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**From:** Nelson, Britta  
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[Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for week of February 27.docx](#)  
[FY2017 Tracking Spreadsheet.xlsx](#)

Hi Sally, Peter, and Cindy - the Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot for the week of February 27 is attached for us to go over at today's check in. The tracking spreadsheet is also attached. Thanks.

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**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**March 2017  
Monthly Hot Topic Snapshot  
WO-410 RMP and EIS Review**  
Updated 02/27/17

**Nikki Moore**  
acting 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.**
  - **No issues. Surname recommended to WO410 on 02-23-17.**
  - 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).
- **Bering Sea-Western Interior preliminary range of alternatives. Alaska.**
  - WO410 submitted comments to WO210 for the wilderness, WSR, and NSHT programs (Nov. 2016).
  - **Update: 1) follow-up meeting scheduled with Alaska for March 1 for lands with wilderness characteristics. 2) a meeting is scheduled with Alaska for February 27 to discuss the Iditarod NHT and what interests and options there are, if any, as to BLM managing or regulating a ROW reservation for the Iditarod for the five townships/two Tentative Approvals that currently do not include a reservation.**
  - **Issues:**
    - Wilderness Program. **Update: Elevation paper submitted to AD for discussion w/SD.** 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.
- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument administrative DRMP-A/DEIS WO Review. Utah.**
  - WO review of DRMP-A/DEIS from **January 30 to February 17. Comment period extended for WO410.**
  - Planning area a National Monument that contains wilderness characteristics, NSHT, WSR, wilderness, and WSA.

- **Issues:** 1) More discussion is needed in plan alternatives on WSA non-impairment and grandfathered use requirements (40% of decision area is within WSAs). 2) Discussion of WSAs and designated Wilderness in the analysis should be separated (currently combined). 3) Discussion and analysis of impacts to Old Spanish NHT is needed.
- **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.
- **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.
  - **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.
  - **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.
  - **Update: 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.