

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the information discussed throughout the remainder of the South Dakota Resource Management Plan. This chapter discusses why the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared this Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Draft RMP/EIS), how the public was involved in this planning process, how issues were defined, and a number of other topics. The information in this chapter is organized into the following headings and subheadings:

- Background
- Purpose and Need
- Planning Area
- Collaboration
- Planning Process
- Scoping and Planning Issues
  - Issues Addressed
  - Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed
- Planning Criteria
  - Relationship to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs
- Related Plans
- Policy
- Vision and Management Goals
- Draft Resource Management Plan
- Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

## Background

The United States Department of the Interior (USDI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared this Draft RMP to provide direction for managing the National System of Public Lands (herein referred to as BLM public lands or BLM-administered public lands) under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Field Office (SDFO) and prepared this EIS to analyze the environmental effects that could result. The affected lands are currently being managed under the South Dakota (SD) RMP (BLM 1985).

Land use planning is used to manage resources and to designate uses on public lands in coordination with tribal, state, and local governments, land users, and the interested public. This Draft RMP incorporates new information and regulatory guidance, and provides management direction where it may be lacking or requires clarification. Current management direction that is effective and requires no change will be carried forward into this revised Draft RMP.

The RMP is being revised according to guidance in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 United States Code [USC] 1701 et seq.) and the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1. An EIS is incorporated into this document as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) (CEQ 1978), and requirements of the BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1 (BLM 2008).

## Purpose and Need

The purpose of this RMP is to provide a single, comprehensive land use plan to guide management of public lands and minerals administered by the SDFO. The RMP provides goals, objectives, land use allocations, and management direction to maintain, improve, or restore resource conditions and to provide for the long-term benefits to the public, including economic needs of local communities. This is done in coordination with federal, tribal, state, and local governments; land

users; and the interested public. This RMP revision will also incorporate appropriate management actions and practices to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*; hereafter, ‘sage-grouse’) and its habitats on BLM-administered land.

The need for the revision is the result of considerable changes within the planning area since completion of the South Dakota RMP in 1985, including:

- changed ecological, socioeconomic, institutional, and regulatory conditions;
- new laws, regulations, and policies that invalidate or supersede previous decisions;
- changing user demands and activities, including increased demand for recreational use of public lands, renewable energy, and oil and gas exploration and development;
- increased conflicts between land use and wildlife/wildlife habitat; and
- heightened public awareness and interest in BLM management actions and permitted uses.

In March 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published its listing decision for the Greater Sage-Grouse as “Warranted but Precluded.” Inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms was identified as a major threat in the USFWS finding on the petition to list the sage-grouse. The USFWS has identified the principal regulatory mechanism for the BLM as conservation measures in RMPs. Based on the identified threats to the sage-grouse and the USFWS timeline for making a listing decision on this species, the BLM needs to incorporate objectives and adequate conservation measures into RMPs in order to conserve sage-grouse and potentially reduce the need to list the species as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. This RMP revision incorporates specific management actions and conservation measures to conserve sage-grouse and its habitats on BLM land.

These conditions drive the need for an inclusive, comprehensive plan that provides updated, clear direction to the BLM, other agencies and entities, and the public.

## Planning Area

The BLM’s SDFO headquarters is located in Belle Fourche in Butte County, near the state’s western border. The planning area for the SDFO and this RMP covers the entire state of South Dakota, which includes approximately 49.3 million acres of public, private, state lands, and Native American reservations. Within the planning area, the BLM administers about 274,000 acres of BLM public land surface (Map 1-1), and approximately 1.7 million acres of federal mineral estate in 37 counties. Table 1-1 identifies BLM-administered acres and total acres within the planning area by county. Collectively, lands that the BLM administers (surface and mineral estate) are considered the “Decision Area.”

This RMP will provide guidance for leasing decisions for federal oil and gas resources managed by the BLM and only those federal Surface Management Agencies (SMA) with which the BLM has an agreement regarding oil and gas leasing.

Leasing decisions for federal oil and gas resources not managed by the BLM will be made by the SMA in cooperation with the BLM. The BLM will not issue federal oil and gas leases without consulting with the SMA. Examples of agencies which fall under this category in South Dakota are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. This document will provide stipulations for split-estate situations involving federal oil and gas beneath private, Recreation & Public Purpose patented, or state-owned surface. The BLM will apply the leasing stipulations recommended by the agency whose land is being leased. The BLM may add other stipulations it deems necessary.

This RMP does not apply to lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service (NPS), USFWS, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Trust lands, tribal lands, or private or state-owned mineral resources.

The USFS makes decisions on its own lands, although the BLM leases minerals under USFS-administered surface. The BLM is a cooperator or joint lead on plans with the USFS and makes decisions on leasing federal minerals underlying private surface within the USFS administrative boundary. The BLM has done this and prepared Records of Decision for the Buffalo Gap and Sioux Ranger District Plans, but not the Black Hills National Forest Plan. Those actions do not fall under this RMP.

<b>Table 1-1 BLM-Administered Public Land and Federal Mineral Estate Ownership in the Planning Area</b>				
<i>County</i>	<i>BLM-Administered Public Lands</i>		<i>BLM-Administered Federal Mineral Estate (split estate lands)</i>	
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent of County</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent of County</i>
Bennett	0	0	2,878	<1
Bon Homme*	56	<1	58	<1
Brule*	532	<1	947	<1
Butte	144,641	10	536,606	37
Campbell*	0	0	2,255	<1
Charles Mix*	122	<1	258	<1
Clark*	0	0	167	<1
Clay*	11	<1	11	<1
Corson	0	0	40,756	<1
Custer	3,693	<1	68,140	7
Dewey	0	0	8,264	<1
Edmunds*	0	0	625	<1
Fall River	7,205	<1	60,532	5.4
Faulk*	0	0	480	<1
Gregory	172	<1	1,866	<1
Haakon	2,178	<1	46,111	4
Hand*	0	0	362	<1
Harding	30,261	1.7	377,328	22
Hughes*	2	<1	500	<1
Hyde*	0	<1	1,285	<1
Jackson	240	<1	4,396	<1
Jones	3	<1	1,107	<1
Lawrence	5,078	1	7,038	1.4
Lyman	225	<1	399	<1
Marshall*	20	<1	20	0
McPherson*	0	0	360	<1
Meade	38,997	1.7	276,774	12
Mellette	0	0	1,612	<1
Pennington	16,088	<1	82,177	5
Perkins	7,973	<1	76,346	1
Potter*	0	0	159	<1
Stanley	15,922	1.7	111,833	12
Sully*	80	<1	1,331	<1
Tripp	160	<1	316	<1
Walworth*	0	0	1,819	<1
Yankton*	359	<1	359	<1
Ziebach	202	<1	202	<1
Totals	274,239	-	1,715,677	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census and BLM 2009a. The acreages may not be identical to other sources because these acreages are based on geographical information system (GIS) data.

\*South Dakota counties east of the Missouri River.

While the BLM has been a cooperator on various Forest Service Plans, for purposes of efficiency, the BLM can address federal minerals in its own plans within the administrative boundary of the USFS. The BLM has found a need to do so in this case for the townsite of Igloo and the Black Hills Army Depot (BHAD). Accordingly, this RMP would provide management direction for the federal minerals that underly private surface estate at this site even though it is within the administrative boundaries of the Buffalo Gap National Grassland. The BHAD and Igloo are eligible for listing as a National Register Historic Site. The BHAD also has historical issues with hazardous materials being inadequately handled and disposed of onsite resulting in some Superfund actions. These concerns have not been addressed in USFS Plans.

