

Miles City RMP Preparation Plan (Miles City Field Office)

Submitted by: Miles City Field Office

Approved by: Montana/Dakotas State Office

State Director: _____

Date: _____

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Miles City RMP Preparation Plan – FY 2003

I. Introduction and Background

The Bureau of Land Management's Miles City Field Office is located in Miles City, Montana and manages approximately 2.8 million surface acres and 11.8 million acres of federal mineral estate land in the eastern portion of the state.

Prior to 1998, the field office operated under two resource areas, Big Dry and Powder River. The lands in each of these resources areas were managed under their own RMP, the Big Dry RMP and the Powder River RMP.

The Big Dry RMP ROD was signed April 24, 1996. The planning area consists of 1.7 million acres of BLM-administered surface acres and 7.6 million acres of BLM-administered mineral resources. It encompasses public lands in 13 counties in eastern Montana: Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan and Wibaux. The public lands within this area that are excluded are the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and the Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and the lands withdrawn for the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Station managed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Other lands excluded are the Fort Peck Indian Reservation managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Fort Peck Tribes in Valley County. Although this plan is less than 10 years old, during the last RMP evaluation completed in 2002 some of the recommendations made were to revisit lands identified for disposal, retention and acquisition for reclassification; incorporate new studies and data for soils, noxious weeds, water/air, forestry, riparian/wetlands, vegetation, T&E etc; include an oil and gas RFD Scenario for the entire planning area; address wind energy development; apply all four coal screens because of high level of interest in energy development; and evaluate the stipulations for wildlife concerning oil and gas development. These recommendations will be evaluated over the entire Field Office.

The Powder River RMP ROD was signed March 15, 1985. The planning area in southeastern Montana consists of 1,080,675 surface acres of land and 4,103,700 acres of subsurface minerals (including minerals in Custer National Forest). It includes portions of Custer, Carter, Rosebud and Big Horn Counties and all of Powder River and Treasure Counties.

The changes that have taken place in the past 10 to 20 years have resulted in different users and uses of public lands. Issues have emerged that relate to potential threatened and endangered species, off road vehicle designations, increased demand for oil and gas, and changes in intensity of use of other resources. Many of the land use plan decisions required by specific program and resource guidance are not adequately addressed in either of the current RMPs.

The public lands and resources need to be managed consistently throughout. This RMP will allow us to guide management actions based on current information (changes in policy and guidance), sound criteria and public input. The objective of this planning effort is to provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating use of the public lands and resources in the Miles City Field Office.

A. Purpose of the Preparation Plan

The purpose of this Preparation Plan is to:

1. Identify anticipated planning issues and management concerns;
2. Identify preliminary planning criteria and outstanding questions that must be addressed to support management decisions;
3. Identify a standard document format (e.g., documents, maps, tables, photos, etc.) for the presentation of the process, information, and decisions, including presentation on the Internet;
4. Identify information or data needed to resolve or address identified issues, management concerns, planning criteria, and outstanding questions;
5. Identify available data and data collection/format standards, and provide an explanation of how the data support the plan itself, and how the data address the planning requirements and anticipated issues or outstanding questions;
6. Identify any known or anticipated data gaps and provide an explanation of why the data are needed to support the plan itself, how the data support the planning requirements and how the data address anticipated issues or outstanding questions;
7. Establish a data inventory that is coordinated with other agencies, which include data standards, work-month costs, staffing and skill requirements, and estimated time-frames needed to establish an integrated, automated geospatial database for filling in data gaps;
8. Establish a communication process for direct communication with the public and to ensure greater public involvement in the planning process and to ensure wide distribution of relevant information;
9. Establish a work plan that identifies the staffing and technology needs to support public involvement and communication through the use of the Internet; and
10. Identify the analytical process required to answer or address outstanding questions, issues, or concerns.

II. Anticipated Planning Issues and Management Concerns

A **planning issue** is identified as a *matter of controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land use that is well defined or topically discrete and entails alternatives between which to choose*. **Management concerns** are topics or points of dispute that involve a resource management activity or land use. While some concerns overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or a few individuals, as opposed to a planning issue, which has more widespread point of conflict. However, certain resource values (e.g., cultural resources) will still play pivotal roles in developing alternatives and reaching decisions regarding the major issues.

The issues and management concerns presented below are preliminary and based on the best information known to date. Preparation of this RMP will afford many opportunities for collaboration with local, State, Federal and Tribal governments and land management agencies, public interest groups, and public land users. As a result, these issues and concerns may need to be modified and perfected to reflect public comments and concerns raised during formal scoping.

A. Preliminary Issues

Issue 1: Vegetation Management

Objective: Provide a desired plant community that supports the integrity of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy cycle, and nutrient cycle) provided by the vegetative community.

The management of vegetative resources to provide forage for livestock use while enabling the landscape to benefit multiple uses (i.e. wildlife habitat, native vegetation, recreation, etc.) is the focal point of this issue. The RMP will determine specific levels of use that will result in appropriate utilization levels or exclusion of livestock utilization to sustain the native vegetative communities.

The components of vegetation management involve the following resources:

1. Upland Vegetation
2. Riparian Areas
3. Noxious Weeds
4. Plant/Animal Habitats

The upland vegetation includes many associated ecological sites and vegetative communities. Primarily the vegetation can be described as an evergreen shrubland that is incorporated into a perennial graminoid plant community. The major graminoid species include western wheatgrass, prairie junegrass, blue gramma, needleandthread, green needlegrass, and buffalograss. The shrub and shrub-like components are dominated by big sagebrush, silver sagebrush, fringe sagewort, rabbitbrush, and winterfat. The community relationships can be altered and affected by fire, herbivory (livestock and wildlife), natural disasters (i.e. floods), or human associated disturbances. All factors that are mentioned that may affect the upland vegetation will be addressed in the RMP.

Riparian plant communities including herbaceous, shrub and tree dominated systems, make up less than 5% of the total landscape administered by the Miles City Field Office. Riparian vegetation and its ability to stabilize stream banks is critical to the proper functioning of the prairie type riparian systems that occur within the area administered by the Miles City Field Office. This is due to the fact that the geomorphology of our drainages is dominated by fine textured soils with relatively flat gradients. Stream bank vegetation and channel dynamics (sinuosity and width/depth ratio) are the two means by which prairie streams dissipate energy. If the riparian vegetation is in poor condition the streams will lose their ability to dissipate energy from high flow events and will be less resistant to other impacts, including livestock grazing, recreation, timber harvest, etc... Poor riparian vegetative conditions can result from current or historic livestock grazing, drought, competition of other plants, such as the encroachment of juniper and ponderosa pine and many other factors. The RMP will concentrate on the BLM guidance on managing riparian areas for maintenance or improvement of condition.

Known noxious weed populations will be mapped and included in the RMP for the development of an integrated control program. The information will be available for review in analyzing the alternatives within the RMP. The incorporation of the use of weed-free forage and the emphasis of restoration of disturbed areas will be included in all alternatives.

The upland and riparian vegetative communities provide an array of habitats for wildlife species. The RMP will include documentation on species occurrence, possible introduction areas for wildlife species, and the species of concern for management. The RMP may target the manipulation of areas through the occurrence or lack of grazing, mechanical options, fire, etc., to develop wildlife habitat. Concentration will be on ecoregion management to manage a multitude of wildlife on Bureau lands.

Rangeland improvement projects are mainly utilized for improving or maintaining vegetative conditions through manipulating livestock behavior. There is not clarification specifying when, where and what type of range improvements will be authorized by the BLM. The lack of uniformity could apply to various fence designs, stock tank sizes, funding of range improvements, etc. In addition, there is lack of consistency on continuity within cooperative agreements for rangeland improvements. For example, the requirement for permittees to allow water in stock tanks for wildlife. The RMP would be generally broad in nature when discussing range improvements, but would provide a public involvement process to provide guidance to the Miles City Field Office in reviewing or authoring range improvement policy.

Vegetation has historically been manipulated through permittees/lessees haying parcels of public lands. Some of these lands consist of introduced vegetation (crested wheatgrass, alfalfa, etc.), while some areas are a mixture of native and introduced vegetation. The RMP will examine the procedure for authorizing haying on public lands. This analysis would include authorizing haying and the stipulations of the authorization (when, type of vegetation, process) or not to allow haying on public lands.

The Miles City Field Office has implemented various Allotment Management Plans to address resource and vegetation conditions. These AMPs include only a small portion of the allotments within the field office. In order to provide functional objectives for public land, allotment specific objectives will be included within the RMP for at least allotments that consist of active use or are a majority BLM lands. These objectives would include allowable use parameters for upland and riparian habitats, season of livestock use, allocation of current permitted AUMs, wildlife habitat criteria, functionality of AMPs (if existing), and maintenance of the plant community according to the Ecological Site Descriptions. These objectives would be measured by a field office monitoring plan directed by the RMP.

The RMP will analyze the process to provide the opportunity to designate grazing allotments as a mitigation forage bank. These allotments may be an allotment reserved for temporary and nonrenewable grazing use by permittees or lessees whose participation in a land restoration, recovery or range improvement program temporarily precludes use of all or part of the active use assigned to their base property. The process would include voluntary cooperation with an existing livestock permittee or lessee through written agreement. Additionally, the BLM would use an allotment as a mitigation forage bank, when an allotment is not subject to a valid permit or lease and there is no applicant with preference. The RMP would provide the guidelines for the operating procedures for a mitigation forage bank within a detailed management plan (i.e. maintenance of range improvements, selection of permittees for utilization, etc.)

Lastly in August 1997, the BLM issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Within the ROD five specific factors relating to vegetation was incorporated into the Miles City Field Office process for evaluating rangeland health. The ROD relating to rangeland health and the subsequent factors will be incorporated into the RMP.

Issue 2: Forestry/Timber

Objective: Provide a desired plant community that supports the integrity of the ecological processes provided by the vegetative community.

- Utilization of commercial products to sustain/support private industry needs (vs non-utilization from Rx burning)
- Restoration of landscapes to achieve Historical Range of Variability conditions. (Fire Condition Class I) What are Desired Future Conditions (DFC's) for forested lands, on a landscape and project area? Structures and levels of each structure to be maintained on the landscape need defined.
- Time frames to achieve DFC's? Sustainable harvest vs quick restoration of landscapes to reduce fuels and lethal fire effects.
- Firewood cutting. (when, where, etc)
- Biomass Utilization. (when, where, how)
- ACCESS. How do you manage forested lands when a majority of the lands are not accessible?

Juniper Woodlands

- Utilization of Forest Products (posts, poles, teepee poles, firewood, etc) (vs non-utilization from Rx burning)
- Firewood cutting, general permits. Utilization of green and dead juniper for firewood.
- DFC's for juniper woodlands on a landscape and project area level need to be defined. Structures and levels to be left on the landscape need defined. Time frames to achieve DFC's need to be set.
- Biomass utilization. (when, where, how)
- ACCESS. How do you manage the woodlands, issue permits, etc when a majority of the lands are not accessible?
- How to treat juniper and conifer encroachment in shrub areas.

