PROPOSED

Butte Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

VOLUME I

September 2008

BLM

Butte Field Office

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Butte Field Office
106 North Parkmont
Butte, Montana 59701-3388
Telephone: 406-533-7600
http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/butte_field_office.html

In Reply To:
1610 (070)

September 2008

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (Proposed RMP/Final EIS) for the Butte Field Office. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, taking into account public comments received during this planning effort. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS provides a framework for the future management direction and appropriate use of the Butte Field Office, located in Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Park, and Silver Bow counties. The document contains both land use planning decisions and implementation decisions to guide the BLM's management of the Butte Field Office. Both the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and the Draft RMP/EIS are available on the Butte RMP website at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/butte_field_office.html.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS have been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Federal land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is largely based on Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS, which was released on June 8, 2007. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS contains the Proposed Plan, a summary of changes made between the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS, predictable impacts of the Proposed Plan, a summary of the written and verbal comments received during the public review period for the Draft RMP/EIS, and responses to the comments.

Pursuant to the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the Butte RMP planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by approval of this Proposed RMP and the land use plan decisions contained within it may protest the plan within 30 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. For further information on filing a protest, please see the accompanying protest regulations in the pages that follow (labeled as Attachment #1). The regulations specify the required elements of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents. To aid in ensuring the completeness of your protest, a protest checklist is attached to this letter (labeled as Attachment #2). This is also available online on the Butte RMP website. Press releases on the actual date ending the protest period will be sent to local and regional media contacts and information will be placed on the Butte RMP website.

Only those persons or organizations who participated in the planning process leading to this Proposed RMP may protest. A protesting party may raise only those issues submitted for the record during the planning process leading up to publication of this Proposed RMP. New issues may not be brought into the record at the protest stage.

Electronic mail and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the email or faxed protest an advance copy and will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of the BLM protest coordinator at 202-452-5112, and e-mailed protests to Brenda Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov.

All protests, including the follow-up letter (if e-mailing or faxing) must be in writing and mailed to the following address:

Regular Mail:
Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams
P.O. Box 66538
Washington, D.C. 20035

Overnight Mail:
Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams
1620 L Street, N.W., Suite 1075
Washington, D.C. 20036

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

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

Upon resolution of all land use plan protests, the BLM will issue an Approved RMP and Record of Decision (ROD). The Approved RMP and ROD will be mailed or made available electronically to all who participated in the planning process and will be available to all parties through the "Planning" page of the BLM national website (http://www.blm.gov/planning), or by mail upon request.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS contains land use planning decisions subject to protest with the exception of decisions on site-specific travel plans. **Decisions on travel route-specific management for the Helena Travel Planning Area (TPA), East Helena TPA, Lewis and Clark County NW TPA, Boulder/Jefferson City TPA, and Upper Big Hole River TPA are not protestable.** Unlike land use planning decisions, implementation decisions are not subject to protest under the BLM planning regulations, but are subject to an administrative review process, through appeals to the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) pursuant to 43 CFR, Part 4, Subpart E. Implementation decision generally constitute the BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. Where implementation decisions are made as part of the land use planning process, they are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations once the BLM resolves protest to land use planning decisions and issues an Approved RMP and ROD. The Approved RMP and ROD will therefore identify the implementation decisions made in the plan that may be appealed to the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Hotaling

Richard M. Hotaling

Butte Field Manager

ATTACHMENT #1

43 CFR 1610.5–2 PROTEST PROCEDURES

(a) Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

(1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Director. The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the plan or amendment in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

For an amendment not requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the protest shall be filed within 30 days of the publication of the notice of its effective date.

(2) The protest shall contain:

(i) The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest;

(ii) A statement of the issue or issues being protested;

(iii) A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;

(iv) A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and

(v) A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.

(3) The Director shall promptly render a decision on the protest. The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons for the decision.

The decision shall be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(b) The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

ATTACHMENT #2

Resource Management Plan
Protest Critical Item Checklist

The following items *must* be included to constitute a valid protest whether using this optional format, or a narrative letter.
(43 CFR 1610.5-2)

BLM's practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. 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. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

Resource Management Plan (RMP) or Amendment (RMPA) being protested:

Name:
Address:
Phone Number: ( )

Your interest in filing this protest (how will you be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of this plan?):

Issue or issues being protested:

Statement of the part or parts of the plan being protested:
Chapter:
Section:
Page:
(or) Map:

Attach copies of all documents addressing the issue(s) that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party, <u>OR an indication of the date the issue(s) were discussed for the record</u>.
Date(s):

A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decisions is believed to be wrong:

PROPOSED
BUTTE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AND
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

BUTTE FIELD OFFICE

BUTTE, MONTANA

SEPTEMBER 2008

PROPOSED
BUTTE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AND
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

1. Responsible Agency:

United States Department of the Interior,
Bureau of Land Management

2. Draft ( ) Final (X)

3. Type of Action: Administrative (X) Legislative ( )

4. Abstract: The Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement describes and analyzes four alternatives for managing the public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Butte Field Office and located in southwestern Montana in Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, Park, and Beaverhead Counties. These alternatives are: Alternative A (continuation of current management, or the No Action Alternatives); Alternative B (Preferred Alternative) and Alternatives C and D. Major RMP issues include vegetation communities; wildlife, wildlife habitat, special status and priority plant and animal species; travel management and access; recreation; and special designations including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, National Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness Study Areas. The alternatives present a range of management actions to achieve goals and desired future conditions for the Butte Field Office.

5. Protests on the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement must be postmarked within 30 days from publication of the Notice of Availability by the Environmental Protection Agency. The close of the protest period will be announced in news releases and on the RMP website at www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/butte_field_office.html.

6. For further information, contact:

Tim La Marr, RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office
106 North Parkmont
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 533-7645
Timothy_LaMarr@blm.gov