



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

*Farmington Field Office  
6251 N. College Blvd., Ste. A  
Farmington, NM 87402*



Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the Proposed Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Farmington Field Office Visual Resource Management (VRM) Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA). The Proposed RMPA/EA was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in consultation with various government agencies and organizations, taking into account public comments received during this planning effort. The purpose of the Proposed RMPA is to amend the 2003 Farmington Resource Management Plan to designate VRM Classes and management for BLM-managed lands in the FFO. The need for action is in response to respond to direction in the 2003 Farmington Resource Management Plan (RMP) to designate VRM Classes following a visual resource inventory (VRI). A VRI for the FFO was completed lands in 2009.

The BLM analyzed the No Action Alternative and the four action alternatives in the EA. After reviewing that analysis, the BLM is proposing to move forward with a decision that would combine elements of Alternatives A and B. Alternative A would serve as the basis for the majority of the allocations and management actions in the proposed action, with the incorporation of the following allocations described in Alternative B:

- VRM Class II for the foreground/midground of Chaco Culture National Historical Park (5 miles from the established Key Observation Points)
- VRM Class III for the background of Chaco Culture National Historic Park (5 to 10 miles from the established Key Observation Point)
- VRM Class II for the Ephemeral Wash Riparian Area (100 yr) where it coincides with portions of the high-potential segment of the Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail (NHT).

The specific language for the proposed action can be found in Attachment 1.

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the planning process for this Proposed RMPA and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the planning decisions may protest approval of the planning decisions contained therein. The Proposed RMPA/EA and FONSI are open for a 30-day protest period beginning December 17, 2013.

For further information on filing a protest, please see the accompanying protest regulations in Attachment 2. The regulations specify the required elements of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents or available planning records (e.g. meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence, etc.).

Emailed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular mail or overnight delivery postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the emailed protest as an advance copy and

will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct emailed protests to: Brenda\_Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov.

All protests must be in writing and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail:

Director (210)  
Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams  
P.O. Box 71383  
Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Delivery:

Director (210)  
Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams  
20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM  
Washington, D.C. 20003

**All protests must be postmarked on or before January 16, 2014**

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your protest, be advised that your entire protest – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your protest to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior on each protest. Responses to protest issues will be compiled and formalized in a Director's Protest Resolution Report made available following issuance of the decisions.

Upon resolution of all land use plan protests, the BLM will issue a Decision Record (DR). The DR will be available to all parties at [http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Farmington\\_Field\\_Office/ffo\\_planning/visual\\_resource\\_management.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Farmington_Field_Office/ffo_planning/visual_resource_management.html).

Unlike land use planning decisions, implementation decisions included in this Proposed RMPA/EA are not subject to protest under the BLM planning regulations, but are subject to an administrative review process, through appeals to the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) pursuant to 43 CFR, Part 4 Subpart E. Implementation decisions generally constitute the BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. Where implementation decisions are made as part of the land use planning process, they are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations once the BLM resolves the protests to land use planning decisions and issues a DR.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Evans', written over a white background.

Dave Evans  
Farmington District Manager

### *Attachment 1: Proposed Action*

**VR-A- 1.** Areas to be managed as VRM Class I (51,000 acres) would include:

- Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah WSA
- Andrew's Ranch ACEC
- Bee Burrow ACEC
- Bis Sa'ani ACEC
- Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness
- Casamero Community ACEC
- Fossil Forest RNA
- Halfway House ACEC
- Indian Creek ACEC
- Kin Nizhoni ACEC
- Morris 41 ACEC
- Pierre's Site ACEC
- Toh-La-Kai ACEC
- Twin Angels ACEC
- Upper Kin Klizhin ACEC

**VR-A- 2.** Areas to be managed as VRM Class II (92,000 acres) would include the foreground/midground surrounding Chaco National Historical Park (5 miles from the established Key Observation Points) and the following:

