

Anticipated Planning Issues and Management Concerns

A *planning issue* is identified as a *matter of controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land use that is well defined or topically discrete and entails alternatives between which to choose*. *Management Concerns* are topics or points of dispute that involve a resource management activity or land use. While some management concerns overlap planning issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or a few individuals, as opposed to a planning issue, which has more widespread point of conflict. However, certain resource values (e.g., cultural resources) will still play pivotal roles in developing alternatives and reaching decisions regarding the major issues.

The planning issues and management concerns presented below are preliminary and based on the best information known to date. It is expected that additional issues may be identified during scoping. Preparation of the RMP will afford many opportunities for collaboration with local, state, federal and tribal governments as well as land management agencies, public interest groups, and public land users. As a result, these issues may need to be modified and refined to reflect public comments and concerns raised during formal scoping.

Preliminary Planning Issues

The following sections identify planning issues based on RMP evaluations, new Bureau program guidance, and Lewistown Field Office staff input. For each issue identified, a planning question is presented, and information that will be considered in answering that question is identified. The questions and information will be refined during public scoping and throughout the planning process.

Issue: Vegetation Management

Past and current management activities, such as timber harvest, road construction, mining, recreation, and/or effects of activities on surrounding private lands continue to affect the natural function and condition of riparian areas, upland vegetation communities, and forested areas. Riparian and wetland habitats, including streams, springs, seeps and meadow areas, are of critical importance to fish and wildlife species. Healthy riparian, upland and forest communities have good species diversity and structural integrity, and are resilient following natural disturbances such as fire. They provide fish and wildlife habitat, soil stabilization, increased infiltration of precipitation, watershed protection, and enhance recreation and aesthetic values. The BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota (ROD, August 1997) identified and incorporated five specific standards into the process for evaluating rangeland health. These standards include upland health, riparian health, water quality, air quality and habitat (biodiversity). The ROD relating to rangeland health and the subsequent standards will be incorporated into the LFO RMP.

Planning Questions

- How will BLM lands be managed to achieve, maintain, or improve riparian, upland and forest communities, with an emphasis on native species restoration?
- What rangeland, forest, woodland, wetland and riparian plant communities currently exist on the landscape and, in what amounts, and what are the desired plant communities?
- Which plant communities would be targeted for restoration activities, and where are they located?
- Which plant communities would be most affected by climate change, drought, and fire?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Comply with Executive Order 11990 for wetlands preservation
- Maintain, improve, and restore natural functions to benefit water storage groundwater recharge, water quality, and fish and wildlife values
- Design Best Management Practices (BMPs) to maintain or improve resource integrity
- Provide for the protection and restoration of native species
- Provide for multiple use and sustained yield of forage for wildlife and domestic livestock
- Coordinate with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to assure that wildlife habitat is sustained
- Incorporate Montana Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Issue: Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species Management

Noxious weeds and other invasive plant species can affect native plants, special status species, wildlife and livestock forage, water quality, and fire management. The BLM is responsible for controlling noxious weeds on public lands

and coordinating with state, county, and private landowners to reduce the establishment of undesirable plant species by implementing integrated weed management. Areas of noxious weed infestation and invasive plants are being mapped and will be used in development of the RMP. The RMP will incorporate policies and strategies detailed in the Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in Seventeen Western States EIS (Final Programmatic EIS, 2007). The RMP will also address additional practices or preventative measures to be applied to all resource activities and uses, such as the use of certified weed-free seed mixtures, feeds, and mulches for reclamation and restoration practices. The incorporation of the use of weed-free forage and the emphasis of restoration of disturbed areas, including specific seed mixes, will be included in all alternatives.

