



US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Bureau of Indian Affairs

# The Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas Joint EIS BLM RMP/ BIA IRMP Newsletter

Issue 2, October 2015

## Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Oklahoma Field Office (OFO) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regional Offices, are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), to guide the management of BLM administered public resources (BLM-administered surface lands and federal minerals) and restricted, trust, and tribal minerals and lands under the jurisdiction of the BIA within the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.

The EIS analyzes the impacts of developing a BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP) and a BIA Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP), which creates the management framework for the planning area. The joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP will be prepared as a dynamic and flexible plan to allow management to reflect the changed needs of the planning area. The BLM RMP will replace the existing 1991 Kansas RMP, 1994 Oklahoma RMP, as amended, and 1996 Texas RMP, as amended. While the BIA manages BIA-administered lands based on current policy and guidance, this IRMP will be the first overarching planning document for the two regions.

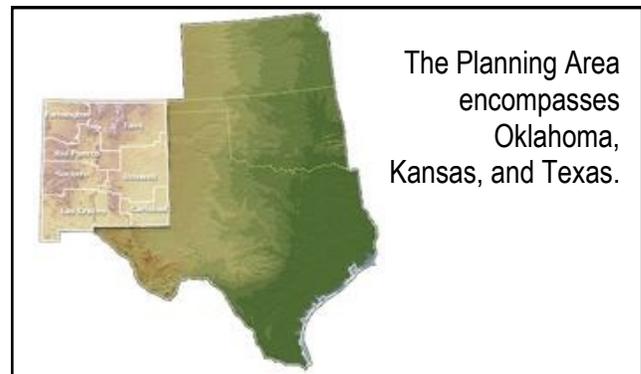
The final joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP will identify desired outcomes, future conditions to be maintained or achieved, and specify uses or resource allocations that are allowable, restricted, or prohibited, including any restrictions needed to meet desired outcomes. Public input on issues related to these decisions is essential and encouraged.

This newsletter is intended to provide the public with the updated status of the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP since the last newsletter was published in November 2013, and to notify the public of alternative workshops that will be held in October 2015.

## Planning Area

The planning area is Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas, regardless of land ownership, and lands administered by the BIA Southern Plains Region in Richardson County, Nebraska. The 269,650,000-acre planning area is composed of federal, tribal trust, restricted, allotted, state, county, and private lands. Federal lands are administered by the BLM; USDA, Agricultural Research Service; US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons; US Department of Defense; US Department of Energy;

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); International Boundary and Water Commission; and US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The planning area encompasses 437 counties (105 in Kansas, 1 in Nebraska, 77 in Oklahoma, and 254 in Texas). The decision area for the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP is where there are federal, tribal, or allotted interests. Individual trust lands are held in trust by the US government for the benefit of individual Indian allottees or their heirs.



## What is a BLM Resource Management Plan?

A BLM RMP, similar to a county master plan, is a land use plan that describes broad multiple-use guidance for managing public lands administered by the BLM. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act directs the BLM to develop such land use plans and to provide for appropriate uses of public lands. Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions.

## What is a BIA Integrated Resource Management Plan?

A BIA IRMP is a long-range, strategic level, comprehensive plan which integrates the management actions applied to a tribe's natural resources and other resources of value. It is a tribal policy document, based on the vision the tribe has for its resources. The IRMP describes the types of management activities which are to be undertaken by tribal and BIA resource management personnel, and serves as the umbrella plan under which all resource planning and management activities are conducted.

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## Public Involvement

The formal scoping period began with publication of the notice of intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on July 26, 2013. The NOI informed the public of the BLM and BIA's intent to develop a joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP for the planning area. It also identified the preliminary issues to be considered in the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP process. A Notice of Intent to Extend the Public Scoping Period was published in December 2013 (78 Federal Register 76318-76319, December 17, 2013). This extended the formal scoping comment period to January 31, 2014, 190 days following publication of the initial NOI. The formal scoping period ended on January 31, 2014; however, all written submissions received on or before February 28, 2014, were evaluated and are documented in the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP scoping summary report, which is available on the project website at <http://www.blm.gov/nm/oktrmp>.

