



# The Farmington Mancos-Gallup RMP Amendment/EIS Newsletter

US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs

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## Farmington Mancos-Gallup Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Impact Statement Available

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) invite the public to review and comment on the Farmington Mancos-Gallup draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The goal of the RMPA/EIS is to help the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) analyze impacts of oil and gas development on lands where the BLM or BIA has authority to make land use management decisions.

The BLM and BIA jointly prepared this RMPA/EIS to update resource management in light of new drilling technologies like horizontal drilling and multi-stage hydraulic fracturing; new information on natural resources; and new and updated laws, regulations, and policies.

The draft RMPA/EIS was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). A 90-day public comment period is open from February 28, 2020 to May 28, 2020.

As required by NEPA, the draft EIS analyzes alternatives under the RMPA for management of BLM- and BIA-managed lands and minerals in the planning area to account for new drilling technologies. These new technologies may result in more wells, different surface disturbances, and different impacts in the planning area than those analyzed in the BLM Farmington Field Office (FFO) resource management plan (RMP) drafted in 2003. This amendment will also update the BLM's management of realty actions, vegetation, and lands with wilderness characteristics in the FFO. Finally, the document will facilitate joint BLM and BIA environmental analysis and permitting of mineral development on the lands that each agency manages.

The planning area consists of approximately 4,189,460 acres of land, including approximately 675,400 acres of Navajo tribal trust surface, 1,316,200 acres of BLM-managed land, and 210,100 acres of individual Indian allotments across 17 Navajo Nation Chapters. The BIA manages and collaborates with allottees in various areas of management for allotted lands.

The BLM and BIA jointly developed their own alternatives for the EIS. Alternatives were developed in collaboration with

stakeholders, including cooperating agencies, and in response to the issues and concerns identified during two rounds of public scoping: the first in 2014 and the second conducted from 2016 to 2017 after the BIA joined as a co-lead agency.

The BIA and BLM each have developed one No Action Alternative and four action alternatives. The action alternatives—A, B (and its two BLM sub-alternatives, BI and B2), C (and its six BLM sub-alternatives, C1-C6), and D—offer a wide range of possible management approaches for responding to the planning issues identified during the public scoping periods.

Each alternative addresses resource management goals in varying ways, with the potential for different long-range outcomes and conditions. The relative emphasis given to particular resources and resource uses also differs for each alternative. For example, the areas where certain uses are allowed may vary by alternative, or the mitigation measures applied to protect sensitive resources may vary. A summary of each agency's range of alternatives analyzed for the RMPA/EIS is included below.

The draft RMPA/EIS and supporting information are available online at [www.blm.gov/nm/farmington](http://www.blm.gov/nm/farmington).

If you don't have access to the internet you can call BLM or BIA directly to request a paper copy of the draft document, newsletter and audio versions of the newsletter in Navajo.

### We Want to Hear from You!

The BLM and BIA are seeking comments from the public, particularly feedback concerning the alternatives, the adequacy and accuracy of the analyses and alternatives, identification and incorporation of mitigating concerns, and any new information that would assist in developing the final RMPA/EIS. The BLM and BIA will consider all substantive comments received and will respond to them in the final EIS. The draft RMPA/EIS may be revised based on these comments. To be included in the analysis, all comments must be received before the close of the 90-day public comment period or 10 calendar days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. Please include your name, return address, and the caption "Draft EIS Comments, Farmington Mancos-Gallup RMPA/EIS" on the first page of

your written comments. Individuals may provide comments in the Navajo language during the virtual public meetings, on the automated voicemail line, or through email or US mail.

We encourage you to attend one of the draft EIS virtual public meetings to learn more about the project details and different alternatives developed, hear from the BLM and BIA staff, view maps, and submit verbal or written comments.

Informational materials will be presented during each meeting and will also be available on the project website noted above, [www.blm.gov/nm/farmington](http://www.blm.gov/nm/farmington). Dates and times for the virtual public meetings are listed below. Comments can be submitted: verbally (in English and Navajo) via an automated voicemail line 720-213-5786, **by fax** to 505-564-7608, Attn.: Ms. Sarah Scott, Project Manager; **through the project website**; or **by US mail** to Sarah Scott, BLM Project Manager, 6251 College Blvd, Suite A, Farmington, New Mexico 87402; or Mr. Robert Begay, BIA Project Manager, P.O. Box 1060, Gallup, NM 87301.

*Before providing your phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information, you should be aware that your information may be made publicly available at any time. While you can request that your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

For more information on the planning process, please contact Sarah Scott, BLM Project Manager, Farmington Field Office at 505-564-7689 or Robert Begay, BIA Project Manager, Navajo Regional Office, at 505-863-8287.

## Purpose of and Need for Action

For the BLM, the primary purpose of this planning action is to adapt to changing oil and gas development patterns in the Mancos/Gallup formations under BLM administration, while providing for multiple use and protecting valid existing rights. This will be accomplished by amending the 2003 RMP to analyze the potential impacts on the FFO from oil and gas innovations, including horizontal drilling technology and multistage hydraulic fracturing. These innovations may result in more wells and different surface disturbances and impacts in the FFO than were analyzed in the 2003 RMP. Additionally, this amendment will update the BLM's analysis of realty actions, vegetation management, and identify lands with wilderness characteristics in the FFO.