Planning Questions

- What actions and/or restrictions will be needed to maintain or improve natural resource values that have been affected by, or are susceptible to, noxious weeds and other undesirable plant species?
- Which plant communities are being degraded because of noxious weed or invasive species and where are they located?
- Which noxious weed and invasive species would receive highest priority for control and where are they located?
- Where in the planning area would be the highest priority for noxious weed and invasive species control?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Utilize the weed management guidelines and design features identified in the 2007 Vegetation Treatments using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 States EIS.
- Protect non-target and special status plant species during treatments
- Incorporate Montana Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
- Consider Integrated Weed Management Strategies for more effective control and eradication of undesirable plant species
- Comply with Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species (February 1999)
- Incorporate the Partners Against Weeds Strategy (PAWS) Plan

Issue: Fish and Wildlife Habitat

The planning area contains a diversity of important habitats for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Habitat quality has been modified as a result of roads, timber harvest, wildfire, fire suppression, recreation and grazing. Where public lands ownership patterns are highly fragmented, protection and/or improvement of fish and wildlife habitats is more challenging. The key to maintaining quality wildlife habitats is large blocks of diverse, healthy vegetation and plant communities. Fish habitats also require high water quality and good stream channel and riparian conditions.

Planning Questions

- How will uses and activities be managed to maintain and/or improve fish and wildlife habitats?
- What are the priority game and non-game species found in the planning, how are they distributed and what are their habitat requirements?
- Which native plant communities provide habitat to priority game and non-game wildlife and how are they distributed in the landscape?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Protect and restore fisheries habitat
- Protect native vegetative communities
- Protect and preserve genetic integrity
- Protect and maintain the intrinsic and recreational values associated with native and desirable non-native species
- Identify habitat conditions and needs in cooperation with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and other land management agencies, including U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Montana Department of Natural Resources and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation
- Coordinate with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to ensure that wildlife populations are

- compatible with land health objectives
- Protect important big game and upland game bird habitats
- Protect habitats for migratory birds
- Improve access to public lands that help meet state wildlife population objectives

Issue: Special Status Species

Special status species include plant, fish, and animal species designated as Endangered, Threatened or Proposed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or as BLM Sensitive species, including Greater Sage Grouse. The planning area supports habitat for a number of federally listed and BLM Sensitive species. Habitats for special status species are affected by roads, timber sales, wildfire, grazing, recreation, and habitat fragmentation.

Planning Questions

- How will BLM manage uses and activities to ensure that activities affecting special status species are carried out in a way that is consistent with objectives for managing those species and their habitats at the appropriate spatial scale?
- What are the special status species within the planning area and what are their distribution, abundance, population condition, current threats and habitat requirements?
- How will species populations be inventoried and monitored?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Follow applicable Conservation Agreements, Strategy Plans, and Recovery plans
- Ensure that management actions protect BLM and State Sensitive species and do not contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to populations or species
- Ensure that management actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed Threatened or Endangered species, or result in the destruction or modification of critical habitat
- Incorporate Montana Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
- Incorporate planning criteria outlined in the Special Status Species Management Manual 6840
- Conservation measures described in the Greater Sage Grouse RMP amendment EA will be incorporated upon completion.

Issue: Recreation and Visitor Services

Public lands provide for a wide array of recreation opportunities within varied settings. Outdoor recreation use levels in both developed and undeveloped recreation settings are increasing. Increased use creates an elevated demand for facilities, user information, and access. The RMP should assist the BLM in providing access to the public lands and to ensure quality environmentally responsible outdoor recreational opportunities, experiences and benefits for the growing number of public land users.

Planning Questions

- How will resources be managed to enhance recreation experiences and quality of life?
- How will management of public lands affect the social and economic conditions of local economies?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Provide for and enhance recreation opportunities to accommodate use and reduce effects to other resources
- Incorporate appropriate guidance from *The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services, BLM Workplan Fiscal Years 2003-2007*
- Identify and map Special Recreation Management Area (SRMAs) and Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs)
- Consider those lands identified as SRMAs and ERMAs and those areas subject to special measures to protect resources or reduce land use conflicts
- Ensure that existing recreation facilities can be properly maintained prior to construction of new facilities

Issue: Travel Management and Access

Many tracts of public land, large and small, within the planning area have no legal access for the public. Population

growth, rural and urban development, and increasing recreational activity have resulted in an increased need for access to public lands. If landowners are willing and funding is available, the BLM can negotiate and purchase easements for public access.

The Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan calls for ensuring environmentally sound public access to recreation sites on public lands. The goal of improving access to appropriate recreation opportunities is also one of the BLM's top priorities.

