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[Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for week of April 10.docx](#)

Hi Nikki, Sally, and Peter - the Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for the week of April 10 is attached for our check in. Thanks.

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**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**April 2017  
Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot  
WO-410 RMP and EIS Review**  
Updated 04/10/17

**Chris McAlear**  
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#### **RMPS AND PROJECTS WITH ISSUES TO ELEVATE/DIRECTORS PRIORITIES**

- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument administrative draft MMP-A/DEIS WO Review.** Utah.
  - **Update:** WO410 is reviewing the response to Utah's follow-up to WO410's comments on the draft MMP-A.
  - **Issues:**
    1. **GSENM.** GSENM has indicated that using livestock grazing as a management tool is not a livestock grazing program issue; it is a vegetation or fire management issue and is outside the scope of this MMP-A. This response contradicts another response which clarifies that the monument would be used as a lab for innovative grazing.
    2. **GSENM.** GSENM indicated that clarification would be provided on the use of monument lands as a lab for innovative grazing. This response contradicts the GSENM comment response that using grazing as a resource management tool is outside of the scope of the livestock grazing amendment.
    3. **National Trails.** Projected lack of adverse impacts to Old Spanish NHT resources should be disclosed within the NEPA document.
  - **DTS# 1471, the NOA for the GSENM MMP-A/DEIS, is being prepared for surname (WO410 leadership has concurred).**
- **WO review of the Craters of the Moon National Monument Proposed Plan Amendment/FEIS.** Idaho.
  - **Update:** WO410 comments submitted April 5, WO410 has not received a response to comment.
  - **WO410 comment summary:**
    - 1) Clarification requested on how the items from the May 2016 discussion with WO210 and Idaho were addressed in the final MMP-A/FEIS. This includes a stronger scientific framework and rationale for levels of grazing, assurance to the public that the preferred alternative is scientifically sound, and clarifying "manner and degree" and grandfathered uses for WSA.
    - 2) Verification that an existing "Extensive Recreation Management Area" will be reclassified as a "Public Lands Not Designated as Recreation Management Areas" and if this approach is consistent with M8320 or if changes in RMA status requires an amendment.
    - 3) Suggested adding language from the 2007 ROD to the preferred alt to make it clear that no new livestock developments will be permitted in the North Laidlaw Pasture or Bowl Crater unless such developments can be shown to provide a net benefit to the objects identified in Proclamation 7373.
    - 4) Noted that there is no clear discussion of how the desired future vegetation condition of North Laidlaw Park and Bowl Crater would be achieved (high ecological condition).
    - 5) Suggested addressing how grazing uses affect volcanic features and geologic processes since one of the purposes of the monument is to safeguard the volcanic features and geologic process of the Great Rift and to consider adding to issues considered but dropped if no impacts.
  - The planning area is a National Monument that contains lands with wilderness characteristics and a study trail.
  - **DTS# 1515. NOA of the Craters of the Moon National Monument PRMP-A/FEIS is in DTS but has not reached WO410.**

- **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 27-April 14, 2017.
  - **Issues:** 1) National Conservation Lands have been identified as an issue within the draft report for some energy corridors; 2) Outdated policy used to address National Trails within the draft review report. This issue has been addressed with WO350 with follow-up occurring.
  - **Update:** WO410 met with WO350 on April 6 to address questions raised for how National Trails were addressed in the draft review report (medium potential for conflict). Clarification was provided that the draft review report uses ROW pre-application screening criteria from WO 2011-061 which is used to assess level of conflict and to help prioritize applications. The IM identifies National Trails within the “medium potential for conflict” category. Since the 2011 IM, National Trails policy (2012) and the final Solar and Wind Rule (Dec. 2016) were issued. Per the NTSA and National Trails M6280 policy, the BLM may permit uses that will not substantially interfere with the nature and purpose of the National Trails. The final Solar and Wind Rule (43 CFR 2804.35) provides screening criteria for categorizing solar and wind applications. The final rule does not specifically include National Trails within the categories and identifies lands near or adjacent to the National Conservation Lands which may be adversely affected as low-priority applications criteria (lower priority for processing due to resource conflicts).
  - **Follow-up:** 1) The Section 368 project team (WO350) will revise the 368 conflict maps to be in accordance the categories under the final rule. 2) The WO410 National Trails program will review 368 corridor abstracts sent by WO350 for consistency with M6280.
- **DTS# 1527. NOA of the DRMP and DEIS for the Cedar City Field Office Planning Area.** Utah.
  - **NOA is routing in DTS but has not reached WO410.**
  - **No issues.** 259,975 acres contain wilderness characteristics (16 areas). This is an increase from the information contained in the original DRMP (reviewed Jan. 2015) which found 227,508 acres in 14 areas.
    - 1) Prioritize other uses on 190,545 acres (73%) while not protecting wilderness characteristics based on mining claims with anticipated development and other resource management priorities, mainly multiple vegetation treatments for restoring habitat from pinion/juniper encroachment.
    - 2) 69,430 acres (27%) would be managed to protect wilderness characteristics as a priority over other multiple uses. Protective allocations include VRM class II, ROW exclusion, NSO for leasable minerals, recommended withdrawal for locatable minerals.
- **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).
- **Donlin Natural Gas Pipeline.** Alaska.
  - **No update.**
  - 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.

<b>UPCOMING BRIEFINGS (NEXT 30 DAYS)</b>
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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.