



OWYHEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COURTHOUSE P.O. BOX 128 MURPHY, ID 83650-0128
TELEPHONE (208) 495-2421

District 1 – Chairman – Jerry Hoagland – P.O. BOX 128 MURPHY, ID 83650-0128
District 2 – Kelly Aberasturi – P.O. BOX 128 MURPHY, ID 83650-0128
District 3 – Joe Merrick – P.O. BOX 128 MURPHY, ID 83650-0128

July 15, 2019

Boise District Office
Attn: (Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger)
3948 Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705

Re: Owyhee Land Exchange Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2014-0001-EA)


This document will be delivered electronically to kkirkpatrickkreiting@blm.gov


Dear Ms. Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger:

This letter provides the Owyhee County Comment on Owyhee Land Exchange Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2014-0001-EA)

We support the proposed exchange of lands as revised by BLM and IDL and briefed to us by Diane French on May 13, 2019.

Sincerely,


Jerry L. Hoagland
Chairman


Kelly Aberasturi
Commissioner


Joe Merrick
Commissioner

From: Russ Hendricks <rhendricks@idahofb.org>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 6:13 PM
To: Comments
Cc: Scott Phillips
Subject: Owyhee Land Exchange Comments
Attachments: Owyhee Land Exchange 0720.pdf

Dear IDL:

Attached are comments from the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation regarding an agenda item which will be on the upcoming State Land Board Meeting on July 21. Please distribute these to the Land Board members and enter them into the record of the hearing.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Russ Hendricks
Director of Governmental Affairs
208-342-2688 | cell 208-869-0303
fax 208-342-8585 | rhendricks@idahofb.org



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation®
"The Voice of Idaho Agriculture"™
500 W Washington
Boise, ID 83702-5965
www.idahofb.org

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IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

500 W Washington Street
Boise, Idaho 83702
(208) 342-2688 FAX (208) 342-8585

July 17, 2020

Idaho Department of Lands
Attn: Land Board Secretary
PO Box 83720
Boise ID 83720-0050

Dear State Land Board:

On behalf of the more than 80,500 Idaho families who are members of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF), I am writing to express our concern regarding the approval of the Owyhee Land Exchange which is on the Land Board agenda for July 21.

We have members who have a direct economic interest in this transaction. These ranchers possess grazing preference rights as well as state adjudicated stock water rights on the BLM lands that the state seeks to acquire through the exchange.

Idaho Code 25-901 states: "congress acknowledged grazing preference rights and provided for adjudication of allotments on which the grazing preference right was exercised. Livestock ranches are bought, sold, traded and inherited with assurance that the appurtenant grazing preference rights will be transferred to the new base property owner. Therefore, a grazing preference right shall be considered an appurtenance of the base property through which the grazing preference is maintained." Idaho law recognizes both stock water rights and grazing preference rights as legally held property rights that cannot be extinguished without compensation.

Our members have adopted a policy for this very situation. IFBF policy #47 states: "We support requiring any entity which acquires property from the federal government to compensate grazing preference holders on the former federally administered lands for the loss of their property rights if that entity does not continue to maintain and protect those rights."

Our primary concern at this point is that these ranchers have not been given any information about whether the state will continue to recognize either of those rights once the land becomes endowment land or not.

We had previously visited with former IDL Director Tom Schultz several times about this issue, and he assured us that prior to any exchange taking place, we would be notified and the ranchers would be contacted so they could be a part of the discussions on how the exchange would affect their rights. Our members tell us that this has not occurred.

Therefore, if the Land Board believes it must move forward on this project at this time, we respectfully request the Board to provide only provisional approval of the exchange on condition that this issue be

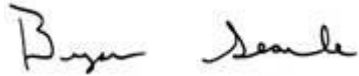
resolved in a manner that is satisfactory to the ranchers involved. In other words, we ask that the Land Board withhold its final approval until this issue is resolved.

It appears there are several additional steps that BLM will have to go through before the exchange can be finalized. This will give time for the parties to reach an acceptable agreement.

