FINAL SCOPING REPORT

BUFFALO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION

Appendix C

SCOPING MATERIALS

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MEETING NOTICES
Scoping Press Releases

Number: 08-47
Date: August 13, 2008

CASPER FIELD OFFICE

Wyoming News

Bureau of Land Management
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, WY 82604

Contact: Lesley A. Collins, 307/261-7603

BLM Buffalo Field Office to Revise Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Buffalo Field Office (BFO) announced yesterday that they are revising the existing 22 year-old BFO Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The revised BFO RMP will provide future direction for managing 800,000 acres of BLM-administered surface land and 4.7 million acres of BLM –administered mineral estate in Campbell, Johnson, and Sheridan counties in central Wyoming.

Due to emerging issues and changing laws, BLM will reevaluate the various uses on public land and determine the up-to-date policies that provide a balance of multiple uses during the revision process.

The major issues include 1) energy and mineral resource exploration and development, including consistency with the National Energy policy; 2) access to and transportation on BLM lands; 3) recreation and off-highway vehicle (OHV) management; 4) wildlife habitat and management of crucial habitat and migration corridors; 5) management and the cumulative effect of land uses and human activities on threatened, endangered, candidate, and sensitive species and their habitats; 6) vegetation, including impacts of invasive non-native species; 7) management of cultural and paleontological resources, including national historic trails; 8) landownership adjustments; 9) fire management and consistency with the National Fire Plan; 10) livestock grazing; 11) visual resource management; and 12) air and water quality. The BLM is requesting the help of the public in identifying additional issues to be addressed in the planning effort.

The revision is anticipated to take four years to complete. The BLM will utilize early and ongoing extensive public involvement throughout the process.

For more information, please contact Linda Slone, BLM Wyoming Office Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at (307) 261-7520.

-BLM-

Number: 9-06
Date: November 10, 2008

BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE

Wyoming News

Bureau of Land Management
1425 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY 82834

Contact: Lesley A. Collins, 307/261-7603

BLM Seeks Input on Buffalo Field Office RMP Revision

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Buffalo Field Office (BFO), is asking the public to provide resource information, issues, and concerns as the agency begins the process of revising the BFO Resource Management Plan (RMP). As part of this project, a supporting environmental impact statement (EIS) is also being prepared.

The existing BFO RMP was approved in October 1985, and several updates have occurred since that time. Current RMP decisions are on the BFO web site: http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/field_offices/Buffalo/bfoplan.html.

The revised BFO RMP will provide future direction for managing approximately 800,000 acres of BLM-administered surface land and 4.7-million acres of BLM–administered mineral estate in Campbell, Johnson, and Sheridan counties in north-central Wyoming.

An integral component of the BFO RMP revision is public involvement. This request for public input is the first opportunity for local interests and residents to participate and share their insights and comments. As BLM proceeds with the planning effort, additional opportunities for public participation will be provided.

Emerging issues and changing laws necessitate revision of the BFO RMP. The major issues are 1) energy and mineral resource exploration and development; 2) access to and transportation on BLM lands; 3) recreation and off-highway vehicle management; 4) wildlife habitat management; 5) management and the cumulative effect of land uses and human activities on threatened, endangered, candidate, and sensitive species and their habitats; 6) vegetation, including impacts of invasive non-native species; 7) management of cultural and paleontological resources, including historic trails; 8) landownership adjustments; 9) fire management; 10) livestock grazing; 11) visual resource management; 12) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), Wild and Scenic Rivers (W&SR), or other special management areas; and 13) air and water quality. The BLM is requesting the help of the public in identifying additional issues to be addressed in the planning effort.

To assure that the best available information is used in completing the BFO RMP revision, BLM is requesting public input of any available resource information or data relevant to this planning area. The BLM is also requesting interest and information on coal resource development potential and other resources that may be affected by coal development for lands in the planning area. Industry, State, local governments, and the public may submit information on lands that

should or should not be considered for coal leasing, including statements describing why the lands should or should not be considered for leasing. This request is in accordance with 43 CFR 3420.1-2, fulfilling the required call for coal and other resource information.

The BLM has scheduled five public scoping meetings at the times and locations shown below.

Meeting Site	Date	Facility	Time
Wright	Monday, December 1, 2008	Wright Branch Library 105 Wright Blvd. Wright, WY 82732	3 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Buffalo	Tuesday, December 2, 2008	Johnson County Library Meeting Room 171 North Adams Buffalo, WY 82834	3 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Gillette	Wednesday, December 3, 2008	Campbell County Library Wyoming Room 2101 South 4 J Road Gillette, WY 82718	3 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Sheridan	Thursday, December 4, 2008	Sheridan County Library Inner Circle Meeting Room 315 West Alger Sheridan, WY 82801	3 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Kaycee	Friday December 5, 2008	Kaycee Community Library 231 Ritter Street Kaycee, WY 82639	3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

These meetings were scheduled to provide an opportunity the public an opportunity to comment on development of the BFO RMP/EIS. Along with presentations at 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and question and answer sessions, there will be time to visit one on one with the specialists with additional questions, comments, or concerns.

Written comments and data submissions are due within 30 days after the last public scoping meeting or by January 5, 2009. Written comments and data submissions should be submitted to BFO RMP Revision Project Manager, BLM Buffalo Field Office, 1425 Fort Street Buffalo, Wyoming 82834. Electronic comments may be sent to BRMP_Rev_WYMail@blm.gov.

For more information or to have your name added to the RMP mailing list, contact Linda Slone at (307) 261-7520.

-BLM-
www.blm.gov/wy/

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Scoping Bulletin

Dear Neighbor,

November 2008

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Buffalo Field Office (BFO), Wyoming is revising its Resource Management Plan (RMP) and preparing an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The RMP revision will replace the existing Buffalo RMP of 1985. The purpose of the RMP revision will be to establish goals and objectives for resource management; identify lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses; provide comprehensive management direction for all resources and uses; and contain broad scale decisions guiding future site-specific implementation decisions.

The revised RMP is being developed to provide future direction for managing approximately 800,000 acres of public lands and 5.7 million acres of mineral estate in north-central Wyoming. The planning area includes Campbell, Johnson, and Sheridan counties. This area contains vast deposits of oil, gas and coal, in addition to providing a variety of resources such as wildlife habitat and rangelands for livestock grazing. The public lands and adjacent Bighorn National Forest provide many opportunities for recreational activities.

What's Next?