The boundary for the BHAD and the townsite of Igloo will be demarcated by the USFS administrative boundary map for illustrative purposes of the RMP. However, there are some issues and discrepancies with legal descriptions and boundary lines which may necessitate referencing and using Master Title Plats, as modified by the most current cadstral survey. The former townsite of Igloo and the abandoned BHAD are shown on Figure 3-22.

NPS and USFWS-administered lands are not subject to leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. However, if oil or gas is being drained from lands otherwise unavailable for leasing, there is implied authority to lease that oil and gas resource.

The BIA leases the lands which they administer. Tribes also do their own leasing. Those actions do not fall under this RMP.

Most of the BLM-administered public lands (surface estate) are located in western South Dakota (Map 1-2). Butte County contains 144,641 acres of BLM-administered public land, or 53 percent of the total BLM-administered public land and 536,606 acres (37 percent) of the federal mineral estate in the planning area. Other counties with substantial amounts of BLM-administered public land are also located in western South Dakota and include Custer, Fall River, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, and Stanley counties. Tracts of BLM-administered public land within these counties generally range in size, but most are between 40 and 320 acres of land and are intermingled with state and private lands. Nine counties east of the Missouri River contain small tracts of BLM-administered public land, including Bon Homme, Brule, Campbell, Charles Mix, Clay, Hughes, Marshall, Sully, and Yankton counties. Most of the BLM-administered public land tracts in eastern South Dakota are along the Missouri River and were flooded when reservoirs were built on the river in the 1940s and 1950s. Eastern South Dakota counties with federal minerals (split estate) are also identified in Table 1-1.

Lands managed by the SDFO include public domain (lands that have never left federal ownership), acquired lands and/or mineral interests (lands that left federal ownership and were later exchanged for or purchased), and federal mineral estate (subsurface) lands beneath private or state lands or lands administered by other federal agencies. Federal minerals included in the Decision Area are shown in Map 1-3 at the end of this chapter. The BLM does not administer land obtained through the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935 in South Dakota; those parcels are administered by the USFS. The BLM will continue to coordinate with other federal and state agencies, especially for those resources and issues that cross boundaries.

## Collaboration

The benefits of enhanced collaboration among agencies in the preparation of the Draft RMP/EIS include disclosing relevant information early in the analytical process, applying available technical expertise and staff support, avoiding duplication with other federal, state, tribal and local procedures, and establishing a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues. In addition to formal scoping, the BLM has implemented an extensive collaborative outreach and involvement process that has included coordinating with cooperating agencies and working closely with the Dakotas Resource Advisory Council (RAC). These efforts are summarized below, and additional information regarding collaboration with governments, agencies, and tribal representatives is provided in Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination.

## Cooperating Agencies

A cooperating agency is any federal, state, or local government agency or Native American tribe that enters into an agreement with the lead federal agency to assist in the development of an environmental analysis. Early in the planning process, the BLM wrote local, state, federal, and tribal representatives, inviting them to participate as cooperating agencies

for the South Dakota RMP revision process. The following agencies with jurisdiction, special expertise, or interest in the RMP revision process have agreed to participate as cooperating agencies:

- Butte County Commissioners
- Custer County Commissioners
- Harding County Commissioners
- Lawrence County Commissioners
- Meade County Commissioners
- Pennington County Commissioners
- State of South Dakota

The cooperating agencies made and entered into memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that set forth the roles and responsibilities for collaborative planning and production of a RMP/EIS for the SDFO. These agencies will work with the BLM to share knowledge and resources, and collectively work toward achieving desired outcomes for BLM lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks in the planning area. Between August 2008 and January 2012, ten cooperating agency meetings were held. These meetings focused on identifying and defining the planning issues and the alternatives development process for the SDFO Draft RMP/EIS.

The USFWS and USFS are cooperators for the larger Greater Sage-grouse planning effort, which includes the South Dakota RMP. The MOU between the BLM, USFWS and USFS was signed in March 2012.

## Resource Advisory Council (RAC)

A RAC is a committee established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management. The Dakotas RAC was formed to address BLM-administered land in North Dakota and South Dakota. The BLM gave the Dakotas RAC initial presentation/briefing on the RMP process in the fall of 2007, with progress briefings and information on the planning process every six months.

During the initial RMP briefing, the BLM provided an overview of the RMP process, highlighting components and issues of the planning area, preliminary planning criteria, and project status. Subsequent briefings have focused on progress updates and slide shows of important aspects, such as selection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), summaries of cooperating agency meetings and public involvement, and sage-grouse management. The RAC continued to be involved through briefings and updates during preparation of this Draft RMP/EIS.

## Planning Process

The RMP provides basic program direction with establishment of goals, objectives, allowable uses and management actions or prescriptions. The RMP focuses on what resource conditions, uses and visitor experiences should be achieved and maintained over time. To do this, the RMP must provide a short-term and long-term perspective.

Defining planning issues and planning criteria represents the first steps in establishing the scope of the RMP revision. These, combined with public input, provide the framework in which RMP decisions are made. The RMP decisions refer to what is established or determined by the final RMP. The RMP provides guidance for land use planning decisions in accordance with the following categories:

- Physical, biological, and cultural resources
- Resource uses
- Special designations, such as ACECs

In the context of these categories, the planning team develops management strategies aimed at providing viable options to address planning issues. These management strategies provide the basis for future activity-level plans or specific projects. The resource management alternatives reflect a reasonable range of management options that fall within limits set by the planning criteria.

The planning process involves public participation, assessment, decision-making, implementation, plan monitoring, and evaluation, as well as adjustment through maintenance, amendment, and revision. This process ensures that land use plans and implementation decisions remain consistent with applicable laws, regulations, orders, and policies.

FLPMA requires the BLM to use land use plans as tools by which “present and future use is projected” (43 U.S.C. 1701 (a)(2)). The Act’s implementing regulations for planning, 43 CFR Part 1600, state that land use plans are a preliminary step in the overall process of managing public lands, “designed to guide and control future management actions and the development of subsequent, more detailed and limited scope plans for resources and uses” (43 CFR Part 1601.0-2). Public participation and input are important components of land use planning.

Revision of existing land use plans is a major federal action for the BLM. NEPA, as amended, requires federal agencies to prepare an EIS for major federal actions such as RMPs (USDI, Departmental Manual, Part 516, Chapter 11.8 B(1)); thus, this Draft RMP/EIS revises the existing plan. This Draft RMP/EIS analyzes the impacts of four alternative scenarios for management of the public lands and resources within the planning area, including the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative is required by NEPA and reflects current management.

The BLM uses a nine-step planning process (refer to Table 1-2) when developing and revising RMPs, as required by 43 CFR 1600 and planning program guidance contained in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1. The planning process is designed to help the BLM identify the uses of BLM-administered public lands desired by the public and to consider these uses to the extent they are consistent with the laws established by Congress and the policies of the executive branch of the federal government.

The planning process is issue-driven (Step 1). The plan revision process is undertaken to resolve management issues as well as to consider management opportunities. The BLM utilized the public scoping process to identify planning issues to direct revision of the existing plan. The scoping process was also used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria that help define the scope of RMP revision (Step 2).