Our members are not opposed to the exchange. They are opposed to disregarding the legally recognized property interests of our members who have so far been excluded from this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on this important issue. If you need any additional information, please contact Russ Hendricks in our Boise office at 208-342-2688.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bryan Searle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bryan" and the last name "Searle" clearly distinguishable.

Bryan Searle, President
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

From: Brenda Richards <brichardsbs@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 10:01 AM
To: Comments
Cc: Ryan Montoya; Dustin Miller; jruhs@blm.gov; jlhoagland@co.owyhee.id.us
Subject: Owyhee Initiative letter of Support
Attachments: OI Owyhee Land Exchange comments _State Land Board Meeting _07_21_2020.pdf; Attachment 2 _OLEX Map.pdf

Good morning!

Attached is the Owyhee Initiative letter of support for the Owyhee Land Exchange scheduled for tomorrow's (July 21, 2020) Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners meeting as agenda item #6.

Please let me know if there is anything further needed to submit this letter for the record.

Thank you.

Brenda Richards, Chair
Owyhee Initiative, Inc.

OWYHEE INITIATIVE



CHAIRMAN, Brenda Richards; VICE-CHAIRMAN Craig Gehrke

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The Wilderness Society, Craig Gehrke; Owyhee Borderlands Trust, Inc., Dennis Stanford; Idaho Rivers United, Stephen Pfiefer; Owyhee Co. Soil Conservation Districts, Chris Black; SIDRA (Southwest Idaho Desert Racing Assoc.), Bill Walsh; Owyhee County Cattlemen's Assoc., Frank Bachman; Owyhee County Farm Bureau, Tim Lowry; Sierra Club, Edwina Allen; Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho, Phil Ryan; The Nature Conservancy, Lou Lunte; Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation, Herb Meyr; Idaho Outfitters & Guides Assoc., Grant Simonds; Idaho Conservation League, John Robison

July 20, 2020

Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners
Attention: Dustin Miller, Land Board Secretary
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0050

RE: Owyhee Land Exchange, Item #6 on Land Board Agenda for July 21, 2020

This documents will be delivered electronically to comments@idl.idaho.gov

Dear Idaho Land Board:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Owyhee Initiative (OI) I would like to submit this letter in support of the Owyhee Land Exchange presented to the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners on July 21, 2020. The Owyhee Initiative supports the Owyhee Land Exchange as shown on the map accompanying this letter. This is the same map presented by Idaho Department of Lands to the Owyhee Initiative and the Owyhee County Commissioners in 2019. It is also the same map included in the Bureau of Land Management's Environmental Assessment on the Owyhee Land Exchange (DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2014-0001-EA).

The goal of the Owyhee Initiative is "to develop and implement a landscape-scale program in Owyhee County that preserves the natural processes that create and maintain a functioning, unfragmented landscape supporting and sustaining a flourishing community of human, plant and animal life, that provides for economic stability by preserving livestock grazing as an economically viable use, and that provides for protection of cultural resources."

For over a decade, this referenced land exchange has been worked on and considered by the Owyhee Initiative, the Owyhee County Commissioners, the BLM, and the Idaho Department of Lands, as it would help consolidate BLM and State sections for management actions. For the Idaho Department of Lands, specifically, the exchange will reduce management costs, and help

to reduce or alleviate risk, cost and restrictions IDL may have with these lands located within sage grouse habitat and wilderness areas.

Select BLM parcels outside of wilderness that are adjacent to existing IDL lands would be transferred to State ownership. State sections identified, primarily those within or adjacent to BLM wilderness, would be transferred to BLM management.

The current mixed ownership between the State and BLM complicates management for both the BLM and IDL. State sections are managed to maximize the long-term financial yield for State services such as roads and schools, while wilderness is managed by the BLM for wildlife, aesthetics, solitude, and scenery and "...continued livestock grazing where it existed prior to wilderness designation..." as stated in Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act and Section 1503(b)(3)(A) of the OPLMA.

The purpose of this exchange is to increase management efficiencies, lower management costs, enable more consistent management, and reduce conflicting uses for both agencies. The exchange still provides appropriate access with routes identified and recommended by the Owyhee Initiative while maintaining the wilderness boundaries. The exchange also still allows continuation of livestock grazing in those areas where it is currently taking place.

