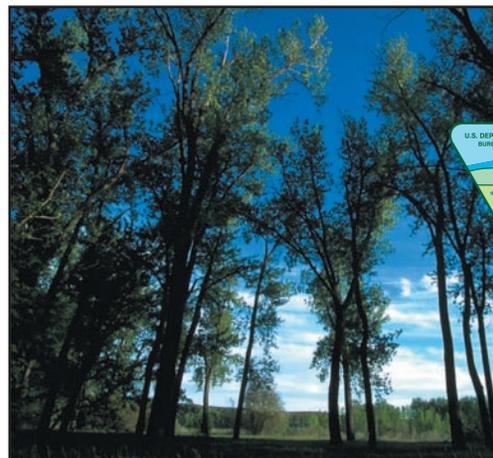
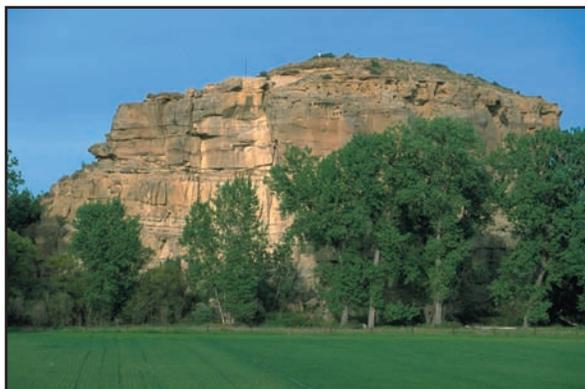


# Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Resource Management Plans

## SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

November 2008



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AMS	Analysis of the management situation
ATV	All-terrain vehicle
AUM	Animal unit month
BiFO	Billings Field Office
BLM	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best management practice
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DEIS	Draft environmental impact statement
EIS	Environmental impact statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GIS	Geographic information system
MFWP	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
MT	Montana
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NOI	Notice of Intent
OHV	Off-highway vehicle
PMWHR	Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range
PPNM	Pompeys Pillar National Monument
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WUI	Wildland urban interface
WY	Wyoming

# INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose and Need for the Resource Management Plans**

A resource management plan (RMP) describes broad multiple-use direction for managing public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) directs the BLM to develop such land use plans to provide for appropriate uses of public land. Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. These decisions establish goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resource management and the measures needed to achieve them. These measures are expressed as actions and allowable uses (i.e., lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any applicable restrictions or stipulations, and lands that are closed to certain uses).

The BLM developed and approved an RMP for the area in 1984. Although the 1984 Billings Resource Area RMP has been subsequently amended, some of the plan does not satisfactorily address new and emerging issues. Laws, regulations, policies and issues regarding management of these public lands have changed during the life of the plan. The BLM is developing two new RMPs to ensure compliance with current mandates and to address current issues. One RMP will be specific to Pompeys Pillar National Monument (Pompeys Pillar NM) and the adjacent BLM land. The Billings RMP will address public lands administered by the Billings Field Office (BiFO) in the planning area. If decisions in the 1984 RMPs are still valid, the BLM may bring them forward into the revised RMPs. When completed, the revised Billings RMP and Pompeys Pillar NM RMP will replace the existing RMP.

To support the preparation of the RMPs, the BLM will prepare one environmental impact statement (EIS) that provides a comprehensive evaluation of the environmental issues and impacts. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the BLM to consider a range of alternatives in its planning process and to analyze and disclose the potential environmental impacts of proposed RMP decisions. The alternatives and the impact analysis are documented in the EIS. The EIS process also provides opportunities for participation by the public, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and tribal governments in the RMP development. The RMPs and EIS will be combined into one document.

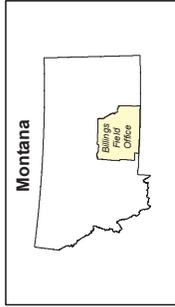
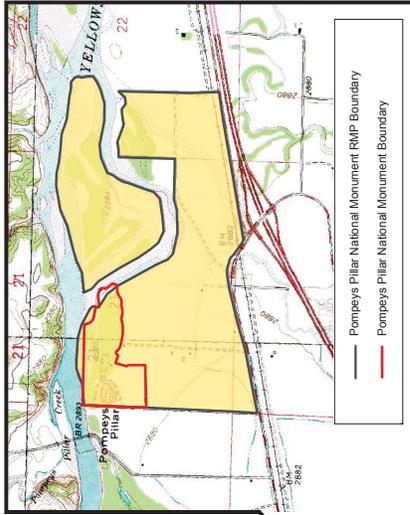
## **Description of the Planning Area**

The planning area is composed of an intermingled landscape pattern including lands managed by various federal and state agencies, the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian tribes, and private lands. There are about 10.8 million total surface acres of land (all ownership) in the planning area. The BLM surface acres represent approximately 4 percent of all lands in the planning area. The planning areas for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs are identified in Map 1.

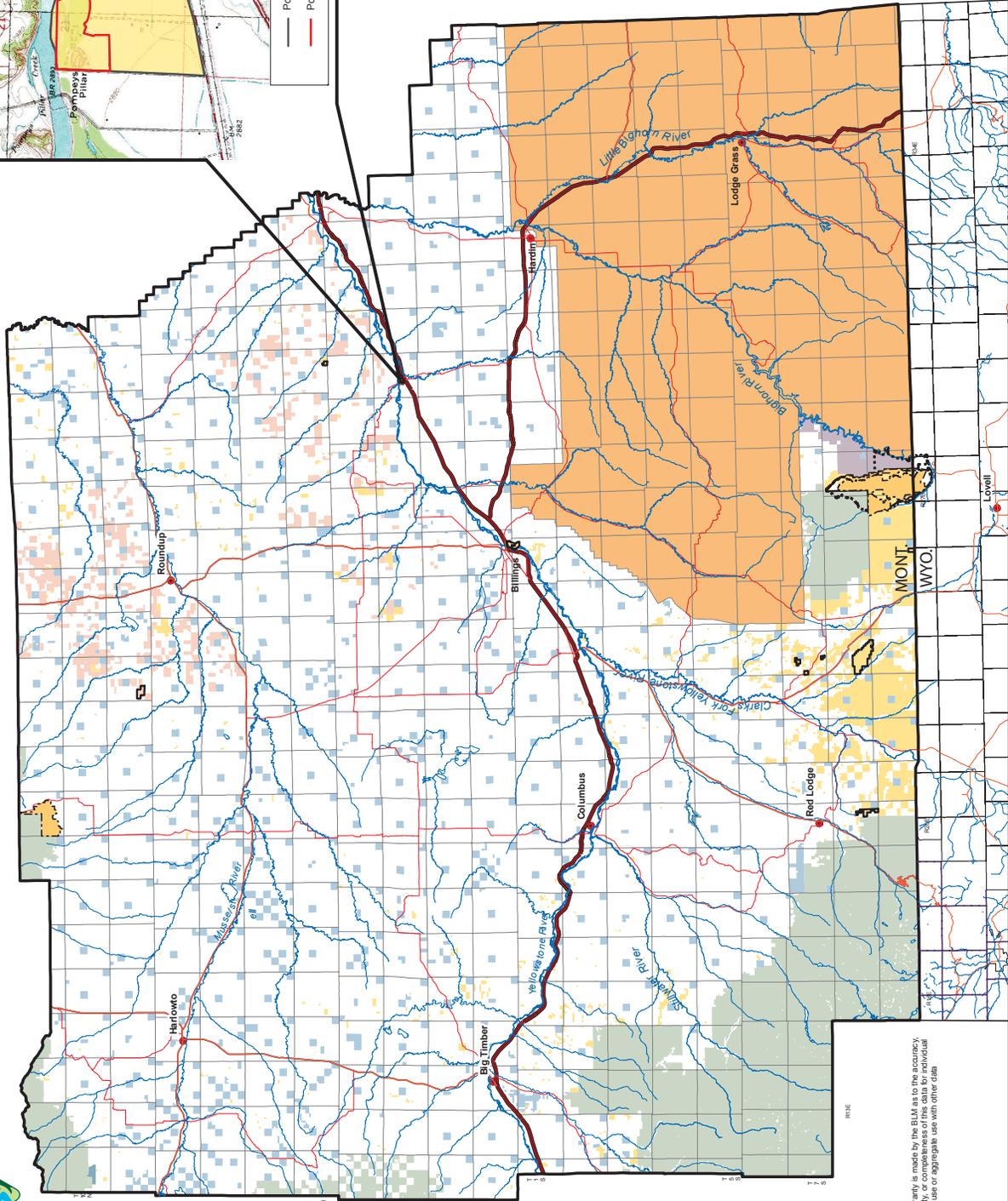
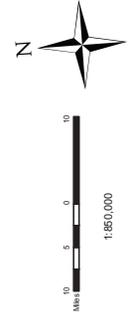
### **Billings RMP Planning Area**

The decision area for the Billings RMP is composed of approximately 427,200 surface acres and 906,000 subsurface acres (mineral estate) managed by the BLM. The Billings RMP planning area extends across eight counties, including: Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland and Yellowstone. The Billings RMP planning area also includes administration of 6,340 acres of public land inside the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range in Big Horn County, Wyoming.

# Billings Field Office and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP Boundaries



- Billings Field Office Boundary (RMP)
- Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
- Pinyon Mountain Wildhorse Boundary
- Major Streams
- Limited Access Highway
- Highway
- Local Roads
- Indian Reservation
- Bankhead-Jones Land Use Lands (BLM)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- National Forest Lands (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- State Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- State Lands
- Private Lands



No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the information. Individual use or aggregate use with other data.

### **Pompeys Pillar NM RMP planning area**

The Pompeys Pillar NM RMP will guide management for approximately 473 acres of BLM land. It will include the 51 acres designated as a national monument on January 17, 2001, for the purpose of protecting the ethnographic, historic and archaeological values associated with the massive sandstone outcrop known as Pompeys Pillar. The area is located along the southern bank of the Yellowstone River, about 30 miles east of Billings, Montana.

### **Description of the Scoping Process**

Scoping is a process designed to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in a planning document. These issues may stem from new information or changed circumstances, the need to address environmental protection concerns, or a need to reassess the appropriate mix of allowable uses based on new information. Scoping is the first stage of the planning process and closely involves the public in identifying issues, providing resource and other information, and developing planning criteria to guide preparation of the two RMPs.

The process has two components: internal scoping and external scoping. Internal scoping is conducted within an agency or cooperating agencies to determine preliminary and anticipated issues and concerns. In 2006 through early 2007, an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists identified the anticipated planning issues and the methods, procedures, and data to be used in compiling the RMPs/EIS. This information was compiled into the Preparation Plan for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs. All of the issues identified in the internal scoping process were relevant to BLM management in the planning area.

External scoping is a public process designed to reach beyond the BLM and attempts to clarify the concerns of high importance to the public. The public process is designed to determine and frame the scope of pertinent issues and alternatives to be addressed. External scoping helps ensure that public concerns are identified early and that they are properly studied, that issues of no concern do not consume time and effort, and that the proposed action and alternatives are balanced, thorough, and able to be implemented.