As appropriate, the BLM used existing data from a variety of sources and collected new data as necessary to address planning issues and to fill data gaps identified during public scoping (Step 3). Using these data, the planning issues, and planning criteria, the BLM conducted an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS; Step 4) to describe current management and identify management opportunities for addressing the planning issues. Current management reflects management under the existing plans and management that would continue through selection of the No Action Alternative. The existing affected environment is summarized from the AMS into Chapter 3 of the Draft RMP/EIS. The AMS is included as part of the administrative record for this plan.

Results of the first four steps of the planning process clarified the purpose and need and identified key planning issues that need to be addressed in the RMP. Key planning issues reflect the focus of the RMP revision and are described in more detail in the Issues Addressed section of this chapter.

Alternatives constitute a range of management actions which are anticipated to achieve identified goals or objectives. During alternative formulation (Step 5), the BLM collaborated with cooperating agencies to identify goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses in the planning area.

These desired outcomes addressed the key planning issues, were constrained by planning criteria, and incorporated management opportunities identified by the BLM. Details of the alternatives were developed through identification of management actions and allowable uses anticipated to achieve the goals and objectives. The alternatives represent a reasonable range for managing resources and resource uses within the planning area under the multiple use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA. Chapter 2 of this document describes and summarizes the alternatives.

This Draft RMP/EIS also includes an analysis of the impacts of each alternative in Chapter 4 (Step 6). With input from cooperating agencies and BLM specialists, and in consideration of planning issues, planning criteria, and impacts of the alternatives, the BLM has identified a Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) from among the four alternatives (Step 7). This is documented in the Draft RMP/EIS, which will be distributed to the public for review and comment (also Step 7).

Step 8 of the land use planning process will occur following receipt and consideration of public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. In preparing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the BLM will consider all comments received during the public

comment period. In developing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, an alternative in its entirety or a combination of various alternatives analyzed may be selected, which prioritizes differing resources and/or uses consistent with the multiple use and sustained yield mandate. Prior to approval of the Proposed RMP, regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610 provide a 60-day “consistency review” period for the Governor of South Dakota, and a 30-day period for “any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval” of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS to protest the Proposed RMP to the BLM Director. Step 9, Monitoring and Evaluation, occurs after a Record of Decision (ROD) is issued and the Approved RMP is being implemented.

Subsequent implementation decisions are carried out by developing activity-level or project-specific plans. Activity-level plans usually describe multiple projects for a single or multiple resource program(s). Project-specific plans usually describe a single project or several related projects.

<b>Table 1-2 Nine-Step Planning Process</b>	
<i>Step</i>	<i>Description</i>
Step 1	Scoping and Identification of Issues*
Step 2	Development of Planning Criteria*
Step 3	Inventory Data and Information Collection
Step 4	Analysis of the Management Situation
Step 5	Formulation of Alternatives
Step 6	Estimation of Effects of Alternatives
Step 7	Identification of the Preferred Alternative. This step includes preparation and public distribution of the Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment.
Step 8	Selection of the Preferred Alternative. This step involves preparation and public distribution of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.*
Step 9	Monitoring and Evaluation**

\* Public participation is invited throughout the planning process but is formally requested at these steps.

\*\* The RMP will be revised as necessary based on monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, and changes in circumstances consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

## Scoping and Planning Issues

The scoping process identifies land use issues and conflicts. These issues stem from new information or changed circumstances, the need to address environmental concerns, or a need to reassess the appropriate mix of allowable uses based on new information. Scoping is the first step in the planning process and closely involves the public with identifying issues, providing resource or other information, and developing planning criteria to guide preparation of the RMP.

Early in the planning process, the public was invited to identify planning issues and concerns related to management of BLM-administered public lands and resources/uses in the planning area. The formal scoping period began with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on July 19, 2007. During scoping, the BLM requested public input on identifying resource issues and concerns, management alternatives, or other ideas to help in determining future land use decisions for the planning area. From August through October 2007, nine scoping meetings were held across the planning area. A total of 89 individuals attended the scoping meetings. In addition to the nine scoping meetings, four open house meetings were held specifically to address the concerns of Native American Tribes.

The South Dakota RMP website housed current information including background documents, maps and other related information (<http://blm.gov/m1kd>). Scoping information and newsletters were sent to a list of individuals, agencies and organizations compiled from a variety of sources, including those who participated in previous BLM planning efforts in the region, individuals who requested to be on the mailing list and those who participated during scoping meetings.

The SDFO received 24 written submissions as a result of scoping efforts. All submissions indicated an interest in the management of BLM-administered public lands and resources. Many of the submissions offered substantive comments, while other comments conveyed a desire or an opinion. Of the 24 written submissions and comments submitted during the scoping open houses, a total of 370 individual comments were analyzed and considered by resource specialists. Additional information on scoping and public participation is described in detail in Chapter 5.

## Issues Addressed

A planning issue is a major controversy or dispute regarding management of resources or uses and is developed from demands, concerns, conflicts, or problems about use or management of public lands and resources. These issues are usually expressed as potential adverse consequences or effects that a particular land or resource use may have on other lands or resources used or valued for other purposes. Planning issues drive the formulation of the range of alternatives considered in the RMP/EIS, such as what areas, if any, contain unique or sensitive resources requiring special management. A reasonable range of alternatives provides various scenarios for how the BLM and cooperating agencies can address this and other key planning issues, including the management of resources and resource uses in the planning area. In other words, key planning issues serve as the rationale for alternative development.

Preliminary planning issues were identified through an extensive review of the South Dakota RMP (1985) and associated amendments and decision documents. Through this review the BLM identified land management direction that will be proposed to be carried forward and land management direction that will be proposed to be changed. The preliminary planning issues were refined through collaborative efforts and through public scoping. The planning issues identified for developing alternatives in this Draft RMP/EIS are summarized below.

The issues that were identified and their goals (not in priority order) include:

- **Issue: Energy Development.** Manage energy development to provide for domestic energy production while protecting the integrity of other resources.
- **Issue: Vegetation Management.** Manage public lands to provide desired plant communities and meet objectives of the BLM Standards for Rangeland Health (Glossary and Appendix A).
- **Issue: Wildlife Habitat.** Manage public lands to conserve wildlife species, maintain or improve their habitats, and control invasive species.
- **Issue: Special Status Species.** Manage public lands to conserve and recover threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species. In March 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the sage-grouse warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), but that listing the species was precluded by the need to address other, higher-priority species first (75 FR 13910, March 23, 2010). One reason for the USFWS decision was an identified need for “improved regulatory mechanisms” to ensure species conservation. The principal regulatory mechanisms for BLM are Resource Management Plans (RMPs); therefore, the BLM is using this opportunity to develop long-term and effective management for the species on the BLM administered lands (WO IM No. 2012-044).
- **Issue: Travel Management and Access.** Determine how transportation and access would be managed in the planning area to provide for use and enjoyment of public lands, while protecting significant resource values and providing for user safety.
- **Issue: Commercial Uses.** Determine what public lands would be available for commercial activities and how those activities would be managed.
- **Issue: Land Ownership Adjustments.** Determine criteria to make public land tenure adjustments, including disposal of public land and acquisition of nonpublic lands, and determine what public lands may be available for future adjustment activities.
- **Issue: Visual Resource Management.** Manage public land to conserve or improve visual resource values.

- **Issue: Climate Change.** Provide for adaptable, flexible management and diverse, healthy ecosystems that are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Consider the impacts of BLM actions on climate change.

A separate public scoping period was initiated on December 9, 2011 with the publication of a Notice of Intent to begin a planning effort in the Federal Register for the national greater sage-grouse planning strategy, which included the South Dakota planning area. As part of this scoping process, the BLM requested that the public submit nominations for potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) for Greater Sage-Grouse and their habitats.