Misc

- **Economics** – Eastern Montana needs a lumber mill and a biomass treatment facility (co-generation plant) to generate a “demand” for forest products and create a market and subsequently a “tool” to help market and utilize forest products. Is this within the scope of the RAC, or other multi-agency group? The cost to accomplish this would be less than 1 year fire suppression costs in eastern MT.

- **Road Construction** – Standards are needed for road construction for timber sales. Integration with ATM processes and DFC's, long-term access policies, engineering specifications, etc.

Issue 3: Special Status Species

How will public lands be managed to conserve and recover threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species and their habitats?

The RMP will identify reasonable strategies to conserve and recover special status species in the planning area in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as required under the Endangered Species Act. These include describing existing and desired habitat and population conditions for major habitat types that support a wide variety of species; designating priority species and habitats, including Special Status Species (SSS); identifying actions and areawide use restrictions needed to achieve desired population and habitat conditions while maintaining a thriving ecological balance and multiple use relationships. Streamlined consultation procedures detailed in the July 27, 1999 Memorandum of Agreement and subsequent implementation guidance for Section 7 consultations will be utilized to provide collaborative opportunities in the consultation process. Special status species include species listed, proposed for listing, or candidate species under the Endangered Species Act and Sensitive species identified by BLM.

At present, six species listed as Threatened or Endangered under the Endangered Species Act, or species proposed for listing, are known to occur in the planning area. The listed species are:

Threatened and Endangered Species & Candidates

- Interior Least Tern (Endangered)
- Bald Eagle(Threatened)
- Whooping Crane (Endangered)
- Piping Plover (Threatened)
- Mountain Plover (prior to 2003 Proposed as Threatened)
- Black-tailed prairie dog (Candidate)
- Pallid Sturgeon (Endangered)

Interior Least Tern

The least tern is known to nest in the planning area. Its habitat includes graveled islands associated with major rivers, primarily the lower Yellowstone River and the Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam. One island adjacent to public land contains a colony of nesting least terns. During spring and fall migrations, the least tern uses stockwater reservoirs.

Bald Eagle

The bald eagle occurs year-round in Montana and has made significant gains in breeding numbers. Current conditions are apparently providing suitable conditions for the recovery of the species as the Fish and Wildlife Service issued a proposed rule to delist the bald eagle in July of 1999. Bald Eagles commonly nest along the Yellowstone River in Rosebud, Prairie, and Custer Counties. The Yellowstone River is used during spring and fall migration. The Montana Bald

Eagle Management Plan, dated July 1994, provides specific direction to use nest site management zones to eliminate potential threats to nesting eagles. We expect to incorporate this strategy into the RMP in relation to the alternatives formulated and activities resulting from those alternatives.

Whooping Crane

Occurrence of the Whooping Crane has been documented within the RMP area. This is a transient/migrant species that exhibits no breeding behavior in the RMP area. Very little data on the Whooping Crane exists for eastern Montana.

Piping Plover

The piping Plover exist in the northern part of the planning area. Most sightings are north of the Missouri River. It is mainly associated within natural saline wetlands. Surveys show that there is one parcel of public land used by piping plover for nesting and brood rearing. One piping plover Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) exists within the plan area in extreme northeastern Montana. A decision needs to be made as to the validity of the ACEC.

Mountain Plover

On September 9, 2003 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a Federal Register (FR) Notice withdrawing their proposed rule to list the mountain plover, *Charadrius montanus*, as threatened. The species had been proposed in 1999 and 2002 because the best data available at the time indicated that breeding populations were declining as habitat was lost to grassland conversions, prairie dog declines, and agricultural practices. The mountain plover is associated with short-grass prairie. Intensive grazing is beneficial to mountain plovers and they also regularly occupy prairie dog towns.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

Black-tailed prairie dogs exist throughout the planning area. Presently they are classified as a Candidate Species for listing. Prairie dog towns provide habitat for numerous vertebrate species, including the burrowing owl, swift fox, mountain plover, and black-footed ferret (endangered). A Miles City District management plan exists for prairie dogs, as well as a state-wide conservation plan for Black-tailed and White-tailed prairie dogs, which was approved in 2002. The Miles City plan will be revisited with the intent of incorporating Best Management Practices into this planning effort.

The statewide prairie dog plan establishes a workgroup in Region 7, which is within the RMP area to identify opportunities to manage prairie dogs so that the distribution and abundance objectives from the state plan can be met. Through the local work groups, complexes and priority areas for maintaining and enhancing prairie dog numbers should be identified.

Black-Footed Ferret

This species was listed as endangered on March 11, 1967. Black-footed ferrets depend almost exclusively on prairie dogs for food and shelter. There is no documentation of black-footed ferrets breeding outside of prairie dog colonies. This species is not believed to be present in the planning area at this time.

The Montana Black-footed Ferret Working Group has studied prairie dog towns capable of supporting black-footed ferrets. Eight reintroduction sites have been identified in Montana, including one in Custer and Prairie County. This area was nominated by the BLM in the Big Dry RMP (final-2/95) as a Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), for the potential reintroduction of black-footed ferrets as well as habitat for associated wildlife species (prairie dog towns-1,151 (public lands) and core area around the towns-10,015 acres (public lands). As stated in the RMP, if a proposal is made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to reintroduce the black-footed ferret, further planning would be needed.

Pallid Sturgeon

This species was listed as endangered on September 6, 1990. Historically in Montana they occupied reaches of the Missouri River from the Fort Benton downstream and in the Yellowstone River from Miles City to the Missouri River (FWS 1993). There are three priority recovery management areas in Montana, two on reaches of the Missouri and one on the Yellowstone River.

Sensitive Species

A wide variety of BLM Sensitive Species exists within the RMP area. Swift Fox are one of the many sensitive species that may occur in the planning area.

Swift Fox

In general, swift foxes are associated with the shortgrass and midgrass prairie ecosystem. The swift fox is presently classified as a BLM Sensitive Species. Historically this species occurred throughout the RMP area and evidence from current surveys conducted by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks indicated that it exists in Carter, Powder River and Custer Counties. A Swift Fox Conservation Team (SFCT) is a multi-agency group comprised of representatives from 10 state wildlife agencies within the historic range of the swift fox and select federal wildlife and land management agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The SFCT formed as a result of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determination that listing the swift fox as a Federal Threatened or Endangered Species may be warranted. Through the efforts of the SFCT, the swift fox was delisted in 2001, but the SFCT remains committed to ensuring their long-term conservation. We will consider SFCT recommendations/comments on conservation strategies for the swift fox.

Sage Grouse

Sage grouse are distributed throughout the planning area. They are presently classified as an interim sensitive species, pending list revision. Presently sage grouse are under the “spotlight”, and much emphasis has been placed on planning efforts throughout Montana and their range. A draft state conservation plan and BLM national strategy for sage grouse has been completed. The plans would be utilized to form management decisions throughout the planning area. BLM National sage grouse strategies and BLM Montana State strategies would be incorporated. We would incorporate the best management practices developed by these plans as they affect public land management.

There is also a number of plant, animal and fish species classified as Sensitive according to BLM standards in the planning area. Some of these include Burrowing owl, Ferruginous hawk, Long-billed curlew, and Swainsons hawk

Issue 4: Water Quality/Quantity/Aquatic Species

Objective: Ensure that waters are of sufficient quality to support the integrity of ecological processes which rely on them, that all identified beneficial uses of waters are protected, and that water quality standards are met. Ensure that flow volumes are sufficient to support the aquatic (fish, invertebrates, etc.) and wildlife which depend on them, and to meet the requirements of valid water rights. Maintain or enhance aquatic life and wildlife habitat through appropriate management activities within riparian habitat, stream side management zones, stream channels, floodplains, and wetlands.

Water Quality

Standard procedures regarding permitting practices required by Federal and Montana State laws will be identified in the RMP. The BLM will work closely with Montana DEQ regarding water quality planning and management. Data to be examined will include (but not limited to) the Montana DEQ's identified impaired streams (303(d)), riparian condition, land jurisdiction, water quality, and water quantity data. The RMP will identify: the Best Management Practices (BMPs) that the State of Montana and its cooperators (including BLM and FS) have developed and distributed for use by Federal land managers, including particular BMPs developed for watersheds as a result of the 303(d)/TMDL process; Standards for Rangeland Health Assessments; BMPs for Grazing; and existing MOUs with the State of Montana.

The RMP will identify drinking wells on public land in the planning area that require protection under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1977, as amended. In addition, municipal watersheds in proximity to public land in the planning area will also be identified.

Water Rights

The RMP would address in what instances the Field Office would file for water rights. At present the BLM files under State of Montana procedures on any new water developments for livestock, wildlife or recreation purposes.

Fisheries

A wide variety of aquatic habitats exists in the planning area, which includes rivers, streams, lakes and stock ponds/reservoirs. A variety of fish species exists in the Powder and Tongue River drainages, and in the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. The planning area has numerous livestock reservoirs that support fisheries on public lands and we would consider other potential development. The State of Montana FWP is presently conducting a fisheries inventory of eastern Montana streams data which would be incorporated into our RMP effort.

Issue 5: Travel Management

How will transportation and access be managed in the planning area to provide for use and enjoyment of the public lands while protecting significant resource values and providing user safety?

A network of improved and unimproved roads and trails provide access to or across the planning area's public lands that are maintained at various levels based on maintenance schedules and funding levels. Presently, the planning area is covered by the Powder River and Big Dry RMPs.

The Record of Decision for Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas (June 2003) amended the Powder River RMP to limit motorized travel to existing roads and trails for most lands under the RMP. The Big Dry RMP already had a similar decision in place. The ROD also provides that BLM will prioritize site specific travel planning areas by December, 2003. The RMP will incorporate these decisions, identify as much road inventory and travel planning decisions as practical, and consider designating additional intensive OHV use areas.

Consider RS 2477 and corridor planning as part of travel management.

Major considerations in alternative development and estimation of the effects for travel in the RMP will include: road densities, recreational activities, user conflicts, user safety, and resource values.

Issue 6: Special Management Area Designation

What public lands require special management attention to protect resource values?

Several supplemental studies and evaluations will be conducted as part of RMP development to address whether certain places in the planning area qualify for special designation to protect unique or significant values. These studies and evaluations will address:

- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wilderness Considerations
- Other Administrative Designations

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

The MCFO administers 16 ACECs that were designated through the Big Dry RMP and the ACEC EA (1998). These ACECs will be reviewed for validity. Additional nominations will be requested during RMP formal scoping procedures so that evaluations can be completed as part of the comprehensive RMP process. These evaluations will determine relevance and importance and whether the area needs special management. An appendix to the draft RMP will list all ACECs and whether or not the area meets the criteria. Evaluation will include consultation with the Eastern Montana RAC. Rationale for areas that do not meet the criteria will also be provided. All nominations, which meet the ACEC criteria, will be studied further during development of the RMP. The draft RMP will list each proposed ACEC and the resource limitations, if any that would occur if the ACEC were designated. Public comment will be solicited as required under

the planning regulations, and final ACEC designations will be made as part of the final RMP and ROD.

