

Lewistown RMP Update

A BLM newsletter for the Lewistown Resource Management Plan

Volume 2

Fall 2014

Thanks to everyone who attended our public meetings earlier this year and provided scoping comments for the Lewistown Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision. Public involvement is critical to both land-use planning and the NEPA process. Your comments and information are being used to formulate a range of alternatives for the Lewistown RMP.

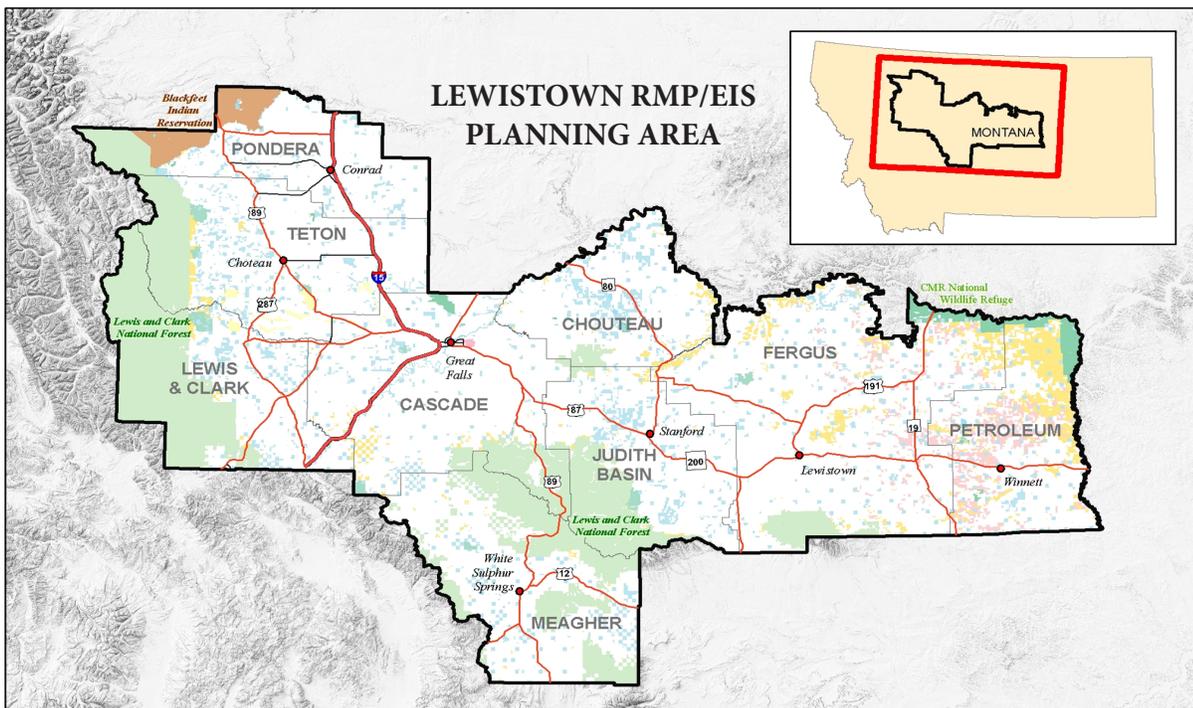
The RMP revision process began with publication of the Notice of Intent on February 10, 2014. During the scoping period we received 87 written letters that contained hundreds of specific comments. Letters came from a variety of organizations, local, county, state and tribal governments, but mostly from individuals. The origination of

comments was evenly divided among communities within the Lewistown planning area, communities within Montana, and from throughout the country. Most commenters focused on fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and visitor services, travel management, wilderness characteristics, and resource uses such as oil and gas development, livestock grazing, and motorized travel.

Currently, the Lewistown Field Office (LFO) is beginning the alternatives development phase of the RMP. The BLM, in conjunction with our cooperating agencies, will use your comments, issues, and planning criteria to formulate a reasonable range of management alternatives for evaluation in the

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Management alternatives will focus on resolving issues identified during scoping and offer a distinct choice among potential action strategies that will guide the direction of BLM management for the next 15 to 20 years.

After developing alternatives, we will conduct an in-depth analysis of each one to determine the impacts on the environment, and social and economic conditions. This analysis will be incorporated into a draft EIS which is scheduled for publication in August 2015. After publication of the draft EIS, there will be a 90-day review and public comment period. A final EIS that takes your comments into consideration will follow.



- County Seats
- Interstate
- State Route
- US Route
- Other
- BIA - Undetermined
- BLM - Land Utilization
- BLM - Public Domain
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Corp of Engineers
- Dept. of Defense
- Local Government
- Private
- Division of State Lands
- State Fish and Wildlife
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- WATER
- Planning Area



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New RMP-Related Documents Available Online

Please note that the following new documents related to the Lewistown RMP Revision have been posted to the BLM LFO website at <http://blm.gov/ngld>:

- Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)
- Scoping Report
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Report (west half of the planning area)
- LFO Final Visual Resources Inventory
- Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario for Oil and Gas Activities in the Lewistown Planning Area, Central Montana
- Potential lands with wilderness characteristics preliminary inventory

Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) Summary

The AMS describes current conditions and trends of the resources and the resource uses/activities in the planning area.

