

Exclusion Areas

Exclusion areas are areas that are not available for location of rights-of-way under any conditions. Programmatic exclusion areas identified in the Wind Energy PEIS ROD issued in June 2005, which amended several land use plans in the Montana/Dakotas, include the following:

- Wilderness Areas
- Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)
- National Monuments
- National Conservation Areas (NCAs)
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- National Historic Trails
- National Scenic Trails

For consistency, lands with any of these designations listed above should be excluded from wind energy development.

- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

The ACECs were originally included by policy as exclusion areas, but are now to be managed as exclusion areas only if their relevant and important values warrant exclusion. The RMP analysis should review the values associated with the ACEC and make a determination if the ACEC can be managed as an avoidance area rather than as an exclusion area and still protect the relevant and important values leading to the ACEC designation.

Planning units may identify other areas as exclusion areas based on analysis contained in the land use planning document. Suggested areas that may be unsuitable for wind energy may vary across the alternatives, and may include:

- Visual Resource Management (VRM)I
- Bald and Golden Eagle Migration Areas or Concentrations
- Sage Grouse Priority Protection Areas
- Sage Grouse Restoration Priority Areas