

A READER'S GUIDE TO THE CHAPTER 1 SUPPLEMENT

The Vernal Field Office Draft RMP/Draft EIS (DRMP/DEIS) was released for public review and comment in January 2005. Chapter 1 of the DRMP/DEIS, entitled "Purpose and Need" lays out the groundwork and background of the land use planning process. It includes the purpose and need for preparing a new land use plan for the Vernal Field Office; a description of the planning area; a discussion of the planning process, including the identification of the issues to be addressed in the new land use plan; an explanation of relationships to other programs, plans, and policies; and a discussion of the relationship of the planning process to the President's National Energy Policy.

The DRMP/DEIS provides the full context for this Chapter 1 Supplement. Section 1.4.1.1 of Chapter 1 of the DRMP/DEIS is being modified by this Supplement. It replaces the language that is currently in the DRMP/DEIS and defines and updates the issues of Wilderness Characteristics and Minerals Management, for planning purposes. A third paragraph has been added to Section 1.4.5, Step 8: Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Resource Management Plan (RMP), to clarify the process of selecting an ROD.

In the DRMP/DEIS, public lands outside of existing wilderness study areas (WSAs) that have wilderness characteristics were referred to as *Non-WSA Lands with or Likely to Have Wilderness Characteristics*. The document also used other variations of that name, like *Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics* and *Non-WSA Lands Likely to Have Wilderness Characteristics*. Further, you may have seen or heard other terms like wilderness inventory areas, reasonable probability determination areas, or simply, areas with wilderness characteristics. All of these terms refer to the same lands: those public lands outside of existing WSAs that that BLM has determined to have wilderness characteristics and that will be considered for management of those characteristics in this planning effort. For consistency and to minimize confusion, these lands will be referred to as *non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics* throughout this Supplement.

Any measures prescribed to protect the wilderness characteristics of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics under Alternative E would be subject to valid existing rights (e.g., existing oil and gas leases).

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CHAPTER ONE – PURPOSE AND NEED

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

See Section 1.4 of the DRMP/DEIS with the following changes.

1.4.1.1 Step 1: Identification of Issues

NOTE TO READER: *The Minerals Management section has been replaced with the following.*

Minerals Management – Projected mineral development would be revisited in the new planning effort. Concerns regarding the amount of oil and gas activity include direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to wildlife, non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, recreation, and visual resources. Baseline minerals information for both RMP areas needs to be revised based on new and developing information. This planning effort would ensure that minerals management issues and opportunities described below would be considered. Potential impacts would be addressed at an appropriate regional scale.

- Update Baseline Reasonable Foreseeable Management/Development scenarios for mineral development on a regional scale.
- Update Book Cliffs RMP baseline data, including the preparation of Mineral Potential Reports, based on BLM Manual 3031 and 3060 (3031: Energy and Mineral Resource Assessments; 3060: Mineral Reports).
- Assess known Gilsonite leasing area classification.
- Review and possibly modify oil and gas leasing categories in specific areas because of changed or newly evaluated resource conditions and issues.
- Review mitigation and lease stipulations and ensure consistency throughout the planning area.
- Review land tenure adjustments or ownerships and management agreements that were not previously addressed or that have occurred since the completion of previous planning, (e.g., Hill Creek federal minerals ownership, private lands acquired as a part of the Book Cliffs Initiative, and the Green River mitigation lands).

NOTE TO READER: *The Wilderness Characteristics section has been replaced with the following.*

Wilderness Characteristics – Certain non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics in the area managed by the Vernal Field Office are proposed by members of Congress and/or members of the public for wilderness designation. After updating its wilderness inventory, it is BLM's position that some of these lands have wilderness characteristics (see Glossary, DRMP/DEIS), and others do not. Management to maintain such wilderness characteristics is being considered in this land use planning process for those lands that the BLM has determined have wilderness

characteristics. However, such management will not be considered for lands that that BLM has determined lack wilderness characteristics.

Sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA (43 U.S.C. §§1711, 1712) and the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) guide the consideration of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics in land use planning. They provide that although BLM may not establish new WSAs, BLM may consider information on wilderness characteristics in land use planning efforts, and manage such lands in a way that would protect or preserve some or all of those characteristics. This may include protecting certain lands in their natural condition and providing outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The RMP will be prepared to ensure consistency with the decision of the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah, *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Norton* 2:04CV574 DAK.

In the development of this RMP, wilderness characteristics are considered in a manner commensurate with other resource values and uses. How non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics are managed is of great interest and controversy in Utah. The RMP will prescribe how the wilderness characteristics of these lands will be managed.

1.4.5 Step 8: Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Resource Management Plan (RMP)

NOTE TO READER: A third paragraph has been added to this section for clarification of the process used to arrive at a Record of Decision for the planning process.

When BLM prepares the final RMP and Record of Decision (ROD), they may select one of the alternatives in its entirety or management actions from more than one of the alternatives analyzed in the planning process. With respect to management of the wilderness characteristics of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, that means the BLM may choose to protect all, some, or none of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, or select all or some of the actions of the protective management prescription.