On June 26, 2002 the National Wildlife Federation submitted a nomination to designate black-tailed prairie dog colonies on BLM administered lands as ACEC's. The Washington Office's evaluation concluded that the designation was not warranted at that time, but did not preclude the field offices from considering whether or not the ACEC designation is appropriate in localized areas. The appropriate time to make the determination is at the time of the RMP.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

All rivers in the planning area will be reviewed for eligibility in accordance with the WSR Act and BLM Manual 8351.

Wilderness Considerations

The RMP will not change the Wilderness Study Area boundaries and recommendations as a result of this planning process. The RMP will address management provisions that would be applied to WSA lands released from wilderness consideration should Congress act during the life of the RMP. Lands acquired after 1993 will be inventoried for resources and values including wilderness characteristics, as authorized in Section 201 of FLPMA.

Other Administrative Designations

Development of the RMP may result in identification of other administrative designations best made at the RMP level, such as Back Country Byways, Watchable Wildlife Sites or Intensive OHV areas. At present, there are no particular known candidates that would be considered in these categories.

Existing Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) will be reviewed and additional areas may be considered for designation. The RMP will incorporate developed recreation and semi-developed sites, and will consider other types of areas (for example, trails). And some designations such as Calypso Trail, PR-Depot and L&C National Historic Trail may be removed from the SMRA designation as they are recreation sites not SRMAs.

Issue 7: Commercial Uses

What Public Lands will be Available for Commercial Activities and how will those Activities be Managed?

Livestock Grazing

The Miles City Field Office administers 1760 grazing allotments under permit or lease to X operators. The RMP will review forage allocations and make adjustments as a result of an interdisciplinary team review and utilize a grazing decision process. Specific concerns are expected in maintaining local communities, providing stability for the livestock industry, and maintenance and enhancement of wildlife habitat, including sensitive wildlife and native plant species, through the modification of livestock grazing (permitted use and season of use).

The RMP will incorporate the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* and a discussion of existing allotments that are in compliance with S&G and recommend changes of those that are not.

Mineral Leasing, Exploration and Development

The Miles City Field Office (FO) is a very important source of federal oil and gas. During FY 2001, the latest available year for this data, approximately 89 percent of the oil production and 20 percent of the gas produced from federal leases in the State of Montana came from this FO. Royalty income from federal oil and gas attributable to the FO totaled approximately \$8.6 million dollars. Of that approximately \$4.4 million was disbursed to the State of Montana.

In keeping with the goals of the President's National Energy Policy to help promote dependable, affordable and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future, the RMP will determine what locations in the planning area will be open or closed to fluid mineral leasing and development. During preparation of this RMP, data from the latest assessments by the United States Geological Survey of oil and gas resources in the United States will be used. This planning area includes parts of the North-Central Montana and Williston Basin Provinces that were included in the 1995 National Assessment and a small portion of the Powder River Basin Province that was recently reassessed for the EPCA inventories. In addition, assessment data prepared by the BLM will also be used during development of this RMP. This and other information will be used in preparation of a reasonably foreseeable development scenario for the planning area.

As required in Appendix C of H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook, the RMP will identify the following areas:

1. Areas open to leasing, subject to standard lease terms.
2. Areas open to leasing, subject to minor constraints.
3. Areas open to leasing, subject to major constraints.
4. Areas closed to leasing.

The RMP will also be used to develop lease stipulations in the standard format including waivers, exception, and modification stipulations.

The RMP will also incorporate the Final Statewide Oil & Gas EIS and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plan (April 2003), and the 1992 Oil & Gas RMP/EIS Amendment to the Powder River, Billings, and South Dakota RMPs.

Solid Minerals

Coal

Miles City Field Office administrative area includes the northern part of the Powder River Basin and the western third of the Williston Basin. The Powder River Basin contains vast reserves of coal, much of which is owned by the federal government. Currently, five large surface mines produce coal in the Montana portion of the Powder River Basin. They are, the Rosebud Mines, Absaloka Mine, Big Sky Mine, Spring Creek Mine and Decker Mine. There is one producing

mine in the Montana portion of the Williston Basin and that is the Savage Mine near Sidney Montana. Total production from these mines for 2002 was about 37 million tons of coal. Of the 15 major coal resource states, Montana ranks number one with a reserve base of about 120 billion tons with about 100 billion tons located in the northern Powder River Basin. The vast majority of the coal is owned by the federal government but only about 1.4 billion of those tons are considered currently recoverable from our existing coal mines.

The Powder River RMP of 1985 focused primarily on the management of the vast federal coal resources. The principle coal resource decision in the land use plan was to identify which coal areas would be determined as acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing (43 CFR 3420.1 4(e)) which states:

“The major land use planning decision concerning the coal resource shall be the identification of areas acceptable for further consideration for leasing which shall be identified by the screening procedures listed below.”

There are four coal screens which must be applied;

1. **Identification of coal with development potential** – Areas could be eliminated from further consideration if they do not contain coal with development potential.
2. **Surface Owner Consultation** – Negative surface owner views could cause lands to be eliminated from further consideration.
3. **Application of Unsuitability Criteria** – Areas can be eliminated if determined to be unsuitable for surface mining based upon application of a list of 20 unsuitability criteria.
4. **Multiple Use Conflict Analysis** – Additional areas of coal resource may be eliminated from consideration based on multiple use considerations if other federal resource values are determined to be superior to the coal resource.

The Powder River RMP task force applied the 4 coal screens only to the areas considered to be in the “new planning area” because some coal areas were previously screened in various Management Framework Plans (MFP’S). However, coal areas in previous planning were accounted for in the RMP totals.

Briefly, 68.4 billion tons of federal coal were identified as having development potential, 4.62 billion tons were deleted due to negative surface owner views, 4.76 billion tons were eliminated due to application of unsuitability criteria and 4.51 billion tons were eliminated due to multiple surface use conflicts, leaving a total of 54.37 billion tons available for leasing consideration.

The four coal screens identified must be applied to coal deposits within the Miles City Field Office. This process represents a very significant workload as it is time, data, and personnel intensive to accomplish. However, upon closer examination, there may be areas where existing analysis will suffice or greatly enhance the new review process. In addition, this type of analysis is tailor made for a GIS application which will save much time. One possible scenario concerning this process follows;

1. **Identification of Coal With Development Potential** – It is likely that this will be the screen that would require the least amount of work. We would review the determinations and the coal areas to determine if there is new data, if ownership has changed, ie., Otter Creek Tracts, and determine if evaluation parameters are still adequate based on today's mining technologies and economics. The screen may have to be fully applied in areas of new interest if not previously applied, ie., North Kinsey. Results would have to be re-tabulated and re-represented. Some new data (drilling) might be required. It may not be feasible to contract this out as confidential data is used in this analysis. If possible, the MSO solid minerals staff (geologists and engineers) would be instrumental in accomplishing this workload.
2. **Surface owner consultation** – The unsuitability criteria would have to be reapplied to all areas of coal with development potential. This would involve mailing questionnaires to all surface owners with federal coal with development potential to obtain surface owner views (split estate involves 84% of federal coal). The results would be tabulated and posted to maps. Areas would be eliminated if there were significant negative surface owner views in an area that satisfy one or more of a set of five criteria.
3. **Application of Unsuitability Criteria** – The unsuitability criteria would have to be reapplied to all areas of coal with development potential. This represents a very significant workload which involves many different disciplines because there are twenty different unsuitability criteria which must be applied to all the identified coal resources. The criteria include T&E plants and animals, habitat, historic sites, special land use designations such as WSA's, ACEC's etc., floodplains, wetlands, alluvial valley floors, rights of ways, occupied dwellings and other land use areas. Existing data would be used and since much of the coal deposits are the same as those currently being examined for CBNG there is much new data to use. Some additional new data may have to be gathered in certain areas. The results would have to be tabulated and posted to maps. Parts of the application of unsuitability criteria might be farmed out to contractors such as those involving ROW's and dwellings etc. However, other areas might be considered more "inherently governmental" or would require such a large amount of supervision by specialists it would be easier to do it in house such as wildlife applications, cultural, etc.
4. **Multiple Surface Use Conflict Analysis** – This would involve analyzing the lands that passed through the unsuitability and surface owner screens for resource values of locally important or unique nature not necessarily included in the unsuitability criteria. In the PRRA RMP twelve resource values were considered; including negative landowner views, soils, croplands, AVF's, wildlife values, power plants, recreation or hunting areas, townsites, oil and gas fields, cultural sites, and AMP's. We would be free to determine our own list of resource values to analyze for this which might include coalbed natural gas fields, new ACEC's or new recreational or special interest areas. This analysis would involve many of the same individuals or disciplines as the unsuitability determination process and would also be personnel, time and data intensive. The coal screens were not fully applied in the BDRMP.

Once the coal screens have been applied via the land use process, then only the unsuitability criteria are generally reviewed and possibly readjusted during the environmental review process for subsequent coal lease applications.

The Fort Union Coal Region is an administrative area that contains additional coal deposits of the Fort Union Formation which will also need to be analyzed for leasing in the RMP.

Impacts to groundwater, and air quality from coal mining may be contentious issues but much data already exists for adequate and straightforward RMP analysis in the coal producing region of the northern PRB.

The RMP will also address bentonite mining development in the planning area.

Recreational Uses

It is expected that the RMP will address balancing dispersed recreation use with commercial recreation use primarily for hunting. This could result in areas where commercial use is not allowed or maximum allowable use is established to reduce competition between commercial and non-commercial recreation use. The RMP also identifies programmatically what recreational activities and associated terms and conditions BLM would authorize without additional environmental review. The RMP will provide guidance to the outfitter and guide program, (i.e.) allocation of space and address OHV intensive use areas.

Right-of-Way Corridor Planning and Lands Authorizations

The RMP will consider whether corridors should be designated for right-of-way purposes. Avoidance and exclusion areas will also be delineated, if necessary, based on interdisciplinary analysis of resource values and requirements for right-of-way uses and commercial activities. This will include considerations for future communication site uses and possible wind energy uses. We will also incorporate best management practices to reduce the potential of impacts.

The President's National Energy Policy will be reflected in the potential Right-of-Way Corridors and in general areas where Right-of-Way authorizations are needed for the development and transportation of energy. Current environmental standards and good stewardship principles will be maintained.

Issue 8: Update Land Tenure Adjustment Information and Access Needs

What Criteria Will Be Used to Make Public Land Tenure Adjustments, Including Disposal of Public Land and Acquisition of Non-Public Lands, and What Public Lands May Be Available for Future Adjustment Activities?