A total of 134 commenters submitted letters during the scoping period, excluding those who submitted form letters. 79.9 percent of commenters were from states in the OFO (Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas): 2.2 percent were from Kansas, 23.9 percent were from Oklahoma, and 53.7 percent were from Texas. Of the remaining submissions, 7.5 percent were from commenters outside of those states and 12.7 percent did not indicate a geographic origin. In addition, some commenters made multiple submissions, and some letters had more than one signatory; therefore, the total for commenters by geographic area is not equal to the total letter submissions.

The BLM and BIA received 587 planning issue comments and categorized them into the 13 planning issue categories. Of the comments received, the greatest percentage of comments pertained to recreation and other uses along the Red River (26.6 percent) and energy development issues (25.2 percent). The remaining categories included public health and safety (11.2 percent), fences and trespassing (8.7 percent), lands and realty (6.8 percent), fish and wildlife (6.6 percent), socioeconomics (6.1 percent), climate change and future water needs (4.8 percent), access and transportation (2.0 percent), minerals and mining (0.9 percent), cultural and historic resources (0.5 percent), issues not addressed in current RMPs (0.3 percent), and tribal interests (0.2 percent).

The public is formally invited and encouraged to participate in the planning process for the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP. Some ways you can participate are:

- ✓ Attending one or more of the public alternatives workshops to learn about the project and planning process and to meet BLM and BIA representatives;
- ✓ Reviewing the progress of the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP on-line at the project website at: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/oktrmp>. The website will be updated with information, documents, and announcements throughout the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP preparation;
- ✓ Mailing or emailing a comment to the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP address or email address (see below). A comment form will be made available on the project website; and
- ✓ Joining the mailing list in order to receive future mailings and information, by:
  - E-mailing us at [BLM\\_NM\\_OKT\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_NM_OKT_RMP@blm.gov); or
  - Contacting Laurence Levesque at (918) 621-4136.

The public will have additional opportunities to comment when the draft and final joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP are available.

### **Mark Your Calendar!** Upcoming Public Alternatives Workshops



Each workshop will include presentations with an overview of major decisions and allocations in the draft alternatives. The public will have an opportunity to comment on draft alternatives during and after the workshops.

**Texas Workshop**  
**Tuesday, October 13, 2015**  
**5:30-7:30 pm**

Fort Worth Library -  
Ella Mae Shamblee Branch  
1062 Evans Ave.  
Fort Worth, TX 76104

**Oklahoma Workshop**  
**Wednesday, October 14, 2015**  
**5:30-7:30 pm**

University of Oklahoma -  
National Weather Center  
120 David L Bored Blvd., Rm 1350  
Norman, OK 73072

**Kansas Workshop**  
**Thursday, October 15, 2015**  
**5:30-7:30 pm**

Lionel D. Alford Branch Library  
3447 S. Meridian Ave.  
Wichita, KS 67217

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## Alternatives Development

The next phase of the BLM and BIA's planning process is to develop a range of alternatives based on planning issues established during the scoping process. Alternatives development is guided by established planning criteria (as outlined in 43 CFR 1610). In compliance with the NEPA, the FLPMA, CEQ regulations, and BLM planning regulations and guidance, the BLM and BIA will produce alternatives that meet the purpose of and need for the joint EIS/BLM RMP and BIA IRMP, address the identified planning issues and scoping comments, explore opportunities to enhance management of resources and resource uses, resolve conflicts among resources and resource uses, and are feasible. The BLM and BIA will develop separate alternatives to meet their respective purposes and needs. The BLM alternatives will be developed to serve the general American public, while the BIA alternatives will be developed to specifically serve the needs of Indian tribes.

### Alternatives are made up of:

- *Goals*: Broad statements of desired outcomes that apply to alternatives; usually not quantifiable and may not have established timeframes for achievement.
- *Objectives*: Identify specific desired outcomes for resources that may or may not be different between alternatives; quantifiable and, where possible, have established timeframes for achievement.
- *Allowable Uses*: Identify uses that are allowable, restricted, or prohibited; identify lands where specific uses are excluded to protect resource values; may establish criteria to guide the identification of site-specific use levels for activities during implementation.
- *Management Actions*: Identify the actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes; identify measures or criteria to guide day-to-day activities; may identify restoration opportunities and priorities; include design features, best management practices, etc.

