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[Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot October 9.docx](#)

Hi Folks, the Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for the week of October 9 is attached.

Please let me know if you have questions. Thanks.

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**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

**October 2017
Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot
WO-410 RMP and EIS Review**
Updated 10/09/17

Chris McAlear
Assistant Director (WO-400)

RMPs AND PROJECTS WITH ISSUES TO ELEVATE/DIRECTORS PRIORITIES

- **DTS# 1749. Riley Ridge to Natrona Pipeline Project Draft EIS NOA. Wyoming.**
 - DTS# 1749 surnamed by WO410 on October 2 by WO410. **NOA package has not reached WO400.**
 - **Issues:** The NOA materials indicate the Agency Preferred Alternative:
 1. Crosses one inventoried unit of lands with wilderness characteristics found to contain wilderness characteristics. Management of the unit has not been considered or analyzed through a public planning process so the project decision could preclude future management options for the unit.
 2. Would have unavoidable residual visual effects on National Historic Trails (Oregon/California/Mormon Pioneer/Pony Express NHTs, the Sublette Cutoff of the California NHT, and the Continental Divide NST). The materials state, per BLM guidance, impacts would be mitigated via the Programmatic Agreement developed for the Project.
- **DTS# 1722. NOI to Prepare an EIS with Minerals Segregation for the Proposed Yellow Pine Solar Project, Clark County, Nevada.**
 - DTS surnamed by WO410 on September 21. **NOI package has not reached WO400.**
 - **Issues:**
 1. The NOI documents state that visual impacts to the Old Spanish NHT will need to be analyzed in the EIS. WO410 additions to the NOI documents include adding that the congressionally designated Old Spanish NHT crosses the area and listing the Old Spanish Trail Association under “interested stakeholder groups”.
 2. Nevada has indicated there are lands with wilderness characteristics in the project area. WO410 asked for the NOI BP to identify that lands with wilderness characteristics are in the project area and the EIS will consider impacts to those values.
- **Carlsbad DRMP/DEIS. New Mexico.**
 - DTS# 1545. NOA of the DRMP and DEIS for the BLM Carlsbad Field Office was surnamed by WO410 on June 8. **NOA package has not reached WO400.**
 - **Issues:** unknown, WO410 has not reviewed the updated draft.
 - **Update:** Carlsbad FO revised Alternative C (agency preferred), briefed the Director on the revisions on September 20, and is seeking approval from the ASLM to move forward with the draft.
 - WSAs, lands with wilderness characteristics, and WSR are located in planning area.
- **Carson City PRMP/FEIS. Nevada.**
 - DTS# 1710. NOA of the Carson City District PRMP/FEIS was surnamed by WO410 on September 28. **NOA package has not reached WO400.**
 - **Issues:** For some lands that would be protected, the NEPA does not demonstrate that the allocations adequately protect wilderness values.

- **Update:** Continuing to working with Nevada on the lands with wilderness characteristics issue. WO410 received the updated rationale on October 2 per the September 22 discussion with the NVSO.
 - Options discussed include 1) updating the PRMP/FEIS's rationale as to why the management provisions/stipulations do protect and are consistent with manual; or 2) updating the category of protection from full protection of wilderness characteristics to "managing for other uses while reducing impacts to wilderness characteristics" and adjusting the explanation accordingly. We also discussed the need to bolster the discussion re: potential and lack of potential impacts.
 - Carson City indicated they would update the PRMP/FEIS's rationale as to why the management provisions/stipulations do protect and are consistent with policy and bolster the discussion regarding potential and lack of potential impacts in chapter 4 analysis and based on other resource allocations that may minimize surface disturbance in these areas.
- Comments were provided for lands with wilderness characteristics, WSA, WSR, and NSHT on August 16. Response to WO comment received on September 6. Programs reviewed and have no further feedback.
- **Mancos Shale RMP-A, Farmington, New Mexico.**
 - **Issues:** Unknown. The planning area includes lands with wilderness characteristics and the Old Spanish NHT, and WO410 has not reviewed the draft alternatives.
 - **Update:** Nevada is seeking approval from the ASLM to move forward with the draft alternatives.
- **DTS# 1624. Notice of Closure, Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument. New Mexico.**
 - **Notice package is in WO400.**
 - **Update:** The October 5 Weekly Notices List from Regulatory Affairs indicates the NMSO and SOL are working to resolve issues.
- **DTS# 1471. NOA for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument administrative draft MMP-A/DEIS. Utah.**
 - Surnamed by WO410 on April 14. **NOA package has not reached WO400.**
 - **Issues:** None at time of WO410 surname.
- **DTS# 1542. NOI to Amend the RMP for the Ukiah Field Office, California and Prepare an Associated Environmental Assessment for the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. California.**
 - Surnamed by WO410 on May 2. **NOI package has not reached WO400.**
 - **Issues.** None at time of WO410 surname.
 - **Update:** the BLM Federal Register Notices update indicates the NOA is on hold at California's request.
- **WO Review of Eastern Washington DRMP/DEIS. Oregon/Washington.**
 - **Update:** This WO review has been postponed until after the Sage-Grouse review under Secretarial Order 3353 has been completed to ensure the RMP is consistent with review results.
 - There are lands with wilderness characteristics, WSR, and NSHT in the planning area.
- **Challis, Salmon, Upper Snake RMP Prep Plan. Idaho.**
 - **Update:** WO210 indicated on October 3 the NHT GIS/data funding has been included in the overall cost of the RMP. The concept of doing joint WSR studies with the USFS was not included in the prep plan.