Motorized travel and transportation (All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV)) use has grown in popularity in some areas. The BLM has prepared new manual guidance for Trails and Travel Management as well as the development of several strategies (i.e., the National Off-Highway Vehicle Management Strategy and National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan) for improving the way the road and trail systems are managed on public lands. These strategies provide a foundation for the development of a comprehensive travel management program.

Planning Question

- How will transportation and public access be managed to improve access, protect resources, reduce conflicts of use, and provide motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities for public land visitors?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Comply with Section 205 of FLPMA
- Evaluate the type of, and need for, existing or proposed facilities
- Evaluate conflicts with existing or potential resource values and uses
- Consider cost benefits and the duration and assurance of title
- Comply with Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 (provide for public safety, minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other public land resources, minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats, and minimize conflicts between OHV use and other existing or proposed recreational uses)
- Ensure compatibility of area OHV designations with designations and conditions on neighboring federal, state, county, and municipal subdivisions, taking into account safety, noise, and other related factors
- Incorporate appropriate guidance in *The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services, BLM Workplan Fiscal Years 2003-2007*
- Incorporate appropriate guidance from the BLM National Off-Highway Vehicle Management Strategy
- Incorporate appropriate guidance from the BLM National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan
- Incorporate appropriate guidance from the BLM Handbook for Trails and Travel Management

Issue: Forest Management

The planning area includes forest lands that provide wildlife habitat, watershed protection, recreational and aesthetic values, and forest products. Fire suppression and harvest activities of the past century, prolonged periods of drought, and historical harvesting methods have changed the pre-settlement character of tree species composition and stand densities. This has led to an increased fire risk in these areas and led to altered disturbance processes including insects and fire in many areas. Studies of timber vegetation type and structure and timber stand plots will be used to determine existing age, structure and composition of forest/woodland areas so that desired outcomes can be identified per the H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook.

Planning Questions

- How will healthy forest ecosystems be maintained or restored?
- Where and at what harvest levels will BLM provide for forest products?
- How should the BLM address demands for "other" or "special" forest products including commercially collecting native seeds and conservation seed collections?
- How will areas impacted by Mountain pine beetle be managed to salvage resources and limit fire danger?
- How will management of BLM lands affect the social and economic conditions of local economies?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Consider desired composition; access; public demand for forest products; effects of drought, insects, and disease; and wildlife habitat
- Use Inventory of Timber Production and Capability Classifications (TPCC); 1974 and 1992 Forest Inventories
- Follow President's Healthy Forests Initiative (August 2002) and National Fire Plan (2000)

Issue: Wildland Urban Interface

The planning area includes areas of expanding wildland urban interface. Within these areas, we will address opportunities to (1) identify broad treatment levels, (2) identify general restrictions on fire management practices (suppression and fuels management) if any are needed to protect other resource values, and (3) restore fire adapted ecosystems. The RMP will also address emergency stabilization and rehabilitation activities on landscapes and communities affected by wildland fire through the use of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) as prescribed by requirements of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and local fire management plans (FMP).

Planning Questions

- Where and what types of fuel management activities can be used to reduce fuel accumulations in the wildland urban interface, and promote and sustain a healthy ecosystem?
- How will management of BLM lands affect the social and economic resiliency and sustainability of local economies?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Emphasize fuel reduction projects on public lands within priority areas identified by the communities
- Coordinate closely with communities and other adjacent owners to ensure maximum effectiveness from joint fuel reduction activities
- Where possible, use local contractors, equipment and services to maximize the economic benefit to the community
- Incorporate guidance and direction defined in the Federal Fire Policy, the National Fire Plan (NFP) and associated policies and guidelines, including multi-agency collaboration for fire, fuels management and budgeting, and the Fire/Fuels Management Environmental Assessment Plan Amendment for the Montana/Dakotas (2003)

Issue: Fire Management

Vegetation fuel types in the Lewistown planning area can be described as grass, shrub and timber. Central Montana typically burned with mixed severity fires and a fire return interval of 5 to 30 years (longer in the higher elevation forest types). The past 100 years of successful fire exclusion, advancement of succession in forest ecosystems, and extended fire return intervals in short-grass prairie and shrub lands have resulted in increased fuel loadings. When added to the significant outbreaks of insects and disease in forested areas, and increasing non-native plants in the grasslands, the result is higher potentials for increased fire size, frequency, intensity, and severity. The influx of people to the area will increase the probability of human-caused fires.

