

MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

PLANNING CRITERIA

The planning criteria guide and direct the plan, and determine how the contractor, planning team and collaborators will approach the development of alternatives and ultimately, the BLM manager's selection of a Preferred Alternative. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. They focus on the decisions to be made in the plan and achieve the following:

- Provide an early, tentative basis for inventory and data collection needs.
- Enable the manager and staff to develop a preliminary planning base map delineating geographic analysis units.
- Stimulate the development of planning criteria during public participation.

PLANNING CRITERIA:

1. The plan will be prepared collaboratively with federal, local and state governments. While collaborators may recommend a preferred decision to BLM, the BLM will retain its decision-making authority.
2. The plan will be completed in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws.
3. The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.
4. 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 Memorandums and Bulletins:
 - a. IB 2002-056 Recommended Formats for Land Use Plans, Records of Decision, and Their Supporting Environmental Impact Statement;
 - b. IM 2002-100 Review Requirements for Land Use Planning Efforts;
 - c. IB 2002-101 Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans;
 - d. IM 2002-164 Guidance to Address Environmental Justice in Land Use Plans and Related National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents;
 - e. IM 2002-167 Social and Economic Analysis for Land Use Planning;
 - f. IM 2002-174 Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations;
 - g. IB 2003-020 Minimum Content for RMP Scoping Reports;
 - h. IB 2003-074 Sample Filing Plan for Land Use Planning Records;
 - i. IM 2003-233 Integration of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) Inventory Results into the Land Use Planning Process;
 - j. IM 2004-007 Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan Guidance for Wildland Fire Management;
 - k. IM 2005-024 National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy;
 - l. IM 2004 -089 Policy for Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario for Oil and Gas;
 - m. IM 2004-079 Land Use Plan Decision, Implementation Decisions, and Administrative Remedies;
 - n. IM 2004-096 *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for Records of Decision;
 - o. IM 2004-110 Fluid Mineral Leasing and Related Planning and National Environmental policy Act;
 - p. IM 2004-194 Integration of Best Management Practices into Application for Permit to Drill Approvals and Associated Rights-of-Way;
 - q. IM 2004-056 Data Standards Development for Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

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5. The plan will incorporate by reference all analyses, as appropriate, from amendments that have been made to the RMPs, including the BLM 1994 *Oil and Gas EIS/Amendment of the Powder River, Billings, & South Dakota RMPs*; and the 2003 BLM/State *Montana Final Statewide Oil and Gas EIS and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans*.
6. The RMP Revision will incorporate by reference all appropriate prior Wilderness Study Area findings in the planning area.
7. Wild and scenic river values were already evaluated in the Big Dry RMP/EIS. Those determinations, consistent with existing policy, will be carried forward into this plan.
8. The plan will incorporate the requirements of BLM Handbook H-1624-1, *Planning for Fluid Mineral Resources*, and the results of the EPCA inventories and implementing Washington Office Instruction Memorandums. For example the least restrictive oil and gas leasing stipulations that protect the resource will be selected as the preferred alternative for oil and gas leasing.
9. The plan 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. Best Management Practices such as oil and gas, road drainage, and fire rehabilitation, etc will be considered as potential mitigation measures.
11. Resource allocations must be reasonable, achievable, measurable and within available technological constraints.
12. The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.
13. Native American Consultation and Coordination - Three Native American reservations are located within the area - the Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Fort Peck. Rocky Boys and Turtle Mountain, Fort Berthold, Lower Rosebud, and Wind River reservations have also expressed an interest in the planning area. Close coordination will take place to see that the Tribe's needs are considered, analyzed, and that BLM fulfills its trust responsibilities.
14. The plan will include discussions that yearling cattle are to be authorized at 1 AUM as provided within 43 CFR 4100 subpart § 4130.8-1(c).
15. The planning process will include early consultation meetings with FWS during the development of the plan.
16. The plan will recognize the State's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
17. The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendixes C and D of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
18. 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 BLM decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
19. The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands and minerals within the Miles City Field Office.
20. 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.