Sufficient detail is provided to create a platform for resolving planning issues through the development of alternatives. The AMS also provides a summary analysis of current management practices, including direction from existing plans and agency policy, as well as a discussion of local resource, social, and economic conditions.

Consistent with multiple use principles, the AMS provides the basis for formulating a reasonable range of alternatives. The AMS will be integrated into the subsequent RMP and EIS as part of the alternatives and affected environment analysis. Alternatives presented in the RMP/EIS will draw on the management opportunities and examination of the adequacy of current management identified in this document.

Scoping Summary

Preliminary planning issues and management concerns based on RMP evaluations, new Bureau program guidance, and LFO staff input, were identified by BLM to initiate the planning process. Between March 4 and April 3, 2014,

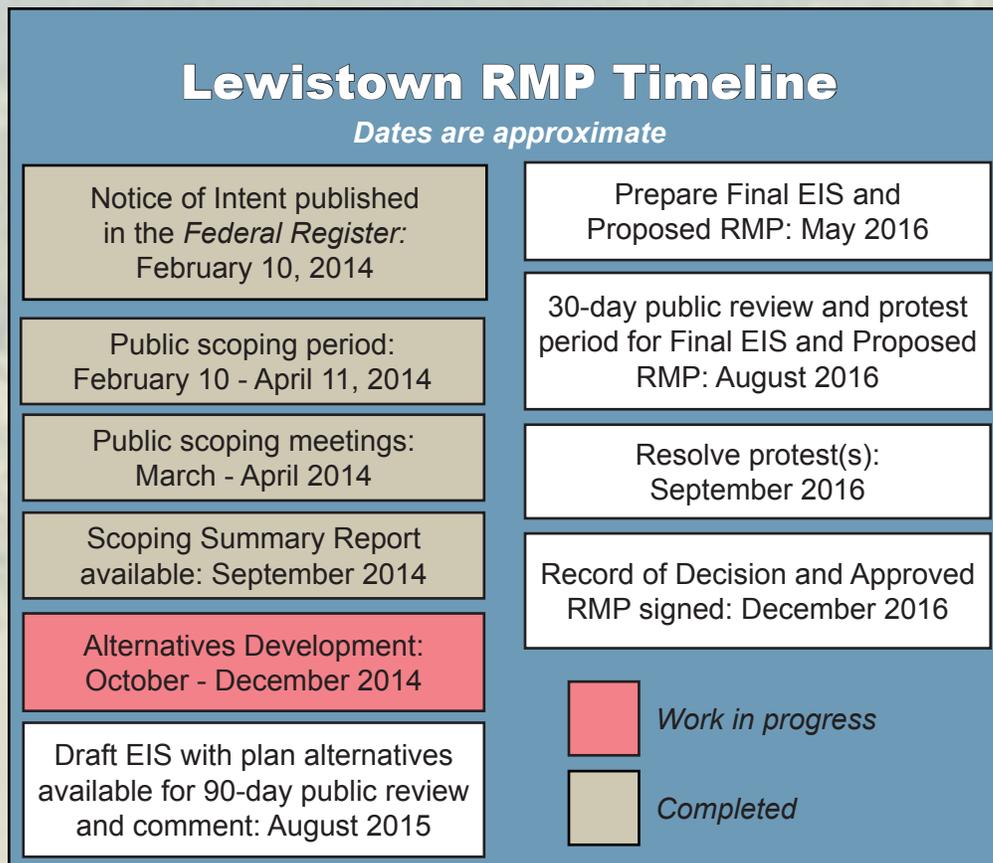
public open house meetings were held at Choteau, Great Falls, Lewistown, White Sulphur Springs, Winifred, and Winnett, Montana. A total of 98 people attended the six meetings. Five additional presentations were made for the following entities: Charles M. Russell Six-County Working Group, Central Montana Resource Council, Conservation Roundtable, Fergus County, and Montana Farmer's Union.

