried to pull that from existing management plans. That's why, as you note, most of those existing plans rely on that 2012 Solar Programmatic EIS

547

01:24:23.706 --> 01:24:36.840

Quincy Bahr - BLM: so, for the solar maps, that's what it generally falls back to. If there have been additional changes through other plan,

amendments or revisions, those should be reflected in those B maps outside sage grouse habitat as well.

548

01:24:37.140 --> 01:24:40.749

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But the intent there is to be able to say

549

01:24:41.090 --> 01:25:01.910

Quincy Bahr - BLM: given the context of what we're changing, how does that- how do those changes fit in the larger realm of management of public lands for those given uses. And so the B maps do not reflect a change in management, they are intended to help set the stage for cumulative impacts analysis.

550

01:25:06.240 --> 01:25:07.280

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy.

551

01:25:07.510 --> 01:25:09.219

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll move on to

552

01:25:09.270 --> 01:25:11.480

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: our next question, which is:

553

01:25:11.690 --> 01:25:20.030

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: there are very many miles of Pre-FLPMA county roads and public roads that fall within ACEC boundaries.

554

01:25:20.290 --> 01:25:24.710

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How was the management of these roads within? ACECs proposed to occur?

555

01:25:24.780 --> 01:25:30.029

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: If the EIS is silent or vague at best on this, and we'll pass it back to Quincy.

556

01:25:30.030 --> 01:25:34.229

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And key word there is, if the EIS is silent,

557

01:25:34.730 --> 01:25:37.469

Quincy Bahr - BLM: default back to existing management.

558

01:25:37.670 --> 01:25:52.999

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, there is no specific management related to in fact, as you look at a section I think it's 2.5.2 under the allocations. There is a row there that runs through the allocations.

559

01:25:53.160 --> 01:26:03.700

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And right at the bottom of the PHMA section, right at the bottom of the of the GHMA section, you'll notice across the range of alternatives. It's same as Alternative One

560

01:26:04.430 --> 01:26:08.420

Quincy Bahr - BLM: and the ACECs do not change that management.

561

01:26:08.610 --> 01:26:17.620

Quincy Bahr - BLM: In relation to travel and transportation management. That is an issue that is addressed at the local level through implementation level planning.

562

01:26:24.160 --> 01:26:25.110

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy,

563

01:26:26.180 --> 01:26:44.600

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we'll go ahead and move on to our next question, which is: To clarify if an alternative that does not designate SFAs is chosen, will the separate EIS for the 1872 withdrawal based on the 2015 polygons be halted, or will it move forward regardless?

564

01:26:44.690 --> 01:26:46.929

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

565

01:26:48.490 --> 01:26:58.951

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We will be moving forward with that Draft EIS regardless of any decisions that's made in this planning effort. We have been directed by the courts to complete the NEPA for that effort.

566

01:26:59.915 --> 01:27:06.800

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And we anticipate publishing that updated draft EIS later this year.

567

01:27:11.590 --> 01:27:12.930

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, thanks, Pat.

568

01:27:14.520 --> 01:27:24.899

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, seems like if the SFA withdraw were actually happening, that would be a big thing for us to know for the impacts analysis of the alternatives.

569

01:27:25.200 --> 01:27:30.119

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How can we actually analyze the sufficiency of the ARPMA's

570

01:27:30.710 --> 01:27:35.000

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: protections without knowing if there's a withdrawal overlay as well?

571

01:27:35.100 --> 01:27:37.420

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll hear from Pat again for that answer.

572

01:27:39.802 --> 01:27:57.119

Patricia Deibert - BLM: That's a great question. However, we still have alternatives that do discuss a withdrawal. It will consider, and I want to make clarify to folks that- if we do move forward with a withdrawal or recommendation for withdrawal, it's just that.

573

01:27:57.566 --> 01:28:05.979

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So we do have a range of alternatives does still consider the withdrawals that were proposed in 2015. But those can, those

574

01:28:06.070 --> 01:28:11.220

Patricia Deibert - BLM: actions in 2015 were simply recommendations for the withdrawal?

