



# 2020 Annual Report

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management - Interior Regions 5 and 9

## MONTANA/DAKOTAS







# BLM-MANAGED LANDS AND RESOURCES



The Bureau of Land Management Montana/Dakotas manages 8.3 million acres of federal lands and 47.1 million acres of federal mineral estate in the states of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. These public lands provide habitat for wildlife, forage for domestic livestock, forest products ranging from Christmas trees to commercial timber, and a wide range of recreational opportunities. Development of the federal mineral estate, which includes oil, natural gas, and coal, creates jobs and contributes to the nation's energy needs.

This report summarizes those contributions in 2020.



[www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas](http://www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas)



[www.youtube.com/BLMMontanaDakotas](http://www.youtube.com/BLMMontanaDakotas)



[www.facebook.com/BLMMontana](http://www.facebook.com/BLMMontana)



[@BLM\\_MTDKs](https://twitter.com/BLM_MTDKs)



[mypubliclands.tumblr.com](http://mypubliclands.tumblr.com)



[flickr.com/blm\\_mtdks](http://flickr.com/blm_mtdks)



[instagram.com/mypubliclands](https://www.instagram.com/mypubliclands)





# BLM Montana/Dakotas

## LANDSCAPE

- 8.3 million acres of varied landscapes and opportunities
- 2,500 miles of streams
- 60,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs
- 32 boating access sites
- 19 Watchable Wildlife sites
- 5 Outstanding Natural Areas
- 5 Backcountry Byways (185 miles)
- 100+ miles of groomed snowmobile/cross country ski trails
- 400+ family camping units
- 15 day-use sites and 24 developed recreation sites
- 400+ undeveloped recreation sites
- 27 miles of mountain bike trails in the Blackfoot River corridor; 28 miles at Acton Recreation Area; and 20 miles at Fort Meade Recreation Area

### BLM ACREAGE

#### Surface Acres

Montana	8,010,044
North Dakota	58,821
South Dakota	274,078

**TOTAL 8,342,943**

#### Subsurface Acres

Montana	37,758,338
North Dakota	5,593,440
South Dakota	3,768,270

**TOTAL 47,120,048**

## NATIONAL MONUMENTS

- Upper Missouri River Breaks (377,000 acres)
- Pompeys Pillar (51 acres)

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

- Pompeys Pillar
- Wolf Mountain, which includes the Battle Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (2,850 acres, of which 120 acres are BLM)

## NATIONAL TRAILS

- 310 miles of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
- 13 miles of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail
- 15 miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- 30 miles of the Garnet Winter Trail
- 9 miles of the Bear Trap Canyon National Recreation Trail
- 12 miles of the Centennial National Recreation Trail

## WILDERNESS & WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

- Bear Trap Canyon Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, Montana's first and only designated BLM wilderness area (6,347 acres)
- 37 Wilderness Study Areas totaling nearly 450,000 acres

## ...AND MORE!

- Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (149 miles)
- Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range (38,000 acres)
- Interpretive centers for the Upper Missouri River Breaks and Pompeys Pillar national monuments.
- Garnet Ghost Town and Visitor Center
- Cabin rentals at Axolotl Lakes, Henneberry House, and Garnet Ghost Town
- Numerous interpretive wayside exhibits
- 61 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

*Henneberry House. Photo by Ann Boucher*

*Front cover: A park ranger helps erect a Crow tipi at Pompeys Pillar National Monument. Photo by Colby Neal*

*Back cover: BLM photos*





# ***OUR MISSION***

***The BLM manages public lands to sustain their health, diversity, and productivity for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.***

BLM photo





## BLM SALARIES BY COMMUNITY

October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020

<i>Belle Fourche, S.D.</i>	<i>\$1,787,000</i>
<i>Billings, Mont. (includes Pompeys Pillar)</i>	<i>\$19,438,000</i>
<i>Butte, Mont.</i>	<i>\$4,450,000</i>
<i>Dickinson, N.D.</i>	<i>\$5,416,000</i>
<i>Dillon, Mont.</i>	<i>\$3,522,000</i>
<i>Glasgow, Mont.</i>	<i>\$1,137,000</i>
<i>Great Falls, Mont.</i>	<i>\$1,157,000</i>
<i>Havre, Mont.</i>	<i>\$1,130,000</i>
<i>Lewistown, Mont. (includes Fort Benton)</i>	<i>\$6,067,000</i>
<i>Malta, Mont.</i>	<i>\$993,000</i>
<i>Miles City, Mont.</i>	<i>\$11,550,000</i>
<i>Missoula, Mont.</i>	<i>\$2,721,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$59,368,000</i>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$95,351,276</b>



## BLM WORKFORCE

### Employment

- 466 permanent full-time; 150 temporary; 70 career seasonal/part-time; 686 total.