A Notice of Intent to prepare the RMPs for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM was published in the *Federal Register* on May 15, 2008 (Appendix A). This notice served as the beginning of BLM's formal scoping process. A media list was developed for the communication plan (Appendix B) and used for distribution of subsequent press releases. The notice was followed by a news release announcing scoping to local media sources (Appendix C). In addition, over 1,200 scoping packages were mailed to potential stakeholders, agencies, organizations and tribes (Appendix D). A website for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs was launched that provides the public access to planning documents, calendars, information on the planning process, as well as a photo gallery of the planning area. The website will continued to be updated throughout the planning process. Another news release was issued in July 2008 announcing the dates, locations and times of seven public scoping open house meetings across the planning area (Appendix E). Postcard mailers were also distributed to the mailing list announcing the public open houses (Appendix F). All of these outreach tools conveyed information about the planning process, preliminary planning issues, special designations and an overview of the planning area.

The BLM hosted scoping open houses to further provide the public with opportunities to become involved, to learn about the project and planning process, to meet the RMP team members, and

to offer comments. The open houses were held across the planning area in seven communities. Flyers announcing the open houses were distributed in local communities across the planning area (Appendix G). About 90 participants attended the open houses and visited with resource specialists, reviewed maps, or asked questions about the planning process or specific concerns.

The open houses were held in the following locations:

August 11	Pompeys Pillar NM	7 - 9 pm
August 12	Bridger	7 - 9 pm
August 13	Big Timber	7 - 9 pm
August 14	Red Lodge	7 - 9 pm
August 18	Lovell, WY	7 - 9 pm
August 19	Roundup	7 - 9 pm
August 20	Billings	7 - 9 pm

## Cooperating Agencies

A cooperating agency is any federal, state or local government agency or Indian tribe that enters into a formal agreement with the lead federal agency to help develop an environmental analysis. More specifically, cooperating agencies “work with the BLM, sharing knowledge and resources, to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks” (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1).

The benefits of enhanced collaboration among agencies in preparing NEPA analyses include:

- Disclosing relevant information early in the analytical process,
- Applying available technical expertise and staff support,
- Avoiding duplication with other federal, state, tribal and local procedures, and
- Establishing a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

On March 10, 2008, the Billings Field Office mailed a letter to local, state, federal and tribal representatives inviting them to participate as cooperating agencies for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs, as well as inviting them to participate in Planning Concepts Training. As of September 12, 2008, 15 agencies had agreed to participate as a cooperating agency for the RMPs (Table 1-1).

The BLM has held RMP team meetings and invited cooperating agencies to participate in the planning meetings. Cooperating agencies were encouraged to attend and/or provide scoping comments. Several cooperators attended public scoping meetings in their respective geographic location and provided comments. Cooperating agencies will be engaged throughout the planning process, including team meetings for alternative development and community economic workshops.

**Table 1-1  
Cooperating Agency Participation (as of 9/12/08)**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Declined</b>	<b>Did Not Respond</b>
Big Horn County Commissioners			X
Carbon County Commissioners	X		
Golden Valley Commissioners	X		
Stillwater County Commissioners		X	
Sweetgrass County Commissioners		X	
Wheatland County Commissioners	X		
Yellowstone County Commissioners	X		
Musselshell County Commissioners	X		
Musselshell Planning Project (counties within the planning area)	X		
Crow Tribal Council		X	
Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council	X		
Arapahoe Business Council			X
Shoshone Business Committee			X
Oglala Sioux Tribal Council			X
Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council			X
Spirit Lake Tribal Council			X
Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council			X
Blackfeet Tribal Business Council			X
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe			X
Natural Resources Office – Pine Ridge			X
Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council			X
Fort Peck Tribal Executive Board			X
Fort Belknap Community Council			X
Chippewa Cree Business Committee			X
Three Affiliated Tribes Business Council			X
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa			X
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	X		
State Historic Preservation Office	X		
MT Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation – Northeastern Land Office	X		
MT Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation – Southern Land Office	X		
Montana Department of Environmental Quality			X
State Department of Agriculture		X	
Montana Association of Conservation Districts	X		
US Fish and Wildlife Service		X	
Custer National Forest		X	
Gallatin National Forest – Big Timber District		X	
National Park Service - Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area		X	
Bureau of Indian Affairs – Rocky Mountain Region	X		
Bureau of Reclamation – Montana Area Office	X		
Environmental Protection Agency – Region 8		X	
Big Horn County Commissioners - Wyoming	X		
Wyoming Game and Fish – Cody Regional Office		X	

## **Resource Advisory Council**

A resource advisory council (RAC) is a committee established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1). A RAC is generally composed of 15 members of the public, representing different areas of expertise. As provided for by FLPMA, the US Department of the Interior established the RAC program in 1995 as a forum for local citizens to provide advice and recommendations to the Department of the Interior on management of public lands. The RAC members serve a three-year term, which is staggered among members such that one-third of the membership is subject to appointment in any given year.

The Eastern Montana RAC includes a 15-member panel appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to represent constituent public land users and provide input on public management issues. Recommendations are based on consensus-building and collaboration.

The BLM provided the Eastern Montana RAC an initial presentation on the preparation plan for the RMPs in February 2007. At a RAC meeting in May 2008, the BLM provided an update on the RMPs and the public scoping period. The Eastern Montana RAC nominated two members to participate with the BLM on the RMP team. The members will attend and participate at BLM RMP meetings, public scoping meetings, etc., and provide reports and feedback to the RAC.

## **Collaboration and Consultation with Tribes**

On March 10, 2008, BLM mailed a letter inviting 16 area tribes (refer to Table 1-1) to participate in the development of the RMPs. A follow-up letter was mailed on June 10, 2008. To date, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe has been the only tribe that has positively responded to this invitation to participate as a cooperating agency. BLM recognizes the importance of establishing collaboration with tribes to solicit information on traditional cultural properties and other concerns in the Billings and Pompeys Pillar RMPs planning areas. Efforts to involve and inform area tribes will continue throughout the planning process.

## **ISSUE SUMMARY**

### **Summary of Public Comments Received**

Although the end of the official Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMP scoping period was August 22, 2008, all written scoping comment received through September 19, 2008, were evaluated and are documented in this Scoping Report. Any written submissions received after September 19, 2008, will be considered in alternative formulation and project planning.

A total of 129 written submissions were received by September 19, 2008. The BLM comment form was the format most commonly used to submit comments (Appendix H). The comment forms were included in the scoping package and were also distributed at the public open houses. Some commentors chose to submit comments through letters (not the comment form). Most written submissions included numerous comments, therefore, the 129 submissions reflected a total of 575 separately-coded comments. The comment forms, scoping package, the *Federal Register* NOI and a notice at the public scoping meetings provided instructions on requesting confidentiality and on requesting that individual names or addresses be withheld from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. No commentors requested confidentiality in their submissions.

All submissions were numbered and scanned. A team collectively reviewed all submissions, and the 575 specific comments were coded into 32 subject categories and 23 subcategories (see Appendix I). These categories are guidance-based resource sections for an RMP (WO IB No. 2002-056), and the subcategories are based on the comments received. Most of the coded comment letters contained several specific comments covering various categories. Of the 575 specific comments, 60 comments addressed the Pompeys Pillar NM RMP. The 60 comments specific to Pompeys Pillar and the 515 comments related to the Billings RMP were each entered into two separate databases and then organized by category and subcategory.

Two separate comment summary reports are available for each RMP. The “Scoping Comment Summary for the Billings RMP” and the “Scoping Comment Summary for Pompeys Pillar NM RMP” are available on the website [http://www.mt.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.mt.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html). Review copies are also available at the BLM Billings Field Office. Copies can also be requested by contacting the Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101.

Following is a summary of the public comments received during the scoping process. The summary captures scoping comments specific to each RMP and are grouped by category. This is only a summary that highlights comments from each category and does not include all the comments, suggestions, data or concerns raised by the public. For a comprehensive summary, please refer to the Scoping Comment Summary Reports for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs, respectively, posted on the RMP website (see link above).

### **Billings RMP**

A total of 515 specific comments were analyzed for the Billings RMP. These comments were broken down into the following subject categories and summarized below.

#### **Air Quality – Subject Category 1050**

Comments under air quality were related to compliance with standards and federal regulations related to air quality. For example: “It is the EPA’s expectation that the Billings Field Office RMP fulfills the basic intent of NEPA, and encompasses to the maximum extent possible the environmental and public involvement requirements of State and Federal laws, Executive Orders, and policies (e.g., Clean Air Act, etc.). EPA’s primary interests are protection and restoration of . . . air quality.”

#### **Climate Change – Subject Category 1070**

“The RMP should address how global warming may affect the RMP area, including communities and WUI [wildland-urban interface] areas, and the steps the BLM should take to mitigate potential damages or changes.”

#### **Cultural Heritage – Subject Category 1100 (also refer to comments under Special Designations)**

These comments included concerns regarding the protection of historic and prehistoric resources, providing access, and educating the public about these areas. Some commenters wonder if motor vehicle access would contribute to the vandalism of historic and cultural sites. Other comments indicated the RMP should explain how the agency will work with tribal governments and comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. Some expressed concern about the effects of oil and gas development on cultural resources and asked how the agency can determine whether an area is appropriate to lease for drilling if an inventory of historic sites has not been

completed. One comment indicated that stipulations for oil, gas, coal and coal bed natural gas leases should be strengthened to protect cultural and historic resources. Other specific comments included:

“Develop a strong multi-agency approach to study and analyze the significance of early human occupation of the Bighorn Basin and adjacent areas.”

“The RMP should include information about what areas have been inventoried and how the BLM plans to expand its inventory of cultural, historic and prehistoric sites. Importantly, it should address how the BLM will protect these sites once they are identified. What rules will govern the taking of artifacts?”

“Give high priority to the acquisition by purchase or exchange of private properties of important historic and cultural importance to include: surrounding areas of access to Weatherman Draw, areas of significant cultural resources in the Pryor Mountains.”

### **Fish and Wildlife – Subject Category 1150**

Most comments concerned the protection of wildlife and/or wildlife habitat. Some indicated the consequences of the following activities should be carefully examined: wind farms and other large industrial projects, oil and gas development, roads and road density and the motorized activity on them, and recreation. Suggestions for analysis included calculating the road densities (including motorized trails) for all alternatives and evaluating the impacts based on this information. One comment indicated spatial and/or GIS techniques should be used to evaluate the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from oil and gas development on wildlife looking at maximum well-pad development densities. Comments about habitat fragmentation included: encourage research for indicators for wildlife of local importance, consider the importance of the wildlife migration corridor between the Pryor Range and the Absaroka-Beartooth Range and examine how oil and gas development affects habitat fragmentation. Another comment stated the northern Bighorn Basin has many significant biological values that should be protected. One organization offered a scientific framework which BLM could use to “identify habitat and wildlife impacts that must be analyzed in planning.” Some comments focused on the Pryor Mountain Horse Range and indicated that improvement on the range for the horses would also benefit other wildlife. Another comment expressed concern over opportunities to expand and restore habitat for a number of key species.

### **Special Status Species – Subject Categories 1300 – 1303 (also refer to Special Designations)**

Several comments addressed sensitive plant species. These comments indicated that many species of plants, as well as several plant communities that occur in the Pryors and Clark’s Fork Valley, are very rare and found nowhere else and said that these plants/areas should be considered for special protection. Comments suggested that threats to these plants and plant communities are from off-road travel, weeds, oil and gas development, cattle grazing and grazing by horses, etc. Some comments suggested BLM inventory the planning area for sensitive plant species. Another comment suggested expanding the Meeteetse Spires ACEC to include populations of other rare plants.

