

## **Minutes**

### **Crook County Natural Resource Committee**

**December 14, 2022**

**Committee Members Present:** Mike Lunn, Lynne Breese, Cliff Kiser, Steve McGuire, Frank Porfily, John Dehler, Andy Gallagher, Casey Kaiser, Tim Deboodt

**Members absent:** Trent Smith, Jace Rhoden

**Guests present:** Lisa Clark (BLM), Greg Jackle (ODF&W)

**Public present:** Mike and Wendy Woodley, Dick Kludt, Gayle Hunt, Melinda Kestler, Dave and Sharon Neilsen, Don Vogel, Terry Rich, Brittany Santucci, Kim Vogel, John Breese, Stan and Nanette Hickman, Sean Santucci, T.C. Keyster

**Meeting was called to order** at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Steve McGuire @ COCC Crook County Open Campus

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **Approval of previous meeting minutes:**

Lynne moved to approve the Committee minutes from November 9, 2022. John seconded. Motion passed.

#### **Agency Reports:**

**Lisa Clark, Acting Field Manager** – Prineville BLM District provided an update of BLM activities (See attached handout). Lisa provided a follow-up from the November meeting regarding questions on sage grouse habitat and the changes in management required when “hard-triggers” are met due to declining bird populations.

Lisa mentioned that the BLM will be piloting a fee collection program this year with some of their campgrounds. The pilot program will utilize remote pay systems (web based) in order to address vandalism issues with current payment collection sites. Lisa shared that about half of the collected fees goes back into the management costs of the lower Deschutes area.

**Solar farm applications** were discussed by Lisa. Attached maps show both the general areas being applied for and for a couple of the applications, specific areas that will be a part of a NEPA EIS analysis. The NEPA process for these applications will begin in 2023. BLM will be reaching out to local governments, affected parties and others. Lisa shared that 5 grazing permits could be directly impacted along with the Millican Plateau OHV area.

Lynne Breese asked what type of studies already exist. Lisa shared that large, programmatic NEPA reviews have been done in the SW part of the U.S., but for Oregon, this is a first. It will take 2 to 3 years to complete the NEPA review. Following a final decision notice, affected permittees will be given a 2 year notice.

**Forest Service update:** No one representing the F.S. was present and no written report was shared.

**Lemon Gulch Trails Project:** John Dehler, sub-committee chair presented a review of sub-committee work and a draft review of the EA for submittal to the County Court. The Committee reviewed the draft, edited it and Cliff Kiser moved to forward the revised letter to the County Court for their consideration with a recommendation that the Court send it to the Forest Service as a part of the public input process for this project. Lynne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Committee appointments:** Andy presented the sub-committee report for committee vacancies. 3 applications were received during the advertised period. Applicant were Melinda Kestler, Bill McCormack and Kim Vogel. After some discussion, John Dehler moved to recommend the 3 applications for appointment to the Crook County Natural Resources Advisory Committee. Lynne seconded. Motion passed. Names will be forwarded to County Court for their approval and appointment.

**Public Comment:**

Mike Ervin commented that while the County's Natural Resources Policy addresses the appropriateness of non-motorized trails on public lands it did not call for a trail complex as proposed by the Lemon Gulch Trails project.

Gayle Hunt said she was heartened by the public involvement in this process.

Cliff Kiser mentioned that the Forest Service need to work with the public in building public trust and gain social license in order to move forward.

Lynne Breese reported to Greg Jackle that the wild turkeys were now in her yard.

Tim thanked John Dehler, Trent Smith and Jace Rhoden for their service to Crook County and their commitment to the management of the natural resources with the County as their terms on the Advisory Committee come to an end.

Cliff moved to adjourn the meeting. Lynne seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

## Crook County Project/Activity Briefing

Bureau of Land Management – Prineville District – December 2022

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### Answers to last month's questions:

*What constitutes a "hard trigger" for sage-grouse?*

Soft triggers represent an intermediate threshold indicating that management changes are needed at the implementation level to address habitat or population losses. If a soft trigger is tripped during the life of the ARMPAs, the BLM will implement more conservative or restrictive conservation measures on a project-by-project basis to mitigate for the specific cause in the decline of populations or habitats, taking into consideration local knowledge and conditions. In each ARMPA, a soft trigger begins a dialogue between the State, FWS, and the BLM to see if the cause can be determined and what implementation-level activities can be used to reverse any trend. These adjustments will be made to prevent tripping a hard trigger, which signals more severe habitat loss or population declines.