The Owyhee Initiative Board of Directors has worked for over ten years on details of this land exchange, and strongly supports the fact that the Idaho Department of Lands and the BLM have worked with those directly affected by the land exchange to assure continued use and appropriate accommodations are in place for those grazing livestock on parcels affected by this exchange. The Owyhee Initiative Board of Directors supports the Owyhee Land Exchange presented today.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Richards

Brenda Richards

Chair, Owyhee Initiative

Cc: John Ruhs, Idaho State BLM Director
Jerry Hoagland, Chairman of Owyhee County Commissioners

(Owyhee Exchange map attached)

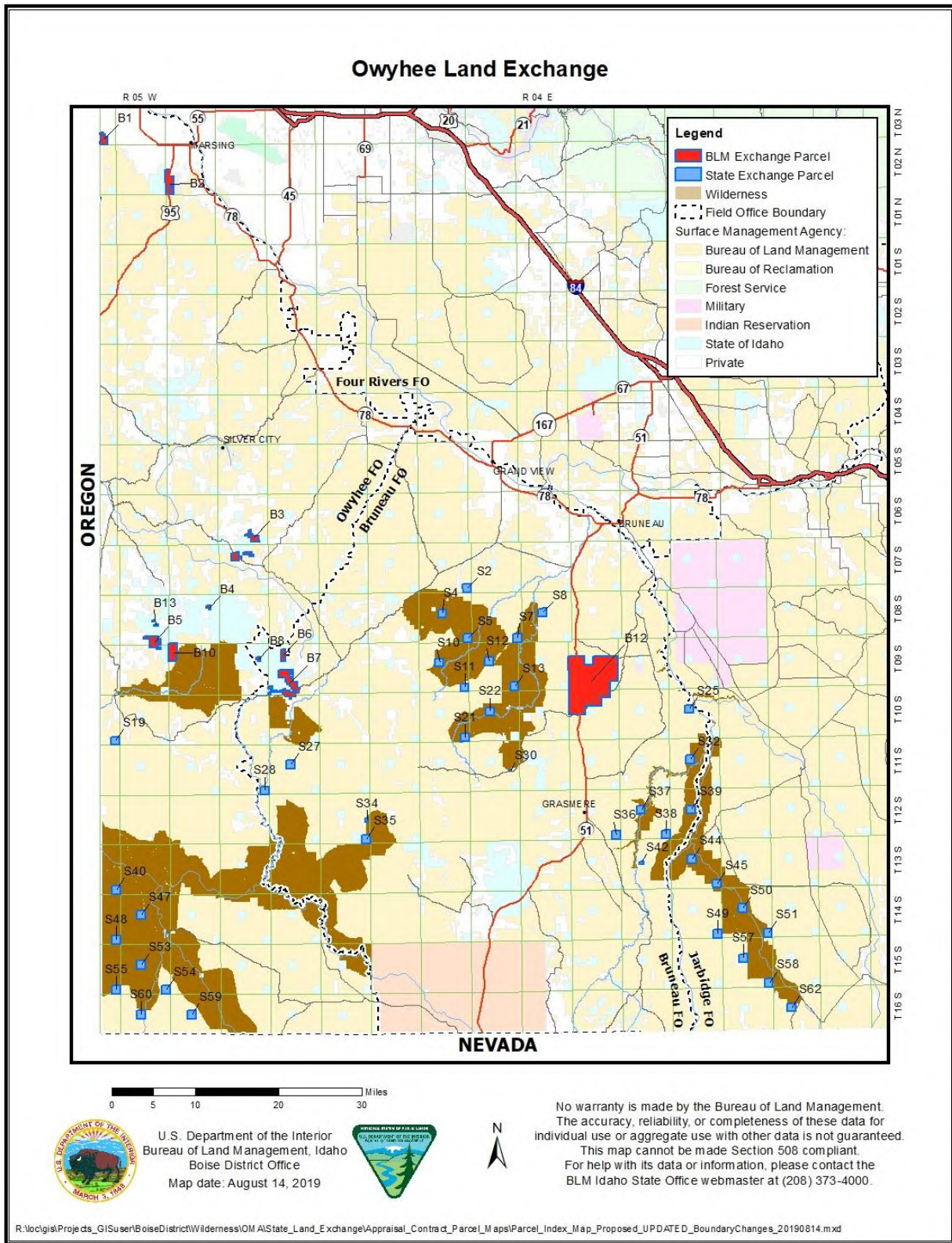


Figure 1. Proposed State and Federal Parcels for the Owyhee Land Exchange

From: Angie Barkell <abarkell@co.owyhee.id.us>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 10:11 AM
To: Comments
Subject: 7-20-20 Owyhee Land Exchange Comment Letter.pdf
Attachments: 7-20-20 Owyhee Land Exchange Comment Letter.pdf

Hello,

Please find a comment letter regarding the Owyhee Land Exchange from the Owyhee County Board of Commissioners.

Thank you,

ANGELA BARKELL

Clerk of the District Court | Ex-Officio Auditor & Recorder

Owyhee County | PO Box 128 Murphy, ID 83650

☎: (208) 495-2421 | ✉: abarkell@co.owyhee.id.us

Responsibility | Input | Empathy | Positivity | Communication



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OWYHEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COURTHOUSE P.O. BOX 128 MURPHY, ID 83650-0128
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July 20, 2020

Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners
Idaho Department of Lands
Attn: Dustin Miller, Land Board Secretary
PO Box 83720
Boise ID 83720-0050

Re: Owyhee Land Exchange

This document will be delivered electronically to comments@idl.idaho.gov

Dear Idaho Land Board:

This letter provides Owyhee County's statement of support for the Owyhee Land Exchange which is an action item on your July 21, 2020 Agenda.

The proposed land exchange arose out of the recommendations of the Owyhee Initiative (OI) Working Group which was created by the Owyhee County Board of County Commissioners. The Commissioners tasked the OI Working Group to develop a strategy to resolve the seemingly never ending litigation over BLM grazing permits and other actions on the federal lands in our county which had become seemingly become the "new normal."