The planning issues and associated statements, planning criteria, and other information collected in the early planning and scoping phases of the RMP/EIS process were used to help formulate a reasonable range of alternative management strategies.

## Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed

Scoping also identified issues, concerns, or questions that can be addressed by current management, BLM policy, administrative action, or that were beyond the scope of this RMP/EIS. Some of these scoping comments are summarized below, while the Scoping Summary Report (BLM 2009a), which is available online at [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/south\\_dakota\\_field/rmp/docs.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/south_dakota_field/rmp/docs.html), provides a comprehensive list of issues and concerns that are outside the scope of the RMP or are addressed through administrative or policy action.

- **There is concern about water purity levels on the Pine Ridge Reservation.** The BLM does not control ground water or surface water quality on Native American reservations. During mineral exploration or development, the BLM may be involved with leasable or locatable minerals. The BLM applies stipulations and works closely with the State of South Dakota to ensure water sources are safeguarded.
- **Development of uranium on Pine Ridge or on Wild Horse Refuge would cause serious sickness among the people who are already suffering and would cause irreparable damage to the land and wildlife.** The BLM does not control ground water or surface water quality on Native American reservations or on the Wild Horse Refuge. During mineral exploration or development, the BLM may be involved with leasable or locatable minerals. The BLM applies stipulations and works closely with the State of South Dakota to ensure water sources are safeguarded.
- **Allow for Coal Development.** BLM-administered public lands in the planning area have low coal development potential relative to adjacent states. Coal development was discussed by the RMP planning team and was dismissed because 1) the SDFO received no comments or expressions of interest in coal development during scoping and has not received applications or expressions of interest in coal development in the last ten years; and 2) coal beds in the planning area have a less profitable stripping ratio than adjacent states, making development unlikely.

## Planning Criteria

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-2) require planning criteria to guide RMP preparation. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the RMP. They ensure that the RMP is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided.

The following criteria were developed based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, and public comment.

- The RMP would address BLM-administered public lands and federal minerals. Decisions would not be made for lands not managed by the BLM.
- The RMP would be in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- Impacts from the management alternatives considered in the RMP would be analyzed in the EIS and developed in accordance with regulations at 43 CFR 1610 and 40 CFR 1500.

- Broad-based public participation would be an integral part of the RMP planning and EIS process.
- Decisions in the RMP would strive to be compatible with existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal and federal agencies as long as the decisions are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of federal law and regulations applicable to BLM-administered public lands.
- The RMP would continue to recognize the State of South Dakota's responsibility and authority to manage wildlife. The BLM would consult with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks as necessary. The RMP would incorporate state or region-wide planning efforts to the fullest extent possible.
- The National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (BLM 2004) requires that impacts to sagebrush habitat and sagebrush-dependent wildlife species (including sage-grouse) be analyzed and considered in BLM land use planning efforts for BLM-administered public lands with sage-grouse/sagebrush habitats. Greater Sage-Grouse were recently found to be warranted but precluded from listing as an endangered species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The BLM will utilize the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitats (Connelly, et al. 2004), and any other appropriate resources, to identify sage-grouse habitat requirements and best management practices (BMPs).
- The RMP would recognize valid existing rights.
- The RMP would incorporate management decisions brought forward from existing planning documents.
- The RMP/EIS would incorporate by reference the Montana/Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management; the Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan; and the Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota.
- Based on the assumptions of adequate funding, this plan would be periodically reviewed and amended if necessary. Plans would be evaluated every five years per 43 CFR 1610.4-9. Information gathered from the five year evaluation would be used to determine planning needs and priority for plan revisions and/or amendments.
- The interdisciplinary team (planning team) would work cooperatively and collaboratively with the State of South Dakota, tribal governments, county and municipal governments, other federal agencies, the Dakotas Resource Advisory Council, and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals.
- The RMP would recognize federal land management agency obligations under tribal treaties and laws or executive orders on Native American reserved rights, religious freedoms, and traditional use areas.
- The BLM and cooperating agencies/governments would jointly develop alternatives to resolve resource management issues that are within the BLM's authority.
- The State Historic Preservation Office would be consulted and involved throughout the planning process.
- Areas with special environmental quality would be protected and, if necessary, designated as ACECs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or other appropriate designations.
- The RMP would emphasize protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the planning area while, at the same time, providing the public with opportunities for compatible activities on BLM-administered public lands.
- The RMP would recognize local, statewide, and national concerns and lifestyles.
- Lands acquired by the BLM would be managed in the manner the RMP prescribes for adjacent or nearby BLM-administered public land, subject to any constraints associated with the acquisition.

- The RMP would provide management direction for lands returned to BLM management through revocation of withdrawals should any occur. The plan would also address lands acquired through other means.
- Fire Management strategies would be consistent with the 2009 Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, the National Fire Plan, the Fire/Fuels Management Plan for Montana and Dakotas, the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide with BLM supplemental guidance, the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Redbook), and other BLM handbooks.
- GIS and metadata information would meet Federal Geographic Data Committee standards, as required by Executive Order 12906, signed April 11, 1994. Other applicable BLM data standards would be followed. The goal is to develop an RMP with spatial and temporal data that can be easily accessed for use in subsequent environmental review.
- All proposed management actions would be based on best available scientific information, research and technology, as well as existing inventory and monitoring information.
- The RMP would establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing BLM-administered public lands within the Decision Area.
- The RMP would result in determinations as required by special program and resource-specific guidance in Appendix C of the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM 2005).
- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.
- The RMP would incorporate existing recovery plans, management strategies, and guidelines for federally listed threatened and endangered species. State management plans would be considered for delisted species.
- The RMP would recognize the State of South Dakota's authority on South Dakota water law and water rights.
- The BLM and USFS will consider allocative and/or prescriptive standards to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, as well as objectives and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.
- The BLM and USFS will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where appropriate, to determine the desired future condition of public lands and National Forest System lands for the conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse and their habitats.
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Greater Sage-Grouse data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on Federal lands.

## **Relationship to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs**

This RMP incorporates new information and regulatory guidance and provides management direction where it may be lacking or requires clarification. Current management direction that has proven effective and requires no change is carried forward in this RMP. A list of the plans and plan amendments that guide current management direction is provided in Table 1-3.

A number of plans have been developed by the BLM that relate to or otherwise govern management in the planning area. Some of these plans have not been formally adopted through the land use planning process, but are considered by the BLM when implementation level planning is conducted or other specific actions are analyzed. These major plans and other major management guidance are listed below and provide a perspective of the many management considerations pertinent to the planning area.

<i>Document Title</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Administrative Record Document Number</i>
South Dakota Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement	1986	BLM-MT-ES-86-001-4410
Miles City District Oil and Gas RMP/EIS Amendment	1995	BLM-MT-PL-94-004-4110
Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment for the Fort Meade Recreation Area ACEC	1996	MT-034-06-8
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Environmental Assessment and Amendment of the Billings, Powder River and South Dakota Resource Management Plans	1997	BLM-MT-PL-98-006-1150
Montana/Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management EIS	1997	BLM-MT-PL-97-009-1020
Oil and Gas Leasing, Nebraska National Forest and Buffalo Gap National Grassland (USFS)	2002	Not Available
Exemption Area Wildland Urban Interface Project Environmental Assessment	2003	BLM-MT040-2002-0024
Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas	2003	BLM-MT-PI-03-108
Off-Highway Vehicle Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota and Portions of South Dakota	2003	BLM-MT-PL-01-002-1220
Custer National Forest, Sioux Ranger District Oil and Gas Leasing Document (USFS)	2004	Not Numbered
Fort Meade Recreation Area Forest and Rangeland Treatments Environmental Assessment	2008	BLM-MT-040-2008-001
*National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy	2004	Not Numbered

\*The National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (BLM 2004) serves as guidance for managing, restoring and enhancing sagebrush habitat on BLM-administered lands. The guidance is designed to support and promote the range-wide conservation of sagebrush habitats for sage-grouse and other sagebrush-obligate wildlife species.

