



United States Department of Interior
106 North Parkmont

Bureau of Land Management

Butte Field Office
Butte, Montana 59701

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For immediate release

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Butte Field Office is beginning the process of revising its Resource Management Plan (RMP), as announced this week in the Federal Register.

Scoping meetings and open houses will be held in Helena, Boulder, Divide, Butte, Bozeman, and Townsend as follows:

- Tuesday - Jan 6 - **Helena**. Chamber of Commerce, 225 Cruse Avenue (7:00 p.m. – downstairs conference room)
- Thursday - Jan 8 - **Boulder**. Boulder Elementary School Library (7:00 p.m.)
- Tuesday - Jan 13 - **Divide**. The Divide Community Hall (2:00 p.m.)
- Tuesday - Jan 13 evening - **Butte**. BLM Butte Field Office, 106 N. Parkmont (7:00 p.m.)
- Wednesday - Jan 14 - **Bozeman**. Best Western Grantree Inn Conference Center - Madison Room, 1325 N. 7th Avenue (7:00 p.m.)
- Thursday - Jan 15 - **Townsend**. Community Room, Townsend School Library (7:00 p.m.)

The meetings will be held to share information and receive comments related to the RMP. The meetings are hosted by the BLM Butte Field Office. Meetings in Helena, Boulder, Butte, Bozeman, and Townsend will begin at 7:00, with a BLM presentation on the RMP at 7:30. The meeting in Divide will begin at 2:00 pm with a BLM presentation at 2:30 pm. After presentations, attendees will have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with BLM representatives and to submit written comments.

The public scoping process of the EIS will identify planning issues and develop planning criteria, including an evaluation of the existing RMP in the context of the needs and interests of the public. The public is encouraged to help identify these questions and concerns.

To allow the agency adequate time to address your concerns, please submit comments by February 17, 2004 to: Bureau of Land Management, Ruth Miller, RMP Project Leader. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

The RMP will identify goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for the management of resources, and identifies the general management practices necessary to achieve desired conditions within the Butte Field Office over the next 10-15 years. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared at the same time to investigate the impacts of the proposed plan and alternatives.

The RMP covers the public lands administered by the Butte Field Office in portions of Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Beaverhead, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Park, and Silver Bow Counties. The major topics identified to date that will be addressed in the RMP effort include: 1) management of vegetation; 2) conservation and recovery of special status species; 3) water quality, quantity, and aquatic species; 4) travel management and access to public lands; 5) management of areas with special values; 6) availability and management of public lands for commercial uses; and 7) land tenure adjustments.

The BLM is also requesting public input for nominations considered worthy of Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation. To be considered as a potential ACEC, an area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance as established and defined in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. Nominations must include descriptive materials, detailed maps, and evidence supporting the "relevance" and "importance" of the resource or area. There is currently one ACEC within the Butte Field Office boundary; the Sleeping Giant ACEC in Lewis and Clark County was designated by the Headwaters RMP in 1984. All ACEC nominations within the planning area will be evaluated during development of the RMP.

For additional information, please contact Ruth Miller, BLM Project Manager, at 406-533-7645. To read the entire Notice of Intent or for more information on the planning process, visit the RMP website at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>.