The Commissioners challenged the Working Group to develop an agreement which would become the basis for federal legislation and would create *"a landscape-scale program in Owyhee County that preserves the natural processes that create and maintain a functioning, unfragmented landscape supporting and sustaining a flourishing community of human, plant and animal life, that provides for economic stability by preserving livestock grazing as an economically viable use, and that provides for protection of cultural resources."*

Included in the OI Agreement, which was presented to the Board for review pending delivery to Senator Crapo, was a listing of proposed land exchanges which were developed under the group's stated intent to provide for economic viability of ranching operations. Those initial proposed land exchanges were federal-to-private land or private-to-federal land exchanges. After the passage of OPLMA which enacted the OI Agreement into law, Idaho Department of Lands saw benefits in incorporating state lands into the proposed exchanges as a means to simplify management while still providing the fiscal benefits to the various public entities which are supported by funding from state land revenues.

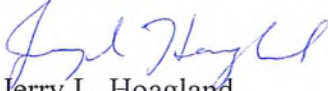
As IDL proposed various state parcels for exchange, Owyhee County and the potentially affected lease holders and BLM land permittees maintained a close relationship with both IDL and the BLM to ensure that the exchanges would not be harmful to the operations that the OI had expressly wished to make more economically viable.

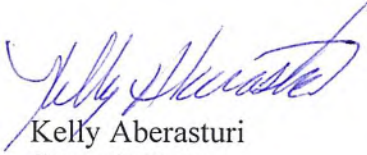
From our review in July 2019 of Bureau of Land Management's Environmental Assessment on the Owyhee Land Exchange (DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2014-0001-EA), and a briefing to us by Diane French regarding the specifics of the exchange, we provided a letter of support for the EA to BLM.

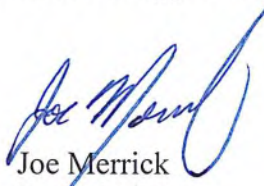
Our current review of the proposed exchange is that it is unchanged from the parcels on which we were briefed in 2019 and which were in the BLM EA which we reviewed and supported. We have also heard from those grazing operators who have interests in the parcels to be exchanged, that they support the exchange.

We support the proposed exchange of lands and encourage the Land Board to approve it.

