

# Lewistown RMP Update

A BLM newsletter for the Lewistown Resource Management Plan

Volume 1

Spring 2014

## Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lewistown Field Office (LFO) is preparing a resource management plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) to guide management of approximately 654,025 acres of public land (surface) and 1,399,880 acres of federal mineral estate (subsurface) administered by BLM (see map insert). The RMP will reflect the changing needs of the planning area over the next several decades, and will replace the current Headwaters and Judith-Valley-Phillips RMPs that were developed in 1984 and 1994, respectively. In order to provide a comprehensive plan, the BLM requests input from you to help identify issues and management opportunities within and adjacent to the planning area.

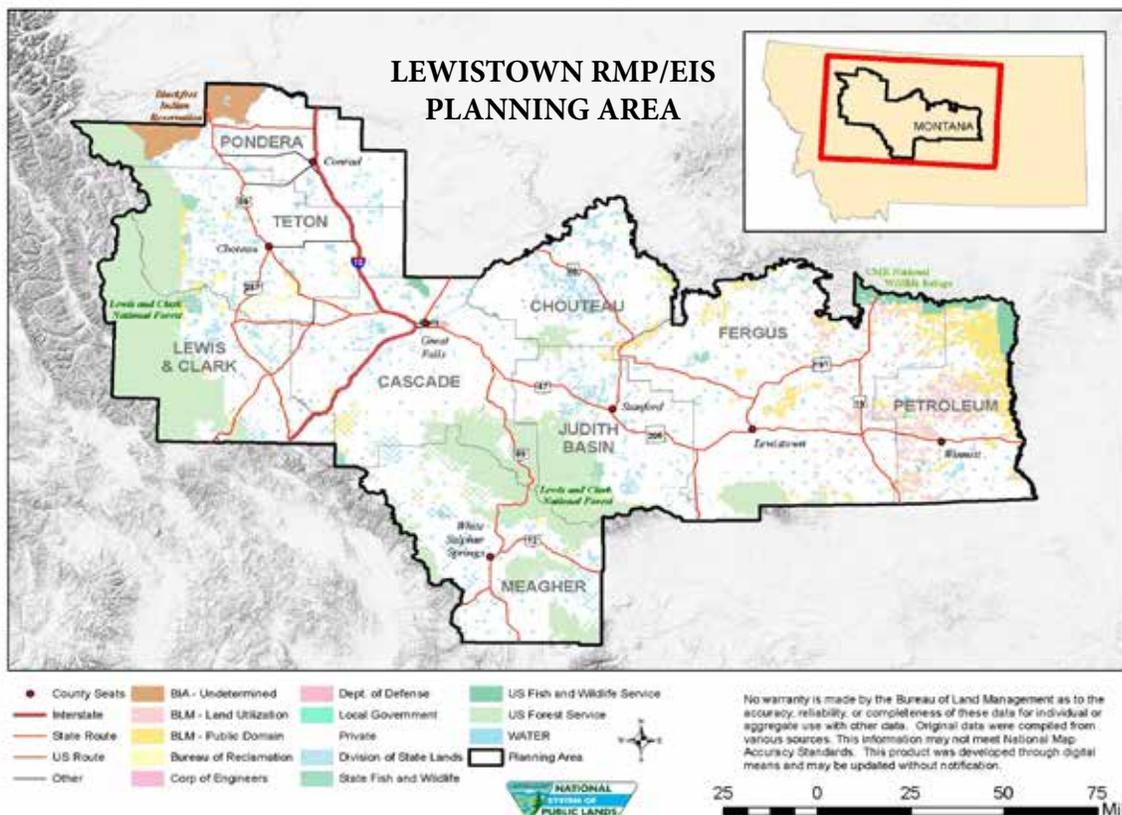
## What is an RMP?

The BLM's land use plans are called resource management plans. An RMP describes broad, multiple-use guidance for managing public lands administered by the BLM. The planning decisions contained in an RMP are the basis for every on-the-ground action the BLM undertakes. An RMP ensures that the public lands are managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). Under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, FLPMA directs the BLM to develop such land use plans and to provide for appropriate uses of public lands. The public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic,

historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources and archeological values. Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions.

The RMP will accomplish the following:

- ◆ Establish goals and objectives for resource management and the measures needed to achieve those goals and objectives;
- ◆ Identify lands that are open and available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses; and
- ◆ Provide comprehensive management direction for, and/or allocate use of all resources.



## Lewistown RMP/EIS Planning Area

The BLM is an agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that administers 258 million surface acres of America's public lands, located primarily in 12 western states. The BLM is separated into state offices and further into district and field offices. The RMP is being prepared by the Lewistown Field Office located in Lewistown, Montana.