575

01:28:11.290 --> 01:28:21.510

Patricia Deibert - BLM: If we actually would move forward with that recommendation that would require a separate EIS process in itself, and that is something would be done in the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.

576

01:28:21.670 --> 01:28:29.140

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So that said, there are alternatives that do discuss recommending withdrawals in our current Draft EIS.

577

01:28:29.700 --> 01:28:30.700

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So

578

01:28:30.970 --> 01:28:35.060

Patricia Deibert - BLM: all the analyses are included in the Draft EIS at this point.

579

01:28:39.280 --> 01:28:40.570

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Pat.

580

01:28:41.550 --> 01:28:48.530

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, if you withdraw mineral rights, the increased cost of aggregate to build highways increases.

581

01:28:49.200 --> 01:28:51.680

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll go back to Pat for that answer.

582

01:28:52.600 --> 01:29:06.189

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Yeah, yeah, the withdrawal that we're referencing under the Mining Law of 1872 is strictly for what we call locatable or hard rock minerals. So those are things like lithium, uranium, gold, silver, etc.

583

01:29:06.270 --> 01:29:24.159

Patricia Deibert - BLM: The available minerals and the leasable minerals would be falling under their own allocations within the Draft EIS and not and are not affected by the 1872 Mining Law, and other than Alternative 3, those minerals would still be open to free use sites.

584

01:29:29.880 --> 01:29:31.240

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks.

585

01:29:31.660 --> 01:29:45.409

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, how have the alternatives, address and assessed impacts to existing long-term deeds of mineral rights of way to FHWA and state DOTs.

586

01:29:45.420 --> 01:29:48.220

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: For use on the Federal Aid Highway system.

587

01:29:48.290 --> 01:29:50.860

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll hear from Quincy for that answer.

588

01:29:53.800 --> 01:29:59.689

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, for that one I would go back to as we were discussed earlier. We're related to other

589

01:30:01.500 --> 01:30:11.730

Quincy Bahr - BLM: the roads issue related to other about existing rights. Although I, the title 5 or the good heavens, RS 2477. My brain is going to many different directions.

590

01:30:13.240 --> 01:30:16.810

Quincy Bahr - BLM: If there are existing rights out there, this plan does not change them.

591

01:30:17.800 --> 01:30:21.390

Quincy Bahr - BLM: So, one of the things we're looking at is-

592

01:30:22.780 --> 01:30:43.749

Quincy Bahr - BLM: this would be in relation to new authorizations as we go forward, and one of the things in relation to transportation, mineral sites, the free use sites and these others that are mentioned here, we've- we've tried to carve those out, recognizing that there is an impact to grouse, but there's also an impact to

593

01:30:44.120 --> 01:30:57.819

Quincy Bahr - BLM: local. There's a need for in relation to public safety in relation to road maintenance. So we've tried to aside from Alternative 3, we've tried to make sure that we've maintained opportunities to develop those

594

01:30:58.690 --> 01:31:14.006

Quincy Bahr - BLM: mineral material sites, those free use sites specifically that kind of mineral material/ saleable site. So beyond that or any of the existing sites, this plan would not change the those

595

01:31:14.690 --> 01:31:16.580

Quincy Bahr - BLM: preexisting authorizations.

596

01:31:20.370 --> 01:31:21.970

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Quincy.

597

01:31:22.740 --> 01:31:32.330

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is: Why are ACECs designated in Alternative 3 if they are ultimately managed the same as PHMAS?

598

01:31:32.340 --> 01:31:34.220

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll go back to Quincy for that answer.

599

01:31:34.440 --> 01:32:02.460

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so, this is looking at that question as you look at the ACEC evaluation process, there is the 3 steps. You need to do, be able to demonstrate relevance and importance based on those criteria, and then the need for special management. And so, the question under 3 is if we adopt Alternative 3 and all the areas of PHMA- all the areas are PHMA and all of them are managed very restrictive- what does the ACEC give you?

600

01:32:03.016 --> 01:32:09.240

Quincy Bahr - BLM: That becomes a question to take into account, as we're looking at selection of a final alternative.

