



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

**March 2017
Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot
WO-410 RMP and EIS Review**
Updated 03/13/17

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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.
 - **Update:** NOI has not yet reached WO410. WO400 has been added to routing. WO410 is working with WO210 to determine why this is a combined plan and to set up a meeting to discuss.
 - Lands with wilderness characteristics and the Gold Butte National Monument are identified as issues.

- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument administrative DRMP-A/DEIS WO Review.** Utah.
 - **DTS# 1471, the NOA for the GSENM DRMP-A/DEIS is routing in DTS and has not yet reached WO410.**
 - 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.

- **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).

- **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.

- **Bering Sea-Western Interior preliminary range of alternatives.** Alaska.
 - WO410 submitted comments and met with BLM Alaska to resolve issues.
 - **Issues: No issues.**
 - Lands with wilderness characteristics. **Update:** met with Alaska on March 1, a full range of alternatives will be included.
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers. **Update:** 1) a full range of alternatives for suitable WSRs (per manual 6400) will be included with all segments proposed as suitable in Alt B. 2) “No net loss” language will be upgraded to reflect “protect and enhance”.
 - National Trails. **Update:** 1) Per 43 CFR 3400.2, coal leasing Actions Common to All Alternatives for Leasable Minerals will be modified to exclude the Iditarod NHT from coal leasing. 2) Clarification was provided that the Rohn Cabin site is included for disposal due to state selection process and other alternatives include retaining the cabin, while transferring the airstrip to the state. The cabin would remain in the regional shelter cabin system if transferred as the State is a partner in the Cabin System and NHT management.

- **Donlin Natural Gas Pipeline.** Alaska.
 - Meeting with BLM Alaska was held on February 27 to discuss State Patent lands of concern within the Donlin project, specific to the Iditarod National Historic Trail. Although it is not feasible to get a ROW reservation for affected townships, BLM Alaska is working to get comments into NEPA for the project, including mitigation for impacts to the NHT.

- **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)
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- **Lewistown DRMP/DEIS. Montana.**
 - **TBD.**
 - **No issues.** 202,730 acres contain wilderness characteristics.
 - 1) Prioritize other uses on 70,000 acres while not protecting wilderness characteristics. Underlying prescriptions include 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.
 - 2) 30,000 acres would be managed to minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics while managing for other uses (13,000 acres of ACECs and approximately 15,000-20,000 acres where actions are in place to protect GRSG).
 - 3) 100,410 acres (49%) would be managed to protect wilderness characteristics as a priority over other multiple uses.

- **Carlsbad Field Office DRMP/DEIS. New Mexico.**
 - **TBD.**
 - **Issue:** Discrepancies in acreages for lands with wilderness characteristics was found in DRMP/DEIS and range from 24,072 to 41,772 acres. **Following up with WO210.**
 - **WSR rationale:** 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.**
 - **TBD.**
 - **No outstanding 410 issues.** There are seven areas totaling 37,524 acres of wilderness characteristics.
 - 1) Prioritize other uses on 1,663 acres (4%) while not protecting wilderness characteristics.
 - 2) 6,920 acres (18%) would be managed to minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics while managing for other uses. Travel limited to designated routes, closed to leasable minerals, avoid for saleable minerals and ROW, minimizing impacts and requiring use of existing routes for forest product removal, and VRM III.
 - 3) 28,941 acres (77%) would be managed to protect wilderness characteristics as a priority over other multiple uses. Travel would be closed except as authorized, closed to leasable and saleable minerals, no new ROWs, closed to forest product removal, and VRM II.