With the passage of FLPMA, Congress declared it the policy of the United States to retain public lands in Federal ownership unless planning procedures determine that disposal of a particular parcel will serve the National interest. Review all lands for retention or disposal, and identify lands or types of resources for acquisition. Also need to consider FLTFA disposals and acquisitions, where a portion of the proceeds from land sales can be used for land acquisitions. Consider the effects of existing withdrawals on land tenure adjustments and future withdrawal actions needed (revocations, new withdrawals, withdrawal expirations, etc. Consider use of

withdrawals for sensitive resources (T&E, cultural, paleontological, Native American, etc., to protect the resources. Also consider the effects of changes to Bureau of Reclamation projects (withdrawal revocations, some land returned to BLM, some land to individual reclamation projects).

The RMP will set criteria for disposal, to be used when assessing land tenure adjustment proposals within the planning area. Criteria will be consistent with laws governing public land tenure adjustments. In addition, specific parcels of public land will be identified by legal description for future consideration under certain disposal actions, for instance, by sale, by exchange, or under provisions of other disposal authorities.

The RMP will also set criteria for acquisition of land or interest in land. The criteria will focus on exchanges, fee acquisition of land, conservation easements, and road easement considerations for access to public land. These criteria would then be applied to proposals that come under review for consideration in the planning area. Criteria will be consistent with FLPMA as well as with the goals and objectives established within the RMP.

Over one million of the 2.8 million BLM administered acres in the planning area do not have legal access. Many areas that are legally accessible are difficult to locate due to the fragmented ownership pattern in eastern Montana. This RMP will address the need for additional public access and enhancing existing access through signing and cooperation with other agencies. The RMP will also incorporate information contained in the “State Director Guidance on Access (April 1989) and identify priority areas for access. We will also consider additional areas for access.

Major considerations in alternative development and estimation of the effects for access management in the RMP will include public and administrative access needs.

The RMP will address the acquisition of new lands in regards to allowable multiple uses (ie., presence or absences of livestock grazing).

B. Management Concerns

Air Quality

The RMP will identify area-wide criteria or restrictions that would apply to activities authorized by the Miles City FO that might affect air quality. Federal Class I areas require prevention of significant deterioration (PSD). The Medicine Lake Wilderness – within the planning area, and UL Bend Wilderness – adjacent to the planning area, are Class I areas. The remainder of the planning area is Federal Class II. The Lame Deer area is a non-attainment area for Federal PM-10.

Soil Resources

The RMP will utilize available soil data to make decisions for a variety of resource affecting actions. State Soil Geographical Data (STATSGO) is available for wide area analysis and Soil Survey Geographical Data (SSURGO) is available for more intense resource analysis. All

counties in the planning area have soil data available for analysis, however, Dawson, McCone, Prairie, and Wibaux are currently being revised and should be available in February of 2004.

Cultural /Paleontological Resources

Cultural Resources

The RMP will describe the cultural resource values located within the planning area, and address the allocation of recorded sites to use categories as identified in BLM Manual 8110. A strategy is currently being developed to assign site types to specific use categories.

The RMP will consider the use of these cultural resources for scientific, educational, recreational, traditional or experimental purposes. Management actions will be prescribed within the RMP for the protection, stabilization and/or interpretation of cultural resources. The RMP will also be utilized as an additional tool to consult with tribal groups regarding traditional cultural values in the planning area and appropriate management strategies to protect, preserve and enhance those values. The BLM will partner with expertise available at the State Historic Preservation Office to continue ongoing efforts and expand the knowledge of traditional uses within the planning area. A new Class I literature review will either need to be conducted or the existing Class I updated in order to construct an overview of the cultural resources of the area. Following the completion of the RMP, a CRMP (Cultural Resource Management Plan/Project Plan) will need to be developed that will allocate the various cultural resource values to use categories and develop management prescriptions for the protection of significant cultural resources.

Paleontological Resources

The BLM Manual guidance found at 8270 will be used in development of the RMP. The plan will identify criteria or restrictions to ensure that significant paleontological resources are identified and evaluated prior to surface disturbing activities, and threats are appropriately mitigated. The RMP will also consider opportunities for scientific, educational and recreational use of paleontological locales within the planning area. A Class I literature review will be conducted to construct an overview of the paleontological resources in the area. This information, coupled with information on the extent of surface geological exposures containing fossil remains will be utilized in the RMP. Following the completion of the RMP, a Paleontological Management Plan/Project Plan will need to be developed that will develop and allocate appropriate paleontological values to appropriate uses and develop management prescriptions for the protection of significant paleontological resources.

Visual Resource Management

The RMP will revisit current management objectives in the Big Dry RMP and provide management objectives for the Powder River RMP area. The intent is balance the need for development with protecting scenic values. The RMP will identify areas where altering the landscape (i.e., energy development, fuels reduction, utility corridors, road and trail development, recreation facility development, etc) is deemed more important than maintaining the characteristic landscape and vice versa. In developing management objectives, fragmented ownership will be an important consideration to avoid managing scenic values on lands where BLM ownership is too limited to affect the overall landscape.

Current inventory records are not sufficient. New inventory data will need to be collected. Inventories will not be completed for fragmented/scattered BLM-administered lands where BLM does not administer enough surface to maintain the characteristic landscape. The intent is to classify these lands as Class IV to accommodate activities such as energy development, fuels reduction, utilities, etc. Lands where BLM administers sufficient surface to manage, the characteristic landscape will be inventoried.

Social and Economic Concerns

The Miles City Field Office manages land within sixteen counties, and near many communities such as Forsyth, Colstrip, Terry, Broadus, Jordan. The concerns among residents and the impacts to communities, from public land management decisions vary in the planning area and will be considered during the RMP process. Land allocation decisions (e.g., land tenure decisions, commercial uses available, outfitter and guide permits, etc.) have the potential to impact many communities in the planning area and will be analyzed in the RMP process. The RMP decisions could also have regional, state and national impacts and interest. This includes population, employment, fiscal, etc. IM 2003-169, Use of the Economic Profile System in Planning and Collaboration, included a requirement for a workshop on economic trends and strategies for all new resource management plans.

Engineering

The RMP will provide guidance for construction and maintenance of resource improvements for watershed, wildlife, fisheries, recreation and livestock grazing and will be consistent with resource management objectives for the allotments or areas (BLM Manual 9101). It will also incorporate as much information as is available on the transportation plan. The protocol for the transportation plan is currently being developed for the Field Office by the Montana State Office.

Wild Fire & Prescribe Fire Management

The RMP will incorporate the Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan. In addition to incorporating the state plan, MCFO has the opportunity to (e) identify broad treatment levels in areas fire polygons, and (f) identify general restrictions on fire management practices (suppression and fuels management) if any are needed to protect other resource values.

III. Preliminary Planning Criteria

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-2) require the development of planning criteria to guide preparation of the resource management plan. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the preparation of the plan. They ensure the plan is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other Federal, state and local agencies, and Native American tribes.

The following preliminary criteria were developed and will be reviewed by the public during scoping; they will be included in the Federal Register Notice. After public comment analysis, the final planning criteria will be approved and distributed to all interested parties collaborating in the planning process.

1. The plan will be completed in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws.
2. The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.
3. The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the Miles City Field Office.
4. The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*; the *Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota*; the *1992 Oil & Gas EIS/Amendment of the Powder River, Billings, & South Dakota RMPs*; the *Montana Final Statewide Oil and Gas EIS and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plan*; and, the *Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan*.
5. The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior Wilderness Study Area findings that affect public lands in the planning area.
6. The planning process will include early consultation meetings with FWS during the development of the plan.
7. The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
8. The plan will incorporate the requirements of the BLM Handbook H-1624-1, *Planning for Fluid Minerals*.
9. The RMP/EIS will incorporate the requirements of the interagency reference guide entitled Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenarios and Cumulative Effects Analysis developed by the Rocky Mountain Federal Leadership Forum on NEPA, Oil and Gas, and Air Quality.
10. The plan will recognize the State's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
11. Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
12. The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with Bureau-wide standards and program guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, the following Instruction Memos and Bulletins:
 - a. IB 2002-054 Information Technology in Support of Land Use Planning;
 - b. IB 2002-056 Recommended Formats for Land Use Plans, Records of Decision, and Their Supporting Environmental Impact Statement;
 - c. IM 2002-100 Review Requirements for Land Use Planning Efforts;
 - d. IB 2002-101 Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans;
 - e. IM 2002-142 Comments on Draft Data Standards for Organization Information;
 - f. IM 2002-164 Guidance to Address Environmental Justice in Land Use Plans and Related National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents;
 - g. IM 2002-167 Social and Economic Analysis for Land Use Planning;
 - h. IM 2002-174 Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations;

- i. IM 2002-196 ROW Corridors, ROW Use Areas, Land Use Planning
 - j. IM 2002-202 Interim Guidance for Data Management in Land Use Planning;
 - k. IB 2003-020 Minimum Content for RMP Scoping Reports;
 - l. IM 2003-020 Interim Wind Energy Development Policy;
 - m. IB 2003-074 Sample Filing Plan for Land Use Planning Records
 - n. IM 2003-233 Integration of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) Inventory Results into the Land Use Planning Process;
 - o. IM 2003-234 Integration of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) Inventory Results into Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Use Authorization;
 - p. IM 2003-238 Guidance for Data Management in Land Use Planning;
 - q. IM 2003-275 Consideration of Wilderness Characteristics in Land Use Plans;
 - r. IM 2004-005 Clarification of OHV Designations and Travel Management in the BLM Land Use Planning Process;
13. Geospatial data will be automated within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.
 14. Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.
 15. The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.
 16. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for oil & gas, road drainage, fire rehab, etc will be added.
 17. Native American Consultation & Coordination - Three Native American reservations are located within the area - the Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Fort Peck. Fort Berthold, Lower Rosebud and Turtle Mountain Reservations have also expressed an interest in our planning area. Close coordination will take place to see that the Tribe's needs are considered, analyzed, and that BLM fulfills its trust responsibilities.

IV. Data and GIS Needs

Appendix A provides a comprehensive summary of data and inventory needs in order to prepare an RMP to meet current planning guidance, and to address anticipated issues unique to the planning area. All new data collected will have information about the data (metadata) stored in a database. All metadata will meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards. All new data collected will meet either BLM national data standards or the standard of the appropriate data collection agency/entity.

V. Participants in the Process

A number of BLM staff will be involved in the preparation of the RMP throughout all levels of the organization. Special expertise and review will be required from the Montana State Office during various steps of the process.

One new position stationed in the Miles City Field Office is required to support development of the RMP. This position would be the Project Manager. This position would be a temporary position for the length of the project. It is critical to the successful and timely development of the RMP.