Hard triggers represent a threshold indicating that immediate action is necessary to stop a severe deviation from GRSB conservation objectives set forth in the BLM ARMPAs. In the event that a hard trigger were tripped, the BLM would implement plan-level decisions, such as allocation changes, to immediately institute greater protection for GRSB and its habitat. If a hard trigger were tripped in a PAC that crosses State boundaries, the WAFWA MZ GRSB Conservation Team would convene to discuss causes and identify potential responses.

The Brothers-Wagontire Priority Habitat Mgmt Area has been in a hard trigger for a few years. Some of the actions that we're taking include:

- Juniper thinning (removes perches for predators and helps maintain shrub-steppe)
- TRAFX counters deployed to determine amount of vehicle use. When we do travel mgmt. planning in the area, this information will be used.
- Maintaining and improving 55 guzzlers
- West Nile Virus surveys
- Flight diverters installed on many miles of fence
- Funding OSU study
- Additional monitoring plots have been established to measure cover, habitat health, etc.

We evaluate these steps annually to determine if they're still valid and/or if anything additional or different is needed.

*Are we considering prescribed burning areas to maintain the juniper thinning – not just going back in and cutting again?*

### New Topics

#### **Williamson Creek – Millican Firewood Cutting**

The contractor is currently cutting the juniper for the FY23 woodcutting unit. This will again be along Millican Road, south of 4-corners. This area will be available by permit June 1. We may have to extend the contract due to weather but should be finished fairly soon.



### Winter Range Seasonal Closures

The winter range seasonal closures for deer are in effect in several areas as of Dec. 1, includes Sanford Creek, Eagle Rock/Prineville Reservoir, and Telephone Springs/N. Fork Crooked River. These involve gate closures to minimize motorized use in winter range areas. Eagle Rock does have some ROW holder that maintain access. To address repeated gate vandalism at Eagle Rock, we're working with the ROW holders to move the gate to what we hope is a better location.

### Fee Collection Pilot Program

Throughout the field office we've had issues with people vandalizing and stealing the Iron Ranger fee boxes on the Crooked and Lower Deschutes. As a result, we will be looking at two possible cash-less systems and we'll try to get both of them on board by late spring to see which one fits the communities the best.

Sanistar ROK (remote off-grid kiosk) – this is a swipe and pay onsite system where information is downloaded to a special device. This is easy to install and is effective remote/canyon areas. However, it is expensive and requires people to have a credit card.

Rec.gov Scan & Pay – this can be done online in advance for reservable sites, but we don't currently have any. For us, this system would mean having visitors scan a QR code and pay using their phone. Once they get out into cell service, the information transfers to Rec.gov. They would be given a confirmation number that can be written on the fee envelope and posted at the sites.

Things to consider:

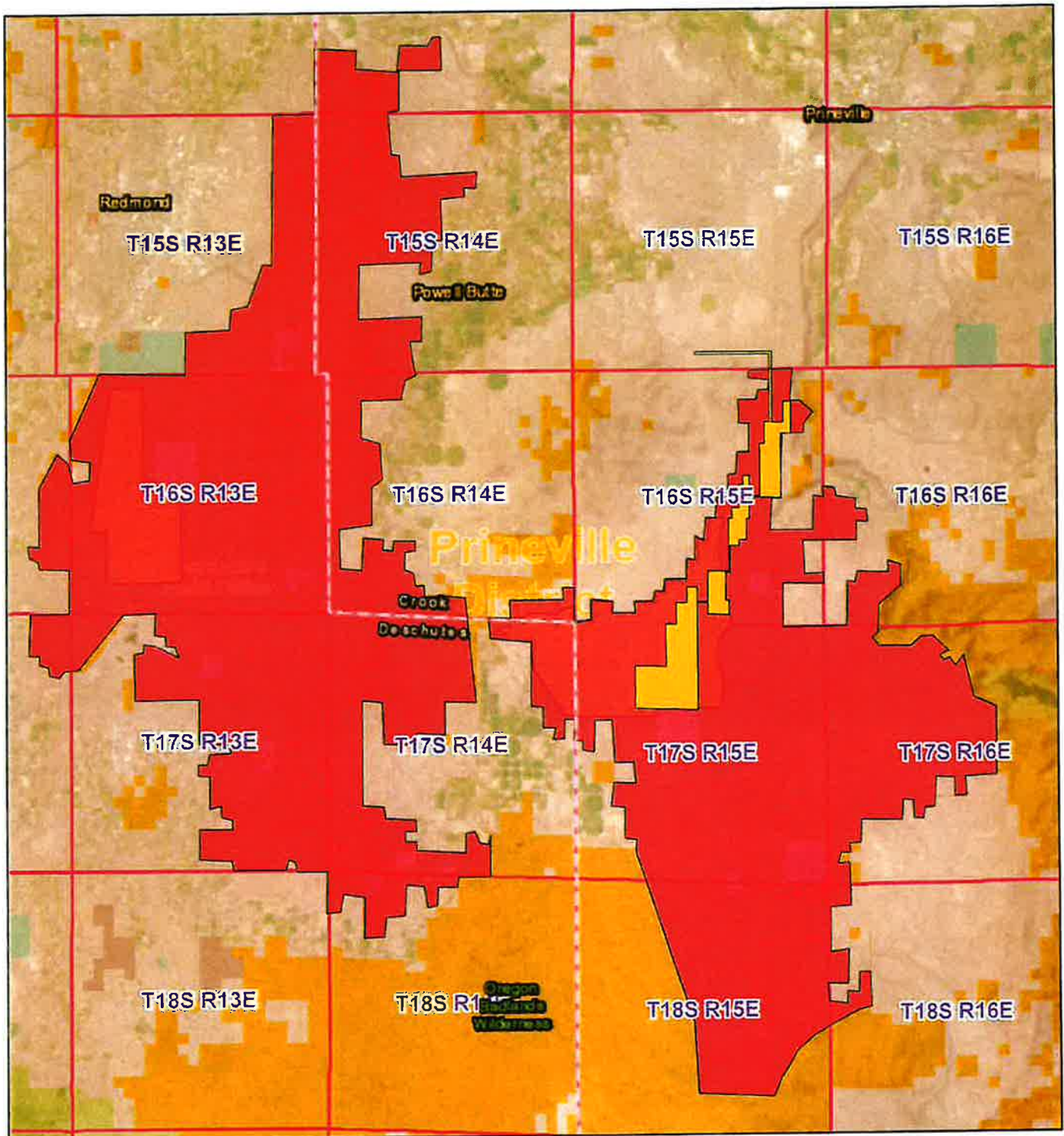
- How to we address spontaneous campers?
- What to do about low-tech folks?
- Some limited examples of people using fake credit card info in the ROK and we don't know until it processes which can be a week later.
- Rec.gov has a \$1 fee for the scan and pay system; ROK fees are rolled into the annual fee the BLM would pay to Sanistar
- How to get the word out?

### Solar Farm Proposals

Kickoff at least one in 2023; process will be an environmental impact statement  
Prior to this, we will have initial public and partner/government meetings



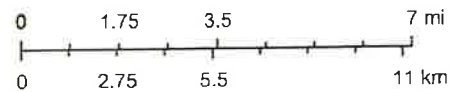
# Solar Companies Combined- Project Areas



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- Mirror Pond Project
- NewSun Area 2 - NewSun Area 2
- NewSun Area 1 - NewSun Area 1
- OROR 70934 Enel Expedition Solar Project Boundary
- OROR 71335 Enel Explorer Solar Project Boundary
- BLM OR PLSS - Township and Range