Sincerely,


Jerry L. Hoagland
Chairman


Kelly Aberasturi
Commissioner


Joe Merrick
Commissioner

cc:

Idaho BLM State Director John Ruhs
OI Board Chair Brenda Richards

From: Russ Hendricks <rhendricks@idahofb.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 5:04 PM
To: Comments
Subject: Owyhee Land Exchange
Attachments: State Land Board.pdf

Dear IDL:

Attached are comments from the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation regarding an agenda item which will be on the upcoming State Land Board Meeting on September 15. Please distribute these to the Land Board members and enter them into the record of the hearing.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Russ Hendricks
Director of Governmental Affairs
208-342-2888 | cell 208-889-0303
fax 208-342-8585 | rhendricks@idahofb.org



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*
"The Voice of Idaho Agriculture"
500 W Washington
Boise, ID 83702-5985
www.idahofb.org

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Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

500 West Washington Street
Boise, Idaho 83702
(208) 342-2688

September 8, 2020

Idaho Department of Lands
Attn: Land Board Secretary
PO Box 83720
Boise ID 83720-0050

Dear State Land Board:

On behalf of the more than 80,500 Idaho families who are members of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF), I am writing to again express our concern regarding the Owyhee Land Exchange which is still on the Land Board agenda for September 15.

As we indicated in our July 17 letter, we have members who have a direct economic interest in this transaction. These ranchers possess grazing preference rights as well as state adjudicated stock water rights on the BLM lands that the state seeks to acquire through the exchange. The ranchers have been told that their grazing preference rights will no longer be valid or recognized when the land is acquired by the state, and it is still unclear how the stock water rights will be handled.

Unfortunately, the issues we raised in July have not yet been resolved. Director Miller and other IDL personnel have finally met with our members on September 3, but as of today, no agreement has been finalized to ensure they are fully compensated for their legally recognized rights which will be extinguished through the exchange.

As a reminder, Idaho Code 25-901 states: "congress acknowledged grazing preference rights and provided for adjudication of allotments on which the grazing preference right was exercised. Livestock ranches are bought, sold, traded and inherited with assurance that the appurtenant grazing preference rights will be transferred to the new base property owner. Therefore, a grazing preference right shall be considered an appurtenance of the base property through which the grazing preference is maintained."

Idaho law recognizes both stock water rights and grazing preference rights as legally held property rights that cannot be extinguished without just compensation.

Our members have adopted a policy for this very situation. IFBF policy #47 states: "We support requiring any entity which acquires property from the federal government to compensate grazing preference holders on the former federally administered lands for the loss of their property rights if that entity does not continue to maintain and protect those rights."

This is not a new issue that has surfaced at the last minute. IDL was informed in writing back in 2015 by one of the ranchers involved that these issues would need to be resolved prior to the exchange moving

forward. Therefore, we respectfully request that the Owyhee Land Exchange be removed from the agenda until these issues are fully resolved.

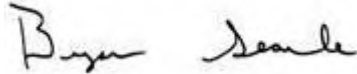
If there is some over-riding reason why the Land Board must move forward before a complete resolution of these issues, we respectfully request the Board to provide only provisional approval of the exchange on condition that these issues be resolved in a manner that is satisfactory to the ranchers involved. In other words, we ask that the Land Board withhold its final approval until all parties are satisfied.

It appears there are several additional steps that BLM will have to go through before the exchange can be finalized. This will give time for the parties to reach an acceptable agreement.

Our members are not opposed to the exchange. They are opposed to disregarding the legally recognized property interests of our members who have only very recently been included in this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on this important issue. If you need any additional information, please contact Russ Hendricks in our Boise office at 208-342-2688.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Searle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bryan" and the last name "Searle" clearly distinguishable.

Bryan Searle, President
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

From: Craig Gehrke <craig_gehrke@twi.org>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 10:01 AM
To: Comments
Subject: Idaho Land Board Comments January 2021
Attachments: Idaho Land Board Comments January 2021.docx

Categories: Comments

Attached are the comments I plan to deliver during oral testimony at the January 19, 2021 meeting of the Idaho Land Board.