#### **Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas (BLM 2003)**

The Fire/Fuels Management Plan implements the National Fire Plan and 2001 Federal Fire Policy in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota and provides general guidance for fire management (including both fire suppression and fuels management) needed to protect other resource values.

#### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Reburial Policy on BLM Lands, BLM Handbook 8120-1, Ch. II, Paragraph C3 (BLM 2006)**

This policy clarifies the BLM's position that reburial of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) items on BLM-administered public lands may be authorized on a case-by-case basis. Lands that may be considered for reburial activities include lands withdrawn from multiple uses and mineral entry.

#### **Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS (BLM 2007a)**

This plan assesses the environmental consequences of implementing a vegetation treatment program to manage a variety of vegetation species on BLM land in the Western United States. The vegetation treatment program responds to many different control requirements, including suppressing plants that are toxic to humans and animals, enhancing visibility,

maintaining passages for transportation, facilitating drainage, reducing fuel for wildfires, and controlling the expansion of exotic species, which includes noxious weeds. The vegetation treatment methods include manual, mechanical, biological, prescribed burning, and chemical.

**Montana Statewide Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans, Record of Decision for Final Supplement (BLM 2008a)**

Under this ROD and proposed amendment, development in the Billings and Powder River RMP areas would be done in a phased manner through restrictions imposed by the BLM. The phased approach is intended to reduce the overall cumulative impacts to any resource by managing the pace and place, as well as the density and intensity of federal coalbed natural gas development. In addition to the standard Plan of Development (POD) review, four evaluation screens for water, wildlife, American Indian concerns, and air would be applied when reviewing proposals to identify impacts, develop mitigation measures, and guide the decision-making process.

**National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (BLM 2004)**

This plan serves as guidance on managing, restoring and enhancing sagebrush habitat on BLM lands. The guidance is designed to support and promote the range-wide conservation of sagebrush habitats for sage-grouse and other sagebrush-obligate wildlife species. BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy (2012) provides direction to the BLM for considering Greater Sage-Grouse conservation measures identified in the Sage-Grouse National Technical Team’s paper “A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures during the Land Use Planning Process.”

## Related Plans

Plans formulated by federal, state, local, and tribal governments that relate to the RMP have been reviewed and considered including:

**Butte County Government Coordinating Ordinance for Actions Affecting Land and Natural Resources Use (Butte County 1995)**

Promote the protection of not only the physical environment, but also the customs, culture, and economic stability of the county; requires that federal and state agencies abide by existing laws that require them to conduct joint planning with the county on actions affecting land and natural resources use in the county; ensures full compensation to the county citizens when environmental protection necessitates use of private property and/or reduces the value of said private property; and provides a positive guide for federal and state agencies in their development and implementation of regulations affecting land and natural resources use in Butte County.

**Harding County Environmental Review Plan (Harding County 1995)**

The overriding purpose of this ordinance is to assist federal and state agencies in coordinating governmental agency-initiated planning activities with Harding County. The nature and intent of this ordinance amendment is to protect the environment, the economic stability of the local community, and the custom and culture of Harding County’s citizens through protecting private property rights, facilitating a free-market economy, and establishing a process to ensure self-determination by local communities and individuals.

**Black Hills National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (Revision) (USFS 1997)**

This plan provides for diversity of plant and animal communities. It updates standards and guidelines and projected outputs based on better science. This ROD also provides a high level of economic net value and includes an increase in acres managed for hardwoods or meadows. It emphasizes diversity in tree stand density, and several botanical areas would be created. Late succession landscapes and sites would be managed. Some riparian areas would be restored by raising the water table. Where possible, it would increase prescribed burning. Timber harvest would remain as an important tool to manage the forest ecosystem.

**Dakota Prairie Grasslands (Revision) (USFS 2002)**

The Revised Grasslands Plan established standards and guidelines that will provide for more diverse conditions than currently exist on the grasslands.

**Pennington County Comprehensive Plan (Pennington County 2003)**

This plan outlines the general approach for the development of Pennington County and examines a number of concerns that affect the quality of life, current development, and future growth of the county. Community Wildfire Protection Plans include:

- Butte County – completed May 2007
- City of Lead – completed 2002
- Custer County – completed October 2006
- Fall River – completed April 2011
- Harding County – completed November 2006
- Lawrence County – completed December 2005
- Meade County – completed June 2006
- Pennington – completed August 2006
- Perkins – completed January 2009
- Stanley – completed December 2007

The principle objective of these plans is to reduce the risk from wildfire to life, property, critical infrastructure, and natural resources in Wildland Urban Interface areas.

**Belle Fourche Reservoir Final Resource Management Plan (Bureau of Reclamation 2004)**

This plan provides overall long-term management direction to protect and manage lands and resources associated with the Belle Fourche Reservoir in Butte County, SD. This plan provides direction consistent with the purposes of the reservoir, which include irrigation, fish, wildlife, and recreation with irrigation as the primary reservoir use. The plan establishes land use categories for various activities and uses for specific areas at the Reservoir.

**Belle Fourche River Watershed Strategic Implementation Plan (Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership 2005)**

This plan summarizes water quality data, identifies impaired streams and provides recommendation for watershed improvement practices in the Belle Fourche River watershed in Butte, Lawrence and Meade counties. This plan provides desired future conditions for a healthy, functioning watershed, addresses nonpoint source pollution and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) pursuant to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act.

**Black Hills National Forest Phase II Amendment #6 Record of Decision (USFS 2005)**

This Phase II Amendment ROD was expanded from the original purpose of species viability and Research Natural Areas to include fire and insect issues.

**Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan (Lawrence County 2005)**

The goals of this plan are to provide for:

- quality of life (including rural small town character, abundant recreation opportunities, economic livelihood, clean air and water, natural beauty, and adequate infrastructure and services);
- land use (including growth and development patterns, economic development, and environmental sensitivity);
- natural environment (including preserving the county's natural amenities for future generations, while allowing an appropriate level of development to ensure economic stability);
- economic development (including how to provide for economic health and vitality without compromising the reason that people enjoy living in the county);

- transportation (projected and planned for in an orderly manner); and
- public facilities and services.

#### **Livestock Grazing Record of Decision for Dakota Prairie Grasslands (USFS 2006)**

One key goal of the Demonstration Project is to maintain or improve current on-the-ground conditions, while maintaining, to the maximum extent possible, a grazing program at current Animal Unit Months (AUM) levels and providing sufficient habitat for grassland species.

#### **Natural Resource Plan for Meade County, South Dakota (Meade County 2006)**

This plan establishes a process for Meade County to coordinate with federal and state agencies on their proposed actions so that county citizens may preserve their custom, culture, and economic stability, while protecting and using their environment.

#### **Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Bear Butte National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS 2007)**

This plan provides overall long-term management direction to protect and manage lands and resources associated with the Bear Butte National Wildlife Refuge in Meade County, SD. Goals include maintaining wildlife and managing habitat, working with partners to provide quality wildlife-dependent recreation and awareness, recognizing the significance and sacredness of Bear Butte to Plains Tribes, and supporting existing partnerships. The Bear Butte Refuge is managed in coordination with the State of South Dakota.