The planning area is located in central Montana and includes Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Meagher, Petroleum, Pondera and Teton counties in the LFO and a portion of northern Lewis and Clark County in the Butte Field Office (BFO). Lands within the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (UMRBNM) are being managed in accordance with the UMRBNM RMP/EIS (approved December 2008) and will not be addressed in this planning document.

## Where Are We in the Planning Process?

A Preparation Plan, outlining LFO's proposal to prepare the RMP, was completed and approved in February 2013. Various contracts to assess the current status of some of the resources involved and inventories to determine the appropriate classification of other resources were either completed during the summer or are ongoing. The Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS), describing the area covered by the plan and the current management situation by resource, is in the final stages of completion. We are now at the point of scheduling public scoping meetings to gather information and issues from the public and other interested agencies and organizations which will be used to identify and formulate the alternatives that will be assessed in the plan.

## What is Scoping and How Can I Participate?

Public involvement is an integral part of preparing the Lewistown RMP. This public scoping period gives the public and other interested agencies and organizations the opportunity to provide comments on issues to be addressed and methods to be used in this plan before BLM begins drafting it. The official scoping period began February 10, 2014, with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* and will continue until April 11, 2014. During the scoping period, the BLM will host six public open houses in Choteau, White Sulphur Springs, Winifred, Winnett, Lewistown and Great Falls, MT. Notices of public meetings have been provided to local newspapers and other media within the planning area.

The public is formally invited and encouraged to participate in the planning process for the RMP during the public scoping period. Some ways that you can participate are by:

- ◆ Attending one or more of the open house meetings to learn about the project and planning process and meet BLM representatives;
- ◆ Reviewing the progress of the RMP online at: <http://blm.gov/ngld>. The website will be updated with information, documents and announcements during the initial scoping process and throughout the duration of the RMP preparation;
- ◆ Joining the Lewistown Field Office RMP mailing list in order to receive future mailings and information:

E-mail us at [blm\\_mt\\_Lewistown\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:blm_mt_Lewistown_RMP@blm.gov); or contact Dan Brunkhorst at (406) 538-1981 or [dbrunkho@blm.gov](mailto:dbrunkho@blm.gov).

## Anticipated Planning Issues

A planning issue is a matter of controversy over a resource management topic that requires alternative actions and a decision. Based on the lands and resources that we manage, the BLM has identified categories of issues (list follows).

## Lewistown RMP Timeline

*Dates are approximate*

Notice of Intent published in the ***Federal Register***:  
Feb. 10, 2014

Public scoping period:  
Feb. 10 - April 11, 2014

Public scoping meetings:  
March - April 2014

Scoping Summary Report available: May 2014

Draft EIS with Plan Alternatives available for 90-day public review and comment: April 2015

Prepare Final EIS and Proposed RMP:  
January 2016

30-day public review and protest period for Final EIS and Proposed RMP:  
May 2016

Resolve protest(s):  
August 2016

Record of Decision and Approved RMP signed:  
December 2016

 *Completed*

## Issue Categories:

- ◆ Air Resources
- ◆ Geology
- ◆ Soil Resources
- ◆ Water Resources
- ◆ Vegetative Communities
- ◆ Fish and Wildlife
- ◆ Wildland Fire and Ecology
- ◆ Cultural, Heritage Resources and Native American Religious Concerns
- ◆ Paleontological Resources
- ◆ Wilderness Characteristics
- ◆ Visual Resources
- ◆ Cave and Karst
- ◆ Minerals and Energy Resources
- ◆ Livestock Grazing
- ◆ Recreation and Visitor Services
- ◆ Trails and Travel Management
- ◆ Forest, Woodland and Special Products
- ◆ Lands and Realty
- ◆ Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- ◆ National Trails
- ◆ Wild and Scenic Rivers
- ◆ Outstanding Natural Areas
- ◆ Social Conditions
- ◆ Economic Conditions
- ◆ Treaty Rights and Tribal Interests
- ◆ Environmental Justice

## Mark Your Calendar Upcoming Open Houses

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
March 4, 2014	5-7 p.m.	Meagher County Courthouse	15 West Main White Sulphur Springs, MT
March 6, 2014	5-7 p.m.	Winifred Community Center	210 Main Street Winifred, MT
March 13, 2014	5-7 p.m.	Petroleum County Courthouse	302 East Main Street Winnett, MT
March 18, 2014	5-7 p.m.	Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center	4201 Giant Springs Road Great Falls, MT
April 1, 2014	5-7 p.m.	Yogo Inn	211 East Main Lewistown, MT
April 3, 2014	5-7 p.m.	Choteau Public Library	17 North Main Avenue Choteau, MT

PLEASE NOTE: If your group or organization would like to schedule an additional presentation or meeting, please contact us to make arrangements.

We expect most public issues and concerns to fall within one of these themes; however, we do not presume that this is an all-inclusive list and it may be revised based on the comments we receive. The BLM requests your comments on these or other issues on or adjacent to BLM-administered lands within the LFO planning area. The BLM will also be accepting nominations for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and any new information on existing special designations.