Other comments focused on sage grouse and prairie dogs. “Sage Grouse and Prairie Dogs are indicators of healthy native prairie ecosystems. Both are generally in trouble. What is the BLM doing to identify healthy habitat, monitor sage grouse and prairie dog populations and help them rebound?”

Some comments asked what T&E species exist in the planning area and how the plan will protect the species and their habitats. Comments said degradation and fragmentation often result from invasive and exotic plant and animal species, human population growth and transportation systems. Another comment indicated BLM needs to evaluate the impacts of motorized vehicles on all special status species by looking at total road densities, including motorized trails.

### **Soils – Subject Category 1350**

Comments related to soils mainly focused around the southern portion of the planning area. “The Wild Horse Range has large areas of highly erodible soils because of the steep, poorly vegetated slopes. Several rare plants occur in this area. Special management of ORV use and horse trampling is needed in order to protect the biological values of this area. Southern toeslopes of the Pryor Range and small included valleys harbor populations of rare plants and endemic plant communities. This area should be considered for special designation.”

### **Vegetation/Native Plants – Subject Categories 1400-1403 (also refer to Special Status Species)**

A variety of comments were received under this category. One comment indicated that many species of plants and plant communities that occur in the Pryors and Clark’s Fork Valley are very rare and found nowhere else. Another comment suggested that reducing animal unit months, off-road travel and limiting oil and gas development areas would result in more diverse vegetation to benefit wildlife and the biodiversity needed for a healthy environment. Several comments suggested BLM needs to evaluate how motorized vehicles will impact vegetation. Other comments indicated the plan should include a synopsis of the watershed plans describing the guidelines and indicators for healthy rangeland conditions and the desired natural community. The synopsis should also describe the current condition of range and riparian areas, where improvements are needed and steps that need to be taken, benchmarks to determine whether the range and riparian areas are moving to the desired conditions, and how the range and riparian conditions are to be monitored. In addition, one comment asked, “Are there reservoirs where it might be beneficial to have them breached as a means to restoring historic prairie streams?” Other suggestions included: “Reseeding of the desert areas of the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range with native grasses which might require doing test plots to assure that helicopter seeding and mulching would be effective.”

Many comments expressed concerns about the control of noxious and invasive plants and indicated that the plan needs high priority management actions to limit the spread of these invasives because they degrade wildlife habitat, reduce wildlife-related expenditures, threaten sensitive and rare plant communities, cost farmers money in forage and crop losses, and cause soil erosion. Several comments indicated BLM needs to evaluate how motorized vehicles contribute to the spread of noxious plants. Other comments suggested this issue needs to be addressed in the Pryor Mountains, specifically in the “South Pryor Desert.”

“The acreage covered by noxious and invasive plants has increased on public lands in Montana 320 percent in the last 10 years! Roads and motorized routes are the most efficient means for the spread of invasive plants into new areas. Treatment of weeds once they become established is costly and often ends with unsatisfactory results. The best and easiest way to stop weed infestations is to not let them start by restricting the vectors that weeds use to invade new areas.”

### **Wildland Fire – Subject Category 1460**

Many of these comments referred to concerns about fires in WUI areas and in the Pryor Mountain area.

“There needs to be an interagency plan for management of wildfires in the Pryors. Such a plan would emphasize rehabilitation post fire. The forest needs to be cleaned out in the Burnt Timber area; as it stands now it is a potential major fire hazard.”

“Strictly limiting the uses of lands adjacent to WUIs would help protect private property owners from loss due to fire and would reduce the expense to state and federal budgets of fire suppression efforts.”

“Expansion of housing developments adjacent or within BLM lands is increasing. The RMP should develop guidelines for acquiring inholdings and educating adjacent private property owners on fire suppression and other issues that might arise from living adjacent to public lands. Taxpayers should not have to pay the cost of fire fighting on private property.”

### **Wild Horses and Burros – Subject Category 1470 (also refer to PMWHR)**

Comments received on the wild horses and the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range were interrelated and varied from comments such as “maintain the existing size of the range and herd, and consider the health of the range and other wildlife” to “expand the range to allow for more wild horses.” Some comments that indicated the range should be expanded said it could be done by cancelling livestock grazing and oil and gas drilling permits. Comments on the wild horse herd size include: consider setting up a non-adjacent satellite herd to maintain the genetic viability of the herd; discuss the criteria used to arrive at population targets for wild horses, wildlife and livestock; the herd is so small it is in danger physically and genetically; stop the use of PZP [porcine zona pellucida]; allow natural forces to control numbers; and study the effects of mountain lion predation on herd size. Other comments include: provide responsible viewing opportunities for the wild horses; add more water catchments to spread out the use of the range; let horses 10 years or older stay on the range; and use proper husbandry, management and care using scientific principles and methods to develop the plan.

Many comments indicated the wild horses and their areas should be left alone and that roundups, removals, use of PZP, etc. should be stopped. The following is representative of many of these comments:

“Let nature take care of itself without human intervention. The herds have been almost destroyed beyond existence now . . . leave water available to these herds . . . Leave it all natural for people to see.”

“Consider working with the Crow Tribe to set up a non-adjacent satellite herd to maintain the genetic viability of the herd.”

### **Water – Subject Category 1500**

Most of these comments expressed a concern for water quality in the planning area. A few comments discussed water developments such as dams for the purpose of bird and wildlife habitat, and pumping or piping water out of reservoirs and using water tanks. One comment addressed oil and gas drilling in relation to rivers/streams.

“We need a ½ mile setback on all oil and gas drilling from rivers/streams and their tributaries.”

“It is the EPA’s expectation that the Billings Field Office RMP fulfills the basic intent of NEPA, and encompasses to the maximum extent possible the environmental and public involvement requirements of State and Federal laws, Executive Orders, and policies (e.g., Clean Water Act, etc.). EPA’s primary interests are protection and restoration of water quality . . . groundwater quality, source water protection . . .”

### **Resource Uses**

#### ***General – Subject Category 2000***

General comments on resource uses ranged from keeping the land available for industrial and commercial activities to concerns resulting from development. These concerns include introduction of non-native species, too large an area open for oil and gas drilling, river contamination, reclamation of use areas, and overuse by livestock and OHVs.

### **Forestry – Subject Category 2050**

The comments related to forestry focused on timber harvest to address fire hazards, provide more room for recreation and disease.

“Overpopulation of trees - harvest some timber. Overpopulation of bugs (beetles) . . . Fire hazard with so many trees, harvest some timber. Harvest some timber so while you are in these areas, a person can see more than one foot ahead to maybe see wildlife. The result would be a healthier ecosystem, more room to recreate, more available resources for infrastructure.

### **Lands and Realty – Subject Categories 2100 - 2103**

General comments on lands and realty included acquisition by purchase or exchange for private properties with important historical or cultural values. Access was also a prominent concern. One comment focused on a process involving documentation of resource decisions: “BLM must institute a practice that formally notes, on master title plats or in local title documents, the effect of resource allocation decisions on public and private lands. These actions are title impacting processes and therefore must be carried on the records as are all other processes of law that impact title.”

Many comments indicated BLM policies should discourage expansion of housing developments adjacent to BLM lands.

Comments also indicated a concern for access to BLM lands. These included: need continued access, need hunting and fishing access, need access for all groups for multi-

use recreation, need access to and protection of historic and prehistoric resources such as Weatherman Draw. Other comments indicated: the public has little respect for the boundary between public and private land, laws that give access to public lands should be upheld, and concern about all closures and all use restrictions on all public lands.

Comments on land tenure generally concerned ways to obtain public access to public lands. Some indicated BLM should establish realistic sale values for nonaccessible public lands, sell these lands and purchase publicly accessible lands for public use. Another comment said isolated landlocked parcels of land should be offered to adjoining landowners and the money generated should be used to purchase key access parcels for the general public. One suggestion concluded: Identify priority areas for future land acquisition or land exchanges so when opportunities arise from willing sellers it is clear whether to put the time, effort and expense into negotiating a sale or trade; land should be acquired to expand wildlife habitat, obtain historic/cultural sites or sites of scenic value, or prevent development which is incompatible with the adjoining public lands. Another suggestion indicated that BLM should give high priority to the acquisition of private properties of important historical and cultural importance to include the following: access areas surrounding Weatherman Draw and areas of significant cultural resources in the Pryor Mountains.

In regard to utility and communication corridors, one comment asked if any pipelines, electrical transmission lines or energy corridors were proposed for the planning area. The comment indicated that the RMP should provide guidance relative to the routing and impacts of such energy corridors.

#### **Livestock Grazing – Subject Category 2150 (Also refer to Vegetation/Native Plants)**

Comments on livestock grazing ranged from supporting livestock grazing or supporting grazing if it mimics wild grazing patterns to strict guidelines on grazing leases, reducing AUMs, or retiring all leases on BLM lands. One comment indicated that money and/or poison should be available from BLM to lessees to poison prairie dogs on private land where it is adjacent to public grazing.

Another comment suggested that BLM should revisit suspended AUMS from tracts that are not currently economic with the AUMs allowed.

#### **Energy and Minerals**

##### ***General – Subject Category 2200***

General comments related to energy and minerals included: retain the mineral estate because it is profitable; oil, gas, coal and minerals should be put to use; identify existing mining claims and areas where concentrations of commercial-grade minerals exist; and focus on economic recovery and energy support.

Other comments indicated the RMP should explain how areas will be determined appropriate for oil and gas and coal development and explain what stipulations will be placed on leases to limit damage and restore the area to a more natural state. In addition, comments indicated that the RMP should explain how the lease holders will be required to work with surface owners to minimize surface damages. More specific comments suggested BLM policies should discourage gas development and mining on the fringe of the Pryor Range, and all stipulations for oil, gas, coal and coalbed

natural gas should be strengthened to protect cultural/historic resources in exploration and mineral development areas. Another comment said "multiple use" should not be construed to mean that extractive uses are preferred over other uses and that BLM cannot authorize a particular use based purely on the contribution of that use to the economy.

One comment addressed the materials available at the scoping meeting. The comment said the maps did not indicate where BLM owns severed minerals, BLM has the potential to affect more acreage subsurface than surface in this area, BLM should also indicate changes in land and mineral ownership between 1984 and 2008, and outstanding mineral leases should also be indicated. This comment concluded it is hard to form an opinion without adequate information.

## **Energy and Minerals**

### ***Oil & Gas – Subject Category 2210 (Also refer to Energy and Minerals – General)***

Comments on oil and gas development ran the range from support for development to concern about how development would proceed. Comments that supported oil and gas development on public lands indicated it is good policy to develop domestic energy supplies because they are critical to America's energy supply, oil and gas development should be encouraged on multiple use lands, and development should proceed with the minimum of restrictions necessary to encourage reasonable and responsible development. These comments also indicated BLM should address the recoverable oil and gas resource potential and how that potential affects domestic supply and demand. In addition, comments suggested that prior to the implementation of oil and gas stipulations, BLM should conduct a complete data review and cost/benefit analysis of the stipulations and adapt a monitoring program tracking the cost-effectiveness of the stipulations.