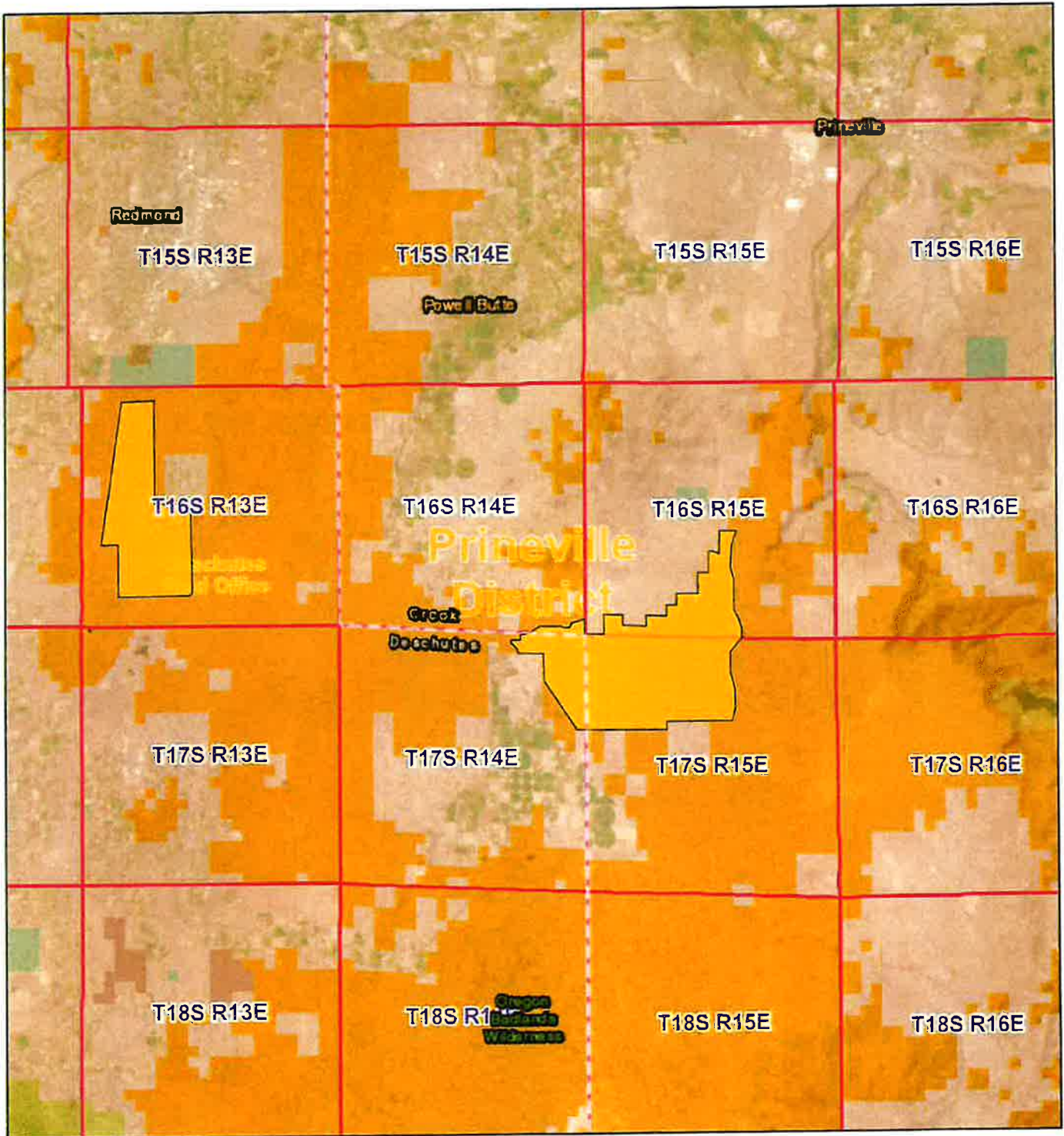


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# Enel Solar Project Proposal



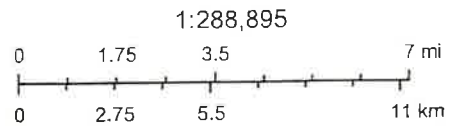
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- OROR 70934 Enel Expedition Solar Project Boundary
- OROR 71335 Enel Explorer Solar Project Boundary
- BLM OR PLSS - Township and Range

BLM OR Ownership

- Bonneville Power Administration
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation

- State Agency
- State Agency
- Private
- Local Government
- U.S. Forest Service

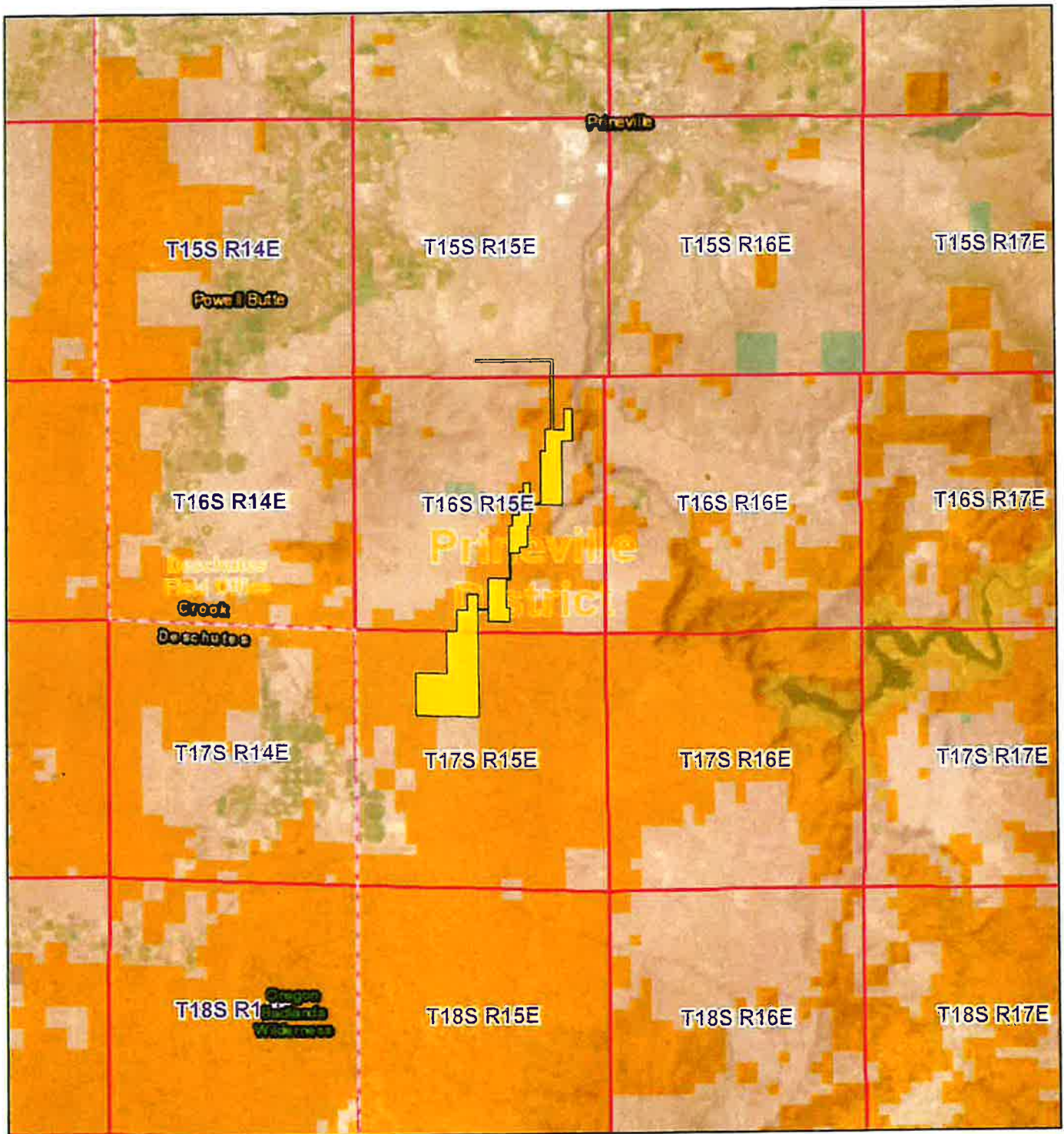


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ArcGIS Web AppBuilder

Earthstar Geographics | Oregon BLM | Bureau of Land Management | Oregon State Office | ORAVA BLM | Crook County GIS | State of Oregon | State of Oregon GEO, Esri, HERE, Garmin | Deschutes

# Leeward Solar Project Proposal

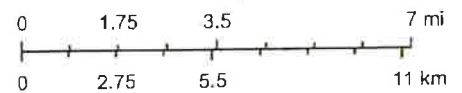


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- Mirror Pond Project
- BLM OR PLSS - Township and Range
- BLM OR Ownership
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - State Agency

- State Agency
- State Agency
- Private
- Local Government
- District Mainland Boundary
- Field Office Mainland Boundary