- Adams Canyon ACEC
- Ah-shi-sle-pah Road ACEC
- Alien Run Mountain Bike Trails
- Angel Peak ACEC
- Angel Peak Scenic Area
- Ashii Naa'a (Salt Point) ACEC
- Bi Yaazh ACEC
- Beechatuga Tongue Geological Formation
- Blanco Mesa ACEC
- Blanco Star Panel ACEC
- Cagle's Site ACEC
- Canyon View Ruin ACEC
- Chacra Mesa Complex ACEC
- Cho'li'i (Gobernador Knob) ACEC
- Christmas Tree Ruin ACEC
- Church Rock Outlier ACEC
- Crow Canyon ACEC
- Crownpoint Steps and Herrudura ACEC
- Deer House ACEC
- Delgadita / Pueblo Canyons ACEC
- Devil's Spring Mesa ACEC
- Dogie Canyon School ACEC
- Dzil'na'oodlii (Huerfano Mesa) ACEC
- East Side Rincon ACEC
- Encierro Canyon ACEC
- Encinada Mesa - Carrizo Canyon ACEC
- Ephemeral Wash Riparian Area (100 yr) where it coincides with portions of the high-potential segment of the Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail (NHT)=
- Farmer's Arroyo ACEC
- Four Ye'i ACEC
- Frances Mesa ACEC
- Gonzalez Canyon - Senon S. Vigil Homestead ACEC
- Gould Pass Camp ACEC
- Haynes Trading Post ACEC
- Holmes Group ACEC
- Hummingbird ACEC
- Kachina Mask ACEC
- Kin Yazhi (Little House) ACEC
- Kiva ACEC
- Largo Canyon Star Ceiling ACEC
- Margarita Martinez Homestead ACEC
- Martin Apodaca Homestead ACEC
- Martinez Canyon ACEC
- Moss Trail ACEC
- Munoz Canyon ACEC
- Navajo Lake Horse Trails
- Negro Canyon SDA
- North Road ACEC
- Pointed Butte ACEC
- Pregnant Basketmaker ACEC
- Pretty Woman ACEC
- Prieta Mesa ACEC
- Rincon Largo District ACEC
- Rincon Rock Shelter ACEC
- Rock House - Nestor Martin Homestead ACEC
- San Rafael Canyon ACEC
- Santos Peak ACEC
- Shield Bearer ACEC
- Simon Canyon ACEC
- Simon Ruin ACEC
- Star Rock ACEC
- Star Spring - Jesus Canyon ACEC
- Superior Mesa ACEC
- Tapacito and Split Rock ACEC
- Thomas Canyon Recreation / Wildlife Area
- Truby's Tower ACEC

**VR-A- 3.** Areas to be managed as VRM Class III (474,000 acres) would include the background surrounding Chaco National Historical Park (5-15 miles from the established Key Observation Points) and the:

