

NEWS

LEWISTOWN BLM

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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For Immediate Release
Contact Craig Flentie
406-538-1943, 10/21/05

Lewistown, MT – The draft document describing different alternatives for managing the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument has been shipped from the printer and should soon be delivered to businesses, organizations, individuals, elected officials, tribal governments and state and federal agencies.

A limited number of the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the Monument will also be available from BLM’s Lewistown Field Office, 920 NE Main Street, or on the internet at

http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/state_info/planning.htm.

Review copies will also be available at most BLM offices in northern Montana, plus the Blaine County, Phillips County, Havre and Lewistown libraries.

The Draft RMP/EIS describes six alternatives (including a draft preferred alternative) for managing about 375,000 acres of BLM land, including 42,800 acres leased for oil and gas. The area was declared a national monument by Presidential proclamation in January 2001.

“The release of the Draft RMP/EIS marks the beginning of a 90-day public review and comment period,” said Gary Slagel, the BLM’s monument manager. “As part of the review and comment process, we’ve scheduled these public comment meetings throughout north central Montana, to answer questions and gather comments concerning the Draft.”

Lewistown	November 28	Sapphire Room, Yogo Inn, 211 East Main
Winifred	November 29	Community Center, Main Street
Fort Benton	November 30	Agricultural Museum, 1205 20 th St.
Havre	December 1	Holiday Village Mall, Hwy. 2 West
Big Sandy	December 5	Community Hall
Chinook	December 6	Chinook Motor Inn, 100 Indiana St.

(more)

Hays	December 7	John Capture Center
Malta	December 8	First State Bank, 1 S. 1 st St. East
Billings	December 12	Hampton Inn, 5110 Southgate Dr.
Great Falls	December 13	Townhouse Inn, 1411 10 th Av. South
Kalispell	December 14	Hampton Inn, 1140 Hwy. 2 West

These meetings are scheduled to run from 6-9 p.m.

Each meeting will begin with introductions; will have a brief BLM presentation; include an opportunity to talk individually with various resource specialists; and then provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment.

Those who can not attend any of these meetings are encouraged to send their written comments on the Draft RMP/EIS to: Monument RMP Team, BLM Lewistown Field Office, 920 NE Main St., P.O. Box 1160, Lewistown, MT 59457, or they may be e-mailed to monumentrmp@blm.gov. All letters and emails should include the first and last name of the individual commenting and a complete mailing address. Those individuals who wish their name and address withheld from public release must state that preference at the beginning of their comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed. All comments from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public release in their entirety.

Slagel said that specific comments addressing concerns that are within BLM's legal responsibilities and can be resolved in the land-use planning process would be most helpful.

The Draft RMP/EIS was developed with assistance from local counties, the state, other federal agencies, tribal governments, BLM's Central Montana Resource Advisory Council and a variety of interest groups.

"We thank all of the organizations and individuals who helped produce the Draft RMP/EIS," said June Bailey, Lewistown Field Manager. "It's been a collaborative process so far and we hope that spirit will continue as we move toward the Final RMP/EIS."

After the comment period ends, a proposed Final RMP/EIS will be issued, probably in July of 2006. That will be followed by the final step in the process, a Record of Decision, expected in September of next year.

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