United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Upper Snake Field Office
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
(208) 524-7500

In Reply Refer To:
1610 (ID-310) P

May 19, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho Falls District, is preparing a new resource management plan (RMP), the Upper Snake RMP, for the Upper Snake Field Office (FO) in southeastern Idaho. The Upper Snake RMP will cover the planning areas currently managed under three management framework plans (MFPs) and one RMP: the Big Desert MFP (1981), Big Lost MacKay MFP (1983), Little Lost/Birch Creek MFP (1985), and the Medicine Lodge RMP (1985). The Upper Snake RMP will replace these four land use plans, resulting in a single RMP for the entire Upper Snake FO.

An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared to analyze the potential impacts the RMP will have upon resource elements such as wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, special status species, and socio-economics, in addition to issues identified through public involvement. The planning process will be conducted under applicable laws and regulations such as the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and BLM policies, manuals, and handbooks. The Notice of Intent to prepare the RMP and EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on February 28, 2008, which initiated the public scoping period. "Public scoping" is terminology that is sometimes confusing, but it is simply the process under NEPA in which we seek your participation and input in identifying resource issues and concerns, management alternatives, or other ideas regarding the RMP.

How You Can Participate and Provide Input

Learn: With this letter is an informational package that we encourage you to read. While the public scoping period is your opportunity to raise any and all issues of concern and importance to you, the information package points out some key areas that we'd like to specifically bring to your attention for your feedback.

Meet: You are invited to attend informational meetings we are hosting throughout the Upper Snake FO planning area regarding the Upper Snake RMP. Three meetings are scheduled as follows:

Monday, June 9, 2008, 4–7 p.m.
Business Center, 159 N Idaho Street, Arco, Idaho, 83213, (208) 527-3060

Thursday, June 12, 2008, 4–7 p.m.
Bureau of Land Management District Office/Upper Snake Field Office,
1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho, 83401-2100, (208) 524-7500

Monday, June 16, 2008, 4–7 p.m.
Chamber of Commerce, Madison Room
450 West 4th South, Rexburg, Idaho, 83440-2319, (208) 356-4646

The meetings are open to the public and will be held in an informal, open-house style, which means that you may attend any (or all) open house(s) at any time during the scheduled 3-hour period. The open-house format was chosen to provide you flexibility to attend and give you direct access to information and the interdisciplinary team members that will be developing the Upper Snake RMP.

Comment: Provide us with your written comments. A form to help document your comments is provided in the information package and will also be available at the open-house meetings. Additionally, you may also provide your written comments by note or letter, or through electronic mail (e-mail). The team will review all of your written comments and use these to identify issues to be analyzed throughout the planning process and development of a draft EIS. Public meetings will be held again at a later date to facilitate review and comment on the draft EIS.

Your form/written comments must be received at the Upper Snake FO no **later than June 27, 2008,** and may be delivered to us via:

E-mail
upper_snake_rmp@blm.gov

In Person or Mail
Bureau of Land Management
Upper Snake FO RMP
Attn: Terry Smith, Project Manager
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Stay Involved: We wish to keep you informed throughout this planning effort. If you wish to remain on our mailing list, you must inform us **in writing or attend one** of the public meetings. **If we do not receive written comments from you or a written request to stay on the mailing list or if you do not attend one of the scheduled public meetings, your name will be removed and you will not receive any additional information by mail.**

We look forward to you joining us in this very important process.

Sincerely,

Wendy Reynolds,
Upper Snake Field Office Manager