Other comments that indicated concern about how development should proceed said the RMP should explain how the public will be informed about the leasing of BLM land for oil and gas drilling, how the BLM will determine whether an area is appropriate for oil and gas drilling, and if it is determined that an area is appropriate to lease, the RMP should explain what kind of stipulations will be placed on leases to limit the damage and restore the area to a more natural setting. Some comments said BLM should put serious thought into what areas are drilled, oil and gas development should not be the sole use for public land, some areas should not have oil and gas activities at all and others need strict oversight, and the oil and gas areas are not going anywhere so take your time deciding where to develop. Another comment indicated that current stipulations related to sage grouse habitat are adequate. The comment further stated that more restrictive stipulations would dramatically affect mineral resource development. A related concern was clearly defining crucial, critical and core sage grouse habitat areas.

Other comments indicated that management challenges make it critical that the BLM uses the best available tools to minimize impacts to valuable public land resources such as wildlife habitat, air and water, cultural resources, land with wilderness character, etc. Some very specific comments included: stop drilling on the PMWHR in special plant habitat areas; institute a ½ mile setback from rivers/streams and their tributaries for oil and gas drilling; if the BLM has not completed an inventory of historic sites, how

will the agency determine whether an area is appropriate for leasing; and leave areas of threatened habitat undeveloped.

## **Energy and Minerals**

### ***Coal – Subject Category 2211***

Comments from the Musselshell County Commissioners, an energy company active in the Bull Mountains area, and others, offered support for both underground and surface coal mining in the Bull Mountains. Comments also urged flexibility in the RMP regarding coal mining for maximum recovery.

## **Energy and Minerals**

### ***Wind Energy – Subject Category 2215***

One comment offered support for wind development. Other comments asked if any BLM lands are leased for wind farms. The latter comments indicated that the RMP process should develop criteria to consider the appropriateness and compatibility of wind farms and other large industrial projects with special management areas or lands with high wildlife values.

## **Recreation – Subject Categories 2250 – 2256**

A variety of comments were received regarding recreation. Specific suggestions included: develop areas for viewing wild horses and wildlife, fix up hunting and fishing access sites, and establish campgrounds in the south Pryors and along the Yellowstone River in or near the Monument. Another more detailed comment said the RMP should provide opportunities for winter recreation by providing public access to the backcountry for activities such as snowshoeing, skiing and wildlife viewing and using some creative options such as plowing roads to trailheads and using yurts or cabins for winter camping or as warming huts.

Concern was expressed in some comments about abuse of lands, trash, driving off road, dangerous shooting, cutting gates and fences, etc. Solutions that were suggested included improving education and outreach to the public on the use of public lands, better policing and enforcement, and tougher fines for violations. A comment was raised during scoping about the possibility of Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP) opportunities, specifically around Big Timber, for a shooting area. Other comments included: make sure public land is accessible to all groups for different types of recreation, consider the effects of recreation on wildlife, and protect recreation values (hunting) by discouraging residential development on private wildlands adjacent to public lands. One comment indicated that public lands closer to Billings will see more use in the future as the population of Billings increases and increasing gas prices make people recreate closer to home. Another comment indicated that commercial recreation use should be closely regulated with significant permit fees so a few businesses do not make huge profits from public lands.

## **Trails and Travel Management**

### ***General, motorized and non-motorized – Subject Categories 2300 - 2311***

Comments on trails and travel management focused on differences or conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, road inventories, monitoring and enforcement and effects to resources from motorized use. A specific concern raised during scoping addressed the need to close roads to abandoned mines due to safety issues.

Many comments indicated the BLM must minimize conflicts between resources and thoughtfully consider how a particular resource use affects other resource values. A suggestion was raised during scoping about temporary OHV closures due to weather to prevent resource damage. “The evidence that motorized vehicle traffic conflicts with other uses is overwhelming. As levels of traffic rise, it becomes a dominant use, displacing traditional non-motorized use.” These comments went on to say, where incompatible uses exist, the BLM has an obligation to provide a spectrum of opportunities that includes opportunities for traditional hunters, hikers and horseback riders seeking a more remote, quiet, non-motorized experience. The RMP should address the measures that will be taken to minimize user conflict between motorized and non-motorized uses. One comment added that “motorized vehicle use of public lands has exploded over the past 15 – 20 years; it isn’t just the number of vehicles but also new more powerful types of vehicles with the capability to go farther and to go places previously accessed only by foot and horse use.” A related comment indicated BLM should assess how the changes in motorized vehicle use and technology will affect future use.

Other comments indicated the BLM should inventory the public lands before making decisions about where to allow motorized vehicle use and that the inventory should determine whether roads and trails were legally created. Some comments indicated that user created roads and trails are not legal and should be closed. Another comment expressed concern that mountain bike opportunities will be diminished in favor of other uses.

A variety of comments indicated BLM should assess the effects of motorized vehicle use on wildlife including special status species, vegetation, the spread of weeds and how access for motor vehicle use will contribute to the vandalism of historic and cultural sites. Other comments indicated the RMP needs to provide a plan for educating the public, monitoring and enforcing rules regarding motorized vehicle use. One comment cited the south Pryor desert and PMWHR as an example where the law enforcement officer has done an admirable job but one officer cannot do it all. Another comment indicated that the Forest Service has much stricter enforcement and maybe BLM should follow its example.

Some more specific comments include: locate areas and trails to minimize damage to other resources such as soil, watershed, vegetation, wildlife, etc.; travel plans need to parallel Forest Service plans on adjacent lands; fix up ATV roads—this might keep people from leaving the main trail; and prohibit motor vehicles on public lands adjacent to WUIs to help protect private property owners from loss due to fire and reduce firefighting expenditures. The RMP needs to address opportunities for “open areas” for full-size 4x4s, ATVs and motorcycles. During scoping a suggestion was made to offer motorized “tours” of special areas (e.g., Weatherman Draw). Comments also indicated that OHV use benefits local economies and provides a recreation opportunity that meets a growing demand. A local OHV group indicated that in the future it would like to be more involved with BLM and is open to such things as volunteerism, maintenance, education, safety and other related topics. This group wants to keep areas open to OHV use, provide loop routes and would like to work with BLM to make that happen.

## **Trails and Travel Management**

### ***Airstrips (Transportation) – Subject Category 2312***

A comment was submitted that addressed airstrips in the planning area. “The BLM is not obligated to authorize any airstrips just because a plane landed in BLM land sometime in the past. Airstrips are not compatible with all values and need to be located away from more primitive and remote settings. It is highly unlikely that any airstrips identified through the RMP process were created to accommodate recreation use, which is a more recent phenomenon.”

### **Special Designations – Subject Category 4000**

Several comments indicated BLM should identify additional areas or additions to currently designated areas by inventorying resources and other values (such as natural, remote and or primitive characteristics). Specific suggestions included developing criteria which considers the appropriateness and compatibility of wind farms and other large industrial projects when in or adjacent to special management areas, and that motorized recreation should be prohibited from these areas to protect the resources.

“How will BLM use its Section 201 FLPMA authority to identify and inventory resources and other values and designate special management areas as a component of the land use planning process.”

### **Special Designations**

#### ***Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) – Subject Category 4050***

A variety of comments were received about ACECs. Several comments indicated BLM should inventory the nine ACECs to determine whether they are currently being managed in accordance with the values for which they were created and, if not, corrective action such as signage, enforcement and restoration should be taken. Comments on specific areas include: enlarge the size of the ACEC for the public land around Weatherman Draw to include all prehistoric and historic cultural resources, inventory and protect cultural resources around the Pryor Mountains by establishing ACECs, expand the Meeteetse Spires ACEC to include populations of other rare plants, and consider the conservation of the rare plants and plant communities in the south Pryor Desert. Another comment indicated areas with high concentrations of endemic species should be considered for ACEC designations, especially those with highly erodible soils.

“Consider ACECs as an ‘evolving environment’ in which the lands can be restored to previous use after development has been in place and that the ‘timing window’ is closed. As a result, resources would be used and land users would be allowed to use the land again, maybe not this generation of 20-40 years, but the land can be reclaimed.”

“I would like to place into consideration the conservation of the rare plants and plant communities of the South Pryor Desert . . . recommended setting aside one and a half sections in the Gypsum Creek-Crooked Creek area . . . This would conserve 8 of 15 high priority vascular plant species. ACEC status might be appropriate.”

## **Special Designations**

### ***Wild and Scenic Rivers – Subject Category 4200***

There was one comment specific to wild and scenic rivers. The commenter did not want to see any wild and scenic river designations in the planning area.

## **Special Designations**

### ***Wilderness Study Areas and Wilderness Characteristics – Subject Categories 4250 – 4300***

Several comments indicated BLM should inventory the WSAs to determine whether they are currently being managed in accordance with the values for which they were created and, if not, corrective action such as signage, enforcement and restoration should be taken. Other comments suggested BLM should develop a plan to protect, restore and improve the wilderness values of the Twin Coulee WSA so it is compatible with the Big Snowy WSA managed by the Forest Service, and can be recommended for wilderness designation. Still other comments said BLM should identify illegally created roads or other changes which might degrade the character of the Pryor Mountain, Burnt Timber Canyon and the Big Horn Tack-on WSAs to ensure they stay viable candidates for wilderness (these areas are adjacent to each other, separated only by primitive roads). A similar comment indicated areas and trails shall be located to prevent impairment to wilderness suitability (43§CFR 8342).

## **Special Designations**

### ***Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range–Subject Category 4350***

#### ***(Also refer to Wild Horses/Burros)***

Comments on the PMWHR varied from expanding the range to maintaining the existing size of the range. Several comments suggested expanding the size of the range onto adjacent BLM, to reopen the Administrative Pasture area, to acquire private land within the range, and/or to work with the Forest Service and the National Park Service to expand the range onto non-BLM lands. Some comments said the additional range is needed for winter pasture. One comment indicated that water was critical and more water catchments should be developed. Other suggestions for the range included restricting OHV travel, hunting, predator and pest control activities, livestock grazing, logging and oil and gas drilling.

Other comments indicated the existing size of the range should be maintained because the health of the range and other wildlife should also be considered. One comment suggested that on some of the range adjacent to the PMWHR, specifically Demijohn Flats, grazing by horses may threaten rare plants.

## **Special Designations**

### ***National Historic Trails – Subject Category 4400***

This comment from a member of the Rochejhone Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation noted the importance of the Lewis and Clark trail and offered the group's resources and assistance to BLM for help with a floater's guide series update or in other places where Lewis and Clark information would be useful.

## **Social and Economic Conditions**

### ***Economics – Subject Category 5050***

A wide variety of comments were received regarding economics. Some comments indicated the BLM should examine the effects of BLM activities/resource decisions

on county/community land use patterns, infrastructure investments, payrolls, housing availability, finances, etc. One comment indicated that BLM should assess the economic benefits (i.e., community stability and well being) of protected landscapes. In addition, the economic analysis should assess the effect of boom and bust extractive industries on local communities. Several comments expressed a concern for the cost to taxpayers of fire suppression and other management efforts. Other comments included: focus on economic recovery and energy support, with the increase in fuel prices people will be recreating closer to home, it is not fair for a few businesses to make huge profits from our public lands, the business community in general benefits from well managed public lands, and the BLM should not authorize a particular use based purely on its contribution to the economy.

Other comments indicated BLM should address the current economic opportunities as a result of developing underground coal mine in the Bull Mountains, as the mine will provide economic opportunities for local businesses, employment opportunities for local residents, and valuable tax revenues to improve community schools, services and infrastructure.

