

BLM Looks to Consolidate Planning Documents in Central Montana

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The Bureau of Land Management is seeking public comment on management of over 650,000 acres of central Montana.

The BLM Lewistown field office is preparing a resource management plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement that encompasses an area from the Rocky Mountain Front to Petroleum County. The planning area includes portions of Lewis and Clark, Teton, Cascade, Meagher, Choteau, Fergus and Petroleum counties. The area currently falls under the Headwaters RMP from 1984 and the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP from 1994. The new RMP aims to consolidate and update those plans.

Public affairs officer for the Lewistown office, Jonathan Moor, said while BLM looks at all comments, they can only implement plans they have control over.

"We deal with land management and state and national wildlife agencies deal with wildlife," he said.

"We're looking for comments to find out about what the public wants as far as grazing and mineral development."

On the sage grouse front, a candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act, Moor said that his agency manages the habitat the bird lives on, and added an amendment to the existing plans to address concerns for the grouse.

"There's a lot of areas of concern to address," Moor said. "We're interested in anything that's within the scope of our responsibilities."

BLM is holding open houses to explain the plan at the Yogo Inn in Lewistown on April 1 and at the Choteau Public Library on April 3. Both meetings are from 5 to 7 p.m.

The public can comment on the RMP Bureau of Land Management, Lewistown Field Office, 920 NE Main St., Lewistown, MT 59457. By fax: (406) 538-1904 (Attn: Lewistown RMP). Email comments can also be sent to: blm_mt_lewistown_rmp@blm.gov.