Planning Questions

- What should be the landscape level fire management goals and objectives?
- Where can fuel management activities be used to reduce fuel accumulations, and promote and sustain a healthy ecosystem?
- How can fire suppression actions be managed to minimize the adverse effects to public health and safety, private property and resources while providing for beneficial ecological processes?
- What is the appropriate management response to naturally occurring wildfire outside the wildland urban interface?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Follow National Fire Plan, 2000
- Follow Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 1995, reaffirmed and updated 2000
- Follow BLM Manual 9214
- Follow Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations

- Incorporate guidance and direction defined in the Fire Planning Manual (MS-9211) and Fire Planning Handbook (H-9211-1)

Issue: Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing in the Lewistown RMP planning area occurs within numerous intermingled allotments containing BLM and other federal lands, private, state and grazing district lands. Percentages of BLM public lands within these allotments range from less than 10 percent to 100 percent of an overall allotment area. The Lewistown Field Office currently authorizes grazing on 590 grazing allotments. There are approximately 66 unallocated parcels. The Butte Field Office administers grazing on approximately 14 allotments within this planning area. Allocations and adjustments will be evaluated within alternatives, as described in IM-2012-169, taking into consideration other resource values and forage demands within the planning area. Unallocated parcels will be evaluated for suitability of livestock grazing. Criteria for issuing grazing permits/leases or identifying parcels to remain unleased will be developed and incorporated into the Lewistown RMP.

The need to improve range condition; range management options when forage resources are affected by drought, insects or fire; the need to maintain and improve wildlife habitat through the modification of livestock grazing (permitted use and season of use); recreational uses; and the need to maintain the economic stability of the local livestock industry will be considered in the plan. In addition, the Lewistown RMP will address concerns regarding rangeland health, selective management categories for individual allotments and maintenance of social and economic factors in affected communities within the planning area.

Planning Question

- What lands will be available or not available for livestock grazing and how will livestock grazing be managed?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Conform with existing laws, regulations, and BLM policy pertaining to livestock grazing on public lands
- Incorporate Montana Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
- Consider ecological site inventory information
- Protect important biological resource functions that provide for soil stability, water quality, and healthy riparian and upland vegetation communities
- Provide for the protection and restoration of native species and potential natural communities
- Authorize use to minimize environmental impacts under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield

Issue: Land Tenure Adjustments

The workload and cost to manage small tracts of public lands within the planning area are high because of the scattered land ownership pattern. Many parcels of public land are less than 640 acres in size, have no legal access and contain limited management opportunities. Land tenure adjustments through purchase, exchange, and donation have the potential to provide greater efficiencies in management, reduced workload, and reduced costs. It also allows for the acquisition of parcels with high public resource values.

Planning Question

- What opportunities exist to make adjustments to public land ownership that would result in greater management efficiency and increased public and natural resource benefits?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Comply with Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act of 1988
- Comply with Sections 203 and 206 of FLPMA
- Improve public access opportunities to public lands and resources
- Improve administrative access opportunities to public lands and resources
- Maintain or enhance important resource values and uses
- Maintain or enhance local social and economic values
- Improve management efficiency and expand management opportunities through the elimination of isolated tracts and creation of “blocks” of public lands
- Review, and where appropriate, continue identification of lands for disposal

Issue: Delineation of Right-of-Way Corridors and Sites

The planning area contains a number of utility, transportation, and communication rights-of-way. The locations of some of these existing rights-of-way may or may not be suitable for expansion or development into utility corridors, communication sites, and/or wind energy sites. It is important to identify or delineate those corridors and sites in order to effectively manage the public lands and to minimize the impacts from the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.