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OWYHEE INITIATIVE



CHAIRMAN, Brenda Richards; VICE-CHAIRMAN Craig Gehrke

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The Wilderness Society, Craig Gehrke; Owyhee Borderlands Trust, Inc., Dennis Stanford; Idaho Rivers United, Kevin Lewis; Owyhee Co. Soil Conservation Districts, Chris Black; SIDRA(Southwest Idaho Desert Racing Assoc.), Bill Walsh; Owyhee County Cattlemen's Assoc., Frank Bachman; Owyhee County Farm Bureau, Tim Lowry; Sierra Club, Edwina Allen; Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho, Phil Ryan; The Nature Conservancy, Lou Lunte; Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation, Herb Meyr, Idaho Outfitters & Guides Assoc., Grant Simonds; Idaho Conservation League, John Robison

**P.O. Box 103
Murphy, ID 83650**

January 19, 2021

Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners
ATTN: Land Board Secretary
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0050

RE: Owyhee Land Exchange, Item #5 on Land Board Agenda for January 19, 2021

This document will be delivered electronically to comments@idl.idaho.gov

To the Idaho Land Board:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Owyhee Initiative (OI) I would like to submit this letter in support of the Owyhee Land Exchange presented to the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners on January 19, 2021.

The OI would like to acknowledge the fine effort made by Idaho Department of Lands staff to keep the OI abreast of developments as the Owyhee Land Exchange evolved over the past few years. Idaho Department of Lands staffers traveled to Murphy to give the OI board numerous updates on the Exchange. Similarly, the Bureau of Land Management met with the OI several times to review maps of the proposed exchange and to keep the OI informed on the Exchange as it made its way through the federal process. Both agencies sought to involve all those

affected by the Owyhee Land Exchange and worked hard to address issues as they were identified.

The Owyhee Land Exchange has been reviewed by the OI for consistency with our organizational goal, which is *“to develop and implement a landscape-scale program in Owyhee County that preserves the natural processes that create and maintain a functioning, un-fragmented landscape supporting and sustaining a flourishing community of human, plant and animal life, that provides for economic stability by preserving livestock grazing as an economically viable use, and that provides for protection of cultural resources.”* The Owyhee Land Exchange is consistent with our organizational goal.

The OI Board voted twice without dissent to support the Owyhee Land Exchange.

For over a decade, this land exchange has been worked on and considered by the Owyhee Initiative, the Owyhee County Commissioners, the BLM, and the Idaho Department of Lands, as it would help consolidate BLM and State sections for management actions. For the Idaho Department of Lands, specifically, the exchange will reduce management costs, and help to reduce or alleviate risks, costs and restrictions IDL may have with these lands located within sage grouse habitat and wilderness areas.

Select BLM parcels outside of wilderness that are adjacent to existing IDL lands would be transferred to State ownership. State sections identified, primarily those within or adjacent to BLM wilderness, would be transferred to BLM management.

The current mixed ownership between the State and BLM complicates management for both the BLM and IDL. State sections are managed to maximize the long-term financial yield for State services such as roads and schools, while wilderness is managed by the BLM for wildlife, aesthetics, solitude, and scenery and “...continued livestock grazing where it existed prior to wilderness designation...” as stated in Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act and Section 1503(b)(3)(A) of the OPLMA.

The purpose of this exchange is to increase management efficiencies, lower management costs, enable more consistent management, and reduce conflicts for both agencies. The exchange still provides appropriate access with routes identified and recommended by the Owyhee Initiative while maintaining the wilderness boundaries. The exchange also still allows continuation of livestock grazing in those areas where it is currently taking place.

The Owyhee Initiative Board of Directors has worked for over ten years on details of this land exchange, and strongly supports the fact that the Idaho Department of Lands and the BLM have worked with those directly affected by the land exchange to assure continued use and appropriate accommodations are in place for those grazing livestock on parcels affected by this exchange. The Owyhee Initiative Board of Directors supports the Owyhee Land Exchange presented today.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Gehrke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "G".