### Volunteers

- 216 volunteers contributed 22,251 hours valued at \$605,227; the cost to BLM Montana/Dakotas was \$53,184.

Photo by Mark Jacobsen





## SOLID NON-ENERGY MINERALS

- 2,644 new mining claims recorded
- 721 mining claims closed
- 1,820 mining claims covered by 425 small miner waivers (taken from daily logs)
- 22,018 active unpatented mining claims
- 18 mining claims relinquished in full; 12 mining claims relinquished in part
- 242,050 active and closed unpatented mining claims on record

Issued 4 new free use permits to local governments;

Over 400,000 cubic yards of free mineral material was permitted, which allows local governments to maintain public roads and infrastructure

- Completed 1 new mineral material sale;
- Closed or resolved 23 case files for unauthorized use of mineral materials;
- Closed 6 reclaimed mineral materials sites

*The BLM has a strong history of meeting our nation's growing energy needs while leading the way in sustainable development.*

## FLUID MINERALS

*Oil and Gas Lease Sales*

- 4 competitive oil and gas lease sales held
- 312 parcels offered
- 64,026 acres in 115 parcels sold
- \$352,462 bonus bids received
- 776 Applications for Permit to Drill processed

## SOLID MINERALS

*Montana Federal and Indian Coal Leases*

- 37 active Federal (37,222 acres) and 2 Indian (18,406 acres) coal leases.
- 9 producing Federal (18,625 acres) and 2 producing Indian (18,406 acres) coal leases from 1 underground and 4 surface mines.
- 13,571,513 tons of Federal coal produced, generating \$20,902,990 in royalties and \$410,953 in lease rentals.
- 2,106,614 tons of Indian coal produced.

*North Dakota Federal Coal Leases*

- 15 active Federal (10,873 acres) coal leases.
- 4 producing Federal coal leases (6,134 acres) from 4 surface mines.
- 2,982,287 tons of Federal coal produced, generating \$1,119,810 in royalties and \$38,958 in lease rentals.



*Photo by Mark Jacobsen*





# BLM Montana/Dakotas

FEDERAL OIL & GAS LEASES ISSUED IN FY2020						
	Competitive		Noncompetitive		Total	
	Number	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	Acres
Montana	24	22,100	1	240	25	22,340
North Dakota	10	2,174	0	0	10	2,174
South Dakota	1	320	0	0	1	320
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24,594</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24,834</b>

FEDERAL OIL & GAS LEASES IN EFFECT AS OF 9/30/2020						
	Producing		Non-producing		Total	
	Number	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	Acres
Montana	1,357	696,465	791	825,622	2,148	1,522,087
North Dakota	1,392	613,203	298	136,227	1,690	749,430
South Dakota	76	36,752	260	107,198	336	143,950
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,825</b>	<b>1,346,420</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>1,069,047</b>	<b>4,174</b>	<b>2,415,467</b>

FEDERAL TOTAL REPORTED ROYALTY REVENUES			
Oil			
	Sales Volume (barrels)	Sales Value	Revenue
Montana	2,900,906	\$89,511,792	\$11,188,974
North Dakota	39,263,016	\$1,336,981,784	\$167,122,723
South Dakota	98,387	\$4,043,024	\$505,378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,262,309</b>	<b>\$1,430,536,600</b>	<b>\$178,817,075</b>
Conventional "Wet" Natural Gas			
	Sales Volume (thousand cubic feet)	Sales Value	Revenue
Montana	10,442,392	\$13,936,752	\$1,742,094
North Dakota	84,420,597	\$189,946	\$(96,411)
South Dakota	772,480	\$63,688	\$7,961
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95,635,469</b>	<b>\$14,190,386</b>	<b>\$1,653,644</b>

All FY 2020 FEDERAL TOTAL REPORTED ROYALTY REVENUES figures from the ONRR website at: <http://statistics.onrr.gov/>





*Besides providing economic benefits, the BLM also maintains healthy ecosystems that provide clean air, clean water, and habitat for plants and wildlife.*