The remainder of the Core/ID Teams will be comprised of existing specialists currently on staff. While the Project Manager will coordinate the ID Team effort, most members of the team will remain supervised within their current organizational structure. The Project Manager will work directly for the Field Manager. Appendix C displays the work months estimated for each Field Office employee listed below.

Our intention is to contract the writing of the plan and development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The contractor will have a primary role in writing/editing the plan based on the information BLM provides, performing the NEPA analysis (and GIS work), the hydrology and social and economics analyses, and writing the EIS. Contract planning will require a very close working relationship between the contractor, BLM managers, and BLM resource specialists for the plans to be successful. Although contracting should reduce BLM staff time commitment, continued BLM staff involvement will be critical particularly to: verify appropriate data collection, help identify planning issues, develop relationships with our collaborators that will carry into implementation, and ensure that BLM staff have an in depth understanding of both the plan and the public’s expectations for our management of the area. BLM staff will ensure appropriate alternatives are developed with input from contractor. The work months and budget developed in this Prep Plan reflect the contracting approach.

Table 1-1. BLM Roles and Responsibilities¹		
Position	Name	Roles/Responsibilities
State Director	Marty Ott	1. Issues the draft RMP/EIS, final RMP/EIS, and ROD.
WO	Andrew Strasfogel	1. WO210 State Liaison
State Office Coordinator	Jim Beaver	1. Coordinates assignment and scheduling of any needed personnel from the Montana State Office. 2. Coordinates timely reviews by Technical Review team in cooperation with Project Manager in accordance with schedule. 3. Acts as the State Director’s representative for the project. 4. Provides technical assistance to the Field Office when necessary. 5. Acts as liaison between MSO and WO210.
Field Manager	David McInay	1. Responsible for preparation and completion of RMP. 2. Recommends approval of the draft and final RMP/EIS and ROD. 3. Supervises Assistant Field Managers and Project Manager during work on the RMP. 4. Apprises Project Manager of needed corrections and ensuring

¹ The purpose of this table is to give a general understanding of BLM’s Roles and Responsibilities during the RMP revision; the assignment of specific tasks to be completed by the contractor versus the BLM will be defined in much greater detail in the Statement of Work.

Table 1-1. BLM Roles and Responsibilities¹		
Position	Name	Roles/Responsibilities
		original direction is maintained.
FO Staff	Fred Wambolt Dale Tribby Ken Smihula Randy Nordsvan	1. Assures availability of Core and ID Team members for completion of all phases of the RMP within assigned dates. 2. Participates in all reviews.
Public Affairs Specialist	Mark Jacobsen	1. Will assist Project Manager and contractor in keeping all local interest groups and key individuals informed of general plan progress. 2. Participates in all public participation activities.
Project Manager	Vacant	1. Works with Public Affairs Specialist to coordinate public participation in plan. 2. Serves as primary contact and spokesperson for RMP process. 3. Ensures Team members are aware of assignments, schedule, and deadlines. 4. Coordinates with Assistant Field Managers and MSO Coordinator to ensure RMP commitments are met and assignments completed by staff under their jurisdiction. 5. Keeps Field Manager and SO Coordinator informed on progress with monthly updates. 6. Identifies problems or challenges in meeting scheduled time frames, recommends solutions, and facilitates the resolution of conflicts. 7. Works with contractor (COR on contract) to ensure the RMP is prepared within the technical and procedural quality standards, which meet the requirements of the Bureau Planning System, NEPA guidelines, and RMP planning guidance. 8. Works directly with WO210 and MSO on resolving any protests filed to the Director at issuance of the FEIS. 9. Responsible for overall quality control of analysis, public participation, and documentation.
Core Team Wildlife Vegetation/Range Lands/Realty Solid Minerals Oil & Gas Rec/Wilderness Fire GIS	Kent Undlin Todd Yeager Pam Wall Dan Benoit David Breisch Squires/Coates Brad Sauer ?	1. Serves as program lead for their section/issues. 2. Works with contractor to prepare the necessary section of the RMP. 3. Assists in preparation of all sections of the document. 4. Ensures technical adequacy of their programs. 5. Reviews the entire RMP and comments on all sections. 6. GIS – Serves as data administrator for RMP; coordinates with MSO GIS on data standards, metadata, and requirements; Provide GIS expertise to RMP ID Team (e.g., technical assistance, training, correction efforts). 7. Each BLM Core Team member would be responsible for quality control for his/her respective resource to ensure accuracy of information and use of appropriate assumptions and methodology in analysis.

Table 1-1. BLM Roles and Responsibilities¹		
Position	Name	Roles/Responsibilities
ID Team² Cultural Range/Weeds Forestry Fish/Riparian Soils Hydrology Social Economic	Melton/Hubbel B Witkowski Ray Smith Joe Platz Robert Mitchell Andy Bobst Joan Trent Ed Hughes	1. Participates in team meetings and work sessions. 2. Assures the technical adequacy of program input; coordinate with MSO counterparts and contractor on all aspects of plan development and technical program adequacy. 3. Keeps Project Manager informed on progress of assignments. 4. Reviews document and assures that references are documented, terms defined, and thoughts and statements are consistent throughout the document; works with Writer-editor to assure consistency. 5. Provides written responses when requested to public comments received throughout the course of the RMP. 6. Each BLM ID Team member would be responsible for quality control for his/her respective resource to ensure accuracy of information and use of appropriate assumptions and methodology in analysis.
Technical Review Team	State Office Program Leads	1. Provide policy, technical, and consistency review of documents. 2. Provide comments to Field Office counterparts and Project Manager; and advise of needed corrections.
Support Team	Admin Staff	1. Assists RMP effort as necessary in providing administrative skills, computer and IRM/IT support, public affairs assistance, and other administrative duties.

VI. Public Participation Plan

A detailed communications plan will be prepared for each major step of the planning process: scoping, development and release of the draft EIS, and release of the final EIS. The purpose of this section of the preplan is to provide overall public involvement guidance for the planning process.

A. Goals and Objectives

The objectives for this Public Participation Plan are to:

1. Provide an outline that will guide public involvement activities during the planning process.
2. Provide an equitable and open process for all individuals and entities that want to be involved.
3. Create a public involvement strategy that is understandable to participants and one that provides useful information to the BLM and decision makers.
4. Provide ample opportunity for the public to comment in a meaningful way during the planning process.
5. Present a positive image of the BLM in all contacts.

² Economist (socio-economics) will be in the SOW for the contractor to provide.

B. Interested or Affected Public

Major stakeholders are listed below. Additional stakeholders will be identified throughout the process. A mailing list identifying key individuals in organizations, agencies and interest groups will be compiled with the assistance of the Project Manager (along with the public affairs specialist) who will be responsible for all mailings, and notifications of public meetings, etc. associated with the public participation process. Public involvement techniques considered most appropriate will be identified during development of the detailed communications plan for each planning phase.

1. Eastern MT Resource Advisory Council
2. County Commissioners (Big Horn; Carter; Custer; Daniels; Dawson; Fallon; Garfield; McCone; Powder River; Prairie; Richland; Roosevelt; Rosebud; Sheridan; Treasure; Wibaux)
3. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
4. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP)
5. Native American Tribes (Crow; Northern Cheyenne, Ft. Peck)
6. State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
7. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
8. Oil/Gas lessees/operators
9. Livestock permittees
10. Montana Board of Outfitters
11. Seven State Grazing Districts
12. Mining Companies/Interest Groups
13. Montana Wilderness Association
14. Montana Stockgrowers Association
15. Montana Public Lands Council
16. National Wildlife Federation
17. Montana Wildlife Federation
18. Northern Plains Resource Council
19. Local and Regional Commodity and Conservation Groups
20. Montana Congressional Delegation
21. Montana Governor's Office
22. Interested Businesses and Consultants
23. Adjacent Private Landowners
24. Recreation-related Groups and Individuals (OHV)
25. Regional Media
26. BLM Employees (FO, MSO, WO)
27. Conservation Districts (MACD)
28. Montana Petroleum Association
29. ROW and Other Land Use Authorization Holders
30. Private Surface Owners
31. County Fire Wardens
32. Montana Trail Riders Association
33. Sportsmen Groups
34. Travel Montana
35. Custer Country Tourism Region

C. Public Participation Activities/Collaboration

Target dates and other details for public participation activities, notices, and availability of printed information (key activities for each phase of the planning process) are listed below. Maximum public involvement is intended. Other activities will be detailed in the communications plan for each phase of the planning process.

Letters will be mailed in 2003 inviting other agencies to be cooperators on the Miles City RMP. The letters will be sent to: the 16 counties within the field office boundary; Montana State Governor's Office; Forest Service; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Department of Natural Resources (DNRC); Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP); and, three Native American Tribes. If there is no response to the letters, then follow-up phone contacts will be made with the intent of trying to get some interdisciplinary team involvement with agencies and tribes.

The RAC will most likely be asked to participate for some issues using subgroups. Also, periodic coordination meetings will be held with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and EPA to provide an open process designed to eliminate potential conflicts at the end of the NEPA process.

1. Scoping Phase

- Publish a Notice of Intent to prepare the RMP in the Federal Register. The Notice will identify the preliminary issues, planning criteria, request ACEC nominations, and scheduled scoping meetings
- Issue a news release, a newsletter/brochure, and website information regarding the preparation of the RMP. An announcement of scheduled scoping meetings will be sent to people on the mailing list.
- Informal public open house scoping meetings will be organized to gather public input on the issues, management concerns to be resolved in the plan, and on the planning criteria and process.
- Briefings will be held with the Congressional staffs, County Commissioners, tribes, and local community groups.
- Coordination/consultation will occur with USFWS and SHPO.
- Written comments on issues/scope of the RMP will be requested by the end of the scoping period.

2. Alternative Development

- A newsletter/brochure will be developed to provide background information on issues and preliminary alternatives.
- Informal public open houses will be held with interested groups, agencies, individuals, etc. to discuss alternatives and make sure issues are addressed.
- Use RAC subgroups where feasible to develop alternatives for controversial issues.
- Written comments on preliminary alternatives for the RMP will be requested by the end of the comment period (to be determined).

3. Issue the Draft RMP/EIS

- Publish a notice of availability in the Federal Register for the draft Miles City RMP/EIS followed by a 90-day public comment period.

