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[FY2017 Tracking Spreadsheet.xlsx](#)

[Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for week of February 13.docx](#)

Hi Chris and Nikki, the Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for the week of February 13 is attached. Also attached is the review tracking spreadsheet. Please let me know if you have any questions or if additional information is needed. Thanks.

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**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

**February 2017
Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot
WO-410 RMP and EIS Review**
Updated 02/13/17

Chris McAlear
Assistant Director (WO-400)

RMPS AND PROJECTS WITH ISSUES TO ELEVATE/DIRECTORS PRIORITIES

- **DTS# 1449. NOA of FEIS and Notice of Decision for Proposed Land Exchange between the BLM and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. California.**
 - **Issues: unknown. Package under review by NM/NCA program.**
 - BLM to exchange four parcels of public land totaling 2,560 acres for three parcels of tribal land totaling 1,471.24 acres. All lands are within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.
 - Exchange consolidates lands, enhances public recreation opportunities, and facilitates more efficient land management.
- **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.**
 - WO review of DRMP-A/DEIS from **January 30 to February 20.**
 - Planning area a National Monument that contains wilderness characteristics, NSHT, WSR, wilderness, and WSA.
- **Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument RMP Prep Plan. New Mexico.**
 - Prep plan review from February 13 through 24.
- **Browns Canyon National Monument RMP Prep Plan. Colorado.**
 - Prep plan review from February 13 through 24.
- **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.
- **Bering Sea-Western Interior preliminary range of alternatives. Alaska.**
 - WO410 submitted comments to WO210 for the wilderness, WSR, and NSHT programs (Nov. 2016). **Have not received a response to WO410 comments.**
 - **Issues:**
Wilderness Program. 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). **Elevation paper submitted to AD for discussion w/SD.**
Wild and Scenic Rivers.

- 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.

- 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.

- **DTS# 1316. NOI to prepare EIS for proposed Deep South Expansion project amendment. Nevada.**
 - **DTS package reached WO400 on 02-13-17.** DTS# 1316 surnamed on 12-09-16 by WO410 (feedback provided on NOI BP and press release).
 - No National Conservation Lands designations within the proposed expansion.
 - **No issues:** No lands with wilderness characteristics inventories have been conducted in this area. BLM NV will update the relevant wilderness characteristics inventories before writing the EIS for the mine expansion, and they will incorporate the updated info into the NEPA analysis.
- **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.**
 - **Staff pre-brief tentatively scheduled for 02-21-17.**
 - **Issues:** **Wilderness program is working with the MTSO to address WSA release policy issues with regard to two WSA's.**
 - Lands with wilderness characteristics. 49% of lands with wilderness characteristics protected (approximately 100,000 acres). 30,000 acres (15%) maintained. 70,000 acres (35%) would not be protected.
 - Of the lands not carried forward for protection in the preferred alternative:

- Approximately 13,000 acres are carried forward as ACECs (Closed to fluid mineral leasing, Closed to mineral material disposal, VRM Class 1, Closed to OHV travel, Exclusion for Communication site ROWs, Avoidance area for utility and transportation corridors).
 - An estimated 15,000-20,000 acres are within PHMA and/or GHMA where management actions are already in place to provide for the protection of Greater Sage-Grouse (ROW Exclusion for Wind and Solar, ROW Avoidance for all other, Closed to non-energy leasable minerals, Closed to salable minerals, No new construction of recreation facilities).
 - Primary considerations for forwarding wilderness characteristics units into the preferred alternative were based on an assessment of the quality and value of the wilderness resources and manageability of each unit.
- **Carlsbad Field Office DRMP/DEIS.** New Mexico.
 - **Director's Brief was held on 09-27-16. Met with NMSO and WO210 to follow-up.**
 - **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.
 - **02-03-17. Updated rationale provided by Carlsbad for WSR, under review.**
 - AD Brief held 08-18-16. Pre-brief held 08-09-16.
 - **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.