This is the first planning bulletin in a series designed to provide you with information on what is happening in the Buffalo RMP revision process. These planning bulletins should keep you current on issues and events during the RMP revision.

An integral part of developing the Buffalo RMP is public involvement. Scoping is a process by which BLM solicits input from the public and other interested agencies on the nature and extent of issues and impacts to be addressed in the RMP revision and the methods by which they will be examined. The official scoping period began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to revise the Buffalo RMP in the *Federal Register* on November 14, 2008.

The BFO has scheduled five public scoping meetings (see the back page for times and locations). These meetings are scheduled to provide an opportunity for you to comment on development of the Buffalo RMP revision. While the formal public scoping period will end on January 5, 2009, your comments and questions are always welcome.

Thank you for your interest in the Buffalo RMP revision. I invite you to remain involved throughout the RMP revision process.

Sincerely,

Chris Hanson
Bureau of Land Management
Buffalo Field Office Manager

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN RMP AND AN EIS?

An RMP is a set of comprehensive, long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by the BLM. The RMP will:

- 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 all resources and uses.

In order to revise the RMP, BLM is required by Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act to prepare an EIS. The EIS analyzes the environmental impacts of a number of management alternatives, including a no action alternative and preferred alternative. Each alternative represents a potential RMP.

WHY IS THE BLM REVISING THE RMP?

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires the BLM to develop RMPs and update/revise them when appropriate. The revision process approach includes building on experience, applying new science, and working with collaborators.

WHEN CAN I COMMENT?

Several official comment periods will occur throughout the RMP revision process, the first being the public scoping period. The public scoping period began with the publication of the NOI to revise the Buffalo RMP in the *Federal Register* on November 14, 2008 and will close January 5, 2009. You may submit your comments in writing, by phone, by email, or by attending a public scoping meeting during this time. BLM is open to accepting comments at anytime during the RMP revision process.

MEETING HANDOUTS

Increased public participation results in a more comprehensive environmental document.

How to Get Involved in the Buffalo RMP Process:

- Attend a public scoping meeting (schedule below)
- Submit comments via phone, mail, or email
- Visit the BLM Buffalo RMP Revision website for more information
- Return the enclosed postcard
- During the formal scoping period, BLM is available to discuss scoping and the full RMP process

For More Information Contact:

RMP Project Manager: Linda Slone
Phone: 307-261-7520
Email: BRMP_Rev_WYMail@blm.gov
RMP Revision Website: http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Planning/rmps/buffalo.html
Buffalo Field Office Address: 1425 Fort Street, Buffalo, WY 82834

Public Scoping Meetings Schedule

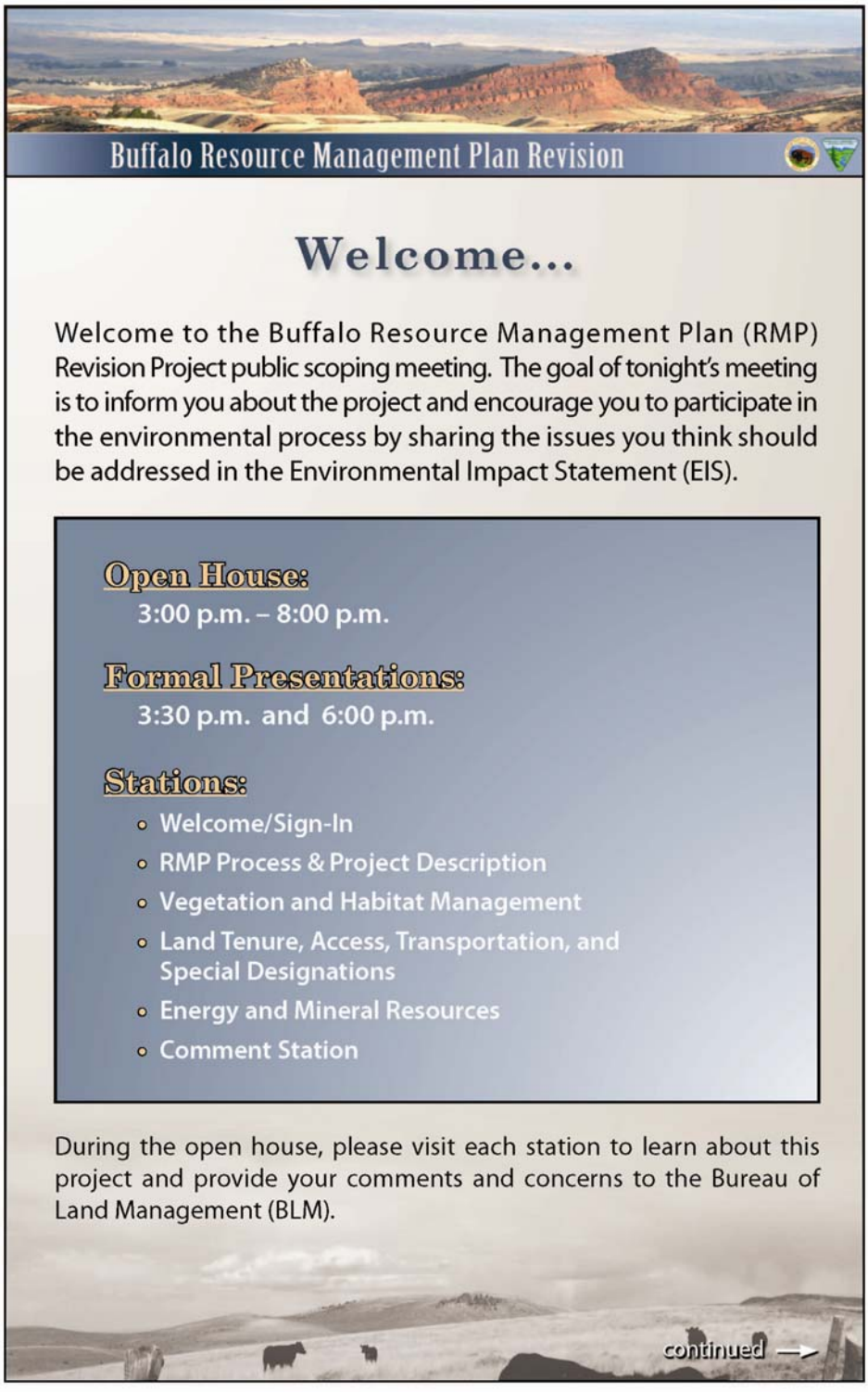
Date	City	Location
Monday, December 1, 2008 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Wright, Wyoming	**Wright Branch Public Library** 105 Wright Blvd, Wright, Wyoming 82732
Tuesday, December 2, 2008 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Buffalo, Wyoming	**Johnson County Library, Meeting Room** 171 North Adams, Buffalo, Wyoming 82834
Wednesday, December 3, 2008 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Gillette, Wyoming	**Campbell County Library, Wyoming Room** 2101 South 4 J Road, Gillette, Wyoming 82718
Thursday, December 4, 2008 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Sheridan, Wyoming	**Sheridan County Library, Inner Circle Meeting Room** 315 West Alger, Sheridan, Wyoming 82801
Friday, December 5, 2008 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Kaycee, Wyoming	**Kaycee Community Library** 231 Ritter Street, Kaycee, Wyoming 82639

