

To: Nikki Moore[nmoore@blm.gov]; Sally Butts[sbutts@blm.gov]
From: Nelson, Britta
Sent: 2017-03-06T12:47:39-05:00
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Subject: Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for week of March 6
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[FY2017 Tracking Spreadsheet.xlsx](#)
[Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for week of March 6.docx](#)

Hi Nikki and Sally, the Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for the week of March 6 is attached for our check in. Also attached is the WO410 tracking spreadsheet.

I moved our check-in to 1:30 pm EST at Sally's request and plan to call in to the conference line unless you are together.

Call line: (b) (5) CIP

Passcode:

(b) (5) CIP

Thanks!

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**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

**March 2017
Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot
WO-410 RMP and EIS Review**
Updated 03/06/17

Nikki Moore
acting Assistant Director (WO-400)

RMPS AND PROJECTS WITH ISSUES TO ELEVATE/DIRECTORS PRIORITIES

- **DTS # 1397. NOI for a Supplement to the DRMP/DEIS for the Southern NV District (Las Vegas and Pahrump FOs) and the Gold Butte National Monument. Nevada.**
 - NOI has not yet reached WO410. WO400 is not on routing in DTS.
 - Lands with wilderness characteristics and the Gold Butte National Monument are identified as issues.
- **WO review of the Section 368 Energy Corridor Region 1 draft review report. Southern California, southern Nevada, and western Arizona.**
 - WO review of draft report is scheduled for March 14-30, 2017.
 - A review kick-off webinar is planned for 03-15-17.
 - **Issues:** National Conservation Lands have been identified as an issue within the draft report for some energy corridors.
- **DTS# 1401. NOA of the Boardman to Hemingway ROD. Oregon.**
 - NOA has not reached WO400. NOA not routed at Division level.
 - WO410 provided updated language for NSHT for the ROD to the Project Manager and WO210 (Jan 12, 2017).
- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument administrative DRMP-A/DEIS WO Review. Utah.**
 - WO410 comments provided on DRMP-A/DEIS in February 2017. Have not received the response to comment.
 - **Issues:**
 - 1) **Wilderness Study Area (WSA):** More discussion is needed in plan alternatives on WSA non-impairment and grandfathered use requirements (40% of decision area is within 17 WSAs totaling approx. 881,300 acres). Under all alternatives it needs to be shown the grazing will not exceed the impacts permitted for grandfathered uses (same manner and degree) or otherwise any changes will meet the non-impairment criteria. One alternative (D) may not meet non-impairment requirements.
 - 2) **Wilderness and WSA:** Discussion of WSAs (881,300 acres) and Wilderness (11,300 acres) should be separated (currently combined) to distinguish between differing laws and policies.
 - 3) **Lands with wilderness characteristics:** The inventory needs to be updated to remove maintained roads from the units as this normally disqualifies an area as having wilderness characteristics. Updates are needed to the document to show that everything except primitive routes are excluded from the units (471,700 acres contain wilderness characteristics).
 - 4) **Lands with wilderness characteristics:** Need to include that subsequent site-specific NEPA documents will include reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects from implementing this plan and that these analyses will have a range of alternatives including at least one that minimizes or does not impact inventoried wilderness characteristics.
 - 5) **Lands with wilderness characteristics.** There is no Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) across the alternatives for the range and location of acres that may undergo vegetation treatments. Vegetation treatments can have a major impact on wilderness characteristics (especially repeated mechanical treatments and

seedings). An order of magnitude discussion is needed in order to make comparisons between the alternatives (especially for cumulative impacts).

- 6) **GSENM:** Aspects of BLM M6220 that focus on grazing should be integrated (consistency with proclamation, implemented in a manner that protects ROVs, and using the NM as a lab for innovative grazing techniques).
- 7) **GSENM:** Clarification is needed re: if and how grazing will be used as a resource management tool.
- 8) **GSENM:** Clarification is needed demonstrating how monument lands will be utilized as a laboratory for innovative grazing with the alternatives (including the preferred alternative).
- 9) **National Trails:** Discussion and analysis of impacts to the Old Spanish NHT or a statement that the NHT will not be impacted with associated rationale is needed as the NHT is potentially in the planning area.

- **Bering Sea-Western Interior preliminary range of alternatives.** Alaska.

- WO410 submitted comments to WO210 for the wilderness, WSR, and NSHT programs (Nov. 2016).

- **Issues:**

Wilderness Program. **Update: Follow-up meeting with Alaska was held on March 1 to address bolstering the range of alternatives.** An alternative protecting all or most of the lands with wilderness characteristics is not included in the range of alternatives. The "maximum protection" alternative only protects 2.5% of the planning area (which, minus a few tiny parcels, all contains wilderness characteristics).

