

# Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

## NEWSLETTER



Issue #3

July 2003

### The Manager's Message

At times, it seems like we're taking very small steps. However, we've come quite a distance since we all started preparing a resource management plan for this monument.

A year ago, during scoping, you and many other interested members of the public talked to us, wrote us or e-mailed us. You provided valuable information about resources, issues and concerns.

We listened carefully and worked with your comments. We found that most of them fell into one of four categories (Access and Transportation; Health of the Land and Fire; Natural Gas Exploration and Development; and Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure).

With your help, we've finished scoping, identified issues and are ready to move on to the next phase of the planning process.

Now we need your help to formulate draft alternatives to resolve these issues. Typically, the managing agency would complete draft alternatives and take them to the public for comments in a draft environmental impact statement. We've take a different approach with this monument.

We're depending heavily upon your specific management ideas to help complete draft alternatives.

This newsletter provides a schedule and format for the workshops we've arranged as a means of gathering your management ideas. Since there is virtually no flexibility in our schedule for completing this resource management plan, we don't have any latitude with the workshop dates.

We've also used the information you provided, through scoping, to create draft vision and goals that will serve as guidelines as we create a management plan. This newsletter contains an insert with this vision and the goals and asks for your comments.

I hope you find this information useful and encourage you to participate as we move toward completing draft management alternatives for the public lands in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

Sincerely,

Gary Slagel, Monument Manager

Bureau of Land Management  
P.O. Box 1160, Airport Road



Lewistown Field Office  
Lewistown, Montana 59457

## WE HAVE FINISHED SCOPING — WHAT DID YOU TELL US

A year ago, you and your peers provided a great deal of information through the scoping process (over 5,000 letters and e-mails). You told us you were primarily concerned about four categories (Access and Transportation; Health of the Land and Fire; Natural Gas Exploration and Development; and Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure).

We thank you for your effort. Now that we've finished scoping, we are ready to move toward formulating alternatives. Again, your participation is very important to us and we hope you can attend one of the workshops mentioned below.

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### UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION WORKSHOPS

Date	Community	Location
Monday, 7/14	Winifred	Winifred High School
Tuesday, 7/15	Lewistown	Yogo Inn
Wednesday, 7/16	Big Sandy	Big Sandy School
Thursday, 7/17	Fort Benton	Agricultural Museum
Monday, 7/21	Havre	Triangle Telephone Coop.
Tuesday, 7/22	Chinook	Chinook Motor Inn
Wednesday, 7/23	Cleveland	Cleveland Hunting Lodge
Thursday, 7/24	Malta	Malta High School
Monday, 7/28	Hays	The John Capture Center
Tuesday, 7/29	Great Falls	Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center
Wednesday, 7/30	Billings	Hampton Inn

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### WORKSHOP FORMAT

Each workshop will be scheduled to last 3 hours, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. This series of workshops has two primary goals; to gather your management ideas to help formulate alternatives, and to do so through a dialogue among public land users and BLM.

Each workshop will follow this schedule:

6:00-6:10 -- Welcome/Introductions/Purpose presentation by Gary Slagel, Monument Manager

6:10-6:40 -- Attendees have a chance to visit each of four stations, talk with resource specialists and submit written management ideas.

6:40-8:30 -- Attendees will be seated while a moderator alternates between reading written management ideas and asking for verbal ideas from the audience. Each idea will be directed to the appropriate resource specialist or manager for discussion.

Some workshops may use this entire block of time for discussing ideas. Some will not. During the shorter sessions, everyone will be given an opportunity to offer management ideas verbally or in writing, then the workshop will move to the next item.

8:30-9:00 -- Conclusion. If necessary, address ideas from the audience that are beyond the scope of a resource management plan.

## OVERALL VISION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will manage the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument) in a multiple use manner that maintains and protects its biological, geological, visual and historic objects; preserves its remote and scenic character; and recognizes the valid existing rights and authorizations, hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities, and livestock grazing in accordance with the Proclamation and existing laws.

## MANAGEMENT GOALS

A number of goals were developed to guide the development of alternatives for the resource management plan. These goals are the result of information provided through public scoping, existing laws and regulations, the Proclamation, and the planning team.

### According to these goals, the BLM would:

- 1) Manage these public lands in a multiple use manner consistent with the Proclamation and all current law and policy.
- 2) Manage legal and physical access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse activities.

### This goal would allow BLM to:

- Provide access to State and Federal land while protecting the features of the Monument;
- Provide access for diverse recreation opportunities;
- Allow access for emergency services (firefighting, search and rescue, etc.);
- Provide reasonable access for private landowners; and

Allow access for administrative needs and authorized uses of industry and government agencies.

- 3) Manage these public lands for a variety of sustainable visitor experiences in mostly primitive and natural landscapes.

### This goal would allow BLM to:

- Provide for dispersed and developed recreation opportunities and ensure visual quality characteristics reflect a predominantly primitive or natural landscape; and

- Provide for a diversity of visitor experiences.

