



US Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Winnemucca District Office
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The Winnemucca RMP Newsletter

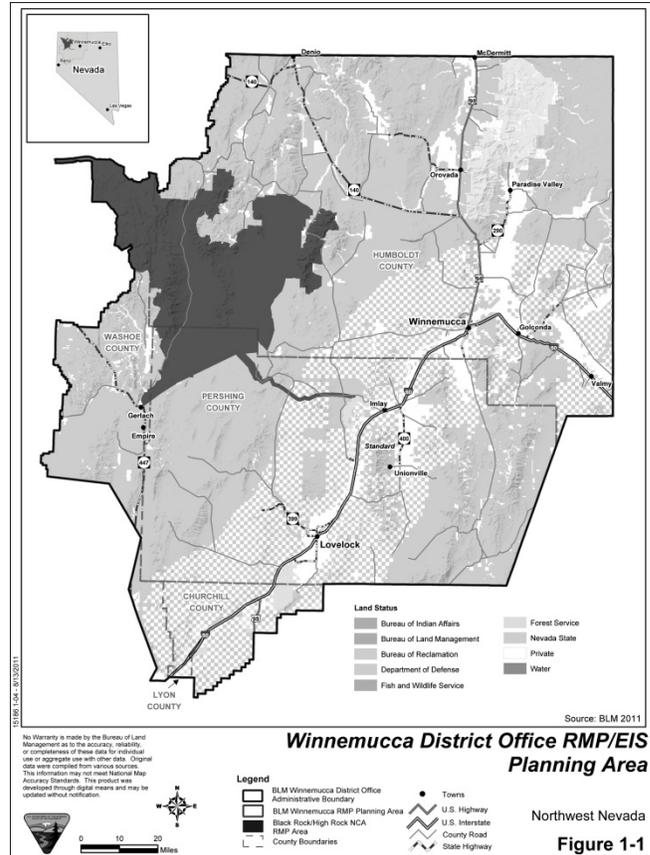
The Objective

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Winnemucca District (WD) is preparing a resource management plan (RMP) to guide the WD in the management of 8.4 million acres of public lands. The RMP will provide resource management direction for public lands within the planning area and is intended to be flexible to accommodate changing needs and resource conditions over the life of the plan.

Note from the District Manager

Thank you for your interest in the development of the WD's RMP. When I started serving as District Manager in Winnemucca in November 2008, I worked with a team of people who were deeply committed to developing a document that would guide the WD's management of public lands for the next several decades. Since then, new and emerging issues have gained attention, either statewide or nationwide, such as management of visual resources, lands with wilderness characteristics, wild horses and burros, renewable energy, and recreation and the conservation of sage-grouse. These issues have caused us to increase our focus and to take an even harder look at the proposed actions and their impacts. We do not view these emerging and changing issues as obstacles to the completion of the RMP, but as opportunities to make this document a solid tool for meeting the BLM's mission: to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

I would also like to thank those individuals, tribal groups, organizations, and local, state, and federal agency representatives who submitted comments during our public review period, from June to October



2010. We received numerous substantive comments, which further assist us in developing a strong, yet flexible, planning document.

With this newsletter, we are providing an overview of the comments received. The WD staff and I remain committed to developing a complete and comprehensive planning document. We are currently responding to public comments and the subsequent changes for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Once revised, the document will be circulated at the Nevada State Office and the Washington Office for completeness and compliance reviews. We anticipate the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and Record of Decision will be available to the public by September 2012. — Gene Seidlitz

BLM Winnemucca District Planning Area

The BLM, an agency of the US Department of the Interior, administers about 261 million surface acres of America's public lands, primarily in 12 western states. The BLM is separated into state offices and further into district offices. The proposed RMP is being prepared for the WD, which contains all of Humboldt and Pershing Counties and parts of Lander, Washoe, Lyon, and Churchill Counties in northwest Nevada.

The WD planning area boundary encompasses approximately 11,223,566 acres, consisting of public lands, private lands, state lands, Indian reservations, and those federal lands not administered by the BLM. The WD RMP will address only the BLM-managed lands in the planning area that are not covered under the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area RMP (July 2004). The remaining area, known as the decision area, covers 8,448,130 acres (approximately 75 percent of the planning area); however, decisions made in this planning process may affect or be affected by adjacent lands inside and outside of the WD administrative boundary.