Wild and Scenic Rivers. **Update: Alaska Recreation Lead, Tom Bickauskas, will follow up with Cathi Bailey.**

- 1) Did not use the required range of alternatives for suitable WSRs (per manual 6400).
- 2) All of the action alternatives have the 22 eligible rivers as not suitable. Yet Goal #1 is to effectively manage the ORVs identified during the eligibility inventory.
- 3) Mitigation standard allows net loss to their designated Wild and Scenic River (Unalakleet).

National Trails. **Update: Iditarod NHT Manager (Kevin Keeler) and State NLCS Lead (Tom Bickauskas) spoke with Deb Salt on 02/22/17 and hope to complete the comment response by 02/24/17.**

- 1) Iditarod NHT is not addressed in coal leasing decisions. Per 43 CFR 3400.2, coal leases shall not be issued on Federal Lands within the National System of Trails.
- 2) Proposed disposal via state selection of the Rohn site, a site significant under the NTSA and NHPA.

- **Appalachian Basin RMP Prep Plan.** Eastern States.

- Prep plan review from February 27 through March 10.

- **Upper Snake, Challis, Salmon RMP Prep Plan.** Idaho.

- Prep plan review from February 27 through March 10.

- **Verde Transmission ADEIS.** New Mexico.

- **Issues:** Potential impacts to WSR and National Trails.
 - Proposed route crosses Rio Grande River. Eligible and suitable WSR streams in area including additional segments of the Rio Grande WSR.
 - Project would cross the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT and Old Spanish NHT.
 - **Next milestone is review of ADEIS (TBD). Any review is to be coordinated through New Mexico as amendment is not on WO210 priority list for WO review.**
 - **Update:** Scoping Report is being prepared. Scoping indicates opposition to project.

- **Mancos Shale RMP-A NOI, Farmington, New Mexico.**
 - **Issues: Unknown** but WO410 is tracking because the RMP-A proposes to amend four decision types including lands with wilderness characteristics and will analyze potential impacts from oil and gas decisions to the Old Spanish NHT (RMP decisions for the NHT will not be made).
 - **As the RMP-A/EIS moves forward (alts development, impact analysis, etc.) WO410 will participate to ensure that the National Conservation Lands units are adequately considered.**
 - **Update:** draft alternatives will be completed this summer. Public release of the DRMP/DEIS is not anticipated until calendar year 2018. NMSO will coordinate with WO210 on WO review.

UPCOMING BRIEFINGS (NEXT 30 DAYS)

- **Lewistown DRMP/DEIS. Montana.**
 - **AD brief anticipated by mid-March.**
 - **No issues.** 202,730 acres contain wilderness characteristics. **100,410 acres (49%) would be managed to protect wilderness characteristics.** 30,000 acres would be managed to reduce impacts to wilderness characteristics (13,000 acres of ACECs and approximately 15,000-20,000 acres where actions are in place to protect GRSG). 70,000 acres would not be protected with underlying prescriptions including open to mineral material sales, non-energy leasables, cross-country mechanized travel, fluid minerals with minor constraints (CSU), and livestock; limited to designated routes yearlong; 400 acres of ERMA prescription (potentially); and mostly VRM III.
- **Carlsbad Field Office DRMP/DEIS. New Mexico.**
 - **Transition team briefing was held on February 16, 2017.**
 - **Follow up:** New Mexico is updating the briefing information related to lands with wilderness characteristics, including specifying acreage that the office will be protecting, maintaining, and not protecting; providing more detailed rationale for these decisions; clarifying that the entire FO was inventoried; and updating the maps to make acreage protected/maintained/not protected more clear. Information related to WSR suitability will also be included either verbally or in the PowerPoint presentation.
 - **Updated WSR rationale provided by NMSO:** The Delaware River segment was not included in the Preferred Alternative because this area has been identified as an area with high oil/gas development potential. Portions of the Delaware River segment are currently leased for oil and gas development and are surrounded by state lands. Much of the Delaware River segment carries protective allocations associated with the proposed Gypsum Soils ACEC which is included in the Preferred Alternative C.
- **Rio Puerco PRMP/FEIS. New Mexico.**
 - **AD's Brief TBD.**
 - **No outstanding 410 issues.** Rationale provided for lands with wilderness characteristics decisions (77% protected, 19% impacts minimized, 4% (1,663 acres) not protected.
 - The 1,663 acres is separated from other wilderness characteristics acres by natural geological barriers and has a separate access route. Area had interest from both the Wilderness Society and National Four Wheel Drive Association. New Mexico met with both groups and reached what everyone agreed was an equitable management approach. New Mexico received a "3 cape" award from the Wilderness Society for their efforts.