Formal presentations on the project will take place at 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
UNITED STATES POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PERMIT NO. G-76

BLM Buffalo Field Office
ATTN: RMP Project Manager
1425 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY 82834

Scoping Meeting Agenda and How to Comment



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

Making Comments...

Your comments and ideas are crucial to the project, so please visit the Comment Station to provide us with your feedback! Also, please feel free to direct questions to the staff available at each station.

Providing Comments:

To provide comments, please fill out a comment form. Completed forms may be handed to any staff member, placed in the basket at the comment station, emailed to BRMP_Rev_WYMail@blm.gov or mailed to the address below, postmarked by January 5, 2009.

Bureau of Land Management
Buffalo RMP Project Manager
1425 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY 82834
Phone: (307) 261-7520

Please note: *By including your name and address on correspondence, you agree the information may be made public as part of the environmental process.*

Keys to Making Effective Comments:

Your involvement and input are essential in helping the BLM make informed decisions during the process. Listed below are tips on how to make your comments useful and effective:

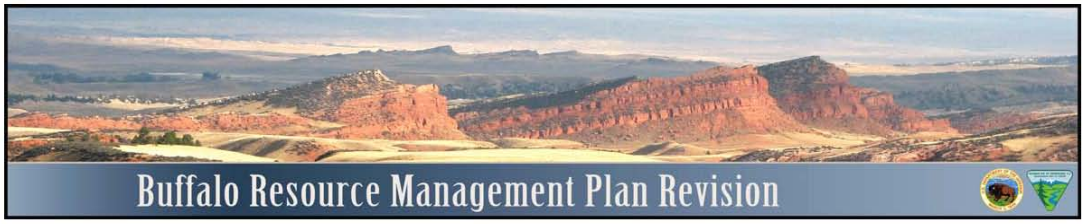
- *Be specific. State particular reasons for your concerns instead of making broad statements.*
- *Focus your comments on particular issues or resources and provide details.*
- *Let us know what environmental and community factors you consider important for analysis.*

Thank you for coming!

Resource Management Plan Objectives and Planning Issues

Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision
Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate, and Sensitive Species and their habitats
Vegetation, including impacts of invasive species
Management of Cultural and Paleontological Resources, including historic trails
Landownership Adjustments
Fire Management
Livestock Grazing
Visual Resource Management
Air and Water Quality
What is the National Environmental Policy Act?
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was passed by Congress in 1969 and signed into law on January 1, 1970. This legislation established a landmark national environmental policy which, among other things, encourages environmental protection and informed decision-making. It provides the means to carry out these goals by:
Mandating that every Federal agency prepare a detailed statement of the effects of "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment."
Establishing the need for agencies to consider alternatives to those actions.
Requiring the use of an interdisciplinary process in developing alternatives and analyzing environmental effects.
Requiring that each agency consult with and obtain comments of any Federal agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved.

Scoping Process and Resource Management Plan Timeline



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is revising the Buffalo Resource Management Plan (RMP). An RMP provides a framework for managing BLM-administered lands. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires the BLM to develop RMPs and update/revise them when appropriate. In addition to FLPMA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. Therefore an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be developed in conjunction with the RMP revision.

The Scoping Process

The BLM is committed to involving the public. Scoping meetings provide citizen and government agencies the opportunity to learn more about the project and ensure the public has a fair and equal opportunity to provide comments. Public input and comments help shape the environmental analysis and allow decision makers to have the most accurate and inclusive information available.

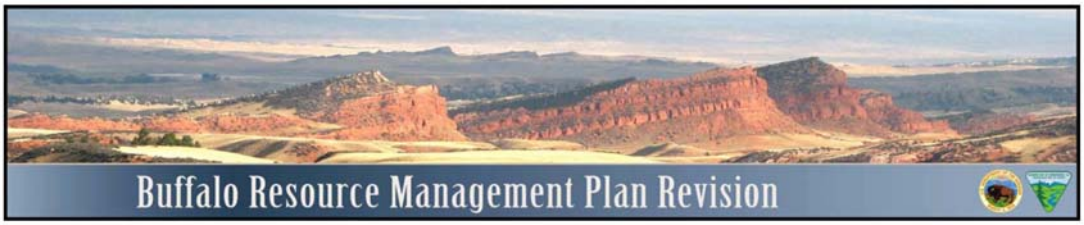
The scoping process:

- Defines the environmental issues that guide the agency in development of a range of project alternatives.
- Provides the public an opportunity to learn about the project and provide input.
- Allows the BLM to identify and address issues and concerns regarding the project.

Next Opportunity for Public Comment

Your next formal opportunity to comment will be during the 90-day Public Comment Period on the Draft RMP and EIS which will occur in the fall/winter 2010/2011. Public meetings will be held during this period. While the 90-day Public Comment Period is the next formal comment period, BLM accepts and considers public input throughout the RMP revision process.

Your involvement and input are an important part of the RMP revision process!



Buffalo RMP Revision Timeline

The RMP revision process is completed simultaneously and in conjunction with the NEPA process.