601

01:32:10.700 --> 01:32:18.400

Quincy Bahr - BLM: it for the purposes of this EIS. We wanted to make sure that we had, within the range of alternatives, considered.

602

01:32:18.410 --> 01:32:27.519

Quincy Bahr - BLM: both PHMA acre for acre as we go through that as well as a range of alternatives for those ACEC shapes.

603

01:32:27.790 --> 01:32:35.410

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And this is based on previous some previous court rulings. We wanted to make sure that we had as a broad a range

604

01:32:35.660 --> 01:32:45.300

Quincy Bahr - BLM: of options to consider when developing a proposed plan. We wanted to make sure that the Draft EIS provided as broad arrange as possible in doing so.

605

01:32:45.310 --> 01:32:55.310

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And so in looking specifically at those ACEC boundaries we wanted an alternative that had those boundaries with specific management.

606

01:32:55.440 --> 01:32:58.599

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Now, if we select an Alternative 3.

607

01:32:59.240 --> 01:33:10.469

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Is there rationale to designate the ACEC? That becomes that question down the road, that if that alternative were selected we would have to identify the rationale for that in the in the ROD.

608

01:33:10.610 --> 01:33:13.350

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But they're for the purposes of analysis,

609

01:33:13.610 --> 01:33:19.730

Quincy Bahr - BLM: what we considered in this effort. That that's the rationale. Why is we wanted to make sure we had that shape

610

01:33:20.170 --> 01:33:25.349

Quincy Bahr - BLM: tied to the ACECs, with that specific management. So we had those options

611

01:33:26.180 --> 01:33:29.350

Quincy Bahr - BLM: as broad a range of alternatives to consider as possible.

612

01:33:33.660 --> 01:33:35.209

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Quincy.

613

01:33:36.710 --> 01:33:52.419

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, can Matt please explain that more? I didn't understand that other than landowners get to do what they want. And I believe this refers to an earlier question that we were answering, which was

614

01:33:52.440 --> 01:34:01.239

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: question number 10, which alternatives include Wyoming's proposed stewardship areas. And how would those areas be managed on the ground?

615

01:34:01.626 --> 01:34:05.870

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll go ahead and hear from Matthew for the answer on that.

616

01:34:09.438 --> 01:34:29.583

Matthew Holloran - BLM: Yeah, sorry. Didn't give enough detail on that. So, the state of Wyoming worked with landowners within the region where the stewardship habitat management area is being proposed in Alternatives 5 and 6, and

617

01:34:30.968 --> 01:34:39.073

Matthew Holloran - BLM: came up with the approaches that the BLM in Wyoming is adopting for management of those areas. And so the

618

01:34:39.830 --> 01:34:46.298

Matthew Holloran - BLM: the emphasis in those areas, are going to be on the landowners to develop



619

01:34:46.920 --> 01:34:49.380

Matthew Holloran - BLM: kind of the landowner-led

620

01:34:50.810 --> 01:35:04.249

Matthew Holloran - BLM: conservation benefits agreement, similar to a CCAA or CCA. And then within that what they do have is at a minimum,

621

01:35:04.729 --> 01:35:27.759

Matthew Holloran - BLM: those landowner agreements will identify key habitats and linkages, potential threats to Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitats, appropriate conservation measures, and then to avoid, minimize, and compensate kind of a strategy for that. That identifies mitigation opportunities within that SHMA area.

622

01:35:31.520 --> 01:35:33.899

Matthew Holloran - BLM: And I think that that should cover it.

623

01:35:35.040 --> 01:35:36.300

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Right. Thanks, Matt.

624

01:35:37.730 --> 01:35:41.539

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll move on to our next question, which is.

625

01:35:41.550 --> 01:35:45.380

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Have plans been developed for Proposed ACECs?

626

01:35:45.390 --> 01:35:48.239

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Quincy for that answer.