Planning Questions

- What lands will be available for right-of-way corridors?
- What lands will be identified as right-of-way avoidance or exclusion areas based on resource values and requirements for right-of-way uses and commercial activities?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Public lands will generally be available for transportation, utility, and communication site rights-of-way, except: (1) where there is a need to protect other resource values; (2) areas specifically identified as avoidance and exclusion areas; or (3) where specifically prohibited by law or regulation
- Comply with Section 503 of FLPMA
- Incorporate the findings of the 1992 Western Regional Corridor Study, by the Western Utility Group
- Utilize existing/common rights-of-way to the extent possible, and minimize the proliferation of separate rights-of-way
- Identify public lands with existing right-of-way corridors that may or may not be suitable for additional rights-of-way
- Evaluate potential conflicts with existing or potential resource values and uses
- Consider Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications

Issue: Minerals and Energy Development

The planning area has the potential for the development of solid minerals, fluid minerals, and energy. Mineral and energy development can affect a variety of other resources, although these effects can be reduced through carefully developed mitigations such as reclamation, hazardous materials management, avoidance areas, the use of Best Management Practices, and mineral withdrawals.

In addition to the mineral and energy development activities, there are concerns about abandoned mine lands and the hazard abatement associated with such activities. This ongoing process involves BLM and other federal and state agencies. The planning effort will identify or mention the following consistent with the goals and objectives for natural resources within the planning area (See Planning Handbook Appendix C, II, H):

- Areas open to leasing, subject to existing laws, regulations, and formal orders; and the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Areas open to leasing, subject to moderate constraints such as seasonal and controlled surface use restrictions. These are areas where it has been determined that moderately restrictive lease stipulations may be required to mitigate impacts to other land uses or resource values.
- Areas open to leasing, subject to major constraints such as no-surface-occupancy stipulations on an area more than 40 acres in size or more than 0.25 mile in width. These are areas where it has been determined that highly restrictive lease stipulations are required to mitigate impacts to other lands or resource values. This category also includes areas where overlapping moderate constraints would severely limit development of fluid mineral resources.
- Areas closed to leasing. These are areas where it has been determined that other land uses or resource values cannot be adequately protected with even the most restrictive lease stipulations; appropriate protection can be ensured only by closing the lands to leasing. Identify whether such closures are

discretionary or nondiscretionary; and if discretionary, provide the rationale.

The plan will identify, for each lease stipulation, the circumstances for granting an exception, waiver, or modification, as well as identify the general documentation requirements and any public notification associated with granting exceptions, waivers, or modifications.

The planning effort will clarify and determine whether the development decisions also apply to geophysical exploration and whether constraints identified in the land use plan for new leases also apply to areas currently under lease.

In addition, the plan will identify resource condition objectives that have been established and specific lease stipulations and general/typical conditions of approval and best management practices that will be employed to accomplish these objectives in areas open to leasing. In addition, long-term resource condition objectives will be identified for areas currently under development to guide reclamation activities prior to abandonment.

Planning Questions

- Under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, how will mineral and energy development activities be managed to provide for products while preventing undue or unnecessary degradation to other natural resources?
- How will management of public lands affect the social and economic conditions established by mineral and energy development?
- How will management of subsurface minerals affect surface lands and resources?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Make public lands and federal minerals available for the exploration and development of energy and mineral resources while considering other resource values.
- Identify reasonable foreseeable development potential/scenarios, as appropriate.
- Identify best management practices, mitigation and conservation measures that are necessary to minimize effects of development
- Identify areas to be withdrawn or closed to protect non-mineral or energy resource values

Issue: Special Designations

The planning unit contains a number of special designations such as the Square Butte Wilderness Study Area, Blacktail Creek Paleontological Site Mineral Withdrawal, Outstanding Natural Areas (ONAs), and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. These special designations provide management direction specifically designed to protect the resource values for which the area was designated. There may be resources that are best protected by additional designations, and there may be designations that are no longer necessary. In addition, the streams and rivers in the Headwaters RMP area have not been evaluated under the Wild and Scenic River guidelines.