The formal comment period began on February 10, 2014, and extended through April 11, 2014. Comments were accepted 30 days from the date of the final scoping meeting which officially ended the scoping period on May 5, 2014. Seventy-five comment letters were received during the official scoping period and an additional 12 comment letters were received after the comment period ended for a total of 87 comment documents. Forty-eight unique written comment letters and 5 form letters were received resulting in a total of 526 comments (370 unique comments and 156 duplicate comments). Once the official comment period ended, a multi-step process was utilized to categorize and distill the issues identified during the RMP scoping period:

1. Comment documents were reviewed for content; individual and duplicate comments were then identified.
2. A scoping summary was created listing all the comments. Twenty-three planning issue categories were developed to organize the comments. Each comment was assigned one or more categories based upon the resource-specific content of the comment.
3. Comments within each category were then reviewed by members of the RMP interdisciplinary team to determine the disposition of each. The categories included:
 - Comment will be addressed in the RMP;
 - Comment presents a new issue and will be addressed in the RMP;
 - Comment further refines an existing issue and will be addressed in the RMP;

Lewistown RMP Timeline

Dates are approximate



Issue Categories:

- ◆ Air Resources & Climate Change
- ◆ Geology
- ◆ Soil Resources
- ◆ Water Resources
- ◆ Vegetative Communities
- ◆ Fish and Wildlife
- ◆ Wildland Fire Ecology
- ◆ Cultural and Heritage Resources
- ◆ Paleontological Resources
- ◆ Visual Resources
- ◆ Wilderness Characteristics
- ◆ Cave and Karst Resources
- ◆ Minerals and Energy Resources
- ◆ Livestock Grazing
- ◆ Recreation and Visitor Services
- ◆ Travel, Transportation Management and Access
- ◆ Lands and Realty
- ◆ Renewable Energy
- ◆ Withdrawals
- ◆ Forest, Woodland and Special Products
- ◆ Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- ◆ Back Country Byways
- ◆ National Trails
- ◆ Wild and Scenic Rivers
- ◆ Wilderness Study Areas
- ◆ Outstanding Natural Areas
- ◆ Social and Economic Conditions
- ◆ Treaty Rights and Tribal Interests
- ◆ Environmental Justice
- ◆ Public Safety

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Socio-Economic Workshops

These workshops will illustrate current and possible future BLM land uses that influence local/regional economic activity in the nine-county planning area that encompasses all or parts of Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Meagher, Petroleum, Pondera, Teton, and Lewis and Clark counties. Participants are encouraged to discuss the evolving nature of resource management in the West, the strengths and weaknesses of the area's economic situation, and local/regional activity and trends that influence social and economic conditions.

The BLM recognizes that the social and economic role of public lands is changing. The economy of the West has diversified, and the uses of and demands on public lands have diversified as well. Recreation, scenery, wildlife habitat, solitude, and ecological functions are increasingly important attributes of public lands. BLM management of these attributes can contribute to the social and economic development and success of nearby communities.

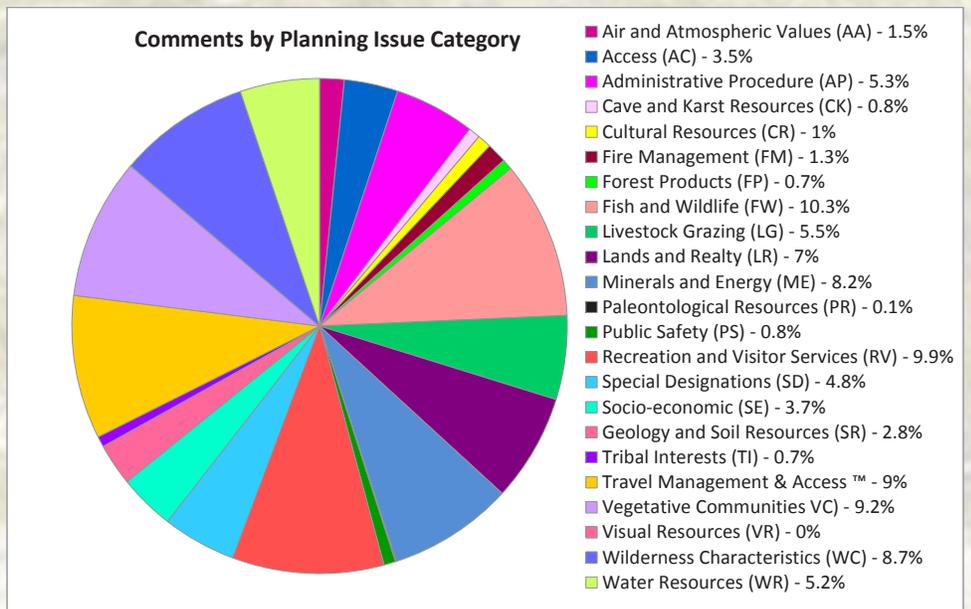
Successful resource management must involve those communities close to public lands. These workshops are an excellent way to promote understanding of how the social and economic analyses fit into the BLM planning process.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
October 15, 2014	4-7 p.m.	BLM Lewistown Field Office	920 NE Main Lewistown, MT
October 16, 2014	4-7 p.m.	BLM Great Falls Oil & Gas Field Office	1101 15th Street North Great Falls, MT

- Comment will not be addressed;
- Comment is beyond the scope of the RMP and will not be addressed;
- Comment is better addressed administratively or at a lower level of planning;
- Reference only.

4. Planning issue statements were written to encapsulate the issues and concerns raised by the scoping comments in each issue category.

A chart depicting the percentage of each of the 23 planning issue categories is shown below.



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