



NEWS RELEASE

BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

SOUTH DAKOTA FIELD OFFICE • 310 ROUNDUP STREET • BELLE FOURCHE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57717 • WWW.BLM.GOV/MT

OP-ED

South Dakota Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Contact: Marian Atkins
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Dear Editor:

We've reached a huge milestone here at the Bureau of Land Management's South Dakota Field Office. 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 *South Dakota Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (RMP/EIS) is ready for public review.

Those who contributed to this effort include local counties, state agencies, tribes, the BLM's Dakotas 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 to give their time and share their perspectives to help managers like me make informed decisions.

It's been 27 years since the BLM implemented the current South Dakota Resource Management Plan-- and I don't need to tell you how much has changed since 1986. The revised South Dakota Draft RMP/EIS considers and analyzes four alternatives that address future management of approximately 274,239 acres of BLM-administered Federal surface and 1.7 million acres of BLM administered Federal mineral estate in South Dakota.

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 D is identified as the BLM's preferred alternative. It's the one our multi-disciplinary team of natural resource specialists has chosen with my support, but the public can help shape the final decision through their comments.

It's not a small document. We know everyone's busy with life and working their way through a volume of this size 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 Sept. 11, 2013.

Compact discs of the entire Draft RMP/EIS are available and everyone can always visit the RMP website at <http://blm.gov/m1kd> to view the draft plan and other important information.

Public meetings, in an open-house format, have been scheduled in five locations to accommodate anyone who would like to visit in-person with a BLM specialist.

These will begin on July 8 and run for two weeks at local communities: Belle Fourche, Sturgis, Rapid City, Pierre and Buffalo. Watch this paper for a precise list of meeting times and locations, or check the BLM website. You can also call the field office at 605-892-7000 and we'll be happy to help you.

There are a number of ways to comment:

- By email: [BLM MT South Dakota RMP@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_MT_South_Dakota_RMP@blm.gov),
- FAX: 605-892-7015,
- Regular mail: "South Dakota RMP Comments", 310 Roundup Street, Belle Fourche, SD 57717, or by hand delivering them to the South Dakota Field Office.

In closing, those 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 and visiting with you in the coming days and weeks.

Sincerely,

Marian Atkins
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