Planning Questions

- Where are special designations appropriate to protect unique resource values?
- What other rivers in the planning area are suitable for Wild & Scenic River status?
- What is the nature and purposes of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail?
- What public land area will be established as National Trails Corridors?
- What management practices will occur to manage National Scenic and Historic Trails so as to safeguard the nature and purposes of the trails and in manner which protects the values for which they were designated?
- What allowable uses, management actions, and necessary restrictions should be established within the National Trails Corridors?
- How will other BLM programs and uses be managed within the National Trails Management Corridors?
- Are there any National Trails related lands within the Planning Area that should be acquired?
- What level of coordination will occur to ensure the National Trails Corridors edgematch with adjoining BLM Field Offices and other agencies that administer these corridors?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Comply with FLPMA, Sections 201 and 202
- Evaluate all rivers and streams in the planning area for eligibility under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Complete a study recommending which eligible rivers are suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System, in accordance with BLM manual 8351, Wild and Scenic River Policy
- Comply with Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review, BLM Handbook 8550-1
- Evaluate any new areas which may be suitable for designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Identify lands with wilderness characteristics
- Comply with the National Trails System Act, in accordance with BLM Manual 6280, National Scenic and Historic Trail policy

Management Concerns

Management Concern: Air Quality

The RMP will summarize all relevant background air quality and climate information associated with the planning area and identify all potentially affected Class I areas as well as actions that could be taken to protect these areas. The plan will identify area-wide criteria or restrictions that would be applied to any activity authorized by the field offices to ensure compliance with all local, state, federal, or tribal air quality standards and implementation plans. Authorized activities include, but are not limited to, fuels management and energy development.

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Comply with NEPA requirements to analyze and disclose impacts to air resources including ambient air quality and air quality related values.
- Comply with procedures in the Memorandum of Understanding among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, regarding air quality analysis and mitigation for federal oil and gas decisions through the NEPA process which was signed on July 23, 2011.
- Incorporate a strategy for addressing BLM requirements under general conformity (40 CFR part 93, subpart B)

Management Concern: Water Quality/Quantity

Standard procedures regarding permitting practices required by federal and Montana State laws will be identified in the RMP. The BLM will work closely with Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, plus tribal, federal and local laws regarding water quality planning and management. Data to be examined will include, but are not limited to, the Montana DEQ's identified impaired streams (303(d)), Montana's Streamside Management Zone Law, riparian condition, water rights, land jurisdiction, water quality, and water quantity data. The Lewistown RMP will identify and consider: Best Management Practices (BMPs) that the State of Montana and its cooperators (including the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service) have developed and distributed for use by federal land managers, including particular BMPs developed for watersheds as a result of the 303(d)/Total Maximum Daily Load process; Standards for Rangeland Health Assessments; BMPs for Grazing; and existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the State of Montana.

Management Concern: Soil Resources

Soils will be managed to maintain or improve soil health and productivity and minimize impacts to soil resources through the actions of management activities. Best Management Practices, mitigation measures and reclamation will be implemented at the site-specific activity/project level to prevent or reduce soil erosion, compaction and return soil productivity; especially, for soils with severe erosion susceptibility, sparse vegetation, shallow depths and on steep slopes. If soil impacts cannot be mitigated or effectively controlled then the activity/project could be relocated or denied.

The RMP will utilize available soil data to make informed decisions for a variety of resources and resource uses. State Soil Geographical Data (STATSGO) and Soil Survey Geographical Data (SSURGO) are available for all

counties in the planning area.

Management Concern: Cultural Resources

The planning area contains many significant prehistoric, historic, and cultural areas. Recreational activities, unintentional trespass, theft, erosion, and vandalism are all sources of cultural resource degradation. Protection of cultural resource sites may include-identification, evaluation, monitoring, stabilization, and interpretation.

Planning Questions

- How will cultural resources needing proactive management, protection, and use be identified?
- How will sacred sites and traditional cultural places that need protection be identified?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Consult with Tribal Governments and State Historic Preservation Office
- Identify and protect cultural resources and traditional cultural properties
- Protect, preserve, and enhance sites eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Management Concern: Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities

Sacred sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural use areas, and other trust resources within the planning unit require inventory, consultation, and protection to meet our trust responsibilities. Treaties ratified by the U.S. Congress and federally recognized tribes confer special legal rights to use public land. Effective consultation and coordination is the key to achieving management goals for both the tribes and the BLM.