Comments also suggested BLM should address the recoverable oil and gas resource potential and how that potential affects domestic supply and demand. In addition, BLM should analyze and define the impact that various stipulations have on the access to recoverable reserves and how that translates into effects on affordable energy, school funding, jobs, and tax and royalty revenues. A complete cost/benefit analysis of the stipulations should be conducted and a monitoring program adopted to track the effectiveness of the stipulations.

## **Social and Economic Conditions**

### ***Social – Subject Category 5100***

Social comments included examining the effects of BLM activities/resource decisions on communities, land use patterns, infrastructure investments, housing availability, etc. One comment indicated the BLM needs to ensure that public land is accessible to all groups of the public for multi-use recreation. During scoping, a concern was raised regarding urban versus rural conflicts. Another comment suggested the BLM make a deliberate effort to survey various age groups regarding their suggestions and include the findings in the RMP. In this way, BLM could obtain ideas from citizens who otherwise might not participate in the process. Several comments discussed the wildland urban interface and suggested BLM should discourage housing development adjacent to public lands or, conversely, discourage activities such as campfires or motor vehicle use on public lands that are adjacent to housing developments (to prevent problems for the homeowners). Another proposed that BLM needs to examine the effect of protected landscapes:

“Protected landscapes attract tourists who contribute to local economies. But the same features which attract tourists also serve as a magnet to attract and keep residents to live, work and conduct business in nearby communities. Their contribution to local economies and to the stability and well being of their communities is generally even greater than tourism.”

## **Process**

### ***General – Subject Category 6000***

This section covers a variety of comments, many of which were also coded elsewhere under specific resources or resource uses. Some comments suggested specific types of analysis be used such as spatial analysis, GIS technology, or landscape analysis techniques to improve public engagement. One comment suggested that extra-regional input should not be allowed to override local interests. Another comment indicated BLM must minimize conflicts between resources and thoughtfully consider how a particular resource use affects other resource values. Several comments (individuals, organizations, etc.) provided reference materials. One organization provided a scientific framework which BLM could use to identify habitat and wildlife impacts that the organization indicated must be analyzed in planning. The EPA provided detailed information concerning impact analysis and the landscape: “The EPA reviews EISs in accordance with its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The EPA’s draft EIS comments will include a rating of both the environmental impact of the proposed action and the adequacy of analysis and disclosure in the NEPA document. We are enclosing a brief summary that explains EPA’s DEIS rating system.”

## **Process**

### ***Management - Subject Categories 6050 - 6055***

Some of these comments included a question about whether additional funding will be needed for implementation and a concern about the importance of monitoring. Some comments focused on implementation-level topics such as how to prevent vandalism in cultural areas or how to monitor motorized use. Other comments indicated support for a variety of management themes such as sustainability, protection, restoration and multiple-use. Many of these comments were also coded elsewhere under specific resources or resource uses. Examples of these “management theme” comments are:

“I believe that in the long term, the public, the actual owners of the public land, will be better served, and the land certainly better protected, if more emphasis is put on recreation use and tourism, than the disproportional use and exploitation of special interest industries.”

“I believe the management plan should provide direction that will protect biological and recreational values (hunting) by discouraging residential development on private wildlands adjacent to public lands.”

“Energy usage by BLM in carrying out its management activities.”

“Conduct landscape-scale analyses to evaluate impacts and provide sound ecological protection for a landscape’s wildlife, habitat, and other ecological resources.”

“The RMP should specify how corrective actions will be taken to restore areas where needed.”

“Multiple use is critical, especially oil, gas, and mineral extraction.”

“Multiple-use should not be construed to mean that all uses must be allowed in all places. Multiple-use is a combination of balances and diverse resources used over a large landscape that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural, scenic, scientific and historic values. Multiple-use allows for future but as yet unknown or currently undervalued uses that arise from changing needs and conditions. Wilderness is included in the multiple use doctrine.”

#### **Process**

##### ***Planning/NEPA – Subject Category 6150***

A comment focused on ensuring a strong planning, interdisciplinary effort. “Public land needs to be managed so that the public can enjoy it without harm to the environment while at the same time using the land without abusing it.”

#### **Process**

##### ***Outside/Beyond the Scope – Subject Category 7000***

Many of these comments dealt with the issue of trespass across private land to get to public lands, law enforcement issues or other issues specific to implementation. Many of these types of comments are implementation level, rather than RMP level, concerns. Other comments related to reinstating the grazing advisory boards or comments on areas outside the planning area.

### **Pompeys Pillar NM RMP**

A total of 60 specific comments addressed the Pompeys Pillar NM RMP. Most comments were generally concerned about preserving the historic and cultural values associated with the Pillar and surrounding area and provided suggestions to enhance visitor services at the site. Some comments were concerned that the original proposal for the RMP included just the 51-acre monument. (Note: since scoping, the RMP boundary for Pompeys Pillar will include the entire 473-acre site, including the monument).

“My sister and I enjoyed a visit to Pompeys Pillar a couple of years ago. We were surprised that protection for the historic aspects of it seemed minimal. My choice for a plan would be to preserve the wild character of the surrounding area and develop unobtrusive protection for the rock with the signatures and dates. No Disneyland on the river, please.”

“Obtain an historic easement of the property around the Pillar on both sides of the river so the Pillar can retain its historic setting . . . .”

“There is a no-dig cultural area between the parking lot and the Interpretive Center . . . enlist an archeological team to investigate the site . . . .”

Other comments related to opportunities for enhancing the visitor experience or visitor services and focusing on the native vegetation of the area, characteristic of an 1806 setting. Comments suggested establishing an overnight camping area near the monument, consider special permits (e. g., concessionaires for food services) at the Pillar and enhance the riparian areas and native vegetation.

“Take out all Russian olive trees on the Monument and adjacent BLM property. Russian olives are not native trees . . . and eventually change the entire riparian environment. The Monument is a premier bird watching area. We must ensure the native environment survives.”

“I hope the management plan for the Pompeys area will consider that commercial interests do not appear to be compatible with the site nor with any of the other interests.”

“Install a permanent picnic shelter that resembles a tepee village . . . .”

“Move the picnic area east so it lies adjacent to the parking area . . . .”

Some comments made very specific suggestions for the site or visitor service enhancements that are implementation-level actions and will not be addressed in this RMP. Examples of these types of comments include: “Build a locker room and showers for the employees,” “Build two interpretive signs depicting what Clark saw from the top of the Pillar,” “Create a new monument brochure every three years,” “Work with the public schools . . . .” These comments will be retained for use upon completion of the RMP for subsequent implementation planning efforts.

## **Issues Identified During Scoping**

Issue identification is the first step in the BLM planning process. As defined in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), planning issues are “concerns or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production and related management actions.” An issue is a subject of interest or concern to the public or a particular group. This usually means that one or more individuals or groups are interested in a resource or land use on public land, that each may have different values for the resource, and that there are different ways (opportunities or alternatives) to resolve the issue. Issues may be identified by local, state or national needs or may reflect conditions specific to the planning area. Issue identification is an ongoing process. Identified issues may change throughout the planning process as new concerns are identified and others resolved.

Management concerns are issues that can be resolved by the BLM or another agency. While some concerns overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or a few individuals as opposed to a planning issue, which has a more widespread point of interest. Addressing management concerns in the RMPs help ensure a comprehensive examination of BLM’s land use management. Management concerns may be modified as the planning process continues; however, they will usually not be addressed in an RMP as thoroughly as is an issue. Management concerns identified in the preparation plan to be carried forward in the RMPs include: air quality, water quality/quantity/aquatic species, soil resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, wildland fire and fuels management, lands and realty, visual resource management and abandoned mine lands.

Preliminary issues and management concerns were identified in the preparation plan for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs (October 2007). These early issues were identified by BLM through interdisciplinary planning effort. They represent BLM’s expectations (prior to scoping) about what concerns or problems exist with current management. These preliminary issues were included in the Scoping Package mailed in May 2008 and were displayed during the seven scoping open houses in August 2008.

The preliminary planning issues have been modified based on the scoping comments and further reviewed by resource specialists.

**The Billings RMP planning issues:** Revisions to the Billings RMP planning issues will also be modified based on public scoping comments. Economic and social conditions will be added as a new planning issue.

**Pompeys Pillar NM RMP planning issues:** The same planning issues were identified and prepared for both the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM and do not necessarily reflect the differences in issues between the two RMPs. Planning issues specific to Pompeys Pillar have been developed. These issues will better address the concerns about Pompeys Pillar based on the resources and resource uses at the site and will address public comments.

The revised planning issues and associated goal statements for both the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPs are identified in the tables below. Several issues have a number of subissues that identify more specific uses and resources. The BLM will use the planning issues and associated statements, planning criteria, and other information collected in the early planning and scoping phases of the RMP process to help formulate a reasonable range of alternative management strategies that will be analyzed during the planning process.

### Billings RMP Planning Issues

Planning Issue	Goal
Vegetation	Manage public lands to provide desired plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy cycle, and nutrient cycle) provided by the vegetative community within rangelands and forests.
Wildlife and fisheries	Manage public lands to maintain or improve wildlife and fisheries habitats and control invasive species.
Special status species	Manage public lands to conserve and recover threatened, endangered, proposed and sensitive species.
Commercial uses: (including: energy - oil & gas, coal, wind, livestock grazing, forest products and areas within community wildlife protection plans, rights-of-way and land use authorizations, and locatable/saleable minerals	Determine what public lands will be available for commercial activities and how those activities will be managed. Manage energy development to provide for domestic energy production while protecting the integrity of other resources.
Recreation	Determine how recreation will be managed in the planning area to provide for use and enjoyment of the public lands while protecting significant resource values and providing for user safety.

Travel Management & access	Develop a planned and manageable travel and transportation network.
Special management area designations	Identify public lands that require special management attention to protect resource values.
Economic & social conditions	Identify how management of various resources and activities in the planning area can affect economic and social conditions.

### **Pompeys Pillar NM RMP Planning Issues**

<b>Planning Issue</b>	<b>Goal</b>
Cultural and heritage resources	Preserve the cultural and historic values and associated viewsheds. Manage the 51 acres designated a national monument for the purpose of protecting the ethnographic, historic and archaeological values associated with Pompeys Pillar.
Wildlife and fisheries	Manage public lands to maintain or improve wildlife and fisheries habitats and control invasive species.
Vegetation	Manage public lands to provide desired plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes provided by the vegetative community.
Recreation and visitor services	Manage the area to provide for interpretation, use and enjoyment while protecting the significant resource values, providing for user safety and maximizing socio-economic benefits.

### **Issues Raised That Will Not Be Addressed**

Comments, issues and concerns raised during the scoping period to date have been summarized in this scoping document or are included in the Scoping Comment Summary Reports for the Billings RMP or Pompeys Pillar NM RMP. Based on the comments received, the preliminary planning issues have been refined. Comments that will not be addressed in one of the RMPs include (1) administrative/policy issues, (2) implementation issues, or (3) other issues outside the scope of the RMP or issues that have already been addressed through other BLM activities. Subject code 7000 represented these types of comments and subject code 6051 specifically identified implementation-level comments.