Your input is needed! → **Notice of Intent Published in Federal Register**
November 14, 2008

↓

Preparation of Analysis of the Management Situation
Winter 2008

↓

Your input is needed! → **Public Scoping Period Ends**
January 5, 2009

↓

Formulation of Alternatives
Summer 2009

↓

Preparation of the Draft RMP and EIS
Fall/Winter 2009/2010

↓

Notice of Availability of Draft RMP and EIS
Fall 2010

↓

Your input is needed! → **90-Day Public Comment Period**
Fall/Winter 2010/2011

↓

Preparation of Proposed RMP and Final EIS
Spring/Summer 2011

↓

Notice of Availability of Proposed RMP and Final EIS
Winter 2012

↓

30-Day Protest Period / 60-Day Governor's Consistency Review: *Winter 2012*

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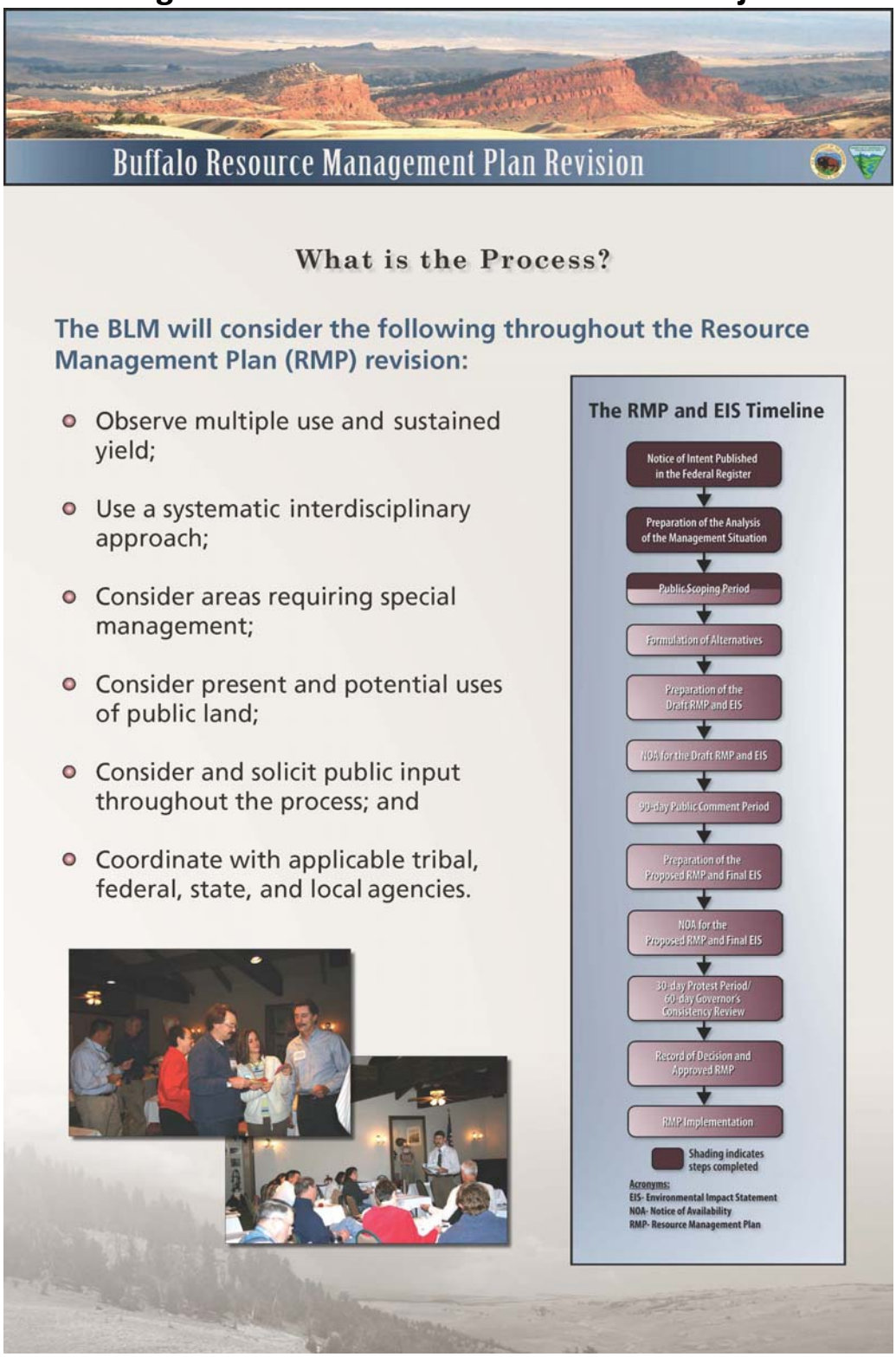
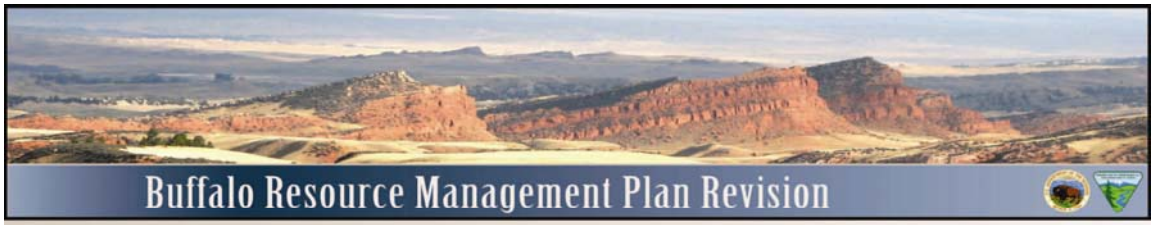
Record of Decision and Approved RMP
Fall 2012

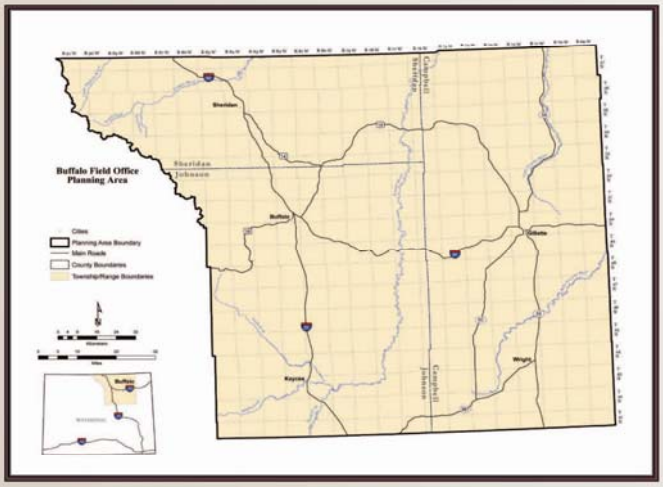
MEETING DISPLAYS
Resource Management Plan Revision Process and Project Description





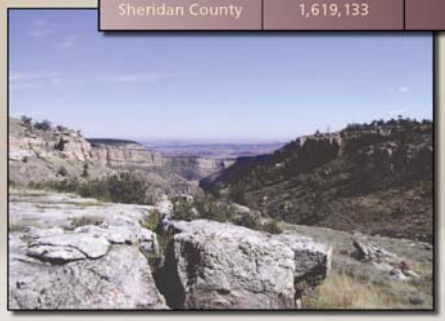
Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

Where is the Buffalo planning area?



