

Rio Puerco Draft Resource Management Plan (Draft RMP) Update

Since the last newsletter was published, the planning process has been moving forward with the help of partners and the public. A draft plan has been completed revising the Rio Puerco 1986 RMP in response to public comment, new legislation, changing policies, urban growth, and updating the management and uses of public land and its resources.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is soliciting comments on the Draft RMP during its 90-day public comment period, which begins July 13 and ends October 11, 2012. The BLM is holding public workshops in seven locations to provide an overview of the document, respond to questions, and receive input from the general public, and interested groups.

Each meeting will be an open house/workshop format. A brief presentation will be given at 5:30 p.m.

August 27, 2012 5 p.m.-7 p.m. University of New Mexico Campus, Gallup, NM	August 29, 2012 5 p.m.-7 p.m. New Mexico Visitor's Center Grants, NM	September 4, 2012 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Cuba Ranger Station Cuba, NM
September 5, 2012 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Civic Center, Moriarty, NM	September 10, 2012 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Regional Transportation Center, Los Lunas, NM	September 12, 2012 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Marriot Pyramid Albuquerque, NM
September 17, 2012 6 p.m. -8 p.m. 6:30 p.m. Presentation Bernalillo High School Gym Bernalillo, NM		

Four Draft Alternatives Prepared

The BLM has developed four alternatives, including continuing current management (the No Action Alternative), for administering BLM lands in the planning area. The goal of developing the alternatives was to prepare different combinations of resource uses and allocations to address issues and resolve conflicts among uses. The draft alternatives represent the overall range of reasonable management strategies. Alternative C, the preferred alternative, represents the BLM's best effort for a balance management approach of the resources. In the implementation effort of the final RMP, the BLM will analyze the impacts of implementing each alternative on the social, economic, and environmental resources in the planning area. The Draft RMP/EIS will include these four alternatives and the impacts analysis:

Alternative A (No Action) – Alternative A, referred to as “No Action,” is the continuation of present management based on management decisions in the 1986 Rio Puerco Field Office RMP and its amendments. The emphasis would be on maintaining the existing land management direction for physical, biological, cultural, and historic resource values along with recreational, social, and economic land uses. The BLM would not establish additional criteria or change present criteria to guide the identification of site-specific use levels for implementation activities.

Alternative B – Alternative B emphasizes non-consumptive use and management of resources through protection, restoration, and enhancement, while also providing for multiple uses, including livestock grazing and mineral development. This alternative would establish the most special designation areas (e.g., areas of critical environmental concern and suitable wild and scenic river segments) and provide the most protection for lands with wilderness characteristics. Objectives focus on environmental and social outcomes achieved by sustaining relatively unmodified physical landscapes and natural and cultural resource values for current and future generations.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative) – This alternative seeks to balance human interests, land uses, and the conservation of natural and cultural resource values, while sustaining the ecological integrity of certain key habitats for plant, wildlife, and fish species. It incorporates a balanced level of protection, restoration, enhancement, and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses. Objectives focus on environmental, economic, and social outcomes achieved by strategically addressing demands across the landscape.

Alternative D – This alternative highlights management for natural resources, commodity production, and public use opportunities. Resource uses such as recreation, livestock grazing, mineral leasing and development would be emphasized. Management direction would recognize and give precedence to existing uses and accommodate new uses to the greatest extent possible, while maintaining resource conditions. Objectives emphasize social and economic outcomes while protecting land health.

Making Substantive Comments

Substantive comments are those that suggest the analysis is flawed in a specific way. Generally they challenge the accuracy of information presented, challenge the adequacy, methodology or assumptions of the environmental or social analysis (with supporting rationale), present new information relevant to the analysis, or present reasonable alternatives (including mitigation) other than those presented in the document. Such substantive comments may lead to changes or revisions in the analysis or in one or more of the alternatives. There may be many or no substantive comments in a letter.

There is often confusion on just what is a “substantive” comment. These criteria were used for a high-interest plan to determine whether a comment was substantive or not. If a comment is substantive, you must respond to it in the Final EIS. Some substantive comments may not result in a change to the text of the plan/EIS, but still should be addressed in an appendix.

Submitting Comments

Opportunities to submit written public comments are available by:

- Attending a public meeting and providing comments in person.
- Emailing comments to: NM_RPFO_Comments@blm.gov or a1martinez@blm.gov
- Mailing comments to: BLM Rio Puerco Field Office, 435 Montano Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107-4935; Attention: Comments

Ways to Review the Documents

Download the Draft RMP documents for the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office web site

[http:// www.blm.gov/nm/riopuerco](http://www.blm.gov/nm/riopuerco)

- View hardcopies of the documents at the BLM Albuquerque, 435 Montano Rd., NE or at community libraries in Gallup, Grants, Cuba, Moriarty, Los Lunas, Albuquerque (downtown), and Bernalillo.
- Request DVD copy of the Draft RMP from the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office