627

01:35:51.230 --> 01:36:02.749

Quincy Bahr - BLM: No- at this point we're not even sure if there are going to be ACECs designated. And so, at this point we are looking at management in the RMP

628

01:36:03.410 --> 01:36:07.210

Quincy Bahr - BLM: for those ACECs under those given alternatives.

629

01:36:07.340 --> 01:36:34.670

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As we go forward, if an ACEC is selected in the prefer, in the in the final decision the BLM can consider preparing stay implementation level plans. It doesn't have to, but it can. At this point BLM Policy states that we should have sufficient detail in the RMP to

guide management of that ACEC which is what we have identified there in section 2.5.12

630

01:36:34.800 --> 01:36:41.939

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Think it was 12 identified in in the RMP as far as what management should be for those

631

01:36:42.550 --> 01:36:46.989

Quincy Bahr - BLM: any future would be dependent on if we designate, and if it's needed.

632

01:36:50.540 --> 01:36:51.510

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy.

633

01:36:52.050 --> 01:37:04.489

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we'll move on to our next question, which is, there are agency projects currently open for comments that will destroy nearly 90,000 acres of core sage grouse habitat on BLM property.

634

01:37:04.720 --> 01:37:11.660

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: That project is inconsistent with this heavy habitat conservation focus displayed by the alternatives from this plan.

635

01:37:12.190 --> 01:37:19.810

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How does the BLM reconcile the 2 very different intents and outcomes between the 2 projects, both within the agency?

636

01:37:19.990 --> 01:37:22.269

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll hear from Pat for that answer.

637

01:37:23.850 --> 01:37:44.464

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks, Alli. So, any projects that are proposed within sage grouse habitat on BLM administered lands would have to comply with the requirements of this plan and any additional state requirements or mitigation. But that depends on the final decision, and I'm a little confused here, and I'm not sure what projects are being referenced.

638

01:37:45.404 --> 01:37:53.260

Patricia Deibert - BLM: But projects that are currently approved are projects that are going to be approved prior to completion of our planning effort

639

01:37:53.320 --> 01:38:01.700

Patricia Deibert - BLM: would not be affected by this planning effort, however, they would need to comply with the 2015 sage grouse amendments.

640

01:38:01.870 --> 01:38:09.670

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, therefore, current projects that are ready for approval, need to comply with the current regulations or the current plans.

641

01:38:09.730 --> 01:38:15.550

Patricia Deibert - BLM: And then, if they're approved after our plans go into place, these new plans, they will have to comply with that.

642

01:38:19.780 --> 01:38:20.590

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Pat.

643

01:38:21.550 --> 01:38:37.450

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, can you please explain why lek buffers do not follow the suggested distances from near at all, despite continued declines in grouse populations and extensive reference to the document in the DEIS.

644

01:38:37.890 --> 01:38:44.469

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: A precautionary approach would suggest larger buffers should be applied if we wish to avoid a future listing.

645

01:38:44.500 --> 01:38:46.810

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll go back to Pat for that answer.

646

01:38:47.920 --> 01:39:10.219

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, as we explained previously, one size fits all lek buffer doesn't necessarily provide the protection, it doesn't necessarily apply across the entire range of the species, and we can achieve the same level of conservation, either using a modified lek buffer or other minimization measures to reduce impacts to sage grouse.

647

01:39:10.670 --> 01:39:29.260

Patricia Deibert - BLM: I also I mean Manir is referenced extensively. It is simply a collection of lek distances, not necessarily the lek distances that we should be following across the board. We need to allow for that site specific information.

648

01:39:29.665 --> 01:39:41.019

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, I appreciate the person's comment. But it really does depend on how we can provide protections that make the most sense based on the local information.

649

01:39:44.000 --> 01:39:45.130

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Great thanks, Pat.

650

01:39:47.270 --> 01:39:56.960

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, how is the BLM going to accept new science that is coming out, showing livestock grazing has a net benefit on sage grouse.

651

01:39:57.120 --> 01:39:59.320

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we'll go back to Pat for that answer.

652

01:39:59.920 --> 01:40:17.569

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Yeah. BLM, will consider any new science. When it has been published in a peer review publication, and we encourage submission of that science. If we have missed that, or if it's new, between when we release the Draft EIS for comment, and when we close our public comments.