- 4) Manage these public lands in a manner that provides a healthy ecosystem supporting plant and animal species and achieves a sustainable natural range of vegetation, variety, and diversity.

### This goal would allow BLM to:

- Manage, enhance, and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and special status species;

- Achieve, or make significant progress toward proper functioning condition on riparian areas;

- Manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc;

- Maintain or reestablish the natural influence of fire on vegetation communities;

- Control, contain, and if possible eradicate invasive plants; and

- Maintain and/or improve the existing hydrologic systems in the Monument.

5) Manage these public lands in a manner that provides current and future generations the social and economic benefits compatible with the Proclamation.

This goal would allow BLM to:

Provide a diverse array of stable economic opportunities in an environmentally sound manner, including the exploration and development of existing oil and gas leases;

Provide quality opportunities to meet the demands of various publics for all resources and a diverse array of activities that result in social benefits while minimizing negative social effects; and

Minimize the risk of catastrophic fire to values at risk within the Monument and communities adjacent to the Monument.

6) Manage visitor use and services on these public lands in a manner that protects Monument values and resources.

This goal would allow BLM to:

Preserve historic and cultural values and sites by enhancing public awareness or protection of the resources;

Protect and preserve the wild and scenic character of the river and preserve or enhance the wilderness study area (WSA) primitive characteristics;

Protect the cultural landscape (viewshed) and the visual features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation;

Protect significant paleontological resources;

Inform visitors of the differences between private property and public land;

Control wildland fire safely, efficiently, and with minimal impact to resource values; and

Provide for visitor health and safety at levels appropriate to the risks normally expected when engaged in recreational activities in the Monument.

7) Manage these public lands in a manner that involves the public and collaborating agencies (local, state, federal and tribal) at every opportunity.

This goal would allow BLM to continue recognizing distinct local values (local communities, users, and private landowners) while continuing to recognize national interests.

### **DO YOU HAVE COMMENTS ABOUT THIS VISION AND THESE GOALS**

If you have ideas that would improve this vision and/or these goals, please send them to us.

Again your ideas would be most useful if provided by August 31, 2003. Please send them to the Lewistown address listed several times in this newsletter.

### **YOUR COMMENTS ARE PUBLIC INFORMATION — UNLESS**

All comments concerning this resource management plan and the names of those individuals who submit them are considered public information and by law, must be released if someone requests them. However, an individual may request his or her name and comments not be released to the public. This request must be in writing and included with all comments submitted.

## PURPOSE FOR THESE WORKSHOPS

BLM now needs your specific management ideas to use as building blocks for alternatives. These workshops will provide an opportunity for you to discuss your ideas with the team members who will be working to complete the draft resource management plan.

These workshops are designed to allow a dialogue among all of us. We need a two-way discussion, with you discussing your specific management ideas for these public lands and us asking for clarification.

We don't think we need another set of meetings with us presenting information or in some other manner talking through most of the session. These workshops are designed to provide you the lead in discussing your management ideas.

## HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE

There are several ways for you to convey your management ideas to us. You can attend one or more of these workshops if it's convenient. If not, you can write or e-mail us with your management ideas.

### MAILING ADDRESS

Bureau of Land Management  
P.O. Box 1160, Airport Road  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
Attn: Monument Manager

### E-MAIL ADDRESS

monumentrmp@blm.gov

To be most useful, your ideas should be submitted by August 31, 2003.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## PLANNING SCHEDULE

It takes time to complete a good resource management plan (RMP). The physical work of gathering the data, involving the public, analyzing and incorporating public comments, and writing the RMP will be done by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists. While planning schedules are vulnerable to budgets and a variety of other priority workloads, we hope to be able to adhere to this schedule.

### In 2002, we:

- published a Notice of Intent to prepare an RMP in the Federal Register;
- briefed state, local and tribal governments about the planning process;
- hosted public scoping open houses;
- prepared a comment analysis summary of the scoping comments; and
- prepared planning criteria for preparation of the RMP.

### In 2003, we will:

- collect resource data;
- host public workshops to gather management ideas for formulating alternatives;
- organize public ideas into alternatives;
- provide a comment analysis summary of the public's alternative ideas; and
- begin writing the draft RMP.

### In 2004, we will:

- identify a preferred alternative;
- issue a draft RMP and environmental impact statement (EIS);
- provide a public comment period (90 days) on the draft RMP/EIS;
- host public open houses on the draft RMP/EIS; and
- provide a public comment analysis summary.

### In 2005, we will:

- select a final resource management plan;
- issue a final RMP/EIS;
- provide a protest period (30 days) in the final RMP/EIS;
- provide a Governor's consistency review (60 days) on the final RMP/EIS; and
- issue a Record of Decision.

Your name will remain on our mailing list unless you want it removed. If you want it removed, please print your name and address clearly below and return this entire page to:

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
LEWISTOWN FIELD OFFICE  
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AIRPORT ROAD  
LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

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