#### **Nebraska and South Dakota Black-tailed Prairie Dog Management on the Nebraska National Forest and Associated Units, Including Plan Amendment 3 (USFS 2008)**

The Final EIS for this ROD identified two distinct management areas within the Nebraska National Forest project area: (1) Non-Management Area 3.63 – those areas outside black-footed ferret management emphasis, and (2) Management Area 3.63 – Black-footed ferret management emphasis.

#### **Travel Management on the Fort Pierre National Grassland (USFS 2008)**

Out of the 236 miles of routes on the Fort Pierre National Grassland (FPNG), 64 miles would be open year-round, eight miles would be open to permitted users only, and 164 miles of user-created routes would be closed to all motorized vehicles. The FPNG would be closed to over-snow vehicles, except for the rights-of-way (ROW) of Highway 83.

#### **Final Environmental Impact Statement, Black Hills National Forest Travel Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (USFS 2010a)**

This EIS responds to the Travel Management Rule and discloses the effects of five alternative approaches to managing motorized vehicles on the Forest. These alternatives were developed after significant public involvement. The EIS considers which routes should be designated as open to motorized use, what types (class) of vehicles should be used on various routes, which routes should be open yearlong and which ones seasonally, and whether limited cross-country motorized travel should be allowed for purposes of retrieving harvested game and/or dispersed camping.

### **State of South Dakota Plans**

The following describes plans developed by the State of South Dakota. Some of the plans listed below are complete and others are being written or revised.

#### **South Dakota Statewide Forest Resource Strategy and Assessment (June 2010)**

The Strategy and Assessment are available at <http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/assessment-of-forest-resources/>. South Dakota's forest resource strategy provides a long-term, comprehensive, coordinated strategy for investing state, federal, and partner resources. The purpose of this strategy is to provide a comprehensive management plan for priority areas identified in the assessment. The resource strategy details threats, strategies, existing resources, needs, and partners.

The threats and strategies described here were assembled with input from the South Dakota Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee and the Community Forestry Advisory Council.

### **South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan (2012)**

State wildlife agencies received federal funding for rare species work. In exchange, each state drafted a plan to address the needs of all fish and wildlife species, with priority on species of greatest conservation need. The South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan guides the state agency's priorities, but more importantly, serves as a framework for potential cooperators to work together to benefit wildlife and healthy habitats. While much of the focus of this plan is to work to avoid future endangered species listings, plans also help maintain common species in the face of known and likely future challenges. An important component of a state Wildlife Action Plan is a list of species of greatest conservation need. The species list is intended to represent declining species and species that can help indicate the effectiveness of habitat management and conservation. The list is not intended to include all rare species. Lists of South Dakota rare species that are found on or near BLM-administered lands are found in the Special Status Species section of Chapter 3. The South Dakota Wildlife Action plan is available at <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/species-list.aspx>.

### **South Dakota Management Plans for Wildlife (specific plans for various species)**

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks develops and periodically updates management plans for various species. These plans are available at <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/default.aspx>.

The following is a description of South Dakota Wildlife Management Plans:

- South Dakota Greater Sage Grouse Management Plan, 2008-2017 (SDGFP 2008b).

The South Dakota Sage-Grouse Management Plan is designed to provide biological information about sage-grouse, identifies factors that influence sage-grouse in South Dakota, and guides future management direction and actions by establishing objectives to:

- 1) maintain the existing status and range of sage-grouse in South Dakota;
- 2) monitor sage-grouse on an annual basis to determine any changes in population status and distribution;
- 3) use current and past lek and harvest information to set the annual hunting season;
- 4) develop a list of research needs and prioritize on an annual basis;
- 5) determine the impacts and develop management responses to disease issues affecting sage grouse populations; and
- 6) develop a public outreach and educational plan that informs the public, landowners, and wildlife/conservation agencies on sage grouse management and the issues of highest concern.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is currently updating the South Dakota Sage-Grouse Management Plan to include more detailed and up-to-date information. A new plan is likely to be completed sometime in 2013.

- Prairie Grouse Management Plan for South Dakota (SDGFP 2011b) – Sharp-tailed grouse and greater prairie chickens, collectively prairie grouse, are the most abundant grouse species in South Dakota. The vast expanses of open grassland found throughout much of South Dakota provide ideal habitat for these two game birds. Although slight differences in micro and macro habitat requirements exist between these two species, management strategies are similar enough to warrant one management plan for prairie grouse in South Dakota.
- Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (SDGFP 2007) – Provides management options from preservation of the existing herds, expansion of present herd numbers, transplanting to establish new herds.
- Mountain Lion Management Plan (SDGFP 2010a) – Provides a concise, yet comprehensive overview of topics such as inventory and status, population monitoring, season summaries, response protocol, public attitudes, issues related to mountain lion management, and research results.
- Private Lands Habitat and Access Strategic Plan (SDGFP 2008c) – Since approximately 80 percent of the state's land base is under private ownership, private landowners serve as the stewards with the most influence over

wildlife habitat conditions for wildlife populations. Dating back to the mid-1970s, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks has offered voluntary private land habitat programs to cooperating landowners, if they desire to establish and enhance wildlife habitat. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks has developed this strategic plan to serve as an adaptive document to guide our efforts to manage habitat and provide public access to private land.

- Wildlife Division Strategic Planning Framework (SDGFP 2006a) – This document is for general, strategic guidance for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and serves to identify the role that the agency plays, how they function, and what they strive to accomplish related to mountain lion management.
- South Dakota Ring-Necked Pheasant Management Plan (SDGFP 2009a) – The vision is to maintain abundant populations of pheasants for South Dakotans and visitors by fostering a partnership-driven approach for habitat development and management, to ensure public access opportunities and to increase public awareness of the broad benefits of quality habitat and hunting.
- South Dakota Resident Canada Goose Management Plan (SDGFP 2010b) – The original South Dakota Resident Canada Goose Management Plan was compiled by the Game Staff in September 1998. An updated version (January 2005) served to guide management of resident Canada geese through 2009. The latest version (May 2010) will guide management through 2014 and should be updated in 2015.
- South Dakota Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan (SDGFP 2008a) – This management plan was developed to address the prevention, control, and effects of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) that have invaded or may invade South Dakota's waters. The South Dakota Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan serves as the initial step in establishing a program to specifically address ANS issues in South Dakota.
- South Dakota All Bird Conservation Plan (SDGFP 2005a) – Ecological management of nongame land birds requires determining which species and habitats are most in need of conservation. The objectives of this plan are to identify the priority species of concern in South Dakota, present their habitat requirements, and identify possible habitat management options.
- South Dakota Bat Management Plan (SDGFP 2004) – The main goal of the South Dakota Bat Management Plan is to provide guidance promoting long-term conservation of South Dakota bat species through research, management, and education.
- Topeka Shiner State Management Plan (SDGFP 2003) – The USFWS listed the Topeka shiner as endangered in January 1999. Prior to listing, limited survey data suggested the shiner occupied only 10 percent of its historic range. Recent studies in South Dakota have documented the Topeka shiner in 80 percent of historically known streams, along with many streams where Topeka shiners were not previously reported.
- South Dakota Prairie Dog Management Plan (SDGFP 2005b) – The primary goal of this plan is to manage for long-term, self-sustaining prairie dog populations in South Dakota while addressing landowner concerns and maintaining the viability of the unique grassland ecosystem. This state management plan was developed by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and Department of Agriculture with the assistance of working groups.
- Management Plans for Threatened and Endangered Species on the Missouri River – South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks has developed a set of management plans for the four listed species that live along the Missouri. These species include the pallid sturgeon (SDGFP 2006b), bald eagle (SDGFP 2005c), least tern (SDGFP 2005d) and piping plover (SDGFP 2005b).
- Siting Guidelines for Wind Power Projects (SDGFP 2009b) – The South Dakota Bat Working Group in cooperation with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks compiled these siting guidelines for wind power developers and other stakeholders to utilize as they consider potential wind power sites in South Dakota.