The Buffalo planning area includes approximately 800,000 acres of BLM-administered surface and 4.8 million acres of mineral estate in Campbell, Johnson and Sheridan counties in north-central Wyoming.

Area	Total Acres	BLM Surface	BLM Mineral Estate
Buffalo Field Office Planning Area	7,358,834	782,102	4,803,277
Campell County	3,066,515	223,994	2,418,761
Johnson County	2,669,755	504,325	1,682,668
Sheridan County	1,619,133	53,724	701,848



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

What is the Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision Project?

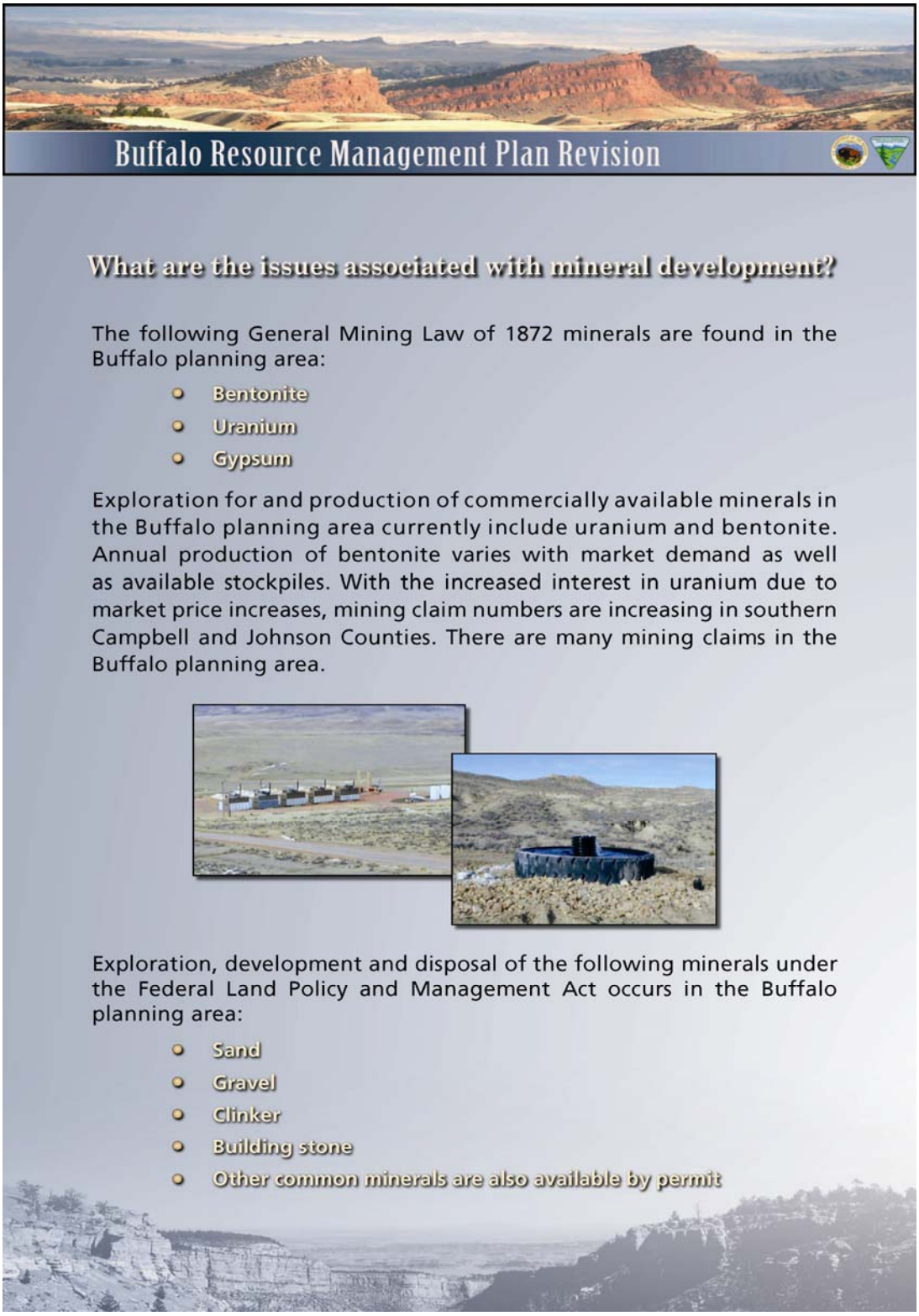
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued a Notice of Intent on November 14, 2008 to prepare the Buffalo Field Office (BFO) Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

An RMP is a land use plan that provides a framework for managing BLM-administered lands over the next 15 to 20 years.

The RMP will:

- Establish goals and objectives that describe the desired future condition for resources and resource uses in the Buffalo planning area;
- Identify management actions anticipated to achieve stated goals and objectives;
- Provide a framework for subsequent implementation level decisions for the next 15 to 20 years; and
- Identify lands that are open, closed, or restricted for resource uses.

Minerals and Energy Development



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

What are the oil and gas trends in the Buffalo planning area?

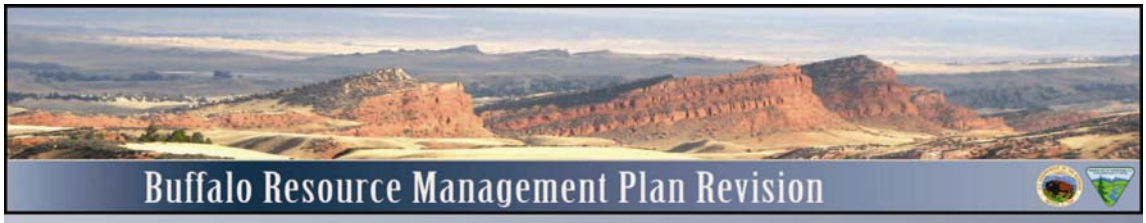
In the United States, Wyoming ranks 7th in the production of oil and 2nd in the production of natural gas.

In the Buffalo planning area, federal oil and gas leases cover approximately 2,627,745 acres. This acreage represents approximately 55% of the total acres of mineral estate in the planning area.