653

01:40:17.610 --> 01:40:34.879

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So our CEQ regulations specify that all agencies make use of reliable data and sources. We have to use the best available science. It's a legal term that appears primarily in the Endangered Species Act.

654

01:40:35.100 --> 01:40:42.059

Patricia Deibert - BLM: but we do use it in our own BLM policy to make sure that we are the most current science out there that's available.

655

01:40:42.542 --> 01:41:04.810

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, we are BLM Policy does require us to ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity information to be used. So, we do encourage, if there's if there's information on livestock grazing that has been missed or becomes published in our comment period, please submit that to us for our consideration.

656

01:41:09.410 --> 01:41:10.519

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Great thanks, Pat.

657

01:41:11.980 --> 01:41:17.510

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is, can you explain how you use Palmquist

658

01:41:18.220 --> 01:41:22.610

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: I'm probably going to mispronounce this- Rigge articles.

659

01:41:23.840 --> 01:41:27.710

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Excuse me in determining important areas within the range.

660

01:41:27.750 --> 01:41:35.940

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Same with Coates et al. Appendix 5 says you consider them but does not explain how and we'll go to path for that answer.

661

01:41:37.170 --> 01:41:40.409

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Yeah, you bet. So Palmquist and Rigge

662

01:41:41.890 --> 01:42:04.680

Patricia Deibert - BLM: publications. They provided models using very different parameters on climate change, and where we were likely to have sage brush habitats persist into the future, and of course they use different timeframes. And the further and further and further, you get out in a timeframe, the less stable the models are. So, we looked at the model results for the next 30 to 50 years.

663

01:42:05.156 --> 01:42:11.599

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We're hopeful that we get a plan that will last that long. But we wanted to make sure that their models

664

01:42:11.630 --> 01:42:28.751

Patricia Deibert - BLM: suggested through their different techniques and their different parameters that sage brush ecosystems in the areas that we are designated as important for sage grouse are likely to persist and be durable in light of climate change as we move forward.

665

01:42:29.510 --> 01:42:47.290

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, basically, we looked at what their model output was. We looked at where we had habitat management areas for sage grouse, and that helped us identify habitat management area boundaries and have that conversation with our state partners to look at that long-term durability of these habitats.

666

01:42:47.380 --> 01:42:57.190

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So that what plan we're putting into place today will not be negated or minimized by any near-term changes as a result of climate actions.

667

01:43:00.220 --> 01:43:01.010  
Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Pat.

668  
01:43:01.920 --> 01:43:15.019  
Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is Alternative 3 notes that clusters are used in place of fine scale HAF boundaries in Wyoming, as HAF boundaries have not been delineated for the state.

669  
01:43:15.360 --> 01:43:20.899  
Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The lack of fine scale HAF boundaries are not addressed in any other alternative

670  
01:43:21.360 --> 01:43:31.379  
Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Will find scale HAF boundaries in Wyoming be used in Alternatives 4, 5, or 6? and we'll hear from Quincy on that answer.

671  
01:43:32.770 --> 01:43:34.309  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: Okay, so

672  
01:43:35.940 --> 01:43:45.999  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: The HAF, that would be the habitat assessment framework. Brief summary- Here. There are 3 scale, 4 scales related to the habitat assessment framework.

673  
01:43:46.060 --> 01:43:57.809  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: The fine scale is that scale I referred to earlier with relation to the disturbance cap as it looks at the various seasonal habitats associated with a given population.

674  
01:43:57.880 --> 01:44:03.359  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: Those have now been developed for Wyoming. Those are displayed in Map 3.8.

675  
01:44:03.660 --> 01:44:09.670  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: And those will be used going forward in Alternatives 3 through 6.