Administrative or policy issue comments will not be addressed during the RMP process. Addressing administrative issues constitutes formulating policy, which is done by the BLM at the national level. Some examples of comments received that require administrative or policy issues/actions include requests that the BLM expand the monument boundary at Pompeys Pillar or that the BLM re-establish grazing advisory boards.

Addressing implementation issues requires on-site actions that follow RMP-level decisions. Comments on implementation issues were received, and many requests related to the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range and Pompeys Pillar NM. Examples of implementation-level issues included: installation of interpretive signs, law enforcement patrols, local/educational programs or tours, volunteer opportunities, etc. Comments that are outside the scope of the planning process can include comments related to policy or action beyond the administrative planning area or involve actions or comments that related to private lands. One comment related to opportunities at the mouth of the Bighorn River, which is located to the east of the planning area. That comment will be forwarded to the appropriate field office/planning jurisdiction.

## **Anticipated Decisions to be Made**

FLPMA requires the BLM to manage public lands using the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Management direction resulting from the planning process for the RMP needs to be adaptable to changing conditions and demands over the life of the RMP. RMPs provide management direction and help with decision making regarding appropriate multiple uses and allocation of resources. They also contain strategies to manage and protect resources and establish systems to monitor and evaluate the status of resources and effectiveness of these management practices. As part of an analysis of the management situation, the BLM is reviewing the condition of the environment and the management situation to identify which management decisions should be continued, which management directions should be modified, and which management directions should be developed and added.

This scoping report does not make any decisions, nor does it change current management direction set forth in the 1984 Billings RMP, as amended. Instead it summarizes those issues distilled from comments identified during the scoping period for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMP planning areas, respectively. The BLM will use planning issues summarized in this scoping report, along with subsequently identified issues, planning criteria and other information (such as occurrence and development potential for oil and gas) to help formulate a reasonable range of alternatives during the next phase of the RMP process. Each identified alternative (including continuation of existing management) will represent a complete and reasonable plan for managing the Billings and Pompeys Pillar planning areas, respectively. Future decisions will occur at two levels: the RMP (or land use planning) level and the implementation level. These decision types are described below. In general, only RMP-level decisions will be made as part of the RMP process. The BLM's evaluation of identified alternatives will be documented in one EIS (for both the Billings and Pillar RMPs), as required by NEPA.

## **Future RMP- level Decisions**

Future RMP-level decisions will be made on a broad scale. These decisions will identify management direction and guide actions for the next 10 to 20 years within the planning areas. The RMPs will provide a comprehensive, flexible framework for managing the numerous demands on resources managed by the BLM.

The vision for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM planning areas will be described in the RMPs in terms of desired outcomes, which represent one of two categories of RMP-level decisions. Desired outcomes will be expressed in terms of specific goals, standards and objectives. Goals are broad statements of desired outcomes, such as ensuring sustainable development. Standards

are descriptions of conditions or the degree of function required, such as land health standards. Objectives are specific, quantifiable and measurable desired conditions for resources (example: managing sagebrush communities to achieve a certain canopy cover by 2015).

The second category of RMP-level decisions, allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes, will be expressed in the RMPs as allowable uses, actions needed, and land tenure decisions. Livestock grazing, administrative designations (for example ACECs) and land disposal are examples of some RMP-level decisions in this category.

### **Future Implementation Decisions**

The RMP makes broad-scale decisions that guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation, often characterized as project level or activity level decisions, and represent the BLM's final approval of on-the-ground actions. Implementation decisions require a more detailed, site-specific environmental analysis that tiers to the EIS prepared for the RMPs. These decisions generally constitute final approval of on-the-ground actions to proceed. An example of an implementation decision is the development and management of a recreation site. In some circumstances, site-specific implementation decisions may be made through the RMP process.

### **Special Designations, Including Nominations**

The special designations section of the RMP will include a discussion of designated areas such as ACECs, WSRs, and WSAs. It also will include new special management area designations, including special recreation management areas, ACECs and river segments eligible and suitable for inclusion in the National WSR System.

## **PLANNING CRITERIA**

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-2) require development of planning criteria to guide preparation of an RMP. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the preparation of the plan. They ensure the plan is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state and local agencies and governmental entities and American Indian tribes.

The following preliminary planning criteria were developed internally and included in the preparation plan for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar RMPs. Scoping introduced the planning criteria to the public for review and comment through the *Federal Register* Notice of Intent in May 2008. Although no specific criteria differing from those identified below was suggested by the public during scoping, several commentors suggested that the BLM use criteria and standards for as many decisions as possible, making it easier to manage site-specific activities during implementation-level management phases. Therefore, the following planning criteria will be used to guide the RMP process. In addition, the BLM will continue to consult with agencies and tribal governments on issues that will support an effective planning process and offer consistency with similar processes within and adjacent to the Billings RMP and Pompeys Pillar NM RMP planning areas.

- The plans will be completed in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws.

- The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act standards.
- The plans will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the BiFO and PPNM.
- The RMPs/EIS will incorporate by reference the *Montana/Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*; the *Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota*; the *1992 Oil & Gas EIS/Amendment of the Powder River, Billings, & South Dakota RMPs*; the *Montana Final Statewide Oil and Gas EIS and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plan*; the *Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan*; *Best Management Practices for Forestry in Montana*; the *Montana Streamside Management Zone Law and Rules*, and when finalized, *the Supplemental EIS to the Montana Statewide Oil and Gas Amendment* and the *Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides EIS*.
- The RMPs/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior wilderness study area findings that affect public lands in the planning area.
- The planning process will include early consultation meetings with FWS during the development of the plans.
- The plans will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
- The Billings plan will incorporate the requirements of the BLM Handbook H-1624-1, *Planning for Fluid Minerals*.
- The RMPs/EIS will incorporate the requirements of the interagency reference guide entitled *Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenarios and Cumulative Effects Analysis* developed by the Rocky Mountain Federal Leadership Forum on NEPA, Oil and Gas, and Air Quality.
- The plans will recognize the state of Montana's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
- To the extent possible, goals and objectives in the plans for plants and wildlife (including special status species) will incorporate or respond to goals and objectives from established recovery plans, conservation strategies, strategic plans, etc.
- Decisions in the plans will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
- The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with bureau-wide standards and program guidance.
- Geospatial data will be automated within a geographic information system (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.

- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.
- Best management practices (BMPs) for oil & gas, road drainage, grazing, Water Quality BMPs for Montana Forests, fire rehab, wind energy, power lines, etc. will be added.
- Native American Consultation & Coordination - Two American Indian reservations adjoin the planning the area - the Crow and the Northern Cheyenne. Also, other tribes located in Montana, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming will be contacted during the scoping process to determine what level of participation they would like to have during the RMPs process. Close coordination will take place to see that the tribes' needs are considered, analyzed, and that the BLM fulfills its trust responsibilities.
- The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will be consulted on any potential affect of these plans on cultural resources under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470f) and under the National Programmatic Agreement.

## **DATA SUMMARY/DATA GAPS**

As part of the RMP planning, evaluation and data collection process, the BLM has inventoried available information and identified data needs for travel management, potential designation of wild and scenic rivers, cultural (ethnographic) inventories, vegetation and oil/gas development potential. Efforts are underway to collect data in all the identified areas. However, in most cases, existing resource information available in the Billings Field Office will be used in preparation of the RMPs/EIS.

Both new data obtained and existing resource information available in the Billings Field Office, including geographic information system theme maps, will be used in formulating resource objectives and management alternatives. Information is being compiled and put into digital format for use in the planning process and development of resource maps for the RMPs/EIS. Information already in a digital format must be updated to the same standards required for newly entered data. Because this information is imperative to quantify resources, to update maps and to manipulate information during alternative formulation, this process must be completed before actual analysis can begin. New data generated during the RMP process will be used to address planning issues and will meet applicable established standards. All new data collected will have information about the data (metadata) stored in a database. All metadata will meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards and will meet either BLM national data standards or the standard of the appropriate data collection agency.

## **SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Scoping is the first step in the planning process. Several more steps are necessary to complete the resource management plans including analysis of the management situation, formulation of alternatives, estimating the effects of alternatives, selection of the preferred alternative and selection of the resource management plan. Following is a brief description of each of these steps in the planning process.

### **Analysis of the Management Situation**

The next step in the process, analysis of the management situation (AMS), will involve the use of existing information and data from new inventories to describe the resources within the planning areas, current management of the areas, and opportunities to resolve the issues identified during scoping. This analysis provides a reference for developing and evaluating alternatives. The AMS will occur from July to December 2008. The public will be informed of this process through updates as the team prepares the AMS.

## **Formulation of Alternatives**

Alternatives will be formulated by identifying a range of reasonable combinations of resource uses and management practices that address issues identified during scoping and that offer distinct choices among potential management strategies. This will include a no action alternative (continuation of current management). The formulation of alternatives will occur from January to March 2009.

## **Estimating the Effects of Alternatives**

Once the alternatives are developed, the next step involves estimating the effects of each alternative on the environment and the management situation. This step will occur from April 2009 to February 2010. The public will be involved through updates as the team prepares the RMPs and EIS.

## **Selection of the Preferred Alternative**

The Billings field manager will recommend to the state director a preferred alternative that best resolves planning issues and promotes balanced multiple use objectives. The state director will approve the selection of the preferred alternative along with other alternatives under consideration through release of the draft RMPs and EIS. This step will begin with the release of the draft document in April 2010 for a 90-day public comment period ending in June 2010. The public will be involved through news releases, newsletters and open houses.

## **Selection of the Resource Management Plan**

Based on the information in the draft plans and public comments, the BLM will select a proposed RMP for the Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM planning areas, respectively, and present them to the public as the final RMPs/EIS. This step will occur from September 2010 through release of the final plan in May 2011. The public will be involved through news releases and a 30-day protest period on the final document and a governor's consistency review.

At the conclusion of the public protest period and governor's consistency review, the BLM will resolve all protests and any inconsistencies. With resolution of all protests and inconsistencies, the approved RMPs and RODs will be published. The availability of these documents will be announced in the *Federal Register*.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The public is invited and encouraged to participate throughout the planning process for the RMPs. Opportunities to stay informed and participate include:

- Reviewing the progress of the RMPs at the official RMP website at [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html), which will be updated with information, documents, and announcements for the duration of the planning process, and
- Requesting to be added to or to remain on the official project mailing list in order to receive future mailings and information. Anyone wishing to be added to or deleted from the distribution list or requesting further information may e-mail a request to [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov) or contact Kim Prill, RMP Project Manager at BLM, Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings MT 59101. Please provide your name, mailing address, and e-mail address, as well as your preferred method to receive information.

# APPENDIX A

## Federal Register Notice of Intent

28150

Federal Register / Vol. 73, No. 95 / Thursday, May 15, 2008 / Notices

### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

#### Bureau of Land Management

[MT-019-1610-DO-065E]

#### Montana State Office; Notice of Intent To Prepare Two Resource Management Plans and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Billings Field Office and Pompeys Pillar National Monument, Located in South Central Montana

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior. -

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Billings Field Office intends to prepare two Resource Management Plans (RMPs) with a single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for lands and resources managed by the Billings Field Office and for Pompeys Pillar National Monument (PPNM). Through this notice, public scoping is also being announced. The RMPs will replace the existing Billings Resource Area RMP, dated September 1984, as amended.

