

Dated: March 12, 2018.

Todd M. Richardson,

*Acting General Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Policy Development and Research.*

[FR Doc. 2018-05946 Filed 3-22-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210-67-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-HQ-ES-2018-N019;
FXHC1122090000-167-FF09E33000; OMB
Control Number 1018-0148]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service,
Interior.

ACTION: Notice of information collection;
request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the
Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, we,
the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are
proposing to revise an existing
information collection.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to
submit comments on or before April 23,
2018.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments on
this information collection request (ICR)
to the Office of Management and
Budget's Desk Officer for the
Department of the Interior by email at
OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov; or via
facsimile to (202) 395-5806. Please
provide a copy of your comments to the
Service Information Collection
Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC, 5275
Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-
3803 (mail); or by email to Info_Coll@fws.gov. Please reference OMB Control
Number 1018-0148 in the subject line of
your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To
request additional information about
this ICR, contact Madonna L. Baucum,
Service Information Collection
Clearance Officer, by email at Info_Coll@fws.gov, or by telephone at (703)
358-2503. You may also view the ICR
at <http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In
accordance with the Paperwork
Reduction Act of 1995, we provide the
general public and other Federal
agencies with an opportunity to
comment on new, proposed, revised,
and continuing collections of
information. This helps us assess the
impact of our information collection

requirements and minimize the public's
reporting burden. It also helps the
public understand our information
collection requirements and provide the
requested data in the desired format.

A **Federal Register** notice with a 60-
day public comment period soliciting
comments on this collection of
information was published on October
10, 2017 (82 FR 47021). The following
comment was received:

Comment #1: Received from Michael
Speerschneider, Senior Director,
Permitting Policy and Environmental
Affairs, and Gene Grace, Senior
Counsel, American Wind Energy
Association, on December 11, 2017, via
email.

The American Wind Energy
Association (AWEA) comments were
limited to the accuracy of the estimate
of the burden for the collection of
information detailed therein. They
provided the Service with an estimate of
the paperwork and respondent burden
required for the wind industry to collect
the data associated with the voluntary
Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines
("Guidelines") on a per project basis.
Based on a survey of their member
companies involved in the development
of wind energy facilities, they believe
the updated estimates are a more
accurate reflection of the work
necessary to adhere to the Guidelines,
and respectfully requested that the
Service utilize this estimate, combined
with other assumed costs (e.g.,
government agency costs) in this and
any other analysis of the Guidelines
going forward. Rather than have
individual companies submit their
respective data with respect to the
estimate burden hours related to the
Guidelines, AWEA submitted
aggregated data and, therefore, chose not
to include identifying information for
any of their members that supplied the
data.

FWS Response to Comment #1: The
Service thanks AWEA for the useful
comments that they provided on this
information collection, and specifically
on the estimate of the burden hours and
expenditures necessary to adhere to the
voluntary Guidelines. We used this
information to update the estimated
burden, noting that there are significant
differences between the Service's
burden estimate developed several years
ago, and AWEA's current estimate. We
assume that these differences are a
reflection of the wide range and
variability in the size and degree of
complexity of commercial-scale wind
energy projects, and that changes in cost
reflect that variability. We attempted to
obtain further clarification and feedback

from AWEA on that presumption but
received no response.

We are again soliciting comments on
the proposed ICR that is described
below. We are especially interested in
public comment addressing the
following issues: (1) Is the collection
necessary to the proper functions of the
Service; (2) will this information be
processed and used in a timely manner;
(3) is the estimate of burden accurate;
(4) how might the Service enhance the
quality, utility, and clarity of the
information to be collected; and (5) how
might the Service minimize the burden
of this collection on the respondents,
including through the use of
information technology.

Comments that you submit in
response to this notice are a matter of
public record. Before including your
address, phone number, email address,
or other personal identifying
information in your comment, you
should be aware that your entire
comment—including your personal
identifying information—may be made
publicly available at any time. While
you can ask us in your comment to
withhold your personal identifying
information from public review, we
cannot guarantee that we will be able to
do so.

Abstract: As wind energy production
increased, both developers and wildlife
agencies recognized the need for a
system to evaluate and address the
potential negative impacts of wind
energy projects on species of concern.
As a result, the Service worked with the
wind energy industry, conservation
nongovernmental organizations, Federal
and State agencies, Tribes, and
academia to develop the voluntary
Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines
(Guidelines; <http://www.fws.gov/windenergy>) to provide a structured,
scientific process for addressing wildlife
conservation concerns at all stages of
land-based wind energy development.
Released in 2012, the Guidelines
promote effective communication
among wind energy developers and
Federal, State, Tribal, and local
conservation agencies. When used in
concert with appropriate regulatory
tools, the Guidelines are the best
practical approach for conserving
species of concern.