Each alternative has a different approach to meeting the vision of the plan. The BLM and BIA will construct a reasonable range of alternatives by varying which lands in the planning area are open or available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are administratively unavailable to certain uses; provide comprehensive management direction for all resources and uses; and make broad-scale decisions guiding future site-specific implementation decisions.

The BIA and BLM have developed preliminary alternatives that are ready to be shared with the public and receive feedback.

**Alternative A** is the continuation of current management.

**Alternative B** emphasizes a balanced level of protection, restoration, and commodity production to meet needs for resource protection and resource use.

**Alternative C** emphasizes management strategies to preserve and protect ecosystem health across the planning area.

**Alternative D** emphasizes commodity production, amenities, and services.

More information will be made available on the draft alternatives following the public alternatives workshops on the project website at:

<http://www.blm.gov/nm/oktrmp>.



The Red River is a popular recreation area for Oklahomans and Texans alike. Portions of these lands are managed by the BLM and also serve as habitat for threatened and endangered species.

July 2013	November 2013— January 2014	Fall 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017	Winter 2017
NOI Published in <i>Federal Register</i>	Public Scoping	Formulate Alternatives and Prepare Draft RMP/ Draft EIS	Draft RMP/Draft EIS Available for 90-day Public Review & Comment	Proposed RMP/Final EIS Available for 30- day Public Review & Protest	Record of Decision & Approved RMP

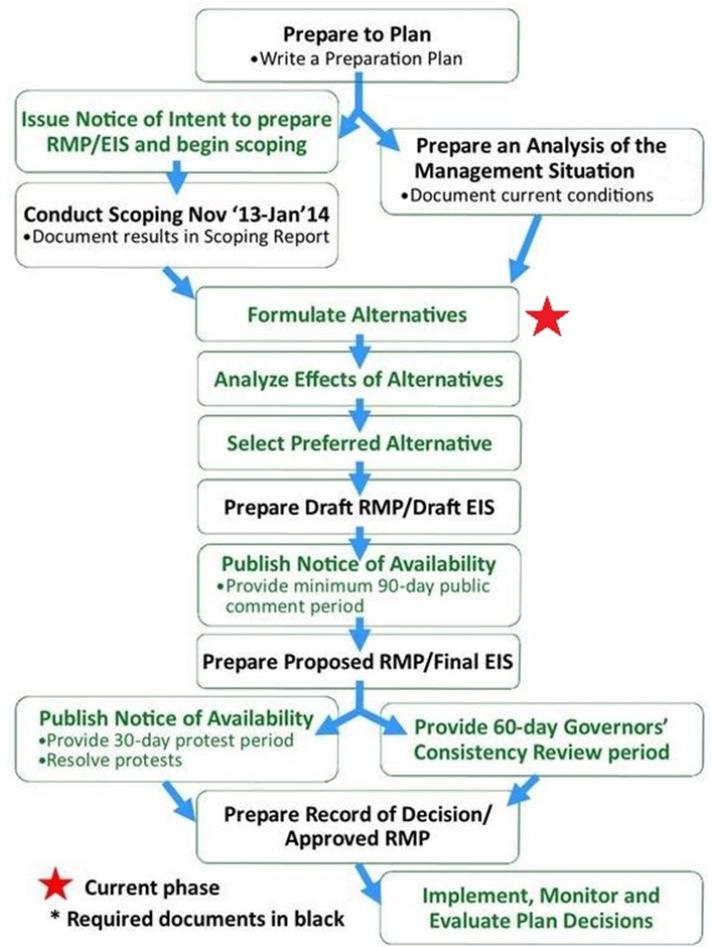
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## Commonly Used Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
IRMP	Integrated Resource Management Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
OFO	Oklahoma Field Office
RMP	Resource Management Plan

### RMP/EIS Process Flowchart



Printed on Recycled Paper



**How to contact us**

If you have questions about the RMP, please contact:

Mr. Laurence Lavesque  
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 Tulsa, OK 74145  
 (918) 621-4136



\*Acting as contracted agent for the Bureau of Land Management

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