For the BIA, the purpose of the EIS is to develop a set of leasing stipulations and other oil and gas development criteria for trust, allotted, and split-estate lands in the planning and decision areas of the RMPA. The BIA will use these to guide the management of oil and gas trust resources owned by the Navajo Nation and individual Indian allottees in response to potential impacts on the Navajo communities in the planning area due to changing oil and gas development patterns in the Mancos/Gallup formations; examples are horizontal drilling technology and multistage hydraulic fracturing, along with associated development activities. This includes addressing the surface, subsurface mineral, and split-estate for Tribal trust and individual Indian allotments, while developing BIA and FIMO leasing stipulations that maximize the mineral owner's best economic interest and that minimize any adverse environmental or cultural impacts resulting from such development, in accordance with 25 CFR 211.

## Mark your Calendar!

The virtual public meeting dates and times are listed below. You can attend meetings via the web or by calling in. You must register for the virtual meetings in advance. You can register by clicking on the Zoom link in the table below, by visiting the project website ([www.blm.gov/nm/farmington](http://www.blm.gov/nm/farmington)), or by calling 505-635-9701.

When you dial this number, an operator will register you. When you register, you will be given a toll-free phone number and a Meeting ID for your scheduled meeting date and time. The operator hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you call outside these hours, leave a message with your phone number and someone will return your call within 24 hours.

Date	Time (MDT)	Zoom Link Registration
Thursday, May 14, 2020	2pm-4pm	<a href="https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OCvYb9vY-TQ-Pb7VColrxQ">https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OCvYb9vY-TQ-Pb7VColrxQ</a>
Friday, May 15, 2020	9am-11am	<a href="https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_btaqcla7ToCnGuD7u2yyDQ">https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_btaqcla7ToCnGuD7u2yyDQ</a>
Friday, May 15, 2020	2pm-4pm	<a href="https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ulmax0Z_Q3i13T8eGq2XfQ">https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ulmax0Z_Q3i13T8eGq2XfQ</a>
Saturday, May 16, 2020	9am-11am	<a href="https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yjtNLJqhSfS9xntNuGhlyg">https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yjtNLJqhSfS9xntNuGhlyg</a>
Monday, May 18, 2020	9am-11am	<a href="https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mrNcRYDQR3-6cQLkcij64Q">https://empsi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mrNcRYDQR3-6cQLkcij64Q</a>

## BLM and BIA Range of Alternatives Summary

Alternative	BLM	BIA
<b>No Action</b>	Continue RMP management direction	Continue current management of leasing practices
<b>A</b>	Manage and enhance habitats with measures designed to support natural ecosystems	Protect and enhance natural ecology, with protection of sensitive wildlife areas and natural resources
<b>B (BLM Sub-Alternatives B1-B2)</b>	<p>Preserve Chacoan and cultural landscapes; prioritize preservation of cultural and paleontological properties, including specific measures proposed by stakeholders</p> <p>Sub-Alternatives B1 and B2 would involve closures to oil and gas leasing for varying distances round the Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CCNHP) boundary as well as the Chacoan outliers of Pueblo Pintado and Kin Bineola.</p>	Preserve and protect the cultural and natural landscapes unique to Northern New Mexico
<b>C (BLM Sub-Alternatives C1-C6)</b>	<p>Balance community needs and development while enhancing land health</p> <p>Sub-Alternatives C1-C6 would involve No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations and/or closures to oil and gas leasing for varying distances around the CCNHP boundary and the boundaries of Pueblo Pintado and Kin Bineola.</p>	Allow development to occur in harmony with the traditional, historic, socioeconomic, and cultural lifeways of the planning area
<b>D</b>	Maximize resources that target economic outcomes while sustaining land health	Maximize resource production and royalty income for Navajo Nation and tribal allottees and minimize and mitigate impacts to surrounding communities

The BLM has selected Alternative C as its Preferred Alternative. The BIA has selected Alternative C as its Preferred Alternative.



### Next Steps

The preliminary schedule below outlines major steps in the RMPA/EIS process and what happens at each step.

<u>Public Scoping and Resource Data Collection</u>	<u>Alternative Development and Draft RMPA/EIS Preparation</u>	<u>Draft RMPA/EIS Publication (We are here!)</u>	<u>Proposed RMPA/Final EIS Preparation and Publication</u>	<u>Records of Decision &amp; Approved RMPA Preparation and Publication</u>
<b>Spring 2014—Summer 2017</b>	<b>Summer 2014—Spring 2020</b>	<b>Spring 2020</b>	<b>Summer—Fall 2020</b>	<b>Winter 2020</b>
<p>Conduct special studies</p> <p>Host public scoping meetings</p> <p>Gather public comments over two scoping periods</p> <p>Publish scoping reports summarizing public comments</p>	<p>Use comments from public scoping to develop alternatives</p> <p>Analyze impacts of alternatives</p>	<p>Publish draft RMPA/EIS</p> <p>Host public meetings</p> <p>Accept public comments on draft RMPA/EIS during 90-day comment period</p>	<p>Review and incorporate public comments on draft RMPA/EIS</p> <p>Publish proposed RMPA/final EIS</p> <p>30-day public review and protest period</p>	<p>Write and publish records of decision and approved RMPA</p>

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**Where to find the Draft RMPA/EIS**

The draft RMPA/EIS is available on the project website, [www.blm.gov/nm/farmington](http://www.blm.gov/nm/farmington). Printed hard copies are available upon request.

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