Other South Dakota wildlife plans that are pending development or revision will be considered as drafts until they are released or become finalized.

## Policy

No proclamations or legislative designations that would influence decisions or constrain the alternatives have been issued within the planning area.

Implementation of the RMP begins when the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Director signs the ROD for the RMP. Decisions in the RMP would be implemented in coordination with the BLM budgeting process. An implementation schedule would be developed, providing for the systematic accomplishment of decisions in the approved RMP. Implementation actions (project level) actions would require additional site specific NEPA analysis.

## Vision and Management Goals

The overall vision of the SDFO in preparing this Draft RMP/EIS is to manage BLM-administered public lands in the planning area in a manner that provides for multiple uses while sustaining a healthy and productive environment for present and future generations. The vision is supported by the guiding principle that would enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources. A number of management goals and objectives that guided alternative development for this RMP were developed from information collected from public scoping efforts, existing laws and regulations, cooperative efforts, and from the inter-disciplinary planning team. Management goals are identified and discussed in Chapter 2. All alternatives would meet these goals, with differing timelines or degrees of completeness.

The SDFO has considered the public's needs and stakeholder values in the management of resources and resource uses proposed in this management plan.

## Goals

### Air Resources

- Ensure BLM authorizations and management activities protect the local quality of life and sustain economic benefits by complying with tribal, local, county, state, and federal air quality regulations, requirements, and implementation plans.
- Meet federal and state air quality standards.

### Climate

- Evaluate the observed and anticipated long-term dynamic of climate change and minimize the impact of greenhouse gases from projects to the degree practicable and reasonably foreseeable.
- Provide for diverse, healthy ecosystems that are resilient to stresses such as climate change.
- Provide for flexible, adaptable management that allows for timely responses to changing climatic conditions.
- Maintain or improve the ability of BLM lands to reduce (sequester) atmospheric greenhouse gases.

### Soil Resources

- Manage uses to minimize soil erosion, sedimentation to water sources, and compaction; and maintain surface soil water infiltration based on site-specific conditions.
- Maintain or improve soil health and productivity, while supporting multiple-use management.
- Soils are stable and provide for capture, storage, and release of water appropriate to soil type, climate, and land form.
- Soils are productive and support vegetation that provides forage, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and esthetic characteristic based on soil type.

## Water Resources

- Maintain or improve the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of water resources to protect designated beneficial uses and achieve water quality standards and guidelines.
- Improve watershed function to minimize erosion and accelerated runoff to streams.
- Maintain or improve water quality for municipal, industrial, agricultural, recreational and residential purposes.
- Maintain or improve stream channel shape, form, and function within the natural range of variability to allow for hydrological processes that can fully support beneficial uses.
- Maintain existing or acquire new water rights on BLM lands to ensure water availability for multiple use management while adhering to the State of South Dakota water rights, and other water quality-related laws and regulations.
- Protect ground water quantity and quality.
- Meet water quality standards without adversely affecting prior existing water rights and uses and protect beneficial uses of water.

## Vegetative Communities – Rangeland, Riparian, Forest and Woodlands

- Manage public lands to provide plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes (water, energy, and nutrient cycles) and to provide forage, watershed protection, and a variety of wildlife habitat.
- Public lands meet the Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health (BLM 1997a).
- A variety of habitat is present with a diverse assemblage of native plant communities indicative of the Northern Great Plains.
- Native plants dominate the planning area and are resistant to invasive plants, noxious weeds, and invasive pests.
- The abundance of woody vegetation is maintained or improved on those riparian sites that have the potential to support woody vegetation.
- Stands of oak, aspen, box elder, ash, and other hardwoods are maintained and a variety of age classes are present.

## Noxious Weeds and Other Invasive Non-Native Species (Plant and Animal)

### *Invasive plant species including noxious weeds:*

- Reduce existing acres infested by invasive plants and noxious weeds through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) treatment methods including restoration and elimination of new infestations through early detection and rapid response.
- New infestations are not common and existing infestations are declining across the landscape.
- Invasive plants and noxious weeds are not leading to a decrease in acres that are meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.

### *Invasive terrestrial animals and insect species:*

- Manage invasive terrestrial animal and insect species, and state and locally declared pests. Reduce acres and/or density of infestations by invasive species through prevention, early detection and rapid response, and provide education opportunities for public land users.
- Infestations are not common across the landscape.

### *Invasive aquatic species:*

- Keep the aquatic environment free from invasive aquatic species. Prevent the introduction of invasive species into the aquatic environment through education of public land users on prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, management and restoration.
- All lentic (lakeshore/wetland) and lotic (river/stream) areas remain free from invasive aquatic species.

## Wildlife Species

- Ensure that native wildlife species are provided with habitat of sufficient quality and quantity to enhance biological diversity and sustain their economic, social, and ecological values.
- Provide habitat and forage to support wildlife with consideration of South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan game management goals and the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture Program.
- Improve the resilience of wildlife habitats to protect wildlife communities from stressors and events such as severe wildfire and climate change.
- Movement of big game species between habitats would be facilitated.
- A full spectrum of biological communities' habitats and their ecological processes are present.
- Populations of native plants and animals are well distributed across the landscape.
- Provide suitable habitat condition to allow for movement between blocks of habitat and seasonal and specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.
- Maintain or improve specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.

## Special Status Species

- Ensure the long-term and self-sustaining persistence of special status species in South Dakota.
- Protect/maintain populations of special status species by minimizing direct mortality and impacts to habitat.
- Provide suitable habitat condition to allow for movement between large blocks of habitat and seasonal and specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.
- Maintain or improve specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.
- Maintain and/or increase sage-grouse abundance and distribution by conserving, enhancing or restoring the sagebrush ecosystem upon which populations depend in cooperation with other conservation partners.
- Within sage-grouse general habitat areas, the BLM will maintain habitat for viable sage-grouse populations.
- Manage for the biological integrity and habitat suitability to facilitate the conservation, recovery, and maintenance of populations of fish and wildlife to avoid contributing to the listing of or jeopardizing the continued existence or recovery of special status species and their habitats.
- Maintain or enhance areas of ecological importance for special status wildlife species.
- Conserve and recover special status wildlife species by determining and implementing conservation strategies including restoration opportunities, use restrictions, and management actions.
- Manage specific environmental hazards, risks, and impacts in a manner compatible with special status wildlife species health.
- Identify habitat thresholds necessary to sustain well-distributed healthy populations of special status wildlife species to avoid future listings under the Endangered Species Act.
- Develop and implement the BMPs, activity plans, or use other mechanisms to protect high priority special status wildlife species.
- Manage special status fish and wildlife species in consideration of the working landscape and the intermingled land ownership pattern that is present.

## Fish and Aquatics

- Ensure that aquatic habitat is of suitable quality to support a diversity of plant and animal communities.
- Promote public awareness, appreciation, and fisheries conservation, management, and ecology.