The Guidelines discuss various risks
to species of concern from wind energy
projects, including collisions with wind
turbines and associated infrastructure;
loss and degradation of habitat from
turbines and infrastructure;
fragmentation of large habitat blocks
into smaller segments that may not
support sensitive species; displacement
and behavioral changes; and indirect

effects such as increased predator populations or introduction of invasive plants. The Guidelines assist developers in identifying species of concern that may potentially be affected by proposed projects, including but not limited to:

- Migratory birds;
- Bats;
- Bald and golden eagles, and other birds of prey;
- Prairie chickens and sage grouse; and
- Species that have been identified as candidates, or proposed or listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

The Guidelines follow a tiered approach. The wind energy developer begins at Tier 1 or Tier 2, which entails gathering of existing data to help identify any potential risks to wildlife and their habitats at proposed wind energy project sites. The developer then proceeds through subsequent tiers, as appropriate, to collect information in increasing detail until the level of risk is adequately ascertained and a decision on whether or not to develop the site can be made. Many projects may not proceed beyond Tier 1 or 2, when developers become aware of potential barriers, including high risks to wildlife. Developers would only have an interest in adhering to the Guidelines for those projects that proceed beyond Tier 1 or 2.

At each tier, wind energy developers and operators should retain documentation to provide to the Service. Such documentation may include copies of correspondence with

the Service, results of pre- and post-construction studies conducted at project sites, bird and bat conservation strategies, or any other record that supports a developer's adherence to the Guidelines. The extent of the documentation will depend on the conditions of the site being developed. Sites with greater risk of impacts to wildlife and habitats will likely involve more extensive communication with the Service and longer durations of pre- and post-construction studies than sites with little risk.

Distributed or community-scale wind energy projects are unlikely to have significant adverse impacts to wildlife and their habitats. The Guidelines recommend that developers of these small-scale projects conduct the desktop analysis described in Tier 1 or Tier 2 using publicly available information to determine whether they should communicate with the Service. Since such project designs usually include a single turbine associated with existing development, conducting a Tier 1 or Tier 2 analysis for distributed or community-scale wind energy projects should incur limited non-hour burden costs. For such projects, if there is no potential risk identified, a developer will have no need to communicate with the Service regarding the project or to conduct studies described in Tiers 3, 4, and 5.

Adherence to the Guidelines is voluntary. Following the Guidelines does not relieve any individual, company, or agency of the responsibility

to comply with applicable laws and regulations (*i.e.*, species protected by the Endangered Species Act and/or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668–668c)).

Title of Collection: Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines.

OMB Control Number: 1018–0148.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Respondents/Affected Public: Developers and operators of wind energy facilities.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Respondents: 160.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 160.

Estimated Completion Time per Response: Varies from 1 hour to 3,600 hours, depending on activity.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 282,995.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion.

Total Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost: \$36,870,000. Costs will depend on the size and complexity of issues associated with each project. These expenses may include, but are not limited to: Travel expenses for site visits, studies conducted, and meetings with the Service and other Federal and State agencies; training in survey methodologies; data management; special transportation, such as all-terrain vehicles or helicopters; equipment needed for acoustic, telemetry, or radar monitoring; and carcass storage.

Requirement	Annual number of respondents	Number of responses each	Total annual responses	Completion time per response (hours)	Total annual burden hours
Tier 1 (Desktop Analysis)					
Reporting	40	1	40	25	1,000
Recordkeeping				1	40
Tier 2 (Site Characterization)					
Reporting	35	1	35	155	5,425
Recordkeeping				3	105
Tier 3 (Pre-construction studies)					
Reporting	30	1	30	3,100	93,000
Recordkeeping				5	150
Tier 4 (Post-construction fatality monitoring and habitat studies)					
Reporting	45	1	45	3,600	162,000
Recordkeeping				5	225
Tier 5 (Other post-construction studies)					
Reporting	10	1	10	2,100	21,000
Recordkeeping				5	50
Totals	160		160		282,995

An agency may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

The authority for this action is the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

Dated: March 20, 2018.

Madonna L. Baucum,

Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-05931 Filed 3-22-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLWYD04000-LL51010000-ER0000-LVRWK14K1600.17X]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Project, Wyoming

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (MLA), as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Project (RRNP or Project) and by this Notice announces the beginning of public review to solicit public comments.

