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Public meeting and negotiation session set for proposed water compact for Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

Lewistown, Mont. – A public meeting and negotiation session on the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s proposal for a federal reserved water right compact with the State of Montana for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument will be held at 1 p.m. on January 31, 2012 at the Yogo Inn in Lewistown, Montana.

Officials from the BLM and the Montana Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission will present an overview of the compact process and the BLM’s proposal, answer questions, and take public comment, said Bill Schultz, Program Manager for the state’s Compact Commission. The meeting will kick off negotiations between the state and the federal government over the BLM proposal.

The 2001 proclamation designating the Monument limits the BLM’s water compact proposal to the Arrow Creek and Judith River basins. The Montana Legislature approved a water compact for the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River in 1997.

“The Bureau of Land Management has submitted a federal reserved water right compact proposal for the Judith River and

Arrow Creek basins. The proposal requests a minimum instream flow for the Judith River and Arrow Creek and quantifies an available water supply for future state-based development. This meeting represents the first of several negotiation sessions between the State and BLM on that proposal,” Schultz said. “The Compact Commission negotiates on behalf of the Governor of the State of Montana and represents the interests of State-based water right holders. All negotiation sessions are open to the public, with opportunity for questions and comments.”

The Yogo Inn is located in downtown Lewistown at 211 East Main Street.

An online copy of the BLM proposal, along with a supporting technical report, may be viewed at the Compact Commission Web site,

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/rwrcc/Compacts/UpperMissouriBreaks/Default.asp>. For more information on the meeting, contact

Commission Staff Hydrologist Stan Jones at (406) 444-1270.