## Cultural Resources

- Identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.
- Seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resource uses by identifying priority geographic areas for new field inventory, based on a probability for unrecorded significant resources.

## Paleontological Resources

- Preserve and enhance paleontological resources on public land.
- Provide opportunities for scientific and recreational uses of paleontological resources within the planning area.
- Significant paleontological resources will be identified and preserved for their scientific values.
- Educational and recreational opportunities will be enhanced for the enjoyment of the public.

## Visual Resources

- Public lands provide natural appearing landscapes for recreational opportunities.

## Fire Management and Ecology

- Manage wildfire and fuels for the protection of public health, safety, property, and resource values, emphasizing firefighter and public safety as the single overriding priority.
- Manage hazardous fuels in areas of urban and industrial interface areas to reduce potential loss due to severe wildfire.
- Maintain and/or improve desired mix of seral stages within vegetation communities including forest and woodlands, grasslands, shrublands, and riparian/wetlands.
- Manage vegetation communities through cooperative efforts by restoring and maintaining natural fire regimes and fire frequency to the landscape, where appropriate.
- Maintain and promote partnerships with the public and interagency cooperators to develop and strengthen coordination of all fire management activities across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Utilize integrated management techniques unless otherwise restricted (defined as prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, or biological, followed by desired seeding) to reduce fuels and to protect high priority areas or resource values.
- Burned areas pose minimal threat to public safety, property, cultural resources, and/or ecological function.
- Continued ecological improvements in the conifer, grassland, shrubland, and riparian strata. This is reflected in moving Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 3 to 2, Class 2 to 1, and maintaining Class 1; with emphasis in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas.

## Forest and Woodland Products

- Manage public forest and woodlands to provide plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy cycle, and nutrient cycle) and improve or maintain wildlife habitat considering economically efficient methods.
- Forests and woodlands support diverse vegetative communities as indicated by wildlife habitat goals.
- Forests and woodlands would be managed for ecological resiliency, as indicated by fuels and fire management goals.
- Forest and woodland treatments may result in vegetative products being available for public or other use depending on local market demands.
- Manage forest resources to improve resilience to severe events and maintain and enhance their ability for the long-term sequestration of carbon.

## Livestock Grazing

- Manage for a sustainable level of livestock grazing while meeting or progressing toward the Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health (Appendix A) recognizing the ecological benefits of moderate levels of large animal grazing in the Great Plains.
- Manage livestock grazing to provide economic opportunities in the planning area.

## Recreation

- Provide for a range of recreational opportunities, while minimizing adverse impacts to other resources.

- Encourage community partnerships with the BLM for the purpose of improving recreational opportunities in response to the needs of visitors and local communities.

### **Travel Management and Transportation (including access)**

- Manage transportation and access to provide for use and enjoyment of the public lands, while protecting resource values and providing for user safety.
- Access is available to larger blocks of BLM-administered surface lands.
- Manage transportation network to enhance a variety of uses of public lands.

### **Lands and Realty**

#### *Land Use Authorizations:*

- Address needs of industry, utilities, the public, or government entities for land use authorizations (rights-of-way, leases and permits, etc.) while minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values.
- Locate new ROW facilities adjacent to existing ROWs to the extent practical.

#### *Withdrawals:*

- Utilize proposed withdrawal actions with the least restrictive measures and minimum size necessary to accomplish the required purpose.
- Protect significant resources or significant government investments.

#### *Land Tenure:*

- Retain public lands, with high resource values, in public ownership.
- Adjust land ownership to improve public land pattern and management efficiency.
- Acquire lands that enhance public access, high resource values, and meet public and community needs.
- Identify available access to larger blocks of the BLM-administered surface lands for public and users.
- Achieve a pattern of public land ownership that is more consolidated and more efficient for management purposes.

### **Minerals**

- Manage minerals to provide an opportunity for local economic benefits, while protecting the integrity of other resources.
- Minerals are developed while wildlife, cultural resources, air and water quality, and other resource values are maintained.
- As mineral development is completed, surface areas are restored similar to pre-existing conditions.

### **Renewable Energy Resources**

- Make lands available for renewable energy development, consistent with goals to manage other resources.
- Provide opportunities for renewable energy development, especially for wind energy, while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts to wildlife, cultural, visual, and other resource values.
- Restore areas to near natural conditions when renewable energy development is decommissioned.

### **Special Designations**

- Protect relevant and important values through Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation and apply special management where standard or routine management is not adequate to protect the areas from risks or threats of damage/degradation or to provide for public safety from natural hazards.
- Historic and cultural sites are preserved. Sites are interpreted as vulnerability to degradation and budget determine.

- Back Country Byway – Highlight and interpret scenic, historic, archeological, or other interest values associated with back country byways in partnership with communities, interest groups, and state and federal entities.
- National Trails – Assist in cooperative efforts to manage current and future National Trails to protect the values for which they were designated.
- Designated trails or portions of trails on BLM land are in good repair and meet the intent of the trail designation.
- Wild and Scenic River Designations – Evaluate river segments for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.
- Fossil Cycad ACEC – Protect relevant and important values through ACEC designation and apply special management where standard or routine management is not adequate to protect the areas from risks or threats of damage/degradation or to provide for public safety from natural hazards.
- Paleontological resources at the Fossil Cycad ACEC are preserved. Sites are interpreted for vulnerability to degradation.

## Public Safety

### *Abandoned Mine Lands:*

- Reclaim Abandoned Mine Land (AML) sites on public land to improve water quality, plant communities, and diverse fish and wildlife habitat.
- Reduce and/or eliminate risks to human health from hazardous mine openings and other physical and chemical safety hazards.
- Protect historic resources and wildlife habitat commonly associated with AML sites.
- Remove the greatest risks, preserve bat habitat, restore the environment, and preserve representative or significant cultural resources.

### *Hazardous Materials:*

- Mitigate threats and reduce risks to the public and environment from hazardous materials.
- Healthy public lands.

### *Debris Flows:*

- Prevent debris flows on public lands from occurring if possible.
- Reduce risks from debris flows from public lands.
- Protect the public from debris flows on public land.
- No reasonably preventable debris flow potential caused by management or lack of management.

## Draft Resource Management Plan

Four alternatives for managing public lands in the planning area, including a No Action Alternative (current management), are described in this Draft RMP/EIS. The alternatives describe various ways the BLM can address planning issues. Each alternative has a different emphasis, but all would meet the overall vision and management goals and FLPMA's multiple-use mandate.

Public involvement will continue following issuance of this Draft RMP/EIS. The BLM will provide a 90-day public comment period and will host a series of public meetings. Additional information on the public participation process is provided in Chapter 5.

## Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final EIS

Following the 90-day public comment period on this Draft RMP/EIS, comments will be analyzed and a Proposed RMP/Final EIS will be prepared and released to the public. A 30-day protest period and 60-day Governor's Consistency Review period will occur after the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is completed. No earlier than 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a notice of the filing of the final environmental impact statement in the Federal Register and

pending final action on any protest that may be filed, the State Director shall approve the plan. Approval shall be withheld on any portion of a plan or amendment being protested until final action completed on such protest. Before such approval is given, there shall be public notice and opportunity for public comment on any significant change made to the proposed plan. The approval shall be documented in a concise public record of the decision, meeting the requirements of regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (40 CFR 1505.2).

Approval will be withheld on any portion of the plan under protest until the protest has been resolved.



Western Butte County, South Dakota

BLM Photo