



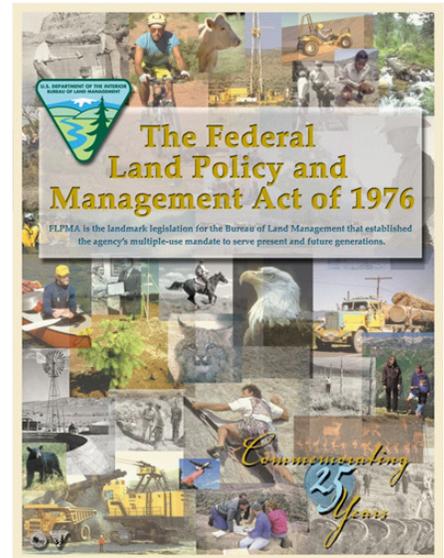
April, 2010

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Cooperating Agencies, including local County Commissions and Conservation Districts and the State of Wyoming, met in mid-February to continue the process of revising the BLM’s land use plan. Several topics of concern were discussed. Local officials pointed out that local communities rely upon BLM-administered public lands to sustain a western culture and lifestyle while meeting economic needs. Discussions also revolved around the appropriateness of special designations, such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act established ACECs in 1976:

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are defined as areas within the public lands where special management attention is required ... to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.



-Federal Land Policy and Management Act

There are currently several ACECs in the Bighorn Basin. These areas include:

- Big Cedar Ridge (260 acres)
- Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite (1,800 acres)
- Sheep Mountain Anticline (25,000 acres)
- Spanish Point Karst (6,600 acres)
- Brown/Howe Dinosaur Area (5,500 acres)
- Carter Mountain (10,900 acres)
- Five Springs Falls (160 acres)
- Little Mountain (1,460 acres)
- Upper Owl Creek Area (13,000 acres)

The BLM is analyzing the effects of four alternative strategies for management of ACECs. Alternative A includes continuing management of the ACECs as listed above. The other alternatives may propose additional ACECs, ACEC expansions, or reduction or elimination of ACECs in response to the public scoping comments received in late 2009. During the comment period on the Draft RMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the public will be able to provide information to the BLM and Cooperating Agencies concerning whether or not important elements of ACECs may require special management. **An example of a substantive comment is:** *The area of concern (name of ACEC) contains these values which with I am familiar. I have been in this area over (time period) and am aware of (types of values/types of threats to values). The BLM and Cooperating Agencies should consider the following when making final decisions on management of this area.*

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) Act of 1968 preserves certain waters with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition. The WSR Act strives to safeguard the special character of these rivers, while also recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. Rivers may be designated by Congress or, if certain requirements are met, the Secretary of the Interior. On BLM-administered public lands, boundaries of designated rivers generally average ¼ mile on either bank. Under the WSR Act, rivers that are free of impoundments are classified as *Wild*, *Scenic*, or *Recreational*:

- **Wild river areas** are generally inaccessible except by trail with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.
- **Scenic river areas** have shorelines or watersheds that are still largely primitive and largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
- **Recreational river areas** are readily accessible by road and may have some development along their shorelines.

Additional information about both ACECs and WSRs may be found in the Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation or in the WSR Reports. Both of these documents are in the *Document Library* of the Bighorn Basin RMP website:

<http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Planning/rmps/bighorn.html>

The BLM is analyzing the effects of four alternative strategies for management of WSRs. The BLM has determined which river segments are eligible for inclusion in the WSR system and has performed a preliminary suitability review. During the comment period on the Draft RMP EIS, the public is encouraged to provide information on the suitability of eligible river segments. **An example of a substantive comment is:** *The wild and scenic river (name of WSR) contains values which with I am familiar. I have been in this area over (time period) and am aware of (factors that support/reduce). BLM and Cooperating Agencies should consider the following when making final decisions on management of this area.*

Inventory of Multiple Use Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Available

The Cody and Worland Field Offices have recently completed an inventory of Multiple Use Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. Approximately 570,500 acres of BLM-administered lands within the Bighorn Basin have wilderness characteristics. Lands must meet several criteria to qualify as having wilderness characteristics including:

- existing in a natural condition
- providing outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The complete inventory of Multiple Use Lands with Wilderness Characteristics is available at:

http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/field_offices/Worland/wild-inv.html

The BLM is analyzing the effects of four alternative strategies for management of Multiple Use Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. Currently, lands outside of Wilderness Study Areas are not specifically managed for retention of wilderness characteristics. Through this plan revision process, a determination will be made to manage all, a portion, or none of these inventoried lands for retention of wilderness characteristics. During the comment period on the Draft RMP EIS, the public is encouraged to provide information on the impacts of managing for wilderness characteristics. **An example of a substantive comment is:** *Managing for retention of wilderness characteristics in (name or location of area) would enhance/reduce opportunities in which I partake (list activities). BLM and Cooperating Agencies should consider the following when making final decisions on management of this area.*