

## Public Participation Plan

The public participation opportunities for the major steps of the planning process are listed below. The schedule for these steps is identified in Table 6, RMP Schedule, following this section. Every effort will be made to provide meaningful public involvement throughout the process. Collaboration with tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments will be emphasized. Informal written, verbal, and e-mailed public input will be accepted throughout the process, and will be documented and routed to the BLM Field Manager and Project Manager. A collaborative workshop on regional and local economic conditions and trends will be conducted to develop an economic profile for the planning area. A detailed and comprehensive public participation plan will be prepared prior to scoping. Major groups of public participants include environmental/conservation groups; county weed districts, and advocacy groups. Other interested groups and private individuals will be identified throughout the planning process.

### Community-Based Collaborative Planning

An open collaborative process will be used to obtain ideas, information and comments from tribes, other federal agencies, state and local governments (Table 5), the Central Resource Advisory Council and the public. The cooperators list will be updated as appropriate during scoping and throughout the planning process. Every effort will be made to coordinate with the other agencies to insure that common standards are used for data so that it can be shared across administrative boundaries. Resource uses that logically extend beyond boundaries (e.g., fire management, roads and trails, rights-of-way) will be coordinated with the other agencies. Opportunities to sustain the social and economic health of local communities will be explored with those communities.

**Table 5. Potential RMP Cooperators**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service          | National Park Service                        |
| Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks        | Congressional Delegation                     |
| Montana Department of Natural Resources | County Commissioners for nine counties       |
| Lewis and Clark National Forest         | Other elected officials of local communities |
| Tribal Governments                      | Montana Department of Environmental Quality  |
| Lewis and Clark NHT Administrator       | Montana State Historic Preservation Office   |
| Nez Perce NHT Administrator             | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency         |
| Continental Divide NST Administrator    |  |

The BLM will provide information and gather input at the following steps:

**Data Gathering/Internal Scoping Phase:** Based on some of the key planning elements outlined in the Director’s 2016 Road Map: Winning the Challenges of the Future, the Lewistown RMP will focus on constructive preparation and data gathering, internal scoping and outreach with our cooperating agencies to build a strong foundation and framework prior to launching formal scoping with the public. We are proposing to initiate the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) stage of the planning process prior to initiating formal scoping through the Federal Register Notice of Intent (FRNOI). This process will result in more meaningful public involvement at the onset of a complex, multi-jurisdictional landscape planning effort by informing both internal and external audiences the current condition (affected environment) and some of the management challenges associated with these conditions. Based on feedback received during scoping, adjustments would be made to the AMS prior to finalization of that document. While internal scoping and coordination with cooperating agencies would be initiated, this process-wise step would allow for more flexibility in completing the formal scoping and associated scoping report (DO target), which would be identified for completion in early FY14.

### Scoping Phase: Identify Issues, Planning Criteria, and Planning Questions

A *Federal Register* Notice of Intent to develop an RMP and press releases will be published, and website information will be available about the preparation and content of the RMP. Public meetings will be held with interested individuals to begin scoping and introduce the project. An RMP mailing list will be developed and maintained throughout the planning process. The list will include all persons, groups, agencies, tribes, and others

who are participating in the development of the RMP. Letters will be sent to individuals and organizations on the mailing list. Public input will be gathered in verbal and written form at all meetings throughout the process, and during a 30-day scoping comment period. Other meetings will be held as necessary with tribal governments, other federal agencies, state and local entities, and interest groups.

Coordination with other agencies will strive for accurate data that can be shared across administrative boundaries. Coordination with adjacent BLM offices will help provide consistency during the planning process.

A scoping report, detailing the public input received during the formal scoping period, and the resulting issues to be addressed, proposed Preliminary Planning Considerations, and preliminary range of alternatives will be distributed to the mailing list and posted on the web site.

### **Alternative Formulation**

Press releases and website updates will provide notification of draft alternatives and invite public comments. Meetings with interested groups, agencies, and other public participants will gather input which will be used to modify alternatives and resolve resource conflicts. The participants will be invited to discuss options for analysis and methodologies used in the development of the RMP.

### **Issue Draft RMP/EIS**

A Notice of Availability of the Draft RMP/EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* and in local press outlets. The Draft RMP will be sent to collaborative partners and those interested individuals and groups on the RMP mailing list. Public meetings will be held to gather input. A 90-day comment period will provide an opportunity for written public comments.

### **Publish Proposed RMP/Final EIS and Approved Plan**

A Federal Register Notice of Availability of the Proposed Plan and Final EIS will be published. Copies of the Proposed Plan/Final EIS will be mailed to participants in the planning process. The availability of the plan will be advertised in regional newspapers and other media, and will include an explanation of the 30-day protest period. The BLM will send written responses to protests as needed. The Governor will be provided a 60-day consistency review.

### **Respond to Protests**

Should timely protest be received within the 30-day protest period of the Federal Register Notice of Availability of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, written responses will be sent to the public, as needed. As a part of addressing protests, the BLM will issue a Federal Register notice requesting comments on significant changes as a result of a protest, if necessary.

### **Publish Approved Plan and Records of Decision**

The approved RMP and RODs will be published, and the public will be notified of its availability via news articles, website, and letters. Appropriate outreach and Congressional briefings, including briefings for county commissioners and local organizations may also be held.