**DATES:** This notice initiates the public scoping process. Comments and resource information should be submitted to the BLM within 90 days of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. However, collaboration with the public will continue throughout the process. The BLM will announce public scoping meetings to identify relevant issues through local news media, newsletters, and the BLM Web site at [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html) at least 15 days prior to each meeting. The minutes and list of attendees for each meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days to any participant who wishes to clarify the views they expressed. Formal opportunities for public participation will be provided upon publication of the draft RMPs/EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101 or online at [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information, and/or to be added to the mailing list, contact Kim Prill, RMP Team Leader, Billings Field Office, at (406) 896-5199 or by e-mail to: [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- **Web Site:** [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html)
- **E-mail:**

[Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov)

- **Fax:** (406) 896-5281.
- **Mail:** BLM Billings Field Office, Attention: Billings/PPNM RMPs, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, Montana 59101.

Respondents' comments, including names and street addresses, will be available for public review at the Billings Field Office during regular business hours 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the RMPs/EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. 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. If you wish to withhold your name from public review, please state so prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Formal scoping comments should be submitted within 90 days of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

The BLM intends to prepare two RMPs, with one associated EIS, for the Billings Field Office RMP and the PPNM. The RMPs/EIS will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the BLM management policies. The land-area to be covered under the Billings RMP/EIS is located in the south-central part of Montana in Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland and Yellowstone Counties and portions of Big Horn County. The Billings Field Office planning area also includes administration of 6,340 acres of public land inside the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range in Big Horn County, Wyoming. There are approximately 427,200 acres of public lands and 906,000 acres of federal mineral estate in the planning area to be addressed in

the Billings RMP. Because the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1610-1) requires that all national monuments have a stand-alone RMP/EIS level plan, the PPNM RMP will be analyzed in conjunction with the Billings RMP and incorporated as a stand-alone section. The 51 acres of public land designated as the PPNM on January 17, 2001 is located along the southern bank of the Yellowstone River, about 30 miles east of Billings, Montana. Nearby communities include the towns of Pompeys Pillar, Worden, Huntley, Shepherd, and the city of Billings in Yellowstone County.

This notice also announces the public scoping for the planning efforts. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, tribal and national needs and concerns. The public scoping process will identify planning issues and develop planning criteria, including an evaluation of the existing RMP, in the context of the needs and interests of the public. These issues also guide the planning process. Comments on issues and planning criteria may be submitted in writing to the BLM at any public scoping meeting or by using one of the methods listed above.

Preliminary issues and management concerns have been identified by the BLM personnel, other agencies, and in meetings with individuals and user groups. This information represents the BLM's knowledge to date regarding the existing issues and concerns with current land management. The major issue themes that will be addressed in this planning effort include:

- Vegetation management.
- Wildlife and fisheries management.
- Special status species.
- Commercial uses:
  - a. Energy development (oil and gas leasing, coal leasing, wind development).
  - b. Livestock grazing.
  - c. Forest products and areas within community wildfire protection plans.
  - d. Rights-of-way and land use authorizations.
  - e. Locatable and saleable minerals.
  - f. Commercial special recreation permits.
- Recreation management.
- Travel management and access.
- Special management area designations, including areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs).

After public comments are gathered as to what issues the RMPs/EIS should address, they will be placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the RMPs/EIS;

**APPENDIX B**  
**Media Distribution List**  
**For**  
**Billings and Pompeys Pillar NM RMPS**

Montana Associated Press  
Lovell (Wyoming) Chronicle  
Carbon County News  
Big Horn County News  
Stillwater County News  
Yellowstone County News  
Big Timber Pioneer  
Billings Gazette  
Roundup  
Laurel Outlook  
KULR  
KTVQ  
New Northwest Broadcasters  
Yellowstone Public Radio  
Fisher Broadcasting (KBLG)  
Northern Ag Network  
KDHN (Hardin)  
KBSR – Big Sky Radio (Laurel)  
Red Lodge Radio

**APPENDIX C**  
**News Release - Scoping**



Date: May 16, 2008  
Contact: Mary Apple, 406-896-5258

**Billings Field Office to Revise Land Use Plans**

The Bureau of Land Management's Billings Field Office intends to prepare two resource management plans (RMPs). One plan will be specific to Pompeys Pillar National Monument and the other to the Billings Field Office. The plans will provide future direction for managing BLM-administered public lands in Carbon, Yellowstone, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Musselshell, Wheatland, Golden Valley, and portions of Big Horn counties, Mont., and Pompeys Pillar National Monument.

The Billings RMP will cover about 427,290 acres of federally managed surface and 906,084 acres of federal mineral estate in south-central Montana. The Billings RMP area also includes 6,340 acres of public land inside the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range in Big Horn County, Wyo. The lands to be covered under the Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP are the 51 acres designated as Pompeys Pillar National Monument.

As part of the plan preparation, one environmental impact statement (EIS) will also be prepared. The Billings Field Office wants the development of the RMPs and the EIS to be a collaborative, community-based effort with a full range of public participation. The BLM encourages public participation early and throughout the process to help it determine the future management of public lands in the area.

The first phase of plan preparation is the scoping period. During scoping, the public is asked to comment on issues and identify management opportunities to be addressed in the plan. The BLM will hold scoping meetings later this summer at Pompeys Pillar National Monument and in Big Timber, Billings, Bridger, Red Lodge, and Roundup, Mont., and Lovell, Wyo. The dates and times of those meetings will be publicized at that time.

The formal scoping period will end in late August 2008; however, comments and input are welcome throughout the planning process. Written comments should be sent to: Billings/PPNM RMPs, Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101; fax – 406-896-5281. Comments may also be submitted via email to: [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov). The website for the RMP is [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html). For more information, contact Kim Prill, RMP Team Leader, at (406) 896-5199.

###

# APPENDIX D

## Scoping Package

### Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

#### What is a Resource Management Plan?

A resource management plan (RMP) provides the overall framework for managing BLM-administered lands. The Montana/Dakotas Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Billings Field Office is preparing two RMPs. One RMP will be specific to Pompeys Pillar National Monument (PPNM); the Billings RMP will address the entire planning area in the Billings Field Office. One environmental impact statement (EIS) will be associated with both RMPs, but there will be a separate record of decision (ROD) issued for each plan. Currently, lands within the Billings Field Office, including PPNM, are managed according to the 1984 Billings Resource Area RMP, as amended.

#### Where is the planning area?

The Billings RMP will guide management for the approximately 427,200 acres of federally managed surface and about 906,000 subsurface (mineral estate) acres administered by the Billings Field Office in Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties. The Billings Field Office planning area also includes administration of 6,340 acres of public land inside the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range in Big Horn County, Wyoming.

The Pompeys Pillar National Monument (PPNM) RMP will include the 51 acres of public land designated as a national monument on January 17, 2001. Pompeys Pillar NM is located along the southern bank of the Yellowstone River, about 30 miles east of Billings, Montana. It was designated a national monument for the purpose of protecting the ethnographic, historic and archaeological values associated with the massive sandstone outcrop known as Pompeys Pillar.



## **What is the Scoping Process?**

Scoping is a collaborative public involvement process in which the BLM asks the public and other agencies to identify planning issues to be addressed in the planning process. The scoping process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register in May 2008. Comments or information gathered from scoping will be used in drafting the RMP revision. While comments or information can be submitted at any time during the planning process, they are most helpful if received by August 22, 2008. Additional opportunities for formal public involvement will be available upon the issuance of the Draft RMPs/EIS.

## **What are planning issues and criteria?**

Scoping introduces preliminary planning issues and planning criteria to the public for comment. A planning issue is a matter of opportunity or concern over resource management activities or land use that entails alternatives between which to choose.

Planning criteria guide development of the plans by helping to define the decision space or “sideboards” of the planning process. The planning criteria will help BLM develop a reasonable range of alternatives that are tailored to the issues identified in the scoping process by the public and BLM. More information about preliminary planning issues and criteria is provided in this scoping package.

## **How can I get involved?**

An integral component of the RMP process is public and community involvement. As part of scoping, we will hold open houses across the planning area, invite the participation of cooperating agencies, and undertake a comprehensive outreach effort to solicit information and involvement from the public. Comments/information can be submitted using the self-mailer included in this package or by submitting comments using any of the following methods:

Web Site: [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html)  
Email: [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov)  
Fax: (406) 896-5281  
Mail: Bureau of Land Management  
Billings Field Office  
Attn: Billings/PPNM RMPs  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

For further information or to have your name added to the RMP mailing list, contact Kim Prill, RMP Team Leader, at (406) 896-5199 or email: [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov). The mailing list will be used to notify the public about the progress of the planning effort as well as additional opportunities for public involvement and comment.

The web site can be used as a source of information for participating in the planning process, background documents, maps, meeting announcements, published bulletins and other RMP-related documents/information.

## **Will my comments be made public?**

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, will be available for public review. If you wish to withhold personal identifying information from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you must clearly state, in the first line of your written comment, “CONFIDENTIALITY REQUESTED.” Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations or businesses, will be available for public review.

## BLM's 9 – Step Planning Process

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- 1** Planning Issues Identification
- 2** Planning Criteria Development
- 3** Data and Information Collection
- 4** Analysis of the Management Situation
- 5** Alternatives Formulation
- 6** Alternatives Assessment
- 7** Preferred Alternative Selection
- 8** Management Plan Selection
- 9** Implementation and Monitoring

**1. Planning Issues Identification.** Issues and concerns are identified through a scoping process that includes the public, Indian tribes, organizations, other federal agencies, and state and local governments. *Summer 2008*

**2. Planning Criteria Development.** Planning criteria are created to ensure decisions are made to address the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria will be derived from a variety of sources and may be updated and changed as planning proceeds. The public has an opportunity to review and comment on the planning criteria during scoping before they are approved.

*Summer 2008*

**3. Data and Information Collection.** Data and information for the resources in the planning area are collected based on the planning criteria. *Ongoing*

**4. Analysis of the Management Situation.** The current management of resources in the planning area is assessed. *Fall/Winter 2008*

**5. Alternatives Formulation.** A range of reasonable management alternatives that address issues identified during scoping is developed. *Winter/Spring 2009*

**6. Alternatives Assessment.** The effects of each alternative are estimated. *Summer/Fall 2009*

**7. Preferred Alternative Selection.** The alternative that best resolves planning issues is identified as the preferred alternative. *Summer/Fall 2009*

**8. Management Plan Selection.**

a. Issue the Draft RMPs/EIS – 90 day public review. *Spring 2010*

b. Public comment analysis. Modify as necessary the Draft RMPs/EIS. Publish the Proposed RMPs/Final EIS – 30 day public review. *Spring 2011*

c. Two separate records of decision (RODs) will be signed to approve the RMPs/EIS. *Summer/Fall 2011*

**9. Implementation and Monitoring.** The management measures outlined in the approved plans are implemented on the ground, and monitoring is conducted to test their effectiveness. Changes are made as necessary to achieve desired results. *Ongoing after RMPs are approved*

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

Planning regulations covering public land managed by the BLM (43 CFR 1610.4-2) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all RMPs or revisions. Planning criteria are the constraints or “ground rules” that guide and direct the development of the plan. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided.

Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations; agency guidance; the result of consultation and coordination with the public, Native American Indian tribes, other federal, state and local agencies and governmental entities; and analysis of information pertinent to the planning area. After gathering comments on planning criteria, the BLM will finalize the criteria and provide feedback to the public on the criteria to be used throughout the planning process.