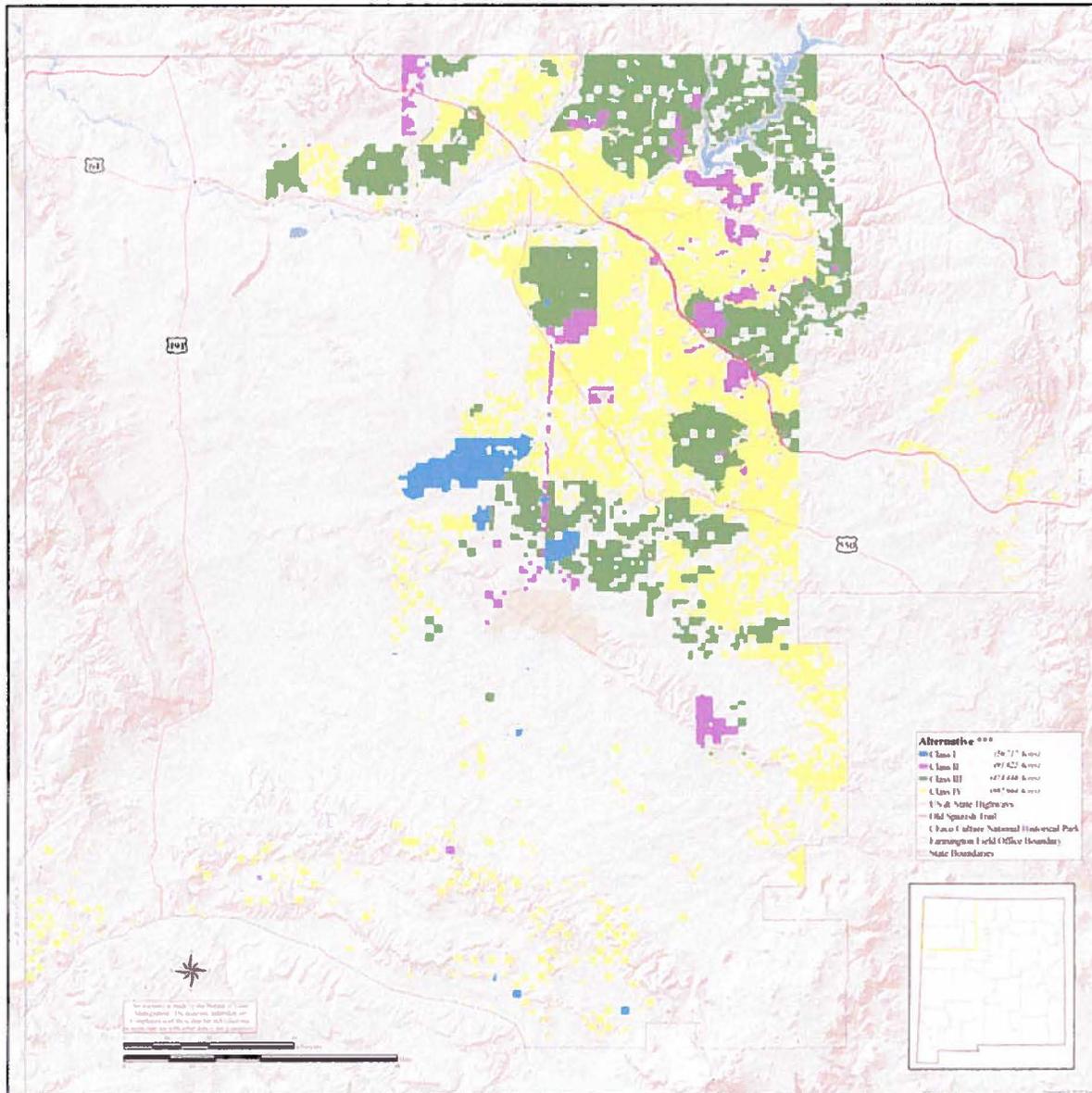
- Bald Eagle ACEC
- Betonnie Tsoosie Fossil Area
- Carracas Mesa Recreation / Wildlife Area
- Carson Fossil Pocket
- Cedar Hill ACEC
- Cereza Canyon Wildlife Area
- Crow Mesa Wildlife Area
- East La Plata Wildlife Area
- Ensenada Mesa Wildlife Area
- Ephemeral Wash Riparian Area (100 yr)
- Glade Run Recreation Area
- Gobernador and Cerza Canyon Fossil Area
- Gonzales Mesa Wildlife Area
- The Hogback ACEC
- Kutz Canyon Fossil Area
- La Jara ACEC
- Laguna Seca Mesa Wildlife Area
- Lybrook Fossil Area
- Mexican Spotted Owl ACEC
- Middle Mesa Wildlife Area
- Pinon Mesa Fossil Area
- Pinon Mesa Recreation Area
- Rattlesnake Canyon Wildlife Area
- Reese Canyon RNA
- River Tracts ACEC
- Rock Garden Recreation Area
- Rosa Mesa Wildlife Area

**VR-A- 4.** The remainder of the area would be managed as VRM Class IV (803,000). Specifically, the following areas would be managed as VRM Class IV:

- Bohanon Canyon Fossil Complex
- Dunes Vehicle Recreation Area
- Head Canyon Motocross Track

See Figure 1 for the locations of areas allocated to each VRM Class.