DATES: The Draft EIS is now available for public review. To be considered in the Final EIS, written comments on the Draft EIS must be received within 45 days after the Environmental Protection Agency's publication in the **Federal Register** of a Notice of Availability (NOA) of this Draft EIS.

Four public open houses for the proposed Project will be held in Big Piney, Rock Springs, Lander, and Casper, Wyoming. Meeting times and locations will be announced through local media and the BLM Project website at <http://bit.ly/2aW727l> at least 15 days prior to the event. To be considered in the analysis, all comments must be received prior to the close of the public comment period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later.

ADDRESSES: The Draft EIS and supporting documents will be available electronically on the following BLM website: <http://bit.ly/2aW727l>.

Written comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* BLM_WY_RRNP@blm.gov.
- *Fax:* 307-352-0329.
- *Mail or Delivery:* BLM High Desert District, Attn: Mark Mackiewicz, BLM National Project Manager, Riley Ridge to Natrona Project, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, WY 82901.

Copies of the Draft EIS may be examined at the following BLM offices from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MDT, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays:

- BLM Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming.
- BLM Pinedale Field Office, 1625 West Pine Street, Pinedale, Wyoming.
- BLM Rawlins Field Office, 1300 N. Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming.
- BLM Lander Field Office, 1335 Main Street, Lander, Wyoming.
- BLM Casper Field Office, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, Wyoming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mark Mackiewicz, BLM National Project Manager, at:

- *Telephone:* 435-636-3616.
- *Email:* mmackiew@blm.gov.

Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to speak with Mr. Mackiewicz during normal business hours. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question for the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM is responding to three applications for right-of-way (ROW) grants submitted by Denbury Green Pipeline-Riley Ridge, LLC (Denbury) and PacifiCorp, doing business as Rocky Mountain Power (collectively referred to as the Applicant), to the BLM for the Project. Denbury submitted an "Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands" (Standard Form 299) to the BLM for two underground pipeline projects: (1) The Riley Ridge Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Pipeline Project (WYW-167867) and (2) the Bairoil to Natrona CO₂ Pipeline Project (WYW-168290). In addition, Denbury has proposed two hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) injection wells (WYW-181373) to be sited near the proposed Riley Ridge Sweetening Plant, which is included in the Riley Ridge CO₂ Pipeline Project application. PacifiCorp submitted an application for ROW for a 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (WYW-185369) to supply energy to the Riley Ridge Sweetening Plant. The applications for ROW grants for

Denbury's Proposed Action were submitted to the BLM on February 19, 2013 (Denbury), and January 25, 2016 (PacifiCorp); the proposal for the injection wells was submitted to the BLM on September 12, 2013.

Collectively, the Project consists of the following components (as proposed):

- An underground non-gaseous H₂S/carbon dioxide (CO₂) pipeline from the existing Riley Ridge Treating Plant (a methane and helium recovery facility) to the proposed Riley Ridge Sweetening Plant, consisting of 31 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipe within Sublette County;
- A CO₂ underground pipeline from the proposed Riley Ridge Sweetening Plant to the Bairoil Interconnect, consisting of 129 miles of 24-inch-diameter pipe, and continuing from the interconnect another 84 miles to the terminus at the Natrona Hub within Natrona County;
- The 4.3-acre proposed Riley Ridge Sweetening Plant, located on BLM-administered lands, constructed and operated to separate the CO₂ from the H₂S; the H₂S would be reinjected into deep geologic formations via two proposed injection wells;
- An approximately 1-mile-long 230 kV overhead transmission line that would bring power to the Riley Ridge Sweetening Plant from an existing 230 kV transmission line; and
- Ancillary facilities, such as roads, valves, flowlines, etc.

After reviewing the scope of the Project, the BLM, as the lead Federal agency, determined that the Proposed Action is a major federal action and would require preparation of an EIS in compliance with requirements of NEPA, as amended by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

On June 9, 2014, the BLM published in the **Federal Register** a Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS. Thirteen agencies are participating as cooperating agencies in preparation of the EIS, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Park Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); the State of Wyoming (and associated departments); Fremont, Lincoln, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Natrona counties, Wyoming; and four conservation districts, Natrona County, Popo Agie, Sublette County, and Sweetwater County, in Wyoming. To allow the public an opportunity to review the Project information, the BLM held public meetings from July 14 to July 17, 2014, in Casper, Lander, Big Piney, and Rock Springs, Wyoming. Issues and potential impacts on specific resources were identified during the