Planning Question

- Are potential effects to trust resources and treaty rights adequately addressed?
- What plants and animals in the planning area are typically used for traditional and/or treaty use purposes?
- How are sacred sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural uses identified and protected?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Consult with Tribal Governments
- Identify and manage trust resources
- Comply with treaty rights for all associated management activities and uses

Management Concern: Tribal Interests

Under all alternatives, BLM would continue to notify and consult with appropriate American Indian tribes on BLM authorized actions. Consultation and coordination would be conducted on a government-to-government basis with federally recognized tribes. Management of public lands would accommodate the exercise of rights provided by treaties or law that are applicable to the planning area. BLM would coordinate with the appropriate entities within tribal government on issues under its jurisdiction to determine appropriate protocols that provide for treaty uses of public lands.

Planning Questions

- Who are the tribes likely to be affected? What is their recent history and likely area of interest?
- What (if any) landscape-scale issues that should be identified and addressed at the land-use planning stage?
- Are there any historic and/or religious concerns that will need to be appropriately addressed under Section 106 of the NHPA?
- What are other resource concerns that would be of interest (water, vegetation, etc.)?
- Are there likely to be environmental justice issues?
- Will climate change impacts and adaptation be an issue of concern for tribes?
- Does the tribe have a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer?
- What plants and animals in the planning area are typically used for traditional and/or treaty use purposes?
- How are sacred sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural uses identified and protected?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Consult with Tribal Governments
- Identify and collect information to adequately address planning issues and questions.

Management Concern: Paleontological and Cave and Karst Resources

The planning area contains documented paleontological localities, as well as the potential for other cave and paleontological resources throughout the field office. These resources are only beginning to be understood and identified. Recreational activities, natural erosion, unintentional trespass, theft, and vandalism are all sources of resource degradation. Protection and management of these sites and caves includes identification, stabilization, and enhancement to maintain significant scientific, educational, and recreational values.

Planning Question

- How will the BLM manage paleontological and cave resources?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Identify and protect significant cave resources pursuant to 43 CFR Part 37
- Identify, protect, and manage caves and paleontological sites to maintain or enhance significant scientific, educational, wildlife and recreational values
- Inventory and monitor paleontological resources using scientific principles and expertise in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 470aaa-1.

Management Concern: Visual Resource Management (VRM)

Range management, forestry, fuels management activities, and rights-of-way for utility, transportation and communication facilities are the primary actions affecting visual resources in the Lewistown Field Office planning area. The BLM is responsible for ensuring that the scenic values of public lands are considered in all proposed actions that may affect visual quality. The BLM manages the visual resource by identifying visual resource values, establishing objectives for managing those values, and taking action to achieve the visual management objectives.

Planning Questions

- Where are the different visual resource values within the planning area, and to what degree should they be protected?
- How will the impacts to the visual resource inventory values (Scenic Quality, Sensitivity and Distance Zones), be assessed individually and quantified?
- Are there any visual values that are of a scarce nature and how would this be determined and managed for protection?
- How will the impact on the human appreciation/ use/ experience of the scenic resource be accounted for within the impact analysis of visual resources?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Follow guidance described in BLM Manual Section 8400, Visual Resource Management
- Follow guidance described in BLM Handbook H-8410-1, Visual Resource Inventory Guidelines and Visual Resource Inventory Data Standard Report
- Complete a Visual Resource Inventory for the planning area and then identify Visual Resource Management Classes

Management Concern: Social and Economic Sustainability of Local Communities

High economic priorities for the local communities of central Montana are agriculture, ranching as a way of life, recreation, and tourism on public lands. Commercial outfitting, guide businesses, and recreational hunting associated with deer, antelope and upland game birds are also factors influencing the local economy. Forest health concerns, including emphasis towards fuels management in the wildland/urban/rural interface, continue to increase the importance of extracting timber products from public lands, thus creating jobs within local communities.

Planning Question

- How will management of BLM lands affect the social and economic conditions of local economies?
- How will management of BLM lands affect the resiliency and sustainability of local economies?

Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Promote social and economic diversification in central Montana
- Recognize the increasing demand for resources on public lands
- Recognize that economies of local communities are dependent on goods and services derived from public lands
- Social scientific data and methods will be integrated into the entire planning process, from preparing the pre-plan to implementation and monitoring.