## Preliminary Planning Issues

A planning issue is a matter of opportunity or concern over resource management activities or land use that is well defined or topically discrete and entails alternatives between which to choose. This definition suggests that one entity or more is interested in a resource on federal land, that each entity may have different values for the resource, and that there are different ways (alternatives) in which to resolve the competition or demand.

Some of the preliminary planning issues and questions to be addressed are listed below. This list is not comprehensive, but includes some of the foremost issues currently facing the Billings Field Office.

- **Vegetation management:** *How will public lands be managed to provide desired plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy cycle, and nutrient cycle) provided by the vegetative community within rangelands and forests?*
- **Wildlife and fisheries management:** *How will public lands be managed to conserve wildlife species, maintain or improve their habitats and control invasive species?*
- **Special status species:** *How will public lands be managed to conserve and recover threatened, endangered, proposed and sensitive species?*
- **Commercial uses:** *How will BLM determine what public lands will be available for commercial activities and how will those activities be managed while protecting the integrity of other resources? For example:*
  - Energy development (oil and gas leasing, coal leasing, wind development)
  - Livestock grazing
  - Forest products and areas within community wildfire protection plans
  - Rights-of-way and land use authorizations
  - Locatable and saleable minerals
  - Commercial special recreation permits
- **Recreation management:** *How will recreation be managed in the planning area to provide for the use and enjoyment of public lands while protecting important resource values and ensuring user safety?*
- **Travel management and access:** *How will BLM develop a planned and manageable travel and transportation network?*
- **Special management area designations:** *What methods will be used to identify public lands that require special management attention to protect resource values, including areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) and wild and scenic rivers?*

## Resources and Resource Uses in the Planning Area

The BLM manages and administers resources and uses throughout the planning area. To help you gain a better understanding of the diverse landscape in this area, we have provided a list of the various resources and resource uses.

### Physical and Biological Resources

Air Quality

Cultural Resources

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Geology

Paleontology

Special Status Species

Soil

Vegetation Communities (i.e., riparian/wetlands; woodland/forest communities; and invasive, non-native plant species)

Visual Resources

Water

Wild Horses and Burros

### Resource Uses

Minerals (i.e., coal, coalbed natural gas, oil and gas, locatable and saleable minerals, etc.)

Lands and Realty (i.e., rights-of-way, easements, land acquisition and disposal, etc.).

Livestock Grazing

Recreation

Transportation and Access

Renewable Energy (i.e., wind energy, geothermal resources, solar power/energy)

Fire Management

Special Designations (i.e., ACECs, recreation management areas, and WSAs).

Social and Economic Conditions

## Your Public Lands....

### Did You Know....

- The Billings Field Office manages approximately 427,200 acres of public land and about 906,000 acres of federal mineral estate (sub-surface) in 8 counties in southcentral Montana.
- The Billings Field Office also administers 6,340 acres of public land inside the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range (PMWHR) in Big Horn County, Wyoming.
- The planning area is bisected by several major rivers: the Bighorn, Yellowstone, Musselshell, Clarks Fork, Stillwater and Boulder rivers. The area includes portions of several mountain ranges: the Snowies, Little Snowies, Belts, Crazies, Absarokas, Beartooths, and Pryors.
- Except for several contiguous blocks of land in Carbon and Musselshell counties, most of the public lands in the planning area are scattered tracts, intermingled with private and state lands.
- The planning area is abundant with natural, cultural and historic resources and special areas, including:
  - ✓ Pompeys Pillar National Monument (51 acres)
  - ✓ Nine areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs)
  - ✓ Four wilderness study areas (WSAs)
  - ✓ Segments of the Lewis & Clark and Nez Perce National Historic Trails
  - ✓ Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range
- The planning area provides a variety of commercial uses including: oil and gas leasing, coal leasing, livestock grazing, wind development opportunities, forest products, locatable and saleable minerals and commercial special recreation permits (outfitter/guides).
- In 2007, almost 300,000 visitors enjoyed public lands in the Billings Field Office and PPNM. Activities most frequently enjoyed include:
  - ✓ Camping & picnicking
  - ✓ Hunting
  - ✓ Non-motorized travel (mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding and backpacking)
  - ✓ Off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel
  - ✓ Cultural tourism (interpretation, education & nature study)

**APPENDIX E**  
**News Release - Open Houses**



Date: August 4, 2008  
Contact: Mary Apple, 406-896-5258

**BLM Hosts RMP Open Houses**

The Bureau of Land Management Billings Field Office is hosting seven scoping open houses in August as part of its preparation of two resource management plans (RMPs). During scoping, the public is asked to comment on issues and identify management opportunities to be addressed in the plan.

The meeting schedule is as follows:

- August 11--Pompeys Pillar National Monument in the log building;
- August 12—Bridger, Senior Center, 118 C Street;
- August 13—Big Timber, Carnegie Public Library, 314 McLeod Street;
- August 14—Red Lodge, Senior Center, 207 S. Villard;
- August 18—Lovell, Wyoming, National Park Service, 20 Highway 14A East;
- August 19--Roundup, Emergency Services Building, 704 1<sup>st</sup> Street East;
- August 20-- Billings, Hampton Inn, 5110 Southgate Drive.

All of the open houses will run from 7 to 9 p.m.

The two RMPS, one specific to Pompeys Pillar National Monument and the other to the Billings Field Office, will provide future direction for managing BLM-administered public lands in Carbon, Yellowstone, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Musselshell, Wheatland, Golden Valley, and portions of Big Horn counties, Montana, and Pompeys Pillar National Monument. As part of the plans' preparation, one environmental impact statement (EIS) will also be prepared.

The Billings Field Office wants the development of the RMPs and the EIS to be a collaborative, community-based effort with a full range of public participation. The BLM encourages public participation early and throughout the process to help it determine the future management of public lands in the area. The formal scoping period ends in late August 2008; however, comments and input are welcome throughout the planning process. For more information, contact Kim Prill, RMP Team Leader, at (406) 896-5199. ###

**APPENDIX F**  
**Post Card – Mailer Announcing Open Houses**

**Scoping Open Houses**

All meetings are from 7 to 9 p.m.



Bureau of Land Management  
Billings and Pompeys Pillar  
National Monument  
Resource Management Plans

Monday, August 11	Pompeys Pillar National Monument — <i>log building</i> <i>Approx. 30 miles east of Billings</i>
Tuesday, August 12	Bridger — <i>Senior Center, 118 C Street</i>
Wednesday, August 13	Big Timber — <i>Carnegie Public Library, Community Room</i> <i>314 McLeod St.</i>
Thursday, August 14	Red Lodge — <i>Senior Center, 207 S. Villard</i>
Monday, August 18	Lovell WY — <i>National Park Service</i> <i>Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area Visitor Center</i> <i>20 Highway 14A East</i>
Tuesday, August 19	Roundup — <i>Emergency Services Bldg (Ambulance Barn)</i> <i>704 1st St. East</i>
Wednesday, August 20	Billings — <i>Hampton Inn, 5110 Southgate Drive</i>

For more information call 406-896-5199 or go to [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html)

**APPENDIX G**  
**Sample Flyer – Open Houses**

**Do you use BLM public lands?  
Are you interested in their future?**

**Please help the BLM in the  
development of resource management plans  
for the Billings Field Office and  
Pompeys Pillar National Monument**

**Attend the scoping open house  
in your community**

**Wednesday, August 20  
7 – 9 p.m.  
Billings, Montana  
Hampton Inn — 5110 Southgate Drive**



**For more information call 406-896-5199  
or go to  
[http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html)**

# APPENDIX H

## BLM Comment Form

### Bureau of Land Management Billings Field Office



### Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Resource Management Plans

The Billings Field Office is committed to listening to and learning from our neighbors, friends, and stakeholders, each of whom belong to a community of interest defined by a common concern for the future of our public lands. The information you provide will be helpful at this point in the planning process. We have provided some sample questions, or you may choose to use your own format for submitting comments or information.

To be most helpful, comments/information should be submitted on or before August 22, 2008. You may use this self-mailer or any of the following methods to submit comments:

Web Site: [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office.html)

Email: [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov)

Fax: (406) 896-5281

Mail: Bureau of Land Management  
Billings Field Office  
Attn: Billings/PPNM RMPs  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

Please complete and return this information/comment card, even if you are not interested in future updates, so we can update our RMP mailing list. Simply refold this mailer to display the Business Reply Mailer, seal it with tape at the top (making sure the tape does not cover the bar code), and mail it. No postage is necessary.

I am NOT interested in this project, please remove me from your list (complete and return to BLM).

I am interested in receiving information – keep me on the mailing list (complete and return to BLM).

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer receiving ONLY e-mail updates/documents (do not mail paper copies to me)

My e-mail address is: \_\_\_\_\_

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, will be available for public review. If you wish to withhold personal identifying information from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you must clearly state, in the first line of your written comment, "CONFIDENTIALITY REQUESTED." Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations or businesses, will be available for public review.

1) What issues or concerns do you have regarding public land resources or uses within the Billings Field Office and/or Pompeys Pillar National Monument?

2) Various options will be studied for the planning area, including areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) and Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs). To address issues or concerns you identified above, what changes would you make?

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3) If you suggested changes or recommendations in any of your responses, what do you feel the benefits would be to: public land resources, public land users, businesses, communities, etc.?

4) Additional issues, comments or suggestions?

Feel free to send additional information or submit comments in your own format.

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## Appendix I Scoping Categories

Subject Category or Subcategory	Category No.	Subcategory No.
<b><i>Resources – General</i></b>	<b><i>1000</i></b>	
Air Quality	1050	
Climate Change	1070	
Cultural Heritage	1100	
Fish and Wildlife	1150	
Special Status Species (Animals, Fish, Plants)	1300	
Prairie Dog		1301
Sage Grouse		1302
Threatened, Endangered & Sensitive Species		1303
Soil	1350	
Vegetation/Native Plants	1400	
Riparian		1401
Noxious and Invasive Plants		1403
Wildland Fire	1460	
Wild Horses and Burros	1470	
Water	1500	
<b><i>Resource Uses – General</i></b>	<b><i>2000</i></b>	
Forestry	2050	
Lands and Realty	2100	
Access		2101
Land Tenure		2102
Utility and Communication Corridors		2103
Livestock Grazing	2150	
Energy and Minerals	2200	
Oil and Gas		2210
Coal		2211
Wind Energy		2215
Recreation	2250	
Camping		2251
Viewshed		2252
Hunting and Fishing		2255
User Fees		2256
Trails and Travel Management (Transportation)	2300	
Motorized		2310
Non-Motorized		2311
Airstrips		2312
<b><i>Special Designations</i></b>	<b><i>4000</i></b>	
ACECs	4050	
Wild and Scenic Rivers	4200	
Wilderness Study Areas	4250	
Wilderness Characteristics	4300	
Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range	4350	
National Historic Trails	4400	
<b><i>Social and Economic Conditions</i></b>		
Economics	5050	
Social	5100	
<b><i>Process – General</i></b>	<b><i>6000</i></b>	
Management	6050	
Implementation		6051
Sustainability		6052
Protection		6053
Restoration		6054
Multiple Use		6055
Planning/NEPA	6150	
Outside Scope	7000	