Craig Gehrke
Vice-chair, Owyhee Initiative
State Director, Idaho Office, The Wilderness Society

From: Ryan Montoya
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 11:35 AM
To: Renee Jacobsen
Subject: FW: Message from WIRELESS CALLER (2089218290)
Attachments: VoiceMessage.wav

Categories: Comments

[Here is a comment for the Owyhee LEX.](#)

From: Cisco Unity Connection Messaging System <unityconnection@idl.idaho.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 10:41 AM
To: Ryan Montoya <rmontoya@idl.idaho.gov>
Subject: Message from WIRELESS CALLER (2089218290)

Following is transcription of a voice mail left for Mr. Ryan Montoya, Idaho Department of Lands, by Mr. Tim Lequerica, on Friday, January 15, 2021 at 10:41 AM (Mountain).

This is Tim Lequerica, a permittee in the South Mountain land exchange. I've always supported this exchange. This needs to be completed as proposed so that the Department of Lands and the BLM can move along to more important issues for the cowman and the resources. By the way, I offered an alternate proposal which was refused by L U Ranching. Ryan, Department of Lands and John Ruhs, BLM can verify this.

Thank you,

Tim Lequerica

From: John Robison <jrobison@idahoconservation.org>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 10:52 AM
To: Renee Jacobsen
Cc: Ryan Montoya
Subject: Re: Request to testify on the Owyhee LEX at the Jan. 19 Land Board meeting
Attachments: ICL testimony in support of the Owyhee Land Exchange.docx

Categories: Comments

Renee,

Please see attached written comments in support of the Owyhee Land Exchange.

John Robison
He/Him/His (what's [this?](#))
Public Lands Director
Idaho Conservation League
PO Box 844, Boise, ID 83701
Mobile phone 208-345-6933 x 113 • fax 208.344.0344
<http://www.idahoconservation.org>
Twitter: @idconservation
Facebook: /idahoconservationleague
Instagram: @idahoconservationleague

Consider making a gift to ICL!
<https://www.idahoconservation.org>

I may send e-mails over weekends and at odd hours. I do not expect you to do the same.



208.345.6933 • PO Box 844, Boise, ID 83702 • www.idahoconservation.org

State Board of Land Commissioners

Gov. Little

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden

State Controller Brandon Woolf

Sec. State Lawrence Denney

Superintendent Sherri Ybarra

IDL Director, Secretary to the Board, Dustin Miller

January 19, 2021

Governor Little and members of the Land Board,

My name is John Robison and I am the public lands director for the Idaho Conservation League. Thank you for the opportunity to call in today to testify in support of the Owyhee Land Exchange.

Over the last year, the Idaho Conservation League has pointed out several areas for improvement regarding Department of Lands proposals and processes.

In the case of the Owyhee Land Exchange, we believe the Department of Lands staff have done an exemplary job of working with stakeholders. The Department of Lands has been transparent, inclusive, patient and adaptive in their approach.

The agreement to initiate the exchange was signed in 2008 and both the BLM and Department of Lands initiated early public outreach on this exchange. The public process was inclusive, extensive and took the time it needed. The Department of Lands staff went

out to the field, listened to stakeholders, and then worked with the BLM to tailor the land exchange to address local concerns. I chaired a subcommittee in which the Owyhee Initiative drafted recommendations on certain aspects of this exchange and witnessed this public outreach firsthand. The Department of Lands dropped several state sections from the exchange to address concerns from permittees and others. For the remaining parcels, the Department of Lands worked with the BLM and permittees to develop provisions to minimize the disruption to livestock operations and increase certainty for permittees.

The high degree of coordination between the Department of Lands, the BLM and stakeholders paid off in the end. The land exchange will help consolidate both BLM and State lands and will allow both agencies to better fulfill their missions. The BLM sections that are proposed to be acquired by the State of Idaho are next to existing state lands, have fewer resource issues, are easier to access and manage for livestock grazing, will not require NEPA analysis and are best suited for endowment purposes.

The state sections that are proposed to be acquired by the BLM are within or near designated wilderness areas, provide habitat for sage-grouse and bighorn sheep, will allow livestock grazing to continue where presently taking place, and are best suited for BLM's multiple use mandate.

We believe the proposal before you is a win-win, a credit to Department of Lands staff, and should serve as a model for other proposals. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.