Presently, there are 280 oil and gas fields in Campbell County, 42 oil and gas fields in Johnson County, and 2 oil and gas fields in Sheridan County. Oil production in Campbell and Johnson counties is on the decline, but is increasing in Sheridan County. Coalbed natural gas is the principal gas production in the Powder River Basin which is increasing and is currently producing at a rate of 1.2 billion cubic feet per day.

The table below identifies the number of producing oil and gas wells in the Buffalo planning area.

COUNTY	FEDERAL OIL AND GAS WELLS	STATE AND FEE OIL AND GAS WELLS	TOTAL OIL AND GAS WELLS
Campbell	6,530	10,335	16,865
Johnson	2,443	1,141	3,584
Sheridan	297	2,996	3,293
Total	9,270	14,472	23,742



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

How does coal production impact the Buffalo planning area?

The coal program in the Buffalo planning area represents the largest portion of coal activity in the Powder River Basin (PRB) Coal Federal Production Region.

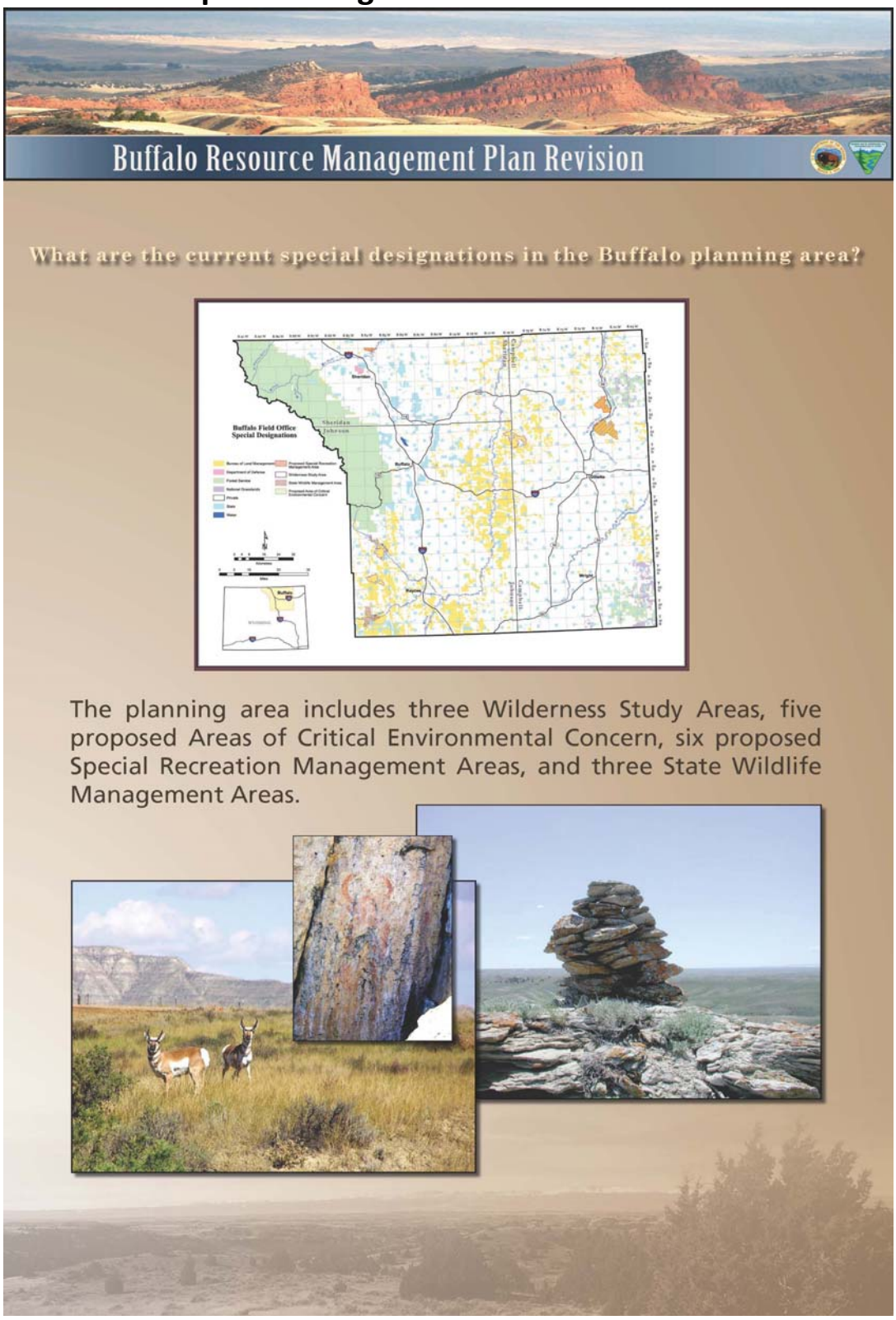
In 2007, over 96% of Wyoming's coal production (436.5 million tons) came from the PRB. Coal from Wyoming's PRB is shipped nationwide. Wyoming PRB coal represented 38% of the Nation's coal production in 2007, with total production expected to grow at an annual rate of 2% to 3% per year in line with electric power demand.

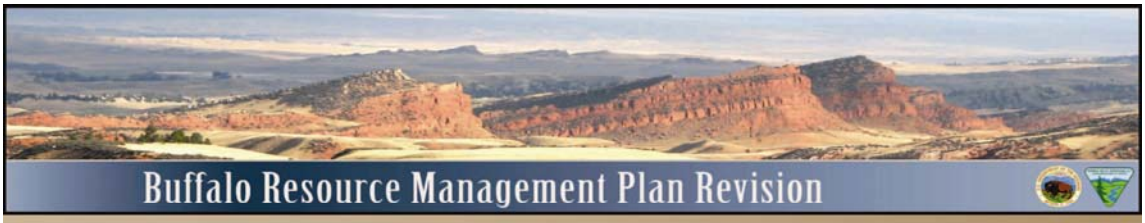
The BLM's goal for the coal program in this region is to meet reserve needs to maintain currently operating mines consistent with environmental protections, coal resource conservation, and fair market value return to the government and public.

The issues associated with coal production in the planning area include:

- Potential conflicts between coal mining and existing and proposed conventional oil and coalbed natural gas development
- Potential impacts to cultural and paleontological resources
- Potential impacts to listed threatened and endangered species and other species of concern
- Potential impacts to wetland resources
- Potential air quality impacts (including cumulative impacts to visibility)
- Potential surface and groundwater quality and quantity impacts
- Potential impacts of and possible mitigation for nitrogen oxide emissions resulting from blasting of coal and overburden
- Potential human health impacts
- The need to address site-specific greenhouse gas emissions
- Others?