- Issue a news release in local/regional papers on the availability of the draft Miles City RMP/EIS, the 90-day comment period, and the schedule of public meetings to be held during the comment period.
 - Public meetings will be held during the 90-day public comment period to gather verbal or written input on the draft Miles City RMP/EIS.
 - Briefings will be held with the Congressional staffs, County Commissioners, tribes, and local community groups.
 - Coordination/consultation will occur with USFWS and SHPO.
 - Written comments on the draft RMP will be requested by the end of the comment period (to be determined).
 - Copies will be available on the BLM website.
4. Publish the Proposed Final RMP/EIS
- A notice of availability will be published in the Federal Register for the final Miles City RMP/EIS and a 30-day protest period.
 - A Governor's consistency review (60 days) will be initiated to identify inconsistencies with State or local plans.
 - Briefings will be held with the Congressional staffs, County Commissioners, tribes, and local community groups.
 - Coordination/consultation will occur with USFWS and SHPO.
5. Respond to Protests
- Written responses will be sent to the public as needed.
 - Protest resolution with the Washington Office, if necessary.
 - If necessary, issue a Federal Register notice requesting comments on significant changes as result of a protest.
6. Publish Approved Plan and Record of Decision
- A notice of availability will be published in the Federal Register for the approved plan and ROD.
 - The approved plan and ROD will be sent to those on the mailing list (which will include all those who participated in the planning process during the preparation of the plan).
 - A news release will be issued in local/regional papers on the availability of the approved plan and ROD.
 - Briefings will be held with the Congressional staffs, County Commissioners and local community groups.

Results of Public Participation

Description of how the results of public participation activities will be summarized, analyzed, documented, and used by the line manager in making decisions in the plan: The contractor, with assistance from the project manager, will analyze all the comments on both the scoping effort and Draft EIS, and develop a summary of comments categorized by issue. The summary will be available to the public upon request and key points will be shared with the public through the RMP newsletter. The purpose of the scoping comments is to assist in finding out issues and concerns during the start of the process; whereas the comments on the Draft EIS will be more

specific to actual alternatives and effects, and have a more formal response to be published in the Final EIS. All comments will be available for public review unless specifically requested by the commenter.

The BLM's interdisciplinary team along with the line manager will review all the public comments and consider the information to develop alternatives and make decisions on a variety of issues.

E. Internet

Internet technology that will be used to provide information to the public and/or solicit comments: The planning team will establish a link from the Miles City Field Office website to the Miles City RMP/EIS web page. The website will contain information such as the plan schedule, maps, pictures, contact information and planning documents as they are completed.

An email address will be established to enable the public to submit their comments electronically throughout the planning process.

VII. Format and Process for the Plan

The primary product will be a stand-alone document called the Miles City Resource Management Plan (RMP). The nine steps of BLM's standard planning process will be followed in the preparation of the RMP. The BLM's Instruction Bulletin (IB 2002-056) *Format for Land Use Plans, Records of Decision, and Supporting EISs* will be followed (see Appendix B).

The proposed RMP and EIS documents will follow standard formats required under NEPA. Each chapter will be supplemented with maps, tables, and figures to assist the public in understanding. Given the current culture of rural Montana, hardcopy publications will be the standard; however, in addition to the hardcopy publications, all documents will be posted on the Internet. In addition, geospatial data will be made available to the public via an Internet mapping tool (ArcIMS) when this tool is available for use Bureau wide is not known. It is possible that copies could be distributed on CD.

VIII. Plan Preparation Schedule

The Miles City RMP will be initiated in FY 2004 and will result in a Proposed RMP/FEIS being distributed in FY 2007, with a ROD/Approved Plan scheduled for release also in FY2007. The proposed preparation schedule for the RMP is shown in Table 1-2.

Public comments will be analyzed during scoping and alternative development. All comments will be considered by the BLM for preparation of the draft RMP/EIS. Public comments will be analyzed after a 90-day review period for the draft RMP/EIS. All comments on the draft RMP will be considered by the BLM and contractor for preparation of the final RMP/EIS.

A range of alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, will be developed to respond to the issues identified during scoping. Each alternative will provide different solutions to the issues and concerns. The objective in the alternative formulation will be to develop realistic solutions that represent a complete plan.

An administrative record will be maintained during the development of the plan and located in the Miles City FO, Miles City, MT. The record will be compiled consistent with Department of Justice guidance on administrative records and Office of the Solicitor guidance on privileged documents. All documents will be indexed following the filing structure found in Appendix D.

Monthly progress reports will be provided to the Field Manager by the RMP Project Manager to troubleshoot delays or budget concerns. However, substantial deviation from the proposed staffing or budgets as identified in this preparation plan, or identification of new or emerging issues not considered at this time, would impact this schedule. If the schedule needs to be adjusted significantly, a memo will be transmitted from the FO Manager through the State Director to the Group Manager. The memo should comply with WO IM NOo2002-256 (Plan Schedule Changes).

Miles City RMP Revision Preparation Plan – March, 2004

Table 1-2. Miles City RMP Revision Schedule					
Planning Phase	Planning Tasks	Time Frames	Dates (CY)	Who³	How
Formally Initiate Planning; Issues; Scoping	Develop Preparation Plan	8 months	08/03-03/04	FO	SO/WO review and comment
	Invite Cooperating Agencies	1 month	03/04-04/04	FO	Mail Letters Follow up call if no response
	Hire Project Manager (start date unknown)	5 months	02/04-06/04	FO/SO	State Office to advertise
	Planning Nuts & Bolts NEPA Class	1 week	2/9-2/12-04	FO	PTC Course
	Develop Statement of Work/contracting work/select contractor	4 months	06/04-09/04	FO/SO	Electronic
	Begin GIS/data evaluation with contractor	1 month	10/04	FO/Contractor	Meetings/electronic
	Establish website/Public Participation plan	1 month	10/04	FO/Contractor	Electronic
	Newsletter/News Release	1 week	10/04	FO	Newspaper/website
	Coordination Meeting with FS, FWS, EPA	1 week	09/04	FO	Meetings
	Initiate Discussion of ESA issues with FWS		09/04		
	Develop Species List (special status, important economic species, etc)		09/04		
	Notice of Intent Published (proposed issues, planning criteria, etc.)	3 months	07/04-09/04	FO/Contractor	Federal Register
	Public Scoping Meetings	1 month	11/04	FO/Contractor	Newspapers/meetings
	Economic Workshop	1 week	11/04	FO	Coordinate with NTC
Comment Period	2 months	11/04-12/04	FO/public	Letters/electronic	
Planning Criteria	Public Comment Analysis/Summary	2 months	01/05-02/05	FO/Contractor	Contractor database
	Finalize planning issues, concerns, opportunities	1 month	03/05	FO/Contractor	Electronic
	Publish planning criteria, issues, etc. on website	1 week	03/05	Contractor	Website
Inventory and Data Collection	Inventory (data collection)	5 months	11/04-04/05	FO	Field work/coordinate with others
	Collaborative data evaluation	6 months	11/04-07/05	FO/Contractor	Coordinate with other agencies

³ The BLM has invited Native American Tribes, local, and state governments to be cooperating agencies in this RMP process. It is not known yet which agencies/tribes will decide to be cooperators; however, they will be involved during all steps of the planning process.

Miles City RMP Revision Preparation Plan – March, 2004

Table 1-2. Miles City RMP Revision Schedule					
Planning Phase	Planning Tasks	Time Frames	Dates (CY)	Who³	How
Analysis of the Management Situation	Describe existing environment to contractor	2 month	02/05-04/05	FO	Meetings/electronic
	Prepare MSA	2 months	03/05-05/05	FO/Contractor	Meetings/electronic
	Develop no-action alternative	1 month	05/05	FO/Contractor	Meetings/electronic
Formulation of Alternatives	Formulate alternatives with contractor/potential working groups	5 months	05/05-10/05	FO/Contractor	Meetings/electronic
	Early Consultation Discussions with FWS		05/05		
	Continue public involvement through alternatives	1 month	06/05	FO/Contractor	Newspapers/meetings
	Work on Chapters 1-3 with contractor as information allows	6 months	04/05-10/05	FO/Contractor	Electronic
Write and Publish Draft EIS	Write Draft EIS	5 months	11/05-05/06	Contractor	Meetings/electronic
	Review by cooperators/collaborators	1 month	06/06	FO/Contractor	Meetings/letters
	Review by SO/WO	1 month	07/06	SO/WO	SO/WO review and comment
	Respond to internal review	1 month	08/06	FO	Electronic
	Layout/Printing of Draft RMP/EIS	6 weeks	09/06-11/06	Contractor	Printer
	Issue Draft RMP/EIS	3 months	10/06-12/06	FO/ Public	Newspapers/letters/website
	News release/NOA	3 weeks	10/06	FO	Newspapers/website
Analyze Public Comments and Prepare and Publish Proposed RMP/Final EIS	Public comments analysis/summary	2 months	01/07-02/07	FO/Contractor	Meetings/electronic
	Prepare Proposed RMP/Final EIS	3 months	03/07-05/07	FO/Contractor	Electronic
	Internal review of RMP/EIS – SO/WO	1 month	06/07	SO/WO	SO/WO review and comment
	Respond to internal review	1 month	07/07	FO	Electronic
	Layout/printing of proposed RMP/Final EIS	6 weeks	08/07-10/07	FO/Contractor	Printer
	Governor’s consistency review period	2 months	09/07-10/07	FO	Meetings/letters
	Issue Proposed RMP/Final EIS (30-day protest)	1 month	10/07	FO	Newspapers/letters/website
	News release	1 week	10/07	FO	Newspapers/website
Decision	NOA	3 weeks	11/07		

Table 1-2. Miles City RMP Revision Schedule					
Planning Phase	Planning Tasks	Time Frames	Dates (CY)	Who³	How
Decision	Record of Decision (date dependent upon protests)	1 week	12/07	FO	Newspapers/letters/website

IX. Budget

The budget for the Miles City RMP effort includes most costs for developing the plan, including BLM staff labor, training and travel, equipment and supplies, Federal Register notices, printing, data collection, and contracting.

Table 1-3. Budget Projections				
Item	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
Salaries/Labor				
Management/Support Team	\$28,000	\$28,500	\$28,500	\$20,000
Core Team	\$205,000	\$255,100	\$126,500	\$80,000
ID Team	\$57,000	\$46,400	\$45,000	\$0
Total Salaries	\$290,000	\$330,000	\$200,000	\$100,000
Procurement				
Federal Register	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400
Newsletter/Updates	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0
Draft/Final RMP/EIS	\$0	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$0
Record of Decision	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,100
Total Procurement	\$2,000	\$72,400	\$72,400	\$5,500
Contract Costs⁴				
RMP Contract Estimate	\$382,000	\$877,000	\$577,000	\$64,000
Total Contracts	\$382,000	\$877,000	\$577,000	\$64,000
Other Costs				
RAC Subgroups/Collaboration	\$24,000	\$25,000	\$9,000	\$0
PCS Costs	\$45,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Computers and Supplies	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$500
Training (Economic Strategies Workshop)	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Other Costs	\$86,000	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$500
Total Budget for Planning				
Total Costs per FY	\$760,000	\$1,309,400	\$859,400	\$170,000

⁴ Contractor costs estimated from other field offices – several contracts were around 1.7 million (spread over 3-4 years).

Appendix A. Preparation Plan Data Status

Where there are costs listed below (other than using existing staff), they are being asked for under the benefiting activity (earmarked funds). These costs are not reflected in the budget table above. Once we have all of our earmarked submissions completed, this table will be updated/completed to reflect the costs used in those submissions.