*Otters on the Big Hole River. Photo by Bob Wick.*

## **NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT**

- 20,423 acres of noxious weeds treated with integrated weed control methods including herbicide, physical, mechanical, and biological weed control agents, and domestic animals (sheep or goats)
- 519,782 acres inventoried and mapped for noxious weeds
- 14,437 acres monitored for Integrated Weed Management evaluation
- Biological control agents established on more than 292,192 acres, an expansion of 4,392 acres

*Source: 2020 Montana Integrated Pest Management Report*

## **GRAZING**

### **Cattle/domestic bison**

- 4,040 operators; 1,188,801 animal unit months (AUMs) authorized

### **Horse/burro**

- 152 operators; 5,237 AUMs authorized

### **Sheep/goats**

- 161 operators; 26,209 AUMs authorized

*Source: FY19 Public Land Statistics*





## **FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES**

### **Habitat**

- 600 species of fish and wildlife
- 3,500 acres of fish-bearing lakes and reservoirs
- 2,500 miles of streams
- 400,000+ acres of grassland bird habitat of international importance
- 69 Seeds of Success collections, focused on sage-grouse forbs
- 45,000 native plant seedlings grown for habitat improvement projects

### **Special Status Species**

*Listed as Threatened and Endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)*

- 4 T&E mammals
- 4 T&E birds
- 2 T&E fish
- 1 T&E invertebrate

### **BLM Sensitive Species**

*lists updated in 2020*

- 3 amphibians
- 37 birds (including 3 ESA delisted species)
- 9 fish
- 4 invertebrates
- 13 mammals
- 58 plants (including 1 Proposed Species)
- 6 reptiles

The overall goal of the BLM's rangeland management program is to **ensure the health and productivity of public rangelands** for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

*Pryor Mountain wild horses  
Photo by Bob Wick*





*Recreation resources and visitor services support strong local economies and public land conservation.*

## RECREATION

In 2020, BLM Montana/Dakotas hosted a record-breaking 7.5 million public visits and collected more than \$605,485 in recreation fees. These fees are crucial for maintaining and improving facilities and providing visitor services at the developed recreation sites.

Our top six recreational activities in 2020, listed from highest to lowest in participation, were:

- Hunting -- all types
- Non-motorized travel
- Swimming/Water-based activities
- Fishing
- Camping/picnicking
- Interpretation/Environmental Education/ Nature Study

### 2020 RECREATION HIGHLIGHTS

The BLM Montana/Dakotas saw a dramatic increase of 2.6 million public visits in 2020 over 2019. This increase reflected the national trend toward dispersed activities such as hunting, fishing and camping, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organized activities such as interpretive programming at national monuments and developed recreation sites saw less participation due to COVID safety precautions.

Also in 2020, recreational fees decreased by more than \$96,000, due in part to a secretarial waiver for standard amenities fees collections and COVID-19 guidance affecting group events and restricting outfitter and guides' operations.



Above: Acton Recreation Area. Right: Fishing Big Sheep Creek; hunting Ear Mountain. Photos by Bob Wick





## FORESTRY

- 1,330,000 acres of forest and woodland base
- 883,000 acres of available forest and woodland from base acres. Available lands are those not restricted to forest management activities such as WSAs, some ACECs and developed recreational sites.

### TIMBER SALES & STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS

- 8.5 million board feet offered through timber sales and stewardship contracts, including 840 acres of treatments that will be completed over the next couple of years.
- Completed treatments on 1,048 acres through forest product sales (green & salvage timber sales and stewardship contracts).
- \$325,409 generated from timber sales and stewardship contracts.
- 10,040 tons of biomass offered through timber sales, stewardship contracts and special forest product sales.
- 609 Special Forest Produce Permits issued, mainly through personal-use firewood sales.

