



FACT SHEET

BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

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South Dakota Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision

FACT SHEET: Overview of the Planning Process

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What is a Resource Management Plan?

A resource management plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides a landscape-level framework for managing Bureau of Land Management-administered lands and Federal minerals. Currently, lands within the planning area are managed under the 1986 South Dakota RMP as amended. The RMP provides broad, general direction for multiple resources and uses and does not address all details of site specific or project specific proposals. These are addressed through a separate planning process at the implementation (project) level.

Where is the Planning Area?

The South Dakota RMP and associated EIS will guide management for approximately 274,000 acres of BLM-managed surface and 1.7 million acres of Federal mineral estate administered in 37 counties. Counties with significant amounts of BLM land include: Harding, Butte, Lawrence, Pennington, Custer, Fall River, Perkins, Meade, and Stanley Counties. Nearly all (over 98 percent) of the surface and mineral estate is located in western South Dakota.

Where we've been . . .

After many years of hard work by BLM staff, Cooperating Agencies, the Resource Advisory Council and other engaged parties, the South Dakota RMP/EIS is ready for your review and comment. This Draft reflects a great deal of planning and analysis, as well as a significant investment of time from our cooperators and resource advisory council members who participated in the process. Described below are some of the important milestones in the planning process that helped us get to this point.

Scoping

In the fall of 2007 the BLM South Dakota Field Office initiated scoping for the RMP revision. A series of public scoping meetings were held across the planning area to obtain public input. The BLM reviewed comments and compiled a scoping report. Comments and information gathered from scoping were used in drafting the RMP revision.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act, but that listing the species was precluded by the need to address other species first. One reason for the USFWS determination was the need for "improved regulatory mechanisms" to ensure species conservation.

The principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM are resource decisions in land management plans. The BLM has joined forces at the national level to develop coordinated long-term conservation measures and actions for the Greater Sage-Grouse in land management plans. This draft plan addresses a range of alternatives to address Greater Sage-Grouse conservation on BLM-administered lands within the planning area.

Alternative Formulation

In the context of an RMP, alternatives are different management options that the BLM may choose to manage lands in the planning area. One management option (alternative) emphasizes resource protection while another alternative emphasizes resource production. The resource production alternative would favor consumptive uses, such as increased production of mineral resources (Alternative B). The resource protection alternative would favor non-consumptive or non-degrading uses (Alternative C).

The BLM used the Analysis of the Management Situation, public comments and met with cooperating agencies and Resource Advisory Council members to determine how best to craft alternatives to address the issues, respond to the management opportunities and to change resource conditions where appropriate. The completed alternatives were then analyzed for impacts and a preferred alternative (D) was identified. The preferred alternative seeks to balance resource protection with resource production in consideration of the economic reliance of local communities on public lands and the way of life provided by public lands.

Where we are now . . .

A notice of availability announcing the release of the draft RMP/EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 14, 2013, initiating the 90-day public comment period. To be considered for preparation of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, comments must be marked received within 90 days of the notice of availability. The comment period ends on Sept. 11, 2013.

You may request a compact disk of the Draft RMP by contacting the South Dakota Field Office at (605) 892-7000 or access the document at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/south_dakota_field/rmp.html. To send an e-mail about the RMP go to: BLM_MT_South_Dakota_RMP@blm.gov. The Draft SD RMP/EIS and related documents are also at: http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/south_dakota_field/rmp.html.

Where We Are Going Next . . .

The public comment period is a very important part of the planning process. The comments and information you provide will be considered in making changes to the Draft RMP. These changes will result in a proposed plan, which will be made available in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The proposed plan will be made available for review and protest before an approved plan is issued with a record of decision.

We will continue to provide updates on the status of our planning process through our website and newsletters. Thanks for your participation, and we encourage you to remain involved throughout the RMP revision process.