Special Designations and Recreation

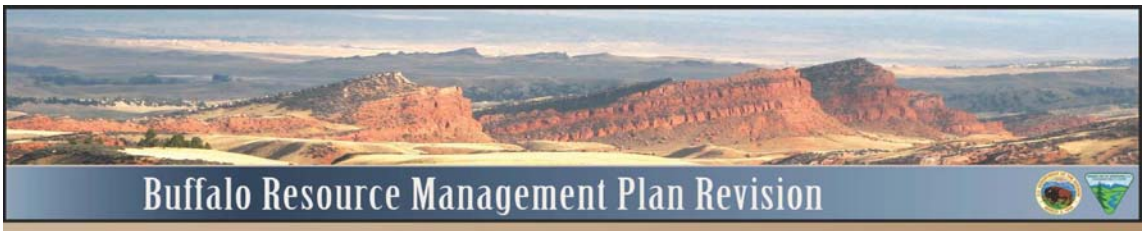




Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

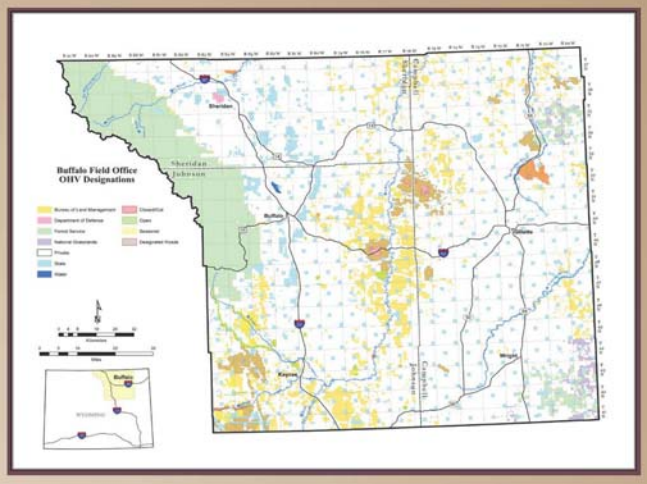
What are the recreation issues in the Buffalo planning area?

- Rapid regional population growth and changing population demographics
- Increasing dispersed recreation use, both summer and winter
- Popularity of public lands as recreation destination for local communities
- Conflicts among public land users
- Economic and social value of recreation and tourism
- Citizen desire for a greater role in the management of their public lands
- Budget allocations, which are flat or decreasing despite aging facilities and increasing demands
- Technological advances, such as ATVs and mountain bikes, as well as better outdoor equipment and clothing
- Integrating recreation use with sustainable management of other resources
- Public access
- Public health and safety
- Protection of natural resources
- Others?



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

What recreational opportunities exist in the Buffalo planning area?



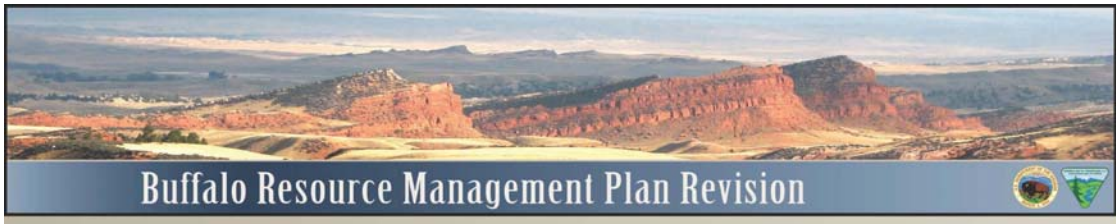
The following recreational activities occur in the Buffalo planning area:

- Picnicking
- Mountain bicycling
- Hiking
- Sightseeing
- Off-highway vehicle use
- Wildlife viewing
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Camping

Hunting, fishing, and target shooting are the most common recreational activities on public lands managed by the Buffalo Field Office.

In 2008, approximately 31,400 people visited the Buffalo planning area for recreational purposes.

Vegetation and Habitat Management



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

How should forests and woodlands be managed in the Buffalo planning area?

Conifer forest and juniper woodland plant communities are growing on 82,096 acres in the Buffalo planning area. The forestlands comprise approximately 65,000 acres and are situated in the Big Horn Mountain Range.

The dominant species growing within these forestlands are:

- Douglas fir
- Lodgepole pine
- Ponderosa pine

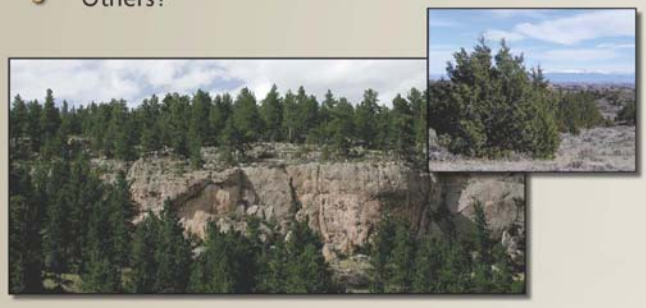
Woodlands comprise approximately 17,096 acres in the Buffalo planning area. The major species which comprise woodlands include ponderosa pine and Rocky Mountain juniper.