676  
01:44:10.038 --> 01:44:18.399  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: If we have that reference in Alternative 3. I do want to confirm on that one where that's used because there are some separate circumstances

677  
01:44:18.630 --> 01:44:21.710  
Quincy Bahr - BLM: where we do use

678

01:44:22.099 --> 01:44:36.149

Quincy Bahr - BLM: adaptive management where we do use the clusters instead of the HAF fine scales. But if it does reference, the clusters for Wyoming under Alternative 3, for disturbance, for example, that that's an error that we need to correct in the Final EIS.

679

01:44:40.420 --> 01:44:41.350

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy.

680

01:44:42.020 --> 01:44:44.240

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is.

681

01:44:44.610 --> 01:44:54.600

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: The text of the Draft EIS states that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would have no recommendations for locatable mineral withdrawals in Montana.

682

01:44:54.610 --> 01:44:56.779

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: DEIS 1.3.10

683

01:44:57.020 --> 01:45:06.759

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: But the maps and Appendix 1 show some small areas of recommended locatable mineral withdraws in Montana in Alternatives 4, 5, and 6.

684

01:45:06.880 --> 01:45:13.880

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Can you verify- Can you clarify what's accurate for Montana locatable mineral withdrawal proposals?

685

01:45:14.200 --> 01:45:16.710

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll hear from Pat on that answer.

686

01:45:18.450 --> 01:45:24.086

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, in this Draft EIS effort we are looking at management actions that are specific to Greater Sage Grouse.

687

01:45:24.410 --> 01:45:48.909

Patricia Deibert - BLM: However, there are other management actions that are already out there on the landscape, and these underlying management actions may be in or out of sage grouse habitat that have a recommendation for withdrawal. In Montana, areas that are recommended for withdrawal are already under an existing ACEC that did not is not under this current planning effort.

688

01:45:49.369 --> 01:46:01.540

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So, the recommendation and our withdrawal is for another resource, it happens to show up in our maps to make sure we are providing the accuracy in those recommendations.

689

01:46:02.270 --> 01:46:12.979

Patricia Deibert - BLM: you can look at the different maps under Alternative 4, or I'm sorry, and maps and in chapter 2, under Alternative 4 that do point out those differences.

690

01:46:17.100 --> 01:46:18.470

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, thanks, Pat.

691

01:46:19.320 --> 01:46:43.960

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and we do have a couple of more questions queued up that we are working to develop answers for you all for. And we have just under 15 min left in our meeting time today. So, I do want to thank everyone for your participation and for all these great questions that we've been getting in so far. I'm just going to take a moment here to pause while we develop the answers for these remaining questions.

692

01:46:44.460 --> 01:46:53.930

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Again. We will be here for about 12 more minutes or so to answer any further questions. If you do have any final ones, please feel free to submit those through that Q&A box.

693

01:50:01.510 --> 01:50:21.250

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And again, just as a reminder, we do have a couple of final questions queued up here, and we're just working to find all the best information available to develop an answer for you all. So, we're just taking a quick pause while we work to determine those, but we do have few more questions queued up before we close out the webinar at the top of the hour.

694

01:51:35.750 --> 01:51:38.439

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright! This next question is.

695

01:51:38.680 --> 01:51:47.000

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: There is recently published, peer reviewed data that implicates livestock grazing, not just "improper grazing"

696

01:51:47.360 --> 01:51:54.790

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: in the expansion and dominance of cheat grass, particularly in the Great Basin, but throughout the range of sage grouse.



697

01:51:54.960 --> 01:52:02.410

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: If these RMP Amendments are not going to prioritize NEPA review grazing allotments which the 2015 plans

698

01:52:02.420 --> 01:52:03.640

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: actually did.

699

01:52:03.730 --> 01:52:11.930

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: which essentially means that it will not get done, since current RMPs and BLM Policy also do not prioritize grazing permitting analysis.

700

01:52:12.000 --> 01:52:21.470

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: How will the BLM address the conversion of habitat to cheat grass monocultures if status quo grazing management continues?

701

01:52:21.590 --> 01:52:24.249

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and I'll pass that over to Pat for the answer.

