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**BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS**  
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**March 29, 2013**

**OP-ED**

**Contact:** Jim Sparks  
(406) 896-5241

Dear Editor:

Our public lands offer so many opportunities for us to enjoy and as the Bureau of Land Management, we are constantly asking ourselves what places are suitable for what uses, ranging from conservation to hunting to energy development. Land use plans and planning decisions are the basis for every action the BLM takes in carrying out its multiple-use mission. That's why today's release of the *Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Draft Resource Management Plan Revision and Environmental Impact Statement* is a huge milestone.

A quality planning effort like this takes years to create and significant contributions from a variety of people were vital. Those who contributed to this effort include counties, state agencies, tribes, the BLM's Eastern Montana Resource Advisory Council, and other federal agencies.

Decisions made on managing America's public lands and their resources don't just happen; it takes engaged citizens like you to give your time and share your perspectives to help managers like me make informed decisions.

After almost five years in the making, the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Draft RMP/EIS considers and analyzes four alternatives that address future management of approximately 434,000 acres of federal surface and almost two million acres of federal mineral estate in south-central Montana and a small portion of Big Horn County, Wyoming. Also included in the planning area is Pompeys Pillar National Monument which was established in 2001 by executive proclamation of the President.

One of the many issues addressed in the Draft RMP/EIS is conservation measures and actions for the Greater Sage-Grouse. This includes a comprehensive list of mitigation measures, conservation actions and cooperative activities to protect and enhance Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.

Of the four alternatives we developed in this draft plan, Alternative D is identified as the BLM's preferred alternative. The preferred alternative aims to find balance for the variety of activities

that can occur on this landscape. However, our range of alternatives offers other approaches that we'd very much like your input on.

We have tried to make it as convenient as possible for you to comment during the 90-day public comment period, which closes on June 28, 2013. CDs of the entire draft RMP/EIS are available or you can visit our RMP website at [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings\\_field\\_office/rmp.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office/rmp.html) to view the draft plan and other important information.

The public may submit written comments to the Draft RMP/EIS by any of the following methods:

- During open houses
- Via email to [Billings\\_PompeysPillar\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov)
- Mailed directly or delivered to:

Draft Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS  
Bureau of Land Management, Billings Field Office  
Carolyn Sherve-Bybee, RMP Team Lead  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

Currently, public meetings in open house format are scheduled to run from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in five south-central Montana communities and in Lovell, Wyoming. The open house forum will include introductions and a brief BLM presentation, but the primary purpose will be to offer an opportunity to talk individually with various BLM resource specialists and managers one-on-one. Please watch this paper for a precise list of meeting times and locations, or check the website. You can also call the Billings Field Office at (406) 896-5013 and we'll be happy to help you.

We do not make decisions concerning future management of public lands lightly and that is why we have a process to engage anyone who is interested. So please join us in this effort and provide comments that will help us make the best final plan possible.

Sincerely,



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