Figure 1. VRM Classes for the Proposed Action



VRM Class designations for Specially Designated Areas are displayed in alphabetical order in Table 1 for easy reference.

**Table 1. VRM Class Designations for Specially Designated Areas**

| Name  | VRM Class |
|---|-----------|
| Adams Canyon ACEC                               | II        |
| Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Road ACEC                        | II        |
| Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah WSA                              | I         |
| Alien Run Mountain Bike Trails                  | II        |
| Angel Peak ACEC                                 | II        |
| Angel Peak Scenic Area                          | II        |
| Ashii Naa'a (Salt Point) ACEC                   | II        |
| Andrew's Ranch ACEC                             | I         |
| Bald Eagle ACEC                                 | III       |
| Bee Burrow ACEC                                 | I         |
| Beechatuga Tongue Geological Formation          | II        |
| Betennie Tsosie Fossil Area                     | III       |
| Bi Yaazh ACEC                                   | II        |
| Bis Sa'ani ACEC                                 | I         |
| Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area                 | I         |
| Blanco Mesa ACEC                                | II        |
| Blanco Star Panel ACEC                          | II        |
| Bohanon Canyon Fossil Complex                   | IV        |
| Cagle's Site ACEC                               | II        |
| Canyon View Ruin ACEC                           | II        |
| Carracas Mesa Recreation / Wildlife Area        | III       |
| Carson Fossil Pocket                            | III       |
| Casamero Community ACEC <sup>2</sup>            | I         |
| Cedar Hill ACEC                                 | III       |
| Cereza Canyon Wildlife Area                     | III       |
| Chacra Mesa Complex ACEC                        | II        |
| Cho'li'I (Gobernador Knob) ACEC                 | II        |
| Christmas Tree Ruin ACEC                        | II        |
| Church Rock Outlier ACEC                        | II        |
| Crow Canyon ACEC                                | II        |
| Crow Mesa Wildlife Area                         | III       |
| Crownpoint Steps and Herradura ACEC             | II        |
| Deer House ACEC                                 | II        |
| Delgadita / Pueblo Canyons ACEC                 | II        |
| Devil's Spring Mesa ACEC                        | II        |
| Dogie Canyon School ACEC                        | II        |
| Dunes Vehicle Recreation Area                   | IV        |
| Dzil'na'oodlii (Huerfano Mesa) ACEC             | II        |
| East La Plata Wildlife Area                     | III       |
| East Side Rincon ACEC                           | II        |
| Encierro Canyon ACEC                            | II        |
| Encinada Mesa - Carrizo Canyon ACEC             | II        |
| Ensenada Mesa Wildlife Area                     | III       |
| Ephemeral Wash Riparian Area                    | II/III    |
| Farmer's Arroyo ACEC                            | II        |
| Fossil Forest RNA                               | I         |
| Four Ye'i ACEC                                  | II        |
| Frances Mesa ACEC                               | II        |
| Glade Run Recreation Area                       | III       |
| Gobernador and Cereza Canyon Fossil Area        | III       |
| Gonzalez Canyon - Senon S. Vigil Homestead ACEC | II        |