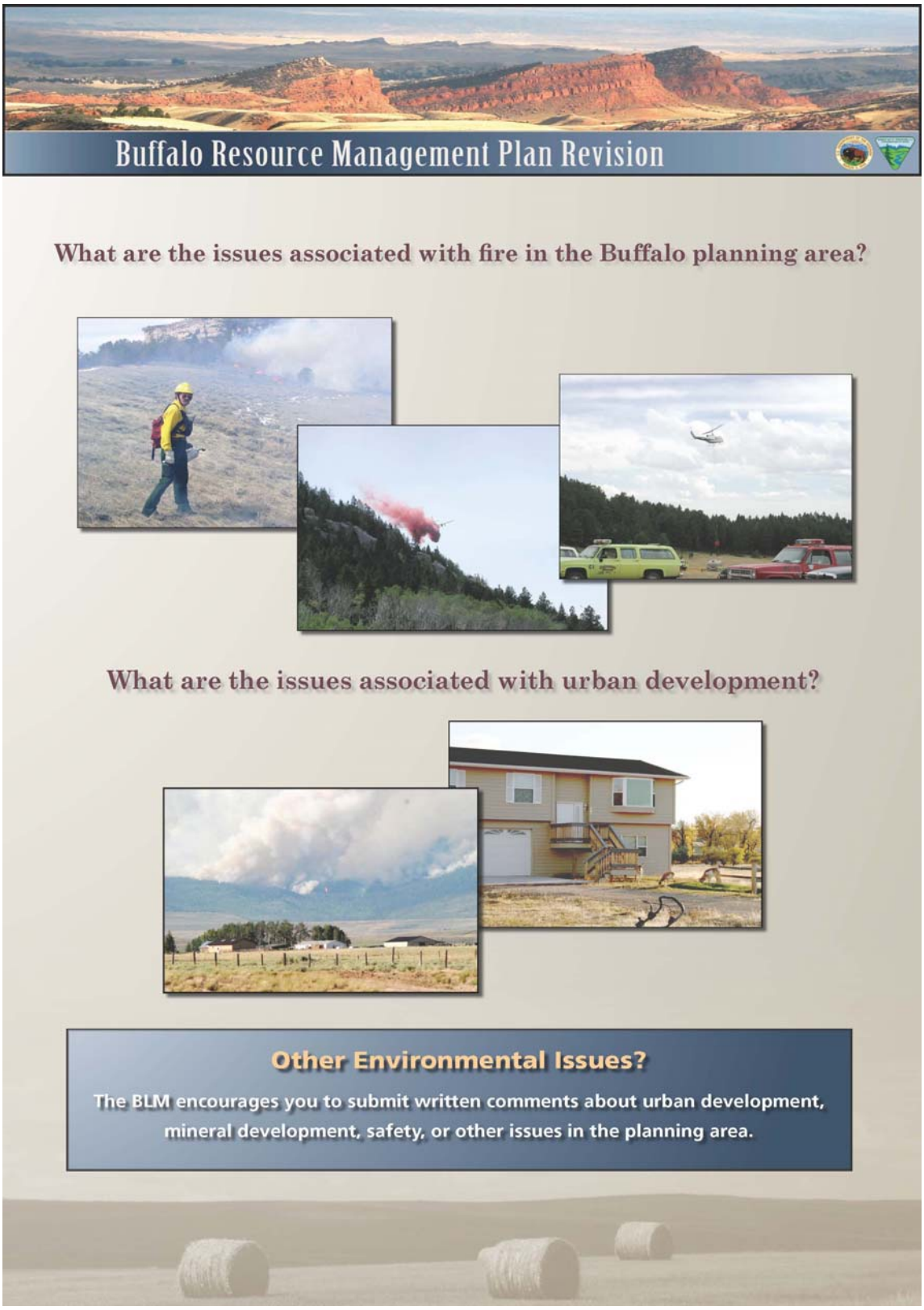
Forest products from public lands may include:

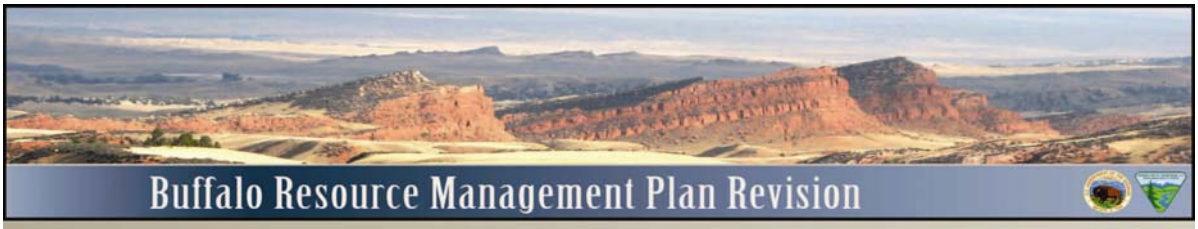
- Christmas trees
- Traditional logs, firewood, posts and poles
- Chips and shavings for animal bedding
- Alternative fuels such as pellets

Forest Management Issues:

- Forest health
- Insect and disease
- Expansion of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
- Expansion of forests into meadow habitats
- Air quality associated with the burning of slash piles
- Woodland management and wildlife cover and habitat in energy production areas
- Others?




Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision
What are the issues associated with fire in the Buffalo planning area?
What are the issues associated with urban development?
Other Environmental Issues?
The BLM encourages you to submit written comments about urban development, mineral development, safety, or other issues in the planning area.



Buffalo Resource Management Plan Revision

How should vegetation be managed in the planning area?

Vegetation resources in the planning area are diverse and include prairie, sagebrush shrublands, riparian areas, and forest communities. These areas are used for consumptive and non-consumptive uses including livestock grazing, recreation, and wildlife. These lands are located in Johnson, Campbell and Sheridan Counties, with the majority of the public lands being located in Johnson County.

Type of Livestock	Number of Allotments
Cattle only	362
Sheep only	18
Cattle and sheep	24
Horses only	5
Bison only	2
Yak only	1
Cattle and horse	11
Cattle, sheep and horse	4
Total	427

The Buffalo Field Office manages 427 grazing leases in the planning area, authorizing approximately 106,078 animal unit months (AUMs) of livestock forage. Grazing leases are for cattle only, sheep only, cattle and sheep, horses only, and bison or yaks. Approximately 400 livestock operators use BLM-administered lands in the planning area.

The following Special Status Species occur in grassland/shrubland habitats:

- Ferruginous hawk
- Greater sage-grouse
- Mountain plover
- Black-tailed prairie dog

Vegetation Management Issues:

- Conflicting demands for vegetation resources
- Expansion of invasive weeds
- Use of vegetation treatments
- Others?

SIGN-IN SHEET
Scoping Meeting Sign-In Sheet Template

Public Scoping Meeting -- Please Sign In!

DATE: _____ LOCATION: _____

PLEASE READ: If you would like a copy of the draft resource management plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) mailed to you, please check either the hard copy or compact disc (CD) box below. Names and addresses from this sign-in sheet will be used to compile a mailing list for distributing future information regarding this project. Comments submitted to BLM for use in this planning effort, including names and home addresses of individuals submitting comments, are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 522). Written comments received during the public scoping process may be published as part of the environmental analysis process. After the close of the public scoping period, public comments submitted, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BLM Buffalo Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday (except federal holidays).

PLEASE PRINT ***Thank You for Coming!***

Name	Organization	Address	City	State	Zip Code	Email