



Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Resource Management Plan Revision

FACT SHEET: Overview of the Planning Process

Program Contact: Carolyn Sherve-Bybee, RMP Team Lead (406) 896-5234

What is a Resource Management Plan?

A resource management plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides a landscape level framework for managing Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands and federal minerals. Currently, lands within the Billings Field Office are managed according to the 1984 Billings Resource Area RMP, as amended.

This Draft RMP/EIS is a combined effort that addresses both the Billings Field Office and the Pompeys Pillar National Monument in a consolidated RMP and associated EIS and is titled (and referenced throughout) as the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument DRMP/EIS. Because these are combined planning efforts, upon issuance of the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Proposed RMP and Final EIS in 2014, and subsequent reviews and resolution of protests, if any, two separate Records of Decision (RODs) will be issued for each area.

Where is the Planning Area?

The Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Draft RMP and associated EIS will guide management for approximately 434,154 acres of BLM-managed surface and about 1,839,782 acres of federal mineral estate managed by BLM within the following Montana counties: Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, and Yellowstone, Montana, and portions of Big Horn County, Wyoming.

Where We've Been . . .

After many years of hard work by BLM staff, Cooperating Agencies, the Resource Advisory Council, and other engaged parties, the Billings and Pompeys Pillar Draft RMP/EIS is ready for your review and comment. This Draft reflects a great deal of planning and analysis, as well as a significant investment of time from our cooperators and resource advisory council members who participated in the process. Described below are some of the important milestones in the planning process that helped us get to this point.

Scoping

In the May 15, 2008, the BLM Billings Field Office initiated scoping for the RMP revision. A series of public scoping meetings were held across the planning area to obtain public input. The BLM reviewed comments and compiled a scoping report. Comments and information gathered from scoping were used in drafting this RMP revision.

In 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act, but that listing the species was precluded by the need to address other species first. One reason for the USFWS determination was the need for "improved regulatory mechanisms" to ensure species conservation. The principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM are resource decisions in land management plans. The BLM has joined forces at the national level to develop coordinated long-term conservation measures and actions for the Greater Sage-Grouse in land management plans. This draft plan addresses a range of alternatives to address Greater Sage-Grouse conservation on BLM-administered surface and federal mineral estate within the planning area.

Analysis of the Management Situation

In September 2008, the BLM began to prepare the analysis of the management situation (AMS), which describes the current conditions and trends of the resources, uses, and social and economic conditions in the planning area. The main purpose of the AMS is to identify what needs to be improved by looking at the conditions and uses of the resources as well as the laws, regulations, and policies under which the BLM manages those resources and uses. The AMS, along with public scoping comments, was used by BLM specialists and cooperators to help formulate alternatives and was the main body of material incorporated into Chapter 3 of the draft plan.

The scoping report, AMS, and other documents can be found at:
www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office/rmp.html

Alternative Formulation

In the context of an RMP, alternatives are different management options the BLM may choose to manage lands in the planning area. One management option (alternative) emphasizes resource protection while another alternative option emphasizes resource production. The resource protection alternative would favor non-consumptive or non-degrading uses. The resource production alternative would favor consumptive uses, such as increased production of mineral resources.

The BLM studied the AMS and public comments, and met with cooperating agencies and resource advisory council members to determine how best to craft alternatives to address the issues, respond to the management opportunities, and to change resource conditions where appropriate. The completed alternatives were then analyzed for impacts and a preferred alternative (D) was identified. The preferred alternative seeks to balance resource protection with resource production in consideration of the economic reliance of local communities on public lands and the way of life provided by public lands.

Where we are now . . .

A notice of availability announcing the release of the draft RMP/EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 29, 2013, initiating the 90-day public comment period. To be considered, comments must be marked received by **June 28, 2013**. You may request a compact disk (CD) of the Draft RMP by contacting the Billings Field Office at (406) 896-5013 or at the following email address: Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov

Comments can be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Written comments may be submitted during public meetings; or
- Written comments may be submitted electronically via email to: Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov or
- Written comments may be mailed directly or delivered to:

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

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised 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 from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Where We Are Going Next . . .

The public comment period is a very important part of the planning process. The comments and information you provide will be considered in making changes to the draft plan. These changes will result in a proposed plan, which will be made available in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The proposed plan will be made available for review before an approved plan is issued with a record of decision.

We will continue to provide updates on the status of our planning process through our website and newsletters. Thanks for your participation, and we encourage you to remain involved throughout the RMP revision process.