| Name                                      | VRM Class |
|---|-----------|
| Gonzales Mesa Wildlife Area               | III       |
| Gould Pass Camp ACEC                      | II        |
| Halfway House ACEC <sup>2</sup>           | I         |
| Haynes Trading Post ACEC                  | II        |
| Head Canyon Motocross Track               | IV        |
| The Hogback ACEC                          | III       |
| Holmes Group ACEC                         | II        |
| Hummingbird ACEC                          | II        |
| Indian Creek ACEC                         | I         |
| Kachina Mask ACEC                         | II        |
| Kin Nizhoni ACEC <sup>2</sup>             | I         |
| Kin Yazhi (Little House) ACEC             | II        |
| Kiva ACEC                                 | II        |
| Kutz Canyon Fossil Area                   | III       |
| La Jara ACEC                              | III       |
| Laguna Seca Mesa Wildlife Area            | III       |
| Largo Canyon Star Ceiling ACEC            | II        |
| Lybrook Fossil Area                       | III       |
| Margarita Martinez Homestead ACEC         | II        |
| Martin Apodaca Homestead ACEC             | II        |
| Martinez Canyon ACEC                      | II        |
| Mexican Spotted Owl ACEC                  | III       |
| Middle Mesa Wildlife Area                 | III       |
| Morris 41 ACEC                            | I         |
| Moss Trail ACEC                           | II        |
| Munoz Canyon ACEC                         | II        |
| Navajo Lake Horse Trails                  | II        |
| Negro Canyon SDA                          | II        |
| North Road ACEC                           | II        |
| Pierre's Site ACEC <sup>2</sup>           | I         |
| Pinon Mesa Fossil Area                    | III       |
| Pinon Mesa Recreation Area                | III       |
| Pointed Butte ACEC                        | II        |
| Pregnant Basketmaker ACEC                 | II        |
| Pretty Woman ACEC                         | II        |
| Prieta Mesa ACEC                          | II        |
| Rattlesnake Canyon Wildlife Area          | III       |
| Reese Canyon RNA                          | III       |
| Rincon Largo District ACEC                | II        |
| Rincon Rock Shelter ACEC                  | II        |
| River Tracts ACEC                         | III       |
| Rock Garden Recreation Area               | III       |
| Rock House - Nestor Martin Homestead ACEC | II        |
| Rosa Mesa Wildlife Area                   | III       |
| San Rafael Canyon ACEC                    | II        |
| Santos Peak ACEC                          | II        |
| Shield Bearer ACEC                        | II        |
| Simon Canyon ACEC                         | II        |
| Simon Ruin ACEC                           | II        |
| Star Rock ACEC                            | II        |
| Star Spring - Jesus Canyon ACEC           | II        |
| Superior Mesa ACEC                        | II        |
| Tapacito and Split Rock ACEC              | II        |
| Thomas Canyon Recreation / Wildlife Area  | II        |
| Toh-La-Kai ACEC                           | I         |

| Name                             | VRM Class |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Truby's Tower ACEC               | II        |
| Twin Angels ACEC <sup>2</sup>    | I         |
| Upper Kin Klizhin ACEC           | I         |
| <sup>2</sup> World Heritage Site |           |

**Management Actions**

**VR-MA- 1.** Ensure BLM management activities and authorized uses are designed to meet the VRM objectives for the project area.

**VR-MA- 2.** If the Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah WSA is released by Congress from wilderness study, the area would continue to be managed as VRM I unless the release language specifies otherwise.

**VR-MA- 3.** Mitigation measures for visual resources listed below apply primarily to mineral extraction activities and are not all-inclusive. Additional mitigation measures for mineral extraction or other program activities may be developed and implemented as necessary.

- Operators may be required, on a case-by-case basis, to leave a tree screen on one or more sides of a location.
- Above-ground structures are required to be painted in one of five colors designated to blend with the natural color of the landscape.
- Permit holders are required to coordinate with the Authorized Officer on the design and color of power poles and transmission lines to achieve minimal practicable visual impacts.
- Permit holders may be required to reconstruct rock rims as near as possible to the original (RMP, 2-20)

*Attachment 2: Protest Regulations*

**Protest Regulations**

[CITE: 43CFR1610.5-2]

TITLE 43--PUBLIC LANDS: INTERIOR  
CHAPTER II--BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PART 1600--PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING--Table of Contents  
Subpart 1610--Resource Management Planning  
Sec. 1610.5-2 Protest procedures.

- (a) Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.
- (1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Director. The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the plan or amendment in the Federal Register. For an amendment not requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the protest shall be filed within 30 days of the publication of the notice of its effective date.
- (2) The protest shall contain:
- (i) The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest;
  - (ii) A statement of the issue or issues being protested;
  - (iii) A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;
  - (iv) A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and
  - (v) A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.
- (3) The Director shall promptly render a decision on the protest.
- (b) The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons for the decision. The decision shall be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.