

Format and Process for the RMP

The planning area will be defined to include eight counties that form the administrative boundary of the Lewistown Field Office, as well as the northern portion of Lewis and Clark County, which is located within the Butte Field Office. One RMP/EIS will be prepared; however, each field office (LFO and BFO) will issue separate RODs.

The format for the RMP/EIS and the process will be based on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations, Department of the Interior and BLM planning regulations, manuals and handbooks, and applicable instruction memos. All legal and policy requirements will be met in the planning process regarding specific laws, public participation and program management. The Draft and Final EIS will be published and made available to the public with the draft and proposed versions of the plan through both hard-copy distribution and through the Bureau's ePlanning system. Public comments will be analyzed after a 90-day review period for the Draft Plan/EIS. All comments will be considered in development of the Proposed Plan/Final EIS.

Decisions in the existing RMPs and amendments will be reviewed and brought forward as appropriate. The RMP may incorporate existing BLM management decisions from fire management plans, livestock grazing allotment management plans, wildlife habitat management plans, conservation/recovery plans for special status species, recreation area management plans, Standards and Guidelines, and other applicable plans. Any NEPA analysis prepared for such decisions will also be brought forward if it meets current standards.

The RMP will describe the current management situation and then identify desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved, and prioritize management actions necessary to achieve objectives and a schedule for implementing the identified management actions.

Contracting

Opportunities to contract portions of the planning steps have been considered and evaluated as part of the RMP preparation planning process. Proposals to contract will be based on efficiency, effectiveness, costs, and staff work needed to complete other high priority workloads. Contracted portions of the RMP could include, but not be limited to, visual resource inventories, writer/editor duties, GIS and data preparation, public scoping, comment analysis, economic modeling and analysis, effects analysis, and printing.

Alternative Formulation

A range of alternatives, including a No Action alternative, will be developed to respond to the issues identified. Alternatives will examine different potential solutions to the issues and concerns identified. The objective of alternative formulation will be to develop realistic, implementable solutions that represent a complete land use plan.

Internal Plan Review

Preliminary documents will be reviewed by the Lewistown Field Office, State Office staff, Washington Office staff, and management prior to being published.