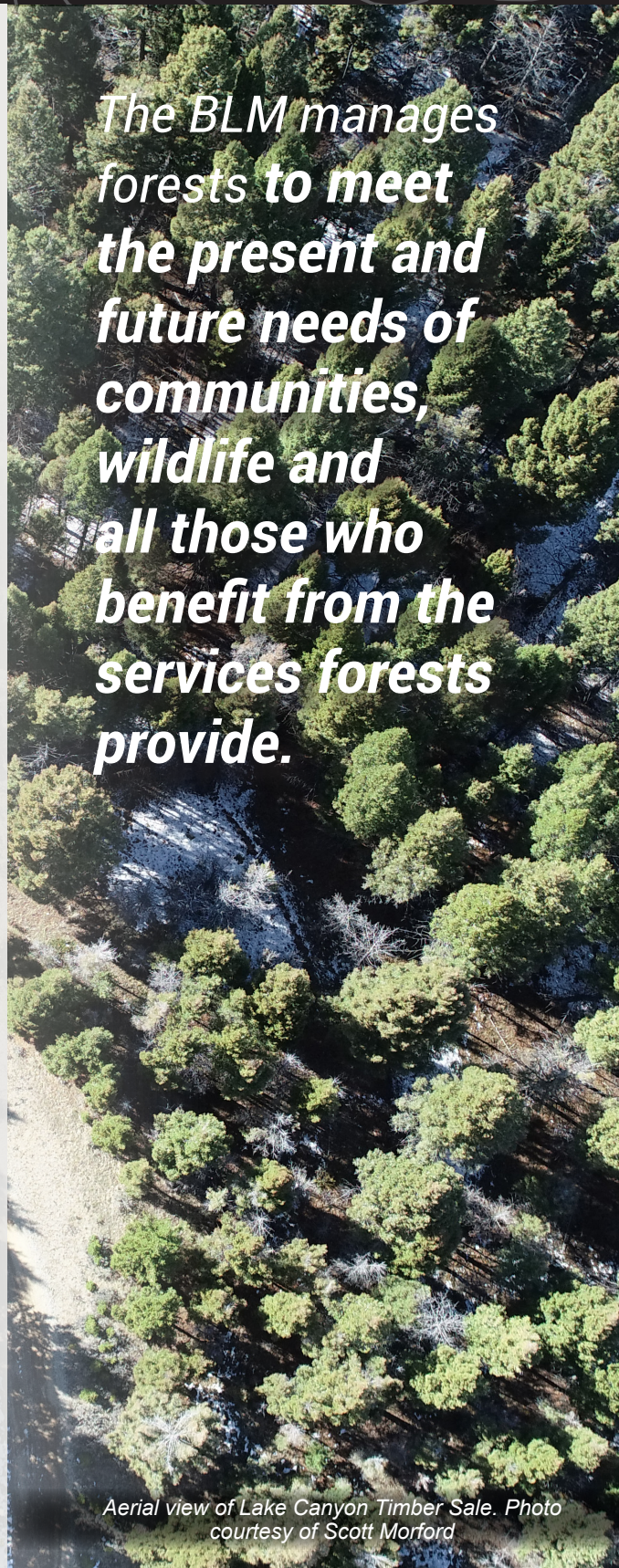
### FOREST DEVELOPMENT

- Continued with whitebark pine conservation efforts. Gave presentation on our methods at the National Whitebark Pine Foundation annual conference in September 2020.
- Completed 4,053 acres of non-commercial forestry treatments including pre-commercial thinning, planting and pheromone application.
- Monitored 1,409 acres of past forest management treatments for erosion issues or non-native plant establishment.
- Inventoried 3,425 acres of forests to determine stand conditions such as current densities, ongoing insect and disease issues, estimated tree morality, and potential treatment needs.

### PARTNERSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS

- Offered the first Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) project timber sale for more than 1 million board feet and added four new projects into the agreement for the 2021 modification. Receipts from the first sale will be utilized for future GNA project funding so no appropriated funds will be needed for future projects.
- Continued partnerships with The Nature Conservancy, Blackfoot Challenge, Western Aspen Alliance, Inland Empire Tree Improvement Cooperative, and the Montana Forest Collaboration Network.
- Restored Missoula forestry position which will result in an increase in acres treated annually by the program.
- A typical 2,000-square foot home requires about 16,000 board feet. One million board feet is enough lumber to build approximately 62 new homes. In 2020, the MT/DAKs forestry program offered enough board feet to build 527 new homes.

*The BLM manages forests to meet the present and future needs of communities, wildlife and all those who benefit from the services forests provide.*



*Aerial view of Lake Canyon Timber Sale. Photo courtesy of Scott Morford*





The BLM is responsible for **fire management on more than 8.3 million acres** of public lands across Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. This includes **wildland fire protection/suppression and fuels management.**



Photo by Colby Neal

## FIRE & AVIATION MANAGEMENT

### WORKFORCE

Montana/Dakotas supports large fire activity nationally and internationally in both direct and indirect ways.