Why Needed	Needed Data Set(s)	Is Needed Data Set Available	Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data/ GIS WM	Estimated Costs	
					Staff Needs (Seasonals)
Base Info. Analysis	Field office administrative boundaries	Yes	Done at 100k scale		
	County boundaries	Yes	Done at 100k scale		
	Ownership	Yes	Most are done at 1:100,000 – nothing at 1:24,000 – Complete coverage for MT at 100k, dated 24k info – approx. 234 quads complete out of 1170 total – need to be digitized		
	Topographic maps	Yes	Digital Raster Graphs (DRG) at 1:24k, 1:100k		
	Elevation data (NED)	Yes	30 meter resolution		
	Slope	Partial	Can create from NED		
	Vegetation	No	Statewide GAP vegetation available, some SILC3 available		
	5 th Code Hydrologic Units		Yes, statewide coverage		
	Lakes	Yes	Statewide coverage at 100K, scattered at 1:24k – 196 available out of 1133 total		
	Streams and Rivers	Yes	205 out of 1085 complete at 24k, statewide coverage at 100k		
	Impaired Streams		No data		
	Riparian Areas	Partial	MSO has no riparian data for Miles City		
	Digital ortho quads	Partial	MSO has statewide coverage of DOQ's – some are still on tape from NRIS and are in process of being converted		
	Aerial photos (4"/mile)	Partial	No data		
	USFS/Other Agency Roads	Partial	Obtain from FS/GIS/Other agencies		
	County Roads	Partial	GIS – 100k ct2 layer – no data for Miles City		
	BLM/FIMMS Roads		100k fimms – need 10 done to complete for Miles City		
	Other/Miscellaneous Roads		100k mt2 – only have 6 done for Miles City		
	1978 Vegetation Inventory		No data		
	Satellite Imagery Vegetation	Partial	Will have 80% coverage of Field Office		
Pfister Habitat Types		No data			
Timber Structure		No data			

Miles City RMP Revision Preparation Plan – March, 2004

Why Needed	Needed Data Set(s)	Is Needed Data Set Available	Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data/ GIS WM	Estimated Costs
				Staff Needs (Seasonals)
Wildlife				
Base Info. Analysis	FWP Game Ranges	Yes	Obtain data from MFWP/GIS – MSO has FWP game ranges depicted on 100k ownership layer – should still get from FWP if available	
	Elk Seasonal Use Areas	Yes	Obtain data from MFWP/GIS – MSO has FWP data converted and available	
	Mule Deer Seasonal Use Areas	Yes	Obtain data from MFWP/GIS – MSO has FWP data converted and available	
	Bighorn Sheep Seasonal Use Areas	No	Obtain data from MFWP/GIS – MSO has FWP data converted and available	
	Antelope Seasonal Use Areas	Yes	Obtain data from MFWP/GIS – MSO has FWP data converted and available	
	Whitetail Deer Seasonal Use Areas	Yes	Obtain data from MFWP/GIS – MSO has FWP data converted and available	
	Black-Tailed Prairie Dog surveys	Partial		
	Bald Eagle Monitoring	Yes		
	Sage Grouse Seasonal Use Areas	Partial	MSO has FWP data converted and available	
Base Info. Analysis	Breeding Bird Surveys for Sensitive Species	Partial		
	Raptor Nesting Areas	Partial		
	Waterfowl Seasonal Use Areas	No	No data	
	General Terrestrial Habitat Surveys	Partial		
	Macroinvertebrate Monitoring	Partial		
	Other Sensitive species (ie. Burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, longbilled burlew, Swainsons hawk & others)	Partial		
Forestry				
Appendix C	Vegetation Inventory	No	Need inventory for forested areas – MSO has GAP vegetation which includes forested areas?	Existing Staff – Flight Time Dollars
Soil and Water				
Base Info. Analysis	Soils		No data	
	Water quality		No data	
Riparian				
Appendix C base info.	Riparian Areas/Condition	Partial	Need to consolidate all in-house records to see what we have and what is needed. Right now we do have paper records and files for some reaches but do not know how many.	__ WM seasonal

Miles City RMP Revision Preparation Plan – March, 2004

Why Needed	Needed Data Set(s)	Is Needed Data Set Available	Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data/ GIS WM	Estimated Costs
				Staff Needs (Seasonals)
Base info.	Riparian Area Conditions		We have no GIS data. Need to GPS sites and complete GIS coverage	
T&E Plants				
There are no T&E species. The Montana Natural Heritage Program maintains a website where sensitive plant locations are available. The plan will discuss how to conserve the types of habitats sensitive plants use. (Special Status plant species are included here also)				
Appendix C Base Info.	Sensitive Plants		MSO has Heritage data – statewide	
Fire and Fuels				
We will use the polygons we already have in the State-wide Fire Plan (no decision yet). The information below for fuels inventory is currently being asked for under the fire program for next FY (about 36,000 acres are scheduled under an existing contract).				
Base info.	Forest Fuels Inventory		No data	
Base info.	Non-Forest Fuels Inventory		No data	
Base info.	Fire History Study		Have fire history data from Denver	
Rangelands				
Appendix C	Ecological Site Inventories		No data	
Appendix C	Rangeland Health		No data	
Base Info.	Noxious Weeds		Some weed data available at 1:24k	
AML/Hazardous Materials				
Base Info.	Inventory/Assessment		No data	
Base Info.	HMM Inventory		No data	
Lands/Realty				
Appendix C	Access Transportation/Utility ROW Corridors		No data in GIS – available on maps – needs updated No data in GIS	
Minerals, Oil and Gas				
Appendix C	Geology – existing		Data Available	
	Mineral Potential		Development/Occurrence Potential on hard copy at MSO (100k scale-need to be digitized)	
	Oil and Gas Potential		Some data available	
	Mineral Material Sale Areas		No data	
Recreation and Special Area Management				
Appendix C	Travel Management		Incorporate guidelines developed by RAC & working group	
Appendix C	Special Designations (Wild and Scenic)		No data in MCFO	

Miles City RMP Revision Preparation Plan – March, 2004

Why Needed	Needed Data Set(s)	Is Needed Data Set Available	Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data/ GIS WM	Estimated Costs
				Staff Needs (Seasonals)
	Rivers)			
	ACECs	Yes	MSO has statewide dataset available	
	OHV		Update LUP guidance with past amendments; consider new areas for intensive OHV use or closed to all motorized use; signing of public lands	
Appendix C	Visual Resource Management/ROS	Partial	Need to update VRM inventory	
Base Info.	Cave Inventory		No data	
Appendix C	Other recreation	Partial	Outfitter and Guiding direction Identify areas where commercial activities would not be allowed Allocation	
Cultural Resources				
Appendix C IB 2002-101	New Class I Inventory		Contract to obtain Data	\$100,000
Paleontology				
	New Class I Inventory		Contract to obtain Data	
Social/Economic				
	Environmental Justice Consideration		Data Available	
	Wildland Urban Interface Areas		Data Available	
	Communities at risk from Wildland Fire		Data Available	
	Counties Losing Population		Data Available	
	Number of Economic Sectors by Counties		Data Available	

Appendix B. Format for Land Use Plans, Records of Decision, and Supporting EISs

The following format is from **IB 2002-056**; modifications may be made in response to issues identified for the Miles City RMP, and to meet BLM policy (e.g., critical elements, President’s Energy Policy, etc.).

Draft/Final Environmental Impact Statement Format

Front Matter

- Abstract (Inside Front Cover) - Privacy Statement (Included in Draft EIS)
- Cover Sheet or Title Page
- Dear Reader Letter
- Protest Procedures (Final EIS)
- Table of Contents
- Summary (and optional Reader’s Guide to help explain chapter format and contents)

Chapter 1 - Introduction

- A. Purpose and Need for the Plan
- B. Planning Area and Map
- C. Scoping/Issues

- 1. Issues Addressed

Issues used to develop alternatives⁵

Issues addressed in other parts of the EIS

- 2. Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed

Issues beyond the scope of the plan

Issues addressed through administrative or policy action

- D. Planning Criteria/Legislative Constraints

- E. Planning Process

Relationship to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs

Collaboration (Intergovernmental, inter-agency, and tribal relationships, Other stakeholder relationships)

- F. Related Plans - Discuss consideration of state, local, and tribal land use plans that “are germane in the development of land use plans for public lands.”⁶

- G. Policy - Discuss policies and decisions that existed prior to the plan being written that are outside the scope of the plan but may influence the decisions, constrain the alternatives, or are needed to understand management of the area. Examples include: proclamations, legislative designations, and court settlements.

- H. Overall Vision ⁷ - Identify the overall vision for management of the planning area. This vision should reflect the goals that are common to all alternatives. This can serve to help integrate programs.

Chapter 2 - Alternatives⁸

- A. General Description of each Alternative - Highlight the characteristics that distinguish each alternative

⁵Italics here show optional categories for issues

⁶Federal Land Policy Management Act Sec. 202(c)(9).

⁷Optional

⁸There has been some discussion of reversing the order of the Alternatives chapter and the Affected Environment chapter of the EIS. However, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance in the Department of the Interior has issued guidance stating that we must follow the recommended format in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1502.10) or obtain approval from OEPC to deviate from it.

- B. Decisions Common to Action Alternatives (primarily goals for resource conditions and resource uses).
- C. No-Action Alternative - Description of existing management direction including current decisions from relevant plans and reasonable, foreseeable, management scenarios.
- D. Action Alternatives⁹ - Detailed description of each of the Alternatives needed to display a reasonable range of options to meet the stated Purpose and Need and address issues. The alternatives should follow the format for land use plan “Management Decisions” provided in this document.
- E. Alternatives considered but not analyzed in detail
- F. Comparison of Alternatives (table)
- G. Comparison of Impacts (table)

Chapter 3 - Affected Environment

Limit discussion to what is needed to understand issues and environmental consequences and provide context for the Goals and Objectives.

- A. Resources - Physical and biological resources (current conditions and trends) addressed in alphabetical order. This is not necessarily a comprehensive list.
 - Air Quality
 - Cultural Resources
 - Fish, Wildlife and Special Status Species
 - Geology
 - Paleontology
 - Special Status Plants
 - Soil
 - Vegetation
 - Forests and Woodlands
 - Rangelands
 - Riparian and Wetlands
 - Weeds
 - Visual Resources
 - Water Resources
 - Wild Horses and Burros
- B. Resource Uses - Resource uses (current conditions and trends) addressed in alphabetical order. This is not necessarily a comprehensive list.
 - Forest Products
 - Lands and Realty
 - Livestock Grazing
 - Water Resource Uses
 - Minerals
 - Leasable Minerals
 - Locatable Minerals
 - Mineral Materials
 - Recreation
 - Renewable Energy
 - Travel Management
 - Utility and Communication Corridors
- C. Fire Ecology
 - Occurrence and history

⁹At the draft stage in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the preferred alternative is identified in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS. At the final EIS (FEIS) stage, the proposed plan is presented with the alternatives. The proposed plan should be in a clearly delineated section to make it easily identifiable and may also be pulled out as a separate document.

