



NEWS RELEASE

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BLM seeks public comment on proposed Sutey Ranch land exchange

SILT, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management is seeking public comment on the proposed Sutey Ranch land exchange in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin counties.

Maps and details about the potential land exchange, which is being facilitated by Western Land Group, are available at www.blm.gov/co/crvfo. BLM will host a public open house meeting May 31 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Carbondale Town Hall, 511 Colorado Ave., to provide information and answer questions about the proposal.

Under the proposal, BLM would acquire the 557-acre Sutey Ranch adjacent to the popular Red Hill Special Recreation Area in Garfield County, including the historic water rights from the ranch. BLM would also receive 112 acres in Pitkin County along Prince Creek Road adjacent to The Crown area. This private parcel is a highly popular area with mountain bikers and is used to access BLM roads and trails.

The BLM would exchange three parcels totaling 1,269 acres in Pitkin County south of Carbondale that are mostly surrounded by private land and are difficult for the public to access. These parcels would be transferred to the Two Shoes Ranch. In Eagle County, BLM would exchange three parcels totaling 201 acres on Horse Mountain southwest of Eagle which has little public access. This parcel would be transferred to the Lady Belle Ranch.

Conservation easements that would prevent development from occurring on the lands that would become private would be placed simultaneously at closing by Two Shoes Ranch and Lady Belle Ranch. BLM would also receive a \$1.1 million donation from the land exchange proponents – \$100,000 to cover BLM's cost to develop a site-specific management plan for the newly acquired parcels, and \$1 million for their long-term management.

“BLM will only go forward with a land exchange if it is in the public's interest,” said BLM Colorado River Valley Field Manager Steve Bennett. “We'll take a broad range of interests into account as part of our detailed evaluation process, and we need to hear about any specific concerns or issues. The more specific the feedback, the more effective it will be.”

After the public comment period closes, BLM will begin an Environmental Assessment of the proposal. A final decision is currently expected in 2013.

“It’s important to remember that BLM land exchanges are evaluated based on the value of the lands involved – they are not straight acre-for-acre exchanges,” Bennett said.

BLM will accept comments through June 20, 2012. Comments can be e-mailed to BLM_CO_SI_CRVFO_Webmail@blm.gov or mailed to BLM, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652, Attn: Sutey Ranch Land Exchange.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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