



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

FINAL

Miles City District Office
Big Dry Resource Area

February 1995

BIG DRY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the stewardship of our public lands. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. Management is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield of our nation's resources within a framework of environmental responsibility and scientific technology. These resources include recreation; rangelands; timber; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; and scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

BLM/MT/PL-95/005+1610



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Big Dry Resource Area
Miles City Plaza
Miles City, Montana 59301-2844



IN REPLY REFER TO:

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the proposed resource management plan and final environmental impact statement for the Big Dry Resource Area of the Miles City District. This document analyzes the environmental impacts of implementing the proposed plan and three other alternatives. It incorporates comments and suggestions made on the draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement during the public review period which began in March 1993 and ended in June 1993.

Any additions to the draft in chapters 1 through 4 and the appendixes are highlighted.

Changes were made to the Preferred Alternative in the draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement including: public lands along the Lewis and Clark Trail (Missouri and Yellowstone rivers) would be a special recreation management area, Ash Creek Divide and Smoky Butte would be designated as areas of critical environmental concern, and the Black-footed Ferret Area of Critical Environmental Concern would be expanded. Other changes made to the Preferred Alternative are described in detail in highlighted areas in chapter 2 under Alternative D. The proposed plan includes the Preferred Alternative and Management Common To All Alternatives to resolve the issues which are described in chapter 2.

During the public comment period for the draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement two new areas were proposed for area of critical environmental concern designation: Smoky Butte and the site of the Miles/Sitting Bull Cedar Creek Fight. BLM filed a notice in the *Federal Register*, November 26, 1993, asking for comments on these proposals. Comments were accepted for 60 days ending January 24, 1994. These comments and the comments received on the draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement were considered and incorporated in chapter 5. The BLM's responses to those comments are found in chapter 5.

The resource management planning process includes an opportunity for review through a plan protest to the BLM's Director. Any person or organization who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval of this resource management plan may protest the plan. Careful adherence to the following guidelines will assist in preparing a protest that will assure the greatest consideration to your point of view.

- (1) Only those persons or organizations who participated in the planning process may protest.
- (2) A protesting party may raise only those issues which were commented on during the planning process.
- (3) Additional issues may be raised at any time and should be directed to the Miles City District for consideration in plan implementation, as potential plan amendments, or as otherwise appropriate.

The period for filing protests begins when the Environmental Protection Agency publishes in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the proposed resource management plan. The protest period lasts 30 days. There is no provision for any extension of time. To be considered "timely," your protest must be sent to the Director of the BLM and must be postmarked no later than the last day of the protest period. Although not a requirement, sending your protest by certified mail, return receipt requested, is recommended.

All protests must be filed in writing to:

Director, BLM
Resource Planning Team (WO-480)
P.O. Box 65775
Washington, D. C. 20035

In order to be considered complete your protest must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

1. The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest.
2. A statement of the issue being protested.
3. A statement of the portion of the plan being protested. To the extent possible, this should be done by reference to specific pages, paragraphs, sections, tables, and maps in the proposed resource management plan.
4. A copy of all documents addressing the issue submitted during the planning process or a reference to the date the issue was discussed for the record.
5. A concise statement explaining why the BLM State Director's decision is believed to be incorrect is a critical part of a protest. Take care to document all relevant facts and to reference or cite the planning documents, environmental analysis documents, and available planning records (meeting minutes, summaries, correspondence). A protest without any data will not provide us with the benefit of your information and insight, and the Director's review will be based on the existing analysis and supporting data.

At the end of the 30-day protest period, the BLM may issue a Record of Decision, approving implementation of any portions of the proposed plan not under protest. Until the protest is resolved, approval will be withheld on that portion of the plan.

We thank the individuals and organizations who participated in the planning process, and assisted in preparing a plan that will lead to more effective and efficient management of public lands and minerals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David D. Swogger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "S".

David D. Swogger
Area Manager
Big Dry Resource Area