The WD is currently managed through the decisions of the Sonoma-Gerlach and the Paradise-Denio Management Framework Plans, each completed in 1982. The Winnemucca RMP will incorporate appropriate management decisions from these Management Framework Plans and associated activity level (implementation) plans, with updated evaluations and decisions for the balance of the issues combined into one RMP.

Planning issues

A planning issue is a matter of controversy over a resource planning issue is a matter of controversy over a resource management topic. It is well defined and entails alternative actions or decisions. Based on the lands and resources that it manages, the BLM has identified planning issues under the following categories:

- Air quality and climate change;
- Geology;
- Soil resources;
- Water resources;
- Vegetation communities;
- Fish and wildlife;
- Special status species;
- Wild horses and burros;
- Wildland fire management;
- Cultural resources;
- Paleontological resources;

What is an RMP?

An RMP is a land use plan that describes broad multiple-use direction for BLM-managed public lands. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act directs the BLM to develop such land use plans to provide for appropriate uses of public land. Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. The RMP will accomplish the following:

- Establish goals and objectives for resource management and the measures needed to achieve those goals and objectives;
 - Identify lands that are open and available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses; and
 - Provide comprehensive management direction for and allocate use of all resources.
- Visual resources;
 - Caves and karsts;
 - Livestock grazing;
 - Leasable, locatable, and salable minerals;
 - Recreation;
 - Renewable energy;
 - Transportation and access;
 - Lands and realty;
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Research Natural Areas;
 - Backcountry Byways;
 - National Trails;
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers;
 - Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics;
 - Watchable wildlife viewing sites;
 - Tribal interests;
 - Public safety; and
 - Social and economic conditions and environmental justice.

Getting Involved

The BLM has implemented a collaborative, community-based planning process for the RMP/EIS, and public input is critical to its success. Issues raised through public participation have driven the different management options that are considered in the RMP, which will ultimately lead to how the BLM manages public lands.

Opportunities for public involvement and comments are provided throughout the planning process. The BLM uses the information from public and other sources to determine current resource conditions, changes needed in managing these resources, and desired conditions for public lands managed by the WD.

Status of the RMP

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, federal agencies are required to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions beforehand. The actions proposed as part of the BLM's RMP/EIS are subject to the requirements of NEPA. One purpose of the WD's integrated RMP/EIS is to provide direction for managing its public lands in northwestern Nevada. A second purpose is to analyze the environmental effects that could result from implementing one of the four alternatives, including a preferred alternative, identified through public scoping.

NEPA requires federal agencies to involve the public in the decision making process. Public involvement for the WD RMP/EIS is being conducted in five phases, as follows:

- Public scoping was conducted in 2005 to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the RMP/EIS, including developing a set of alternatives that could address the resource management issues and criteria raised during the public scoping period. The official start of the scoping period was on March 25, 2005, with the publication in the Federal Register of the Notice of Intent to Prepare an RMP. During the comment period, the BLM held open houses in Winnemucca, Lovelock, Gerlach, and Reno, Nevada. All comments received from the scoping period were compiled and distilled to identify prominent issues and were summarized in the Scoping Summary Report (July 2005);
- Public outreach through project updates, a project website, news releases, and newspaper advertisements;
- Collaboration with federal, state, local, and tribal governments; and
- Public review and comment on the Draft RMP/EIS, which is an analysis of likely environmental effects and includes the BLM's preferred alternative. The Draft WD RMP/EIS was released on June 25, 2010, for public comment. Because public organization representatives requested additional time to submit comments, the comment period was extended until October 25, 2010. Public comment open houses were held on Monday, July 26, 2010, in Winnemucca, on July 27 in Lovelock, on July 28 in Gerlach, and on July 29 in Reno. Input provided during the public comment period allowed the BLM to further refine the alternatives presented in the Draft RMP/EIS and, if necessary, to revise the analysis of impacts.