- WO410 provided follow up comments to the responses to WO feedback (May 19), requesting data and GIS funding needs for National Trails be identified in the prep plan and following up on a WSR comment that was not responded to re: if USFS and BLM coordination on joint WSR studies would be considered.
- **Appalachian Basin RMP Prep Plan.** Eastern States.
 - **Issues:** WO410 has not received the response to comments. WO210 indicated this effort is on hold per Eastern States pending a re-evaluation of priorities.
 - **Update:** WO410 provided feedback on the prep plan on March 10, 2017 (NSHT and WSR should be addressed if located in the planning area).
- **Lake Powell Water Project.** Arizona, Utah.
 - **Issues:** Potential hydro-power station located in and plan amendment for the GSENM.
 - **Update:** WO410 has reached out to BLM Utah and the project manager regarding this project. This is a water removal and transportation project including a proposed hydro-power station located on GSENM. The BLM is working with Utah to perfect the License Application to FERC and to discuss the need for one or two plan amendments in the Arizona Strip FO and GSENM. This would be a new license for a proposed pipeline and is a discretionary authorization.
- **Donlin Natural Gas Pipeline PFEIS.** Alaska.
 - **Issues:** Iditarod NHT is located on some State Patent lands which are proposed for the project.
 - **Update:** The Alaska State Office review of the PFEIS ended August 25. Kevin Keeler, IDNHT Administrator, reported at the September 28 NSHT Program Lead call that the location of the pipeline is being reconsidered in order to reduce impacts to NHT sites. A 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:** The schedule is being revised because the public scoping period was extended. Approval of the revised project schedule is pending.
- **Boardman to Hemmingway ROD.** Oregon, Idaho.
 - **Update:** The last update was provided for the Renewable Energy and Transmission dashboard on June 28, 2017 and indicates that coordination is continuing with the WO on the NOA for the ROD and incorporating compliance discussions with the Executive Order of March 28, 2017 and Secretarial Order 3349 of March 29th, as it relates to mitigation. **It is unknown if WO410 will participate in the process.**

- **Environmental Assessment to Reconsider the ROD Approving Segments 8 and 9 for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project.** Idaho.
 - **Update:** The NOI for the EA was published on August 28. The BLM is directed, through the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Boundary Modification Act, 2017, to issue a ROW for the lands described in Sec. (b)(2) of the Modification Act for portions of Gateway West segments 8 and 9. The Modification Act moved the lands for this ROW from NCA status, stipulated that the mitigation framework presented in the Final Supplemental EIS will apply to the authorized segments, and stipulated a timeframe for issuance of the ROW. **It is unknown if WO410 will participate in the process.**
- **Section 368 Energy Corridor Region 1 draft review report.** Southern California, southern Nevada, and western Arizona.
 - **Issues:** Outdated policy that categorized National Trails as 'medium potential for conflict' was used in the original draft review report. Updated solar and wind policy now categories National Trails as 'high potential for conflict'. This was addressed with WO301. WO301 indicated no further follow up needed at this time.
 - **Update:** Revised draft Region 1 Report sent to WO100 for review prior to release for 30-day stakeholder input.
- **Section 368 Energy Corridor Region 2 review.** Eastern Arizona, southern Utah, and New Mexico.
 - **Update:** A schedule is being developed for the Region 2 review.

UPCOMING BRIEFINGS (NEXT 30 DAYS)
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- **Pre-Brief for the Carson City PRMP/FEIS.** Nevada.
 - **Pre-brief is scheduled for October 11, 11 am EDT.** Purposes of the pre-brief are to 1) ensure comments/issues have been resolved, and 2) preview and provide feedback on the presentation for the AD and Director's briefs.
 - **Issues:** For some lands that would be protected, the NEPA does not demonstrate that the allocations adequately protect wilderness values.
- **Kick-off Briefing for WO Review of Eastern Washington DRMP/DEIS.** Oregon/Washington.
 - TBD.
- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument administrative draft MMP-A/DEIS.** Utah.
 - **AD Brief TBD.** Staff pre-brief was held April 25.
 - **No issues.** 471,700 acres contain wilderness characteristics. The draft MMP did not specifically address management of lands with wilderness characteristics, however these lands receive incidental management in the following zones:
 - The primitive zone (281,800 acres) allows for an undeveloped, primitive, and self-directed visitor experience without mechanized or motorized access.
 - The outback zone (149,600 acres) is intended for an undeveloped, primitive, and self-directed visitor experience, while allowing motorized and mechanized access on designated routes. Facilities are rare and are provided only when needed for resource protection.
 - The remaining lands with wilderness characteristics (40,300 acres) are in the front country and passage zones which contain more facilities and are the focal points for visitation.
- **Lewistown DRMP/DEIS.** Montana.

- **TBD.**
- **No issues.** 202,730 acres contain wilderness characteristics.
 - 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.
 - 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).
 - 100,410 acres (49%) would be managed to protect wilderness characteristics as a priority over other multiple uses.
- **Rio Puerco PRMP/FEIS.** New Mexico.
 - **TBD.**
 - **No issues.** There are seven areas totaling 37,524 acres of wilderness characteristics.
 - Prioritize other uses on 1,663 acres (4%) while not protecting wilderness characteristics.
 - 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.
 - 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.