702

01:52:26.030 --> 01:52:38.587

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Thanks, Alli, and thanks for the patience of our folks here. There are so many great questions coming, and we're struggling to read them and make sure we're interpreting them correctly to answer your questions. So, I appreciate your patience on that

703

01:52:38.940 --> 01:52:40.500

Patricia Deibert - BLM: So,

704

01:52:41.220 --> 01:53:05.429

Patricia Deibert - BLM: prioritizing grazing permits is actually not an RMP decision. And we have an internal instructional memorandum from 2018 that covers our priorities for the review and processing of grazing and it's not appropriate for RMPs to replace those existing policies. Although new policies may be developed as a result of an RMP.

705

01:53:05.918 --> 01:53:15.760

Patricia Deibert - BLM: We do have a lot of vegetation management actions that we have incorporated since 2015 to address cheat grass and cheat grass is not only spread

706

01:53:15.780 --> 01:53:23.499

Patricia Deibert - BLM: potentially by livestock, but also by other land uses out there, and our management actions do address these other uses as well as livestock grazing.

707

01:53:23.850 --> 01:53:32.950

Patricia Deibert - BLM: If there is additional information that you have that would provide us with ways to better manage these allotments for cheat grass,

708

01:53:33.386 --> 01:53:57.850

Patricia Deibert - BLM: please feel free to send that to us with your comments. We will be considering again all the available science. When we're developing the final plan amendments. We want to make sure that we're including the potential effects and considered and, excuse me, all the potential effects for turn is considered. We encourage you to provide that literature to us.

709

01:53:58.240 --> 01:54:02.470

Patricia Deibert - BLM: But again, the prioritization of RMP

710

01:54:03.034 --> 01:54:12.129

Patricia Deibert - BLM: review is- I'm sorry- the prioritization of allotments is not an RMP decision. That is an implementation decision.

711

01:54:15.970 --> 01:54:17.289

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. Thanks, Pat.

712

01:54:18.080 --> 01:54:20.090

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Our next question is.

713

01:54:20.260 --> 01:54:29.100

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: For Quincy's information, the reference to use of the clusters in Wyoming is on page 4 - 22.

714

01:54:30.170 --> 01:54:46.509

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and then it quotes in Wyoming the BLM would apply a 3 percent cap, including infrastructure, wildfire, and agriculture at the project scale and within neighborhood cluster boundaries. Clusters are used in place of fine scale HAF boundaries, as HAF boundaries have not been delineated for Wyoming.

715

01:54:46.710 --> 01:54:48.659

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and I'll pass it over to Quincy.

716

01:54:48.660 --> 01:54:53.680

Quincy Bahr - BLM: This is, thank you. That's that reference is out of date. And

717

01:54:54.001 --> 01:55:04.539

Quincy Bahr - BLM: those HAF boundaries in Wyoming were late in development and as we rolled them in we obviously missed a section in updating the document. So, thank you. Thank you for pointing that out.

718

01:55:07.540 --> 01:55:28.543

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright. And again, we do have a few more questions that are queued up. So, we'll take a moment here to have a little under 5 min. Again, our team is working in the background to develop answers for these. And we may not get to all questions today. But we will be following up with answers for those questions. So

719

01:55:29.350 --> 01:55:32.380

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: we'll just take a pause here while we develop those answers.

720

01:55:57.000 --> 01:56:06.320

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, next question is: Any thoughts on the Greater Sage being designated as endangered, and the effect that would have on this planning effort?

721

01:56:06.400 --> 01:56:08.259

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: And we'll turn that over to Pat.

722

01:56:09.230 --> 01:56:15.680

Patricia Deibert - BLM: Yeah, thanks. Alli. So the Bureau of Land Management has no role in considering whether or not

723

01:56:16.031 --> 01:56:18.759

Patricia Deibert - BLM: the sage grouse should be listed as an endangered species.

724

01:56:19.165 --> 01:56:33.790

Patricia Deibert - BLM: That is strictly under the purview of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Greater Sage is considered a species, a special status species under our policies, and is our objective to avoid a listing decision.