- 18 wildland fire engines and 2 tactical water tenders
- 1 Type 2 Initial Attack (IA) Veteran hand crew
- 175 firefighters and an additional 215 support personnel ready to respond
- 2 Type 3 helicopters with helitack modules and 4 single engine airtankers (SEATs)
- 1 large airtanker base (Billings) and 2 SEAT bases (Lewistown and Miles City)

### FIRE ACTIVITY

82 wildfires and 11,670 acres burned on lands where BLM has protection responsibilities (all in MT)

- Human-caused: 30 fires (37%), 2,345 acres (20%)
- Lightning: 52 fires (63%), 9,325 acres (80%)

### HAZARDOUS FUELS TREATMENTS

- 35,575 acres of hazardous fuels treated: 4,594 acres of prescribed fire; 16,330 acres of mechanical fuels reduction; 6,188 acres of chemical treatments; and monitoring efforts to confirm that 10,463 acres of the met resource objectives
- 55% of treatments within the wildland urban interface

### COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE/EDUCATION

- Supported more than 230 fire education events and 55 communities with some type of assistance
- 19 assistance agreements support the creation of fire adapted communities through education, planning, and mitigation on non-federal land. Nearly \$400k was added to these agreements in 2020
- Roughly 200 homes protected through the treatment of 675 acres of hazardous fuels reduction

### FIRE TRESPASS

- Completed a new state fire trespass operating plan that outlines the processes and procedures to fulfill the Bureau's policy of investigating all wildland fires to determine cause, origin, responsibility as well as pursuit of cost recovery for fires on BLM-administered lands
- Led the development of a standard agency cost template for fire trespass cases with the National Fire Investigation and Trespass Committee and National Fire Business Management Group

### AVIATION

- 1,136 hours of flight time and 559 flight days supporting fire activity
- 998,000 gallons of retardant delivered out of the Billings Tanker Base (largest amount since 2017)

### BILLINGS FIRE CACHE

- \$2.4 million worth of supplies issued in the Northern Rockies and out of region
- Refurbished and returned supplies from several other caches and more than 20 incidents
- Can support up to 1,200 firefighters at any given time





## REALTY, LANDS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

### Improving/Enhancing Access for Hunting and Recreation Opportunities

Three land donations/purchases contributed 11,748 acres of new public land access and improved public land access to an additional 3,040 acres. The total acres acquired were 12,621 for \$9,104,900 (all within Montana). The donated lands do not have legal public access.

- Square Butte donations; three parcels totaling 873.21 acres (\$0)
- Middle Belmont land acquisition; 7,268.30 acres (\$5,632,900)
- Upper Belmont land acquisition; 4,480.00 acres (\$3,472,000)

### Actions to Improve Energy Infrastructure & Sustainable Use of Public Lands

- 147 ROW actions processed and 56 ROW grants issued
- Most of the identified ROW renewal backlog eliminated
- 10 new permit/lease actions completed
- No communication sites inspected due to Covid 19-related safety precautions

*The BLM's Cadastral Survey Program originated with the Land Ordinance of 1785, providing boundary surveys for land in federal ownership.*

*Today's surveys still provide essential information needed to correctly determine ownership rights in order to facilitate good land management decisions.*

## CADASTRAL SURVEY

- 200 miles surveyed
- 309 survey monuments set
- 14 survey plats accepted

## CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND ENGINEERING

### Condition assessments performed on:

- 31 hazard class dams

### Annual maintenance performed on:

- 193 administrative site and recreation site buildings
- 858 lane miles of road
- 214 recreation and administrative site projects
- 23 bridges
- 272 miles of trail
- 46 dam projects

### Deferred maintenance and/or construction performed on:

- 14 recreation and administrative site projects
- 1 trail project
- 2 road projects
- 1 dam project

### Other work completed:

- 4 architectural and engineering task orders issued
- 61 radio sites –equipment maintained

*Public lands managed by BLM are often scattered, presenting unique management challenges and complex public access issues.*



*Belmont acquisition. BLM photo*



*Partnerships and inclusion are vital to managing sustainable, working public lands.*



*Tipi display at Pompeys Pillar National Monument. Photo by John Reffit*

## **TRIBAL RELATIONS and CONSULTATION**

- Held a Treaty Rights Workshop focusing on the Hell Gate Treaty, the Blackfeet Treaty, the Fort Laramie Treaty and the Fort Bridger Treaty. Tribal attorneys and a professor from the MSU-Billings Native American Studies Department gave presentations.
- A presentation at a Bozeman school about the history and culture of Montana tribes featured the Salish and Kootenai tribes.
- Two interns for the Salish Kootenai College Internship Agreement: one worked with the Missoula Field Office archaeologist and one worked in the Minerals Department at the State Office.
- Working with Seven Bison Consulting on gathering the ethnographic data for Dry Head Overlook project.
- Initiated the Fort Belknap Plant/Seed Restoration Project.

