

**NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
HELD JULY 18, 2023 IN THE WHITE PINE COUNTY  
LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Committee Members:**

Cody Odgers, Chairman  
Jacob Carter, Vice Chairman  
Dave Baker  
William R. Wilson  
Ross Rivera  
Alt. Craig Baker (absent)  
Alt. Robin Peterson

Mark Tefft  
Gary Perea (via Zoom)  
Danny Reed  
Frederick Partey (via Zoom)  
Dana Johnson (absent)  
Steven Carter (via Zoom)  
Secretary, Nichole Stephey

**White Pine County Representatives:**

Jeremy Drew, RCI     via Zoom                             Michael A. Wheable, County Manager  
Laurie L. Carson, County Commission Vice Chairman  
Janet VanCamp, County Commissioner

**Also Present:**

Jared Bybee representing the BLM; Nathan Robertson, Mayor of the City of Ely; George Chachas from George Town Media

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Chairman Cody Odgers brought the meeting into session at 5:31 p.m.

**1. 5:30 P.M. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Member Ross Rivera led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

George Chachas advised the Committee that he had raised several questions and received no answers to his written request that he submitted April 17th and resubmitted on May 16th. On the issue of the Golf Course, he felt that the course needed to stay on City supplied water and the County needed to pay their fair share and stop getting a discount. He submitted a report from Frederick Partey from KGHM that stated that the mine was still pumping 1,186 gpm into Gleason Creek and he felt that water should be used. He asserted that the County had been allocating precious water rights that were designated for industrial use for other purposes and he felt that might jeopardize those rights if no clear intent was shown and he was concerned. He felt the County was sending the wrong message and needed to be clearer.

- \*3. Discussion/for Possible Action: The Committee will review the Nevada Division of Water Resources Monthly Report for water right filings made in June 2023. The Committee may take action to recommend County review and/or involvement in any application that may affect the County's water resources or related interests. Jeremy Drew, RCI**  
Via Zoom, Jeremy Drew reported that there were no filings.

- \*4. Discussion/for Possible Action:** The Committee will review a Draft Energy Section for the White Pine Public Lands Policy Plan and may provide input on proposed additions or other revisions, including specific areas of the County where renewable energy may be directed or discouraged. The goal would be to bring an updated draft back to the Committee in July for possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for adoption. **Jeremy Drew, RCI**

Via Zoom, Jeremy Drew covered the backup material describing the areas in green where he added in information and areas in yellow where information was revised that came from feedback from this Committee. He advised that he will add to the emergency services policy section per County Manager Michael A. Wheable. William Wilson offered a suggestion on policy 20-1 and the Committee engaged in discussion on his suggestion on a change on policy 20-8 to add abandoned mineral leases or invalid mining claims.

Member Dave Baker addressed Mr. Drew and asked what the tax differences were from development on private land versus federal. There was discussion about PILT and Mr. Drew replied that on public land, PILT would not be affected by a renewable energy project and no revenue sharing would occur with solar or wind. There is revenue sharing with geothermal and other types of construction get sales tax and other revenues. Vice Chairman Jacob Carter reasoned that when an individual creates energy within a county and ships it somewhere else, they must pay a gross margins tax in Nevada. Manager Wheable explained about renewable energy projects and how they pay taxes to the state and get tax abatements and how the county tax revenues come from personal property such as heavy equipment during the construction phase. He did note that the state wants counties to push these projects. Member Mark Tefft asked if the money that rPlus promised the County would be based on the value of the turbines, pumps, and structures at the Pumped Storage Project. Manager Wheable replied that the County Assessor could better answer that question and added that no property tax will be paid on BLM land.

Mr. Drew addressed the Committee regarding policies 20-32 and 33. Member Rivera asked about impact fees, access, egress, and signage as being important to emergency services. Vice Chairman Carter moved to approve this draft section with Mr. Wilson's additions. Member Baker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**5. Discussion/Update from White Pine County**

County Manager Mike Wheable had nothing to present. Chairman Odgers felt the energy section will be good for the County. Jeremy Drew provided Manager Wheable with some model ordinances from Nye County that he will review with the DA's Office. His intent was to influence the development of renewable energy here and make sure the development agreement process and the special use permit process works together with the Regional Planning Commission. Chairman Odgers noted projects on 15k acres in Jakes Valley and another in Butte Valley and they have not come to the County Commission. Manager Wheable advised that the BLM requires developers to comply with County ordinances as a check relief valve and those developers will be before the Commission as a requirement at some point.

**6. Discussion/Update from various agencies and organizations:**

**a. Bureau of Land Management**

Jared Bybee from the BLM was back as the acting Field Manager and there was not a huge change from June. The Bald Mountain Mine expansion EIS notice of Availability will be published by the end of the month and a draft will be out in August for 45 days and will have a comment period. Antelope South Horse Gather in White Pine County gathered 1,107 horses, 2,000 horses in Elko County, and 700 in Antelope South. The Butte Project at Golden Butte Mine is preparing an EA that will be ready for public comment by the end of the summer and also has a road agreement in place with WPC. The Stagecoach Wind Newark Valley formal EIS project should begin next calendar year; that is a \$850 billion project that has a Fast 41 approval from DOI and will be done after 41 weeks.

**b. U.S. Forest Service**

No one was present.

**c. National Park Service**

James Woolsey provided an update in the backup.

**d. Nevada State Parks**

No one was present.

**e. Department of Wildlife**

No one was present.

**f. Resource Concepts, Inc.**

From Zoom, Jeremy Drew advised that he attended a virtual session on the BLM Rule on Renewable Energy and it seemed to him like the BLM was trying to make development look more attractive on public land by giving incentives and reductions in fees for wind and solar. He will be putting together comments due August 15<sup>th</sup> for that. Senator Catherine Cortez-Masto toured the Swamp Cedars National Monument site in Spring Valley a couple of weeks ago and he will request a tour with the County. He has not heard from the DOI but he will reach out to them. For the sage grouse update, we are a cooperating agency and participate in bi weekly calls. He attached a BLM news release on the reg updates for grazing, which the BLM are not moving forward on, but will rather update their guidance on grazing and he recommended people keep their eye on that one. A draft EIS should be out soon for Bald Mountain Mine. He will be submitted scoping comments for Greenlink North on June 28th. For the BLM Solar Programmatic EIS, there are 7 western states involved and he is participating in bi weekly meetings; a preliminary matrix was in the backup and briefly discussed. Chairman Odgers asked about Pine and Wah Wah Valley. Mr. Drew replied that he had heard that the EIS had got to be reviewed in Washington DC with internal commentary and additional analysis to be completed and ended up being put on hold with no forthcoming updates.

- \*7. **Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of minutes from the June 20, 2023 Natural Resources Advisory Committee Meeting**

Member Danny Reed moved to approve the minutes and Vice Chairman Carter made the second. Mr. Rivera abstained because he was absent from the last meeting and the motion passed.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

**\*9. ADJOURNMENT**

Member Rivera moved to adjourn the meeting and Member Reed seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Approved this 19th day of September 2023.

  
Cody Odgers, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Nichole Stephey, Secretary