



NEWS RELEASE

BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE · 111 GARRYOWEN ROAD · MILES CITY, MONTANA 59301 · WWW.BLM.GOV/MT

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OP-ED

Contact: Todd Yeager
(406) 233-2800

Dear Editor:

We've reached a huge milestone here at the Bureau of Land Management's Miles City Field Office this week. After a great deal of planning and analysis by BLM staff and a significant investment of time from our numerous cooperating agencies, I wanted to let you know the *Miles City Field Office Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* is ready for your review.

Those who contributed to this effort include 12 counties, seven conservation districts, the Prairie County Cooperative State Grazing District, state agencies, tribes, the BLM's Eastern Montana Resource Advisory Council, and other federal agencies.

Land use plans and planning decisions are the basis for every action the BLM takes in carrying out its multiple-use mission. Decisions made on managing America's public lands and their resources don't just happen; it takes engaged citizens like you to give your time and share your perspectives to help managers like me make informed decisions.

It's been 19 years since the BLM implemented the current Big Dry and Powder River Resource Management Plans, and I don't need to tell you how much has changed since 1996. The MCFO Draft RMP/EIS considers and analyzes five alternatives that address future management of approximately 2.8 million acres of federal surface and 11 million acres of federal mineral estate in eastern Montana. That's more resources than many sovereign nations can claim.

In this Draft RMP/EIS, we address conservation measures and actions for the Greater Sage-Grouse through the range of alternatives. This includes a comprehensive list of mitigation measures and conservation actions to protect the habitat, as well as promote cooperative activities to enhance Greater Sage-Grouse habitat across jurisdictions. Alternative E is identified as the BLM's preferred alternative. It's the one our interdisciplinary team has chosen with my support, but again you can help shape the final decision through your comments.

It's not a small document. We know everyone's busy with life and working your way through a 1,800-page document can be a challenge. That's why we've tried to make it as convenient as possible for you to comment during the 90-day public comment period, which closes on June 5, 2013. CDs of the entire draft RMP/EIS are available and you can always visit the MCFO RMP website at <http://blm.gov/0ykd> to view the draft plan and other important information.

Public meetings, in an open-house format, have been scheduled in eight locations to accommodate anyone who would like to visit in-person with a BLM specialist. These will start May 6 and run the entire week visiting: Sidney, Jordan, Ekalaka, Baker, Terry, Forsyth and Broadus. The Miles City meeting will be held May 13. Please watch this paper for a precise list of meeting times and locations, or check the website. You can also call the MCFO at 406.233.2800 and we'll be happy to help you.

There are a number of ways to comment: by email: (BLM_MT_MCFO_RMP@blm.gov), FAX: (406) 233-3650, regular mail: ("MCFO RMP Comments", 111 Garryowen Road, Miles City, MT 59301), or by hand delivering them to the MCFO.

In closing, those of you who benefit from BLM-managed lands or who share other ties to public lands—whether they be recreation, historical and cultural, spiritual, wildlife-focused or otherwise—have a special opportunity to have a voice in this new management plan. The BLM looks forward to hearing from you and visiting with you in the coming days and weeks.

Sincerely,



Todd Yeager
Field Manager
BLM Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, MT 59301