725

01:56:34.266 --> 01:56:54.323

Patricia Deibert - BLM: But the listing of sage grouse, should that ever proceed forward again is really dependent not only on the success that

BLM plans, but also of all of our conservation actions and all of our partners. Are implementing as well as BLM across the entire landscape. So, it's-

726

01:56:54.850 --> 01:57:03.980

Patricia Deibert - BLM: I don't know that that we can either say one way or another. This is not our decision, but we are working hard to ensure that conservation occurs.

727

01:57:07.560 --> 01:57:08.887

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Alright, thanks, Pat.

728

01:57:10.840 --> 01:57:14.129

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: We'll go to our final question for today, which is.

729

01:57:14.140 --> 01:57:25.290

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Can BLM make available the spatial data that was used to calculate disturbances for the 5-year monitoring report, as well as the disturbance data for the last few years.

730

01:57:25.320 --> 01:57:27.590

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: and I'll pass that over to Quincy.

731

01:57:29.000 --> 01:57:32.485

Quincy Bahr - BLM: And that one we may need to double check...

732

01:57:33.530 --> 01:57:54.599

Quincy Bahr - BLM: The problem is the spatial data that was used the 5 to for the 5 Year Monitor Report is based on some proprietary data. And so purchased data sets that that the BLM has agreements with. And so there needs to be some caretaken as far as publication of some of those data because

733

01:57:54.600 --> 01:58:03.164

Quincy Bahr - BLM: of that- because of the those data sources. And so while there is information on the

734

01:58:04.100 --> 01:58:16.480

Quincy Bahr - BLM: on ePlanning related to some of the range wide, when it comes to those specific sources related to the 5 year monitoring report because of those proprietary data sets, they may not all be able to be provided.

735

01:58:17.020 --> 01:58:21.549

Quincy Bahr - BLM: I can look into it, though, and see what we are able to identify.

736

01:58:24.400 --> 01:58:41.819

Alli Yamnitsky - AECOM: Thanks, Quincy, and with that we are nearly at the end of our meeting time today, just under a minute or so remaining so again. Just want to thank everyone for your participation on all these great questions, and I'll turn it over to Quincy for some final remarks.

737

01:58:42.800 --> 01:59:07.508

Quincy Bahr - BLM: Yeah, I say that the fact that we had this many people participate in the middle of the afternoon asking good questions that are obvious that you've been into the document. I really appreciate. These public reviews help us make a better document, help us make better decisions as an agency, and making sure that we've considered all the aspects related to this decision that we can consider as part of these RMP decisions.

738

01:59:08.192 --> 01:59:18.160

Quincy Bahr - BLM: There is a recognition that again, this is not the end of conservation. This is a step towards what the BLM needs to provide as we go forward.

739

01:59:18.290 --> 01:59:22.019

Quincy Bahr - BLM: But as we work with our partners, that's the critical part moving forward.

740

01:59:22.070 --> 01:59:25.350

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As far as this effort. For the remainder of this comment period.

741

01:59:25.580 --> 01:59:27.150

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We do have another

742

01:59:27.520 --> 01:59:34.510

Quincy Bahr - BLM: 12 public meetings coming up, 11 in person, and then one more virtual on April 25<sup>TH</sup>.

743

01:59:34.550 --> 01:59:43.500

Quincy Bahr - BLM: we've tried to put those throughout the range of sage grouse and look forward to opportunities to continue these discussions in those various settings.

744

01:59:43.886 --> 01:59:56.943

Quincy Bahr - BLM: As described in the notice of availability, and on the ePlanning side, if you do have additional questions, feel free to reach out, we'll get to as many of those questions as we're able to be able to improve-

745

01:59:57.550 --> 02:00:06.749

Quincy Bahr - BLM: To help you understand where to find things in the document. I recognize it is a challenging document. There is a lot of pieces from different plans from different states.

746

02:00:06.800 --> 02:00:25.869

Quincy Bahr - BLM: We've tried to organize it and present it in a manner that's as understandable as possible, but I recognize that as you guys get into it, if you find questions feel free to reach out to us, and we're happy to help to improve your ability to help comment and help us make better decisions. So, with that, thank you very much for your time this afternoon.