

Introduction

The Bates Hole Travel Management Area (TMA) is located approximately 15 miles southwest of Casper, Wyoming, within the larger Bates Hole Management Area (MA). The Bates Hole TMA is bounded by U.S. Highway 220 to the north, County Roads 404 and 405 to the west, County Road 402 to the east, and the Natrona County- Carbon County line marking the southernmost boundary. The Bates Hole TMA consists of 181,214 acres of intermingled surface ownership of private, state and BLM-administered federal lands. The BLM-administered land is approximately 72,613 acres or 40% of the total surface ownership.

Background Information

The Casper Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2007) restricts Off-Highway Vehicle use to “Designated Roads and Trails” within the Bates Hole MA. The Bates Hole Travel Management Plan (TMP) will address both motorized and non-motorized access and travel. The BLM will incorporate input from internal and external cooperators, local communities, interest groups and private citizens into this plan.

The Bates Hole MA was identified in the Casper RMP as an area requiring more intensive management due to the abundance of natural resources including sensitive soils, important wildlife habitats, as well as diverse natural landscapes. This area provides important sage-grouse habitat and falls within two sage-grouse core areas, Powder River and Alcova. This area has an intermingled landownership pattern with varying degrees of legal public access. Bates Hole is a popular dispersed recreation area. Legal motorized access is available via county roads that intersect with public lands. Primary user groups include private land owners, grazing lessees, OHV enthusiasts, big game hunters, professional hunting guides, and commercial mining interests. The Game and Fish has obtained walk-in access agreements with private land owners improving public access to this area.

The popularity of this area coupled with its close proximity to Casper and conflicting resource uses increases the potential for negative environmental impacts resulting from off-route and cross-country vehicle travel. As the population of Casper increases, it is reasonable to assume use of Bates Hole will follow.

Purpose of Bates Hole TMP

The purpose of this plan is not to further restrict access, but to manage travel in such a manner as to protect the natural characteristics and important resource values. The overarching goals of the Bates Hole Travel Management Plan are to:

1. Provide and improve sustainable access for public needs and experiences
2. Protect natural resources and settings
3. Promote the safety of public land users
4. Minimize conflicts among the various users of public lands

Public Involvement

A public scoping meeting has been scheduled for April 15, 2010 at the Casper Field Office and information including maps will be available. The Scoping Period will close May 15th, 2010.

An environmental assessment (EA) is scheduled for completion after September 2011. For information please contact Kathleen Lacko, Planning & Environmental Coordinator at the Casper Field Office at (307) 261-7682 or visit our website at the following address www.wy.blm.gov/cfo.