Planning criteria guide development of the RMP/EIS by helping define the decision space; they are generally based on applicable laws, BLM Director and Montana State Director guidance and the results of public and governmental participation (43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.4-2). The BLM developed preliminary planning criteria to set the sideboards for focusing planning of the LFO RMP/EIS and to guide decisionmaking by topic. A preliminary list of the planning criteria to be used for the Lewistown RMP/EIS can be viewed at the following web address: <http://blm.gov/ngld>.

### How Will My Comments be Used?

Upon completion of the scoping period, we will analyze your comments and identify relevant issues to address in the Lewistown RMP. Once the comments have been analyzed, a scoping report will be compiled to ensure that the issues important to the public are addressed. The scoping report summarizes the comments received through the end of the scoping period and identifies issues to be addressed by the plan; it does not make decisions or set forth policies.

Before including an address, phone number, e-mail address or any other personal identifying information in your comments, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. All submissions from organizations or businesses will be made available for public disclosure in their entirety.

# CONTACT US

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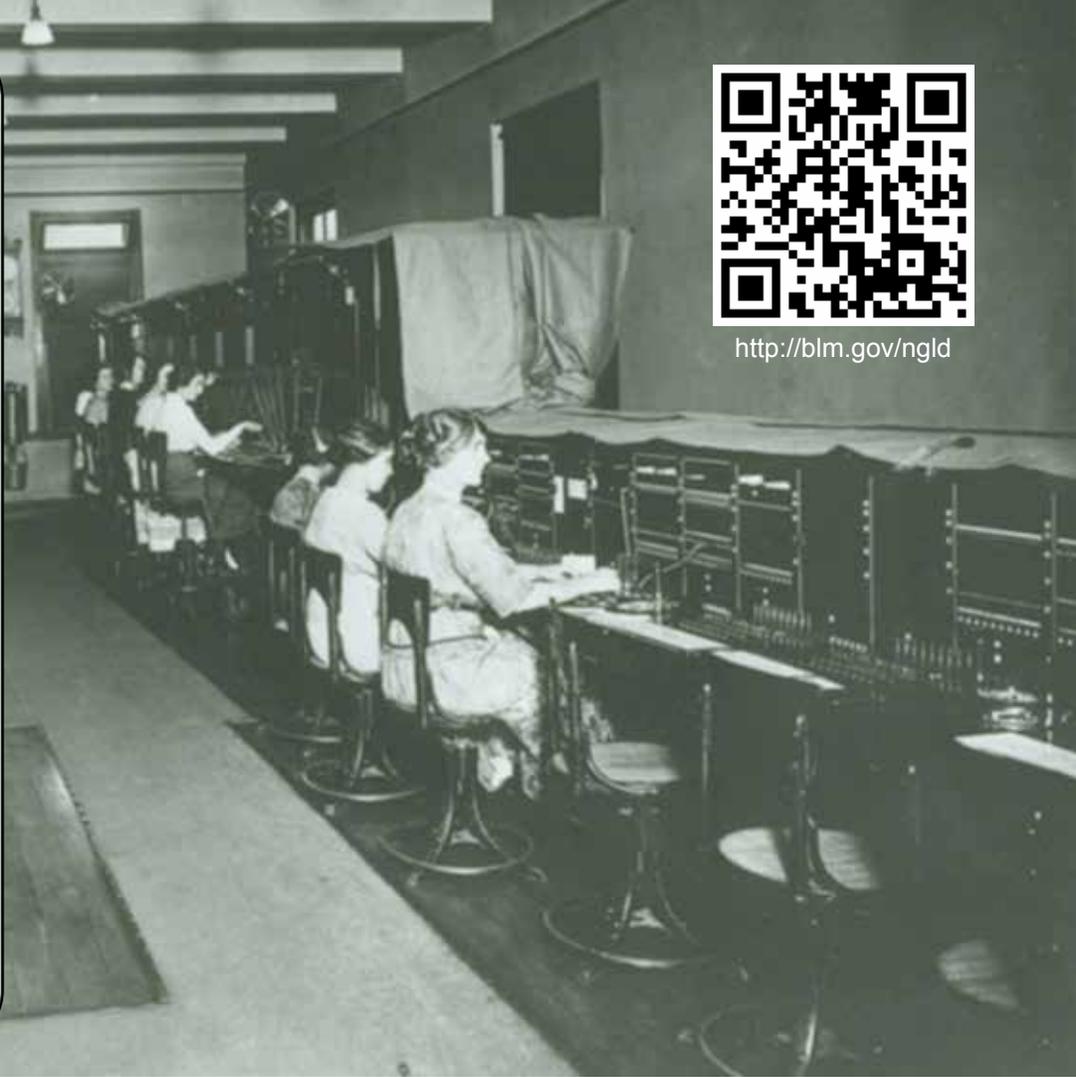
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