- Risk
- D. Special Designations - in alphabetical order
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
 - Back Country Byways
 - National Recreation Areas
 - National Trails
 - Recreation Management Areas
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers
 - Wilderness
 - Wilderness Study Areas
- E. Social and Economic Conditions
 - Economic
 - Environmental Justice
 - Health and Safety
 - Abandoned Mines
 - Debris Flows
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Indian Trust Resources
 - Social

Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences

Document sufficient analysis to support all conclusions.

- A. Introduction
 - Analytical assumptions
 - Types of effects to be addressed (direct, indirect and cumulative)
 - Summarize critical elements that are addressed, not affected, or not present.
 - Incomplete or unavailable information
- B. Resources - Physical and biological resources addressed in alphabetical order. This is not necessarily a comprehensive list. Describe direct, indirect and cumulative effects.
 - Air Quality
 - Cultural Resources
 - Fish, Wildlife & Special Status Species
 - Geology
 - Paleontology
 - Special Status Plants
 - Soil
 - Vegetation
 - Forests and Woodlands
 - Rangelands
 - Riparian and Wetlands
 - Weeds
 - Visual Resources
 - Water
 - Wild Horses and Burros
- C. Uses - Resource uses addressed in alphabetical order. This is not necessarily a comprehensive list. Describe direct, indirect and cumulative effects.
 - Forest Products
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Lands and Realty
 - Livestock Grazing

- Water Resource Uses
- Minerals
 - Leasable Minerals
 - Locatable Minerals
 - Mineral Materials
- Recreation
- Renewable Energy
- Transportation
- Utility and Communication Corridors
- D. Fire Ecology - Describe direct, indirect and cumulative effects.
 - Occurrence
 - Risk
- E. Special Designations - in alphabetical order. Describe direct, indirect and cumulative effects.
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
 - Back Country Byways
 - National Recreation Areas
 - National Trails
 - Recreation Management Areas
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers
 - Wilderness
 - Wilderness Study Areas
- F. Social and Economic Conditions
 - Economic
 - Environmental Justice
 - Health and Safety
 - Abandoned Mines
 - Debris Flows
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Indian Trust Resources
 - Social

Chapter 5 - Consultation and Coordination

- A. Description of specific actions taken to consult and coordinate with:
 - Tribes
 - Intergovernmental - State, Local, County, and City
 - Federal Agency
 - Interest Groups
 - National Mailing List
- B. Describe additional collaboration
- C. Responses to comments by issue area (FEIS only)
- D. List of Preparers

Back Matter

- Appendices
- Glossary
- References
- Index
- Abbreviations/Acronyms (Inside Back Cover) - placement can also occur with the Reader's Guide, Summary, or in the Glossary.

Record of Decision/Land Use Plan Format

At the end of the protest period on the final EIS (FEIS) and proposed plan and after protests are resolved, the Record of Decision (ROD)¹⁰ is issued. The ROD must be published in the same booklet with and reference the land use plan (proposed plan from the FEIS as modified in response to protests or other considerations between the FEIS and issuance of the ROD). The ROD/LUP serves as a more concise and useful tool to land managers and stakeholders than a cumbersome EIS. Separation of the final LUP from the Final EIS and attaching it to the ROD clarifies the different roles served by a plan and the supporting NEPA analysis. Additionally a stand alone ROD/LUP will improve internal agency and partner understanding of the plan and improve our long-term ability to implement the plan.

Record of Decision (ROD)

- A. Introductory Material (on a cover sheet or at the top of the first page)
 - Title
 - Preparing office and office location
 - Cooperating agencies (if any)
 - Signature and title of responsible official and concurring officials (if any)¹¹
 - Date of signature(s)
- B. Summary (if ROD exceeds 10 pages)
- C. Decision - The primary decision is to approve the attached land use plan¹²
- D. Alternatives - Briefly discuss the alternative or alternatives that were considered to be “environmentally preferable.”
- E. Management Considerations - Provide the rationale for the decision
- F. Mitigation Measures - In addition to identifying approved mitigation measures, state whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted, and if not, why they were not. Summarize any monitoring and enforcement program being adopted for mitigation measures.
- G. Plan Monitoring
- H. Public Involvement - Briefly describe public participation in planning process.

Land Use Plan

1. Introduction¹³

- A. Purpose and Need for the Plan
- B. Planning Area and Map
- C. Scoping / Issues
 1. Issues Addressed
 - Issues used to develop alternatives¹⁴*
 - Issues addressed in other parts of the EIS*
 2. Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed

¹⁰The format for the ROD can be found in the NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1), Chapter V, C (Documentation), (Record of Decision); pp V-22 to V-23.

¹¹Signatures and date of signatures can occur at end of ROD.

¹²Example: “The decision is hereby made to approve the attached plan as the Resource Management Plan (Plan) for ... This plan was prepared under the regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 CFR 1600). An environmental impact statement was prepared for this Plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The Plan is nearly identical to the one set forth in the ... Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement published ... Specific management decision for public lands under the jurisdiction of the ... Field Office are presented in Chapter ... of the Plan. Major Decisions include: ...”

¹³This Introduction section is optional material for the land use plan document

¹⁴Italics here show optional categories for issues

Issues beyond the scope of the plan

Issues addressed through administrative or policy action

D. Planning Criteria / Legislative Constraints

E. Planning Process

Relationship to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs

Collaboration

Intergovernmental, inter-agency, and tribal relationships

Other stakeholder relationships

F. Related Plans - Discuss consideration of state, local, and tribal land use plans that “are germane in the development of land use plans for public lands.”¹⁵

G. Policy - Discuss policies and decisions that existed prior to the plan being written that are outside the scope of the plan but may influence the decisions, constrain the alternatives, or are needed to understand management of the area. Examples include: proclamations, legislative designations, and court settlements.

H. Overall Vision ¹⁶- Identify the overall vision for management of the planning area. This vision should reflect the goals that are common to all alternatives. This can serve to help integrate programs.

2. Management Decisions¹⁷

A. Goals¹⁸ - Identify goals for resource conditions, resource uses and other goals as appropriate.

B. Objectives¹⁹ - Identify objectives with their rationale (include associated goal(s)). Reference which goals are advanced by the objective.

C. Management Actions - Make these adaptive as appropriate and practical. Relate each decision to all goals and objectives impacted. Address special designations and land tenure decisions.

Allowable uses - This should include allowable uses, restricted uses, and prohibited uses.

Incorporate maps where appropriate.

Actions - Management measures that will guide future and day-to-day activities. Project design features, stipulations, best management practices, standard operating procedures, and guidelines should be included in this section as well

D. Monitoring - Describe plans for monitoring to assess progress toward meeting goals and objectives. If appropriate, discuss plans of action if monitoring indicates actions are not meeting goals and objectives or if actions are no longer needed.

3. Public Involvement. Describe how the public and partners can be involved in implementation.

4. Management Plan Implementation. To the extent practical and appropriate, identify priorities and costs of the management program. Costs should be estimated at a scale that is useful for budgeting (thousands of dollars and whole work months). It may be useful to identify priorities into two groups: one-time projects and ongoing tasks.

5. Plan Evaluation/Adaptive Management. Identify a tentative schedule for land use plan evaluations and the management actions that could be taken after an evaluation.

¹⁵Federal Land Policy Management Act Sec. 202(c)(9).

¹⁶Optional

¹⁷The format of this section is designed to: a) clarify the distinction between goals, objectives, and management actions; b) move toward (or demonstrate) objectives and management decisions that will work toward meeting multiple goals; c) demonstrate the connectivity between programs; and d) reduce conflicts internal to the document.

¹⁸Goals are broad statement of desired outcomes. They are usually not quantifiable.

¹⁹Objectives are specific desired conditions. They are quantifiable and measurable and may have timeframes for achievement.

Appendices

Appendix C. Estimated Work Months for Miles City RMP Revision

The Project Manager would be kept on with planning funds to finalize the plan record, begin implementation of the RMP, and deal with protests, if any.

Estimated Work Months for Field Office Staff				
Position/ Person	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
Management Team				
Field Manager – McIlroy	1	2	2	1
Assistant Manager Non-Renewable – Jaynes	1	2	2	1
Supv Natural Resource Specialist – Tribby	1	1	1	1
Supv Land Use Specialist – Wambolt	1	1	1	1
Public Affairs – Jacobsen	1	1	2	1
Core Team				
Project Manager – vacant	5	12	12	12
Lands/Realty – Wall	1	1	2	0
Minerals – Breisch/Benoit	1	5	5	0
Recreation – Squires	1	1	2	0
Vegetation – Yeager	1	1	2	0
Wildlife – Undlin	1	2	2	0
ID Team				
Cultural – Hubbell/Melton	1	1	2	0
Forestry – Smith	1	1	1	0
Riparian – Platz	1	1	1	0
Soils – Mitchell	1	1	1	0
Weeds – Witkowski	1	1	1	0
Social/Economic – Trent/Hughes		1	1	
Admin Support	2	4	4	
State Office Review		2	2	
Total Work Months	22	41	46	22

Appendix D. RMP Revision Draft Filing Plan

The following is the general filing plan for the RMP. Modifications will be made if necessary to tailor to the RMP (e.g., files for the contractor information).

- I. General Information
 - A. Federal Register Notices
 - B. Issues, Concerns, Opportunities
 - C. Planning Criteria
 - D. ID Team (IDT) Membership
 - E. Project Schedules
 - F. Preparation Plan
 - G. Cooperating Agencies
 - H. Contracting Information

- II. Public Information and Involvement
 - A. Public Involvement Plans
 - B. Public Information Documents, Letters, Notices
 - C. Mailing Lists
 - D. News Reports and Clippings
 - E. General Correspondence
 - F. Meetings / Workshops
 - G. Public Comments - Scoping
 - H. Public Comments - prior to DEIS
 - I. Public Comments - DEIS
 - J. Protests Received
 - K. Protest Responses

- III. External Communications
 - A. Other Federal Agencies
 - B. Tribes
 - C. State Agencies
 - D. Local Agencies
 - E. Elected Officials
 - F. Organizations
 - G. Individuals
 - H. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests

- IV. Internal Communications
 - A. Project Management Correspondence
 - B. IDT - Correspondence
 - C. IDT Meeting Agendas and Notes
 - D. FOIA Exempt Documents

- V. Materials (background/supporting) used to develop planning documents (DEIS, FEIS, ROD)
 - A. Introduction
 - B. Alternatives
 - C. Affected Environment
 - D. Environmental Consequences
 - E. Appendices

VI. Data Standards

VII. References

VIII. Planning Documents

A. DEIS

B. FEIS

ROD