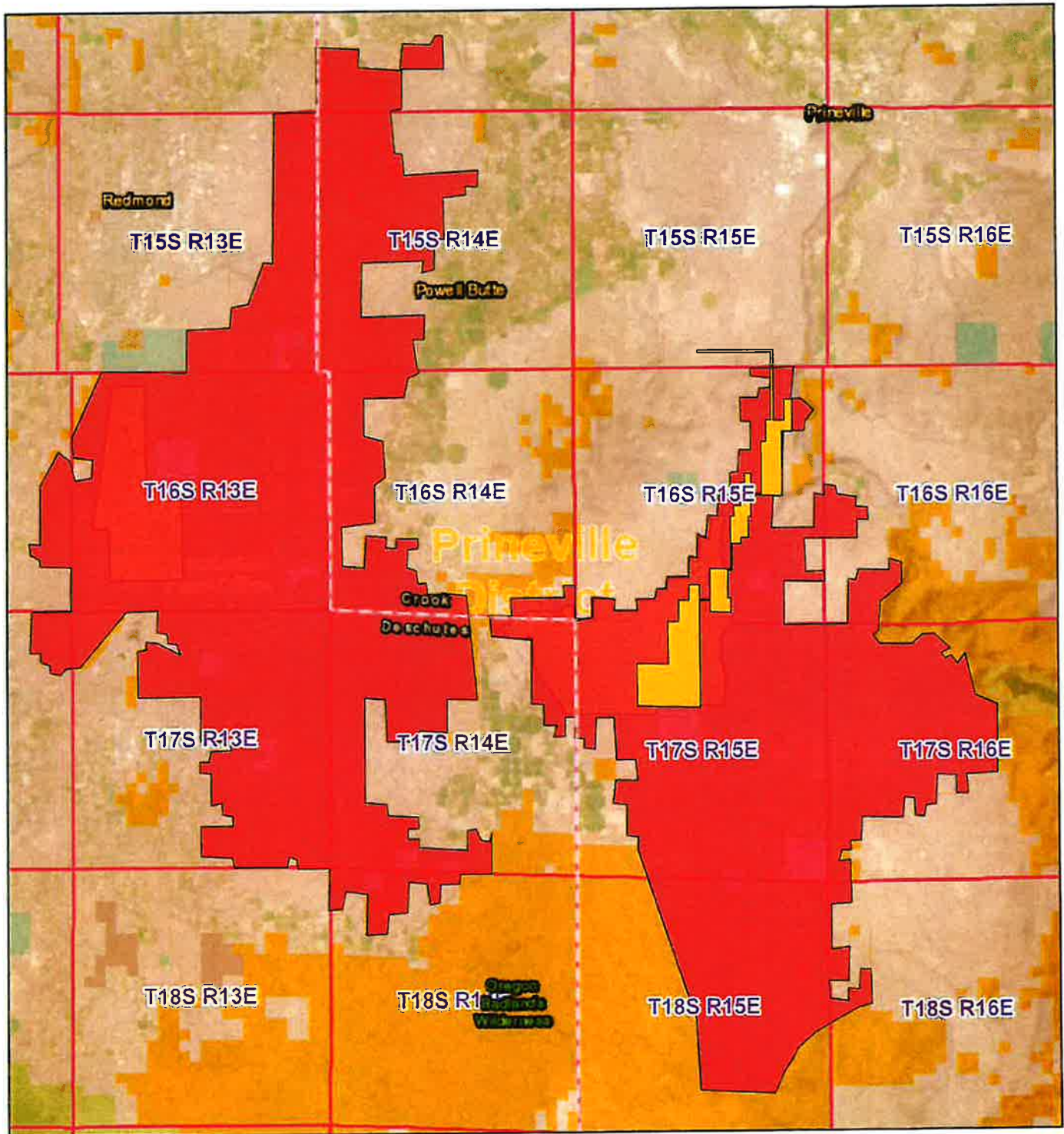


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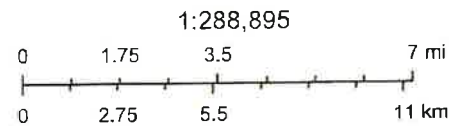
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Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Office, State of Oregon, State of Oregon GEO, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Earthstar Geographics

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