## **CULTURAL and PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

*To date:*

- 2,227,151 acres of public land surveyed for cultural resources
- 11,497 sites have been recorded as a result of those surveys
- 39 sites and/or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 778,781 artifacts from 4,745 sites curated at the Billings Curation Center, located at the Montana/Dakotas State Office
- Paleontological investigations on public land have resulted in 5,421 localities recorded on BLM-managed lands, representing some of the most significant fossil resources in the country.

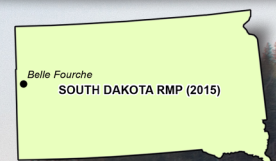
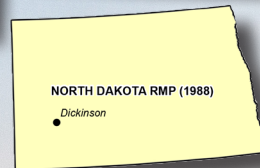
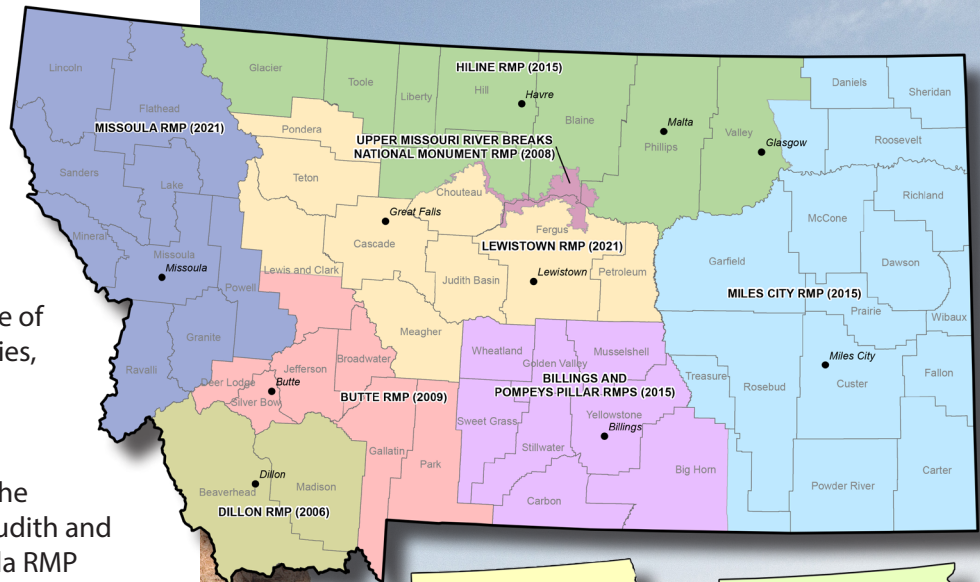


*DIG Field School teachers examine a vertebrate microfossil site. Photo courtesy of the University of Washington*



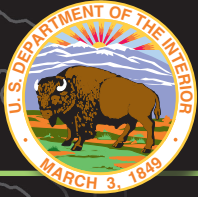
## LAND USE PLANNING and ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION

- With extensive public involvement and the assistance of numerous Cooperating Agencies, land use planning efforts were completed for the Lewistown Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the Missoula RMP. The Lewistown RMP replaces the Judith and Headwaters RMPs. The Missoula RMP replaces the Garnet RMP.
- The North Dakota RMP (which will replace the 1988 North Dakota RMP) began with public scoping meetings in August 2020. The Draft EIS/RMP will be released in early 2022 for public comments.
- The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument RMP was evaluated and no issues were found to warrant amending or revising this 2008 RMP. Resource management plans are normally evaluated every 5 years.
- Continued emphasis on improving the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process by focusing on issues-based NEPA. More than 400 NEPA documents were completed in FY20 covering programs and activities such as fuels treatments, grazing permit renewals, recreation special use permits, habitat improvement projects, oil and gas development, and realty projects.



Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Photo by Bob Wick





PUBLISHED BY THE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
BLM Montana/Dakotas State Office