Currently, BLM resource staff specialists are analyzing comments received during the public comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS. Appropriate revisions to the Draft RMP/EIS are in progress, and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is being prepared. Like the draft version, the Proposed RMP/Final EIS will undergo extensive review at the district, state, and Washington office levels. Following this, the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is scheduled for a 30-day public protest period and a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review. A 60-day protest resolution period will follow, if warranted. A Record of Decision and approved RMP/EIS is estimated for fall 2012.

Results of the Public Comment Period

By the end of the comment period, 1,348 comments had been submitted. In addition, separate organizations allowed individuals from all over the world to submit 30,617 form letters pertaining to wild horses and burros. The preparers of a Public Comment Summary Report, (April 2011), reviewed and summarized written and electronic comments received from the public during the comment period. This report, along with the BLM's responses to the comments received, will be attached as an appendix to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

Apart from the 30,617 form letter comments, eighteen percent of the total comments received focused on wild horses and burros, nine percent focused on vegetation, and seven percent focused on mineral management. Other large numbers of comments were focused on recreation, livestock grazing, soil, fish and wildlife, and general categories. The BLM will consider the comments when preparing the Final RMP/EIS.

New RMP Team Lead Selected

The Winnemucca District Manager has announced that Jeff Johnson has been selected as the new RMP team lead, effective August 15, 2011. Jeff has over 20 years of BLM experience and previously served at the District RMP team leader from 2004 to 2006.

How to contact the BLM

If you have questions about the RMP/EIS, please contact

Postal Address: Jeff Johnson
Bureau of Land Management
Winnemucca District Office
5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd.
Winnemucca, NV 89445-2921

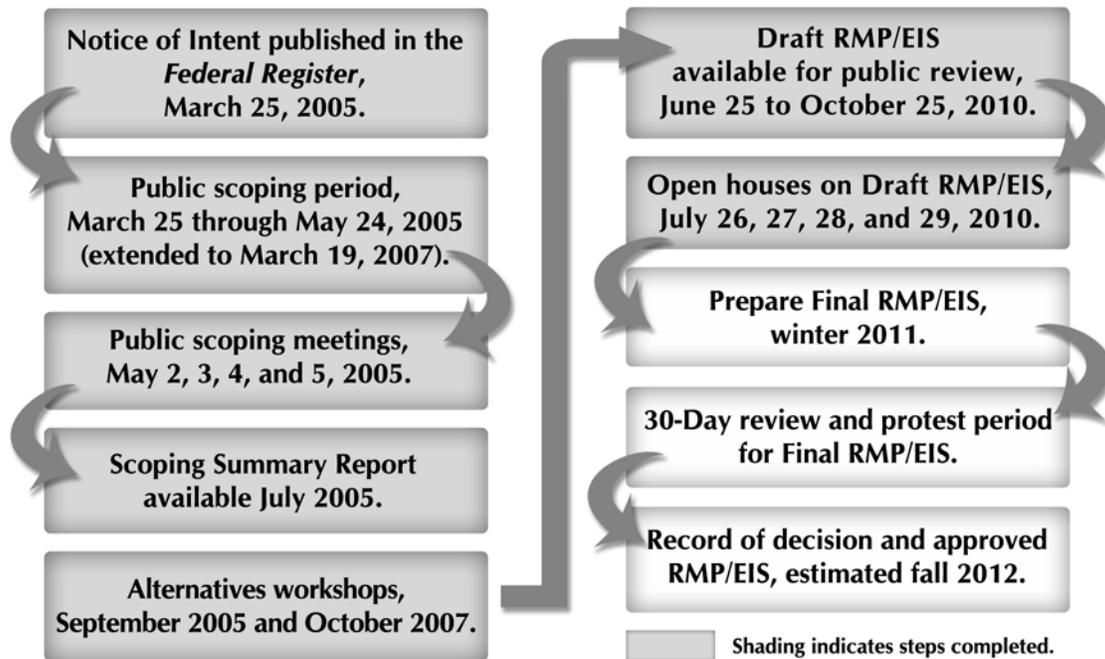
Phone: (775) 623-1500

Fax: (775) 623-1503
(Attn: Winnemucca RMP)

E-mail Address: wdrmp@blm.gov

Website Address: http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo/blm_information/rmp.html

PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE



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Commonly Used Acronyms

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
EIS.....	Environmental Impact Statement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
RMP.....	Resource Management Plan
WD.....	Winnemucca District