

# **Butte Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Report**

**U.S. Department of the Interior,  
Bureau of Land Management  
Butte Field Office  
Butte, Montana**



**May 2004**

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ..... 1  
    Public Scoping and Issue Identification..... 1  
    Public Scoping Meetings..... 1  
    Public Scoping Comments..... 2  
Introduction ..... 3  
Butte Field Office RMP/EIS Planning Schedule ..... 6  
Scoping Process ..... 7  
    Butte RMP Website ..... 8  
Public Scoping Meetings ..... 10  
    Meeting Logistics and Attendance ..... 10  
Verbal Scoping Comments ..... 13  
Written Scoping Comments ..... 18  
    Method of Submittal ..... 18  
    Number and Type of Comments Received ..... 19  
Written Comment Summaries ..... 20  
    Air Quality ..... 20  
    Cultural Resources..... 20  
    Lands and Realty..... 20  
    Minerals/Mining ..... 21  
    Recreation Resources..... 21  
    Off-Highway Vehicle Use..... 22  
    Transportation and Access ..... 23  
    Socioeconomics..... 24  
    Soils ..... 24  
    Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions..... 24  
    Vegetation ..... 24  
    Fire Management ..... 25  
    Forestry Management ..... 25  
    Livestock Grazing ..... 25  
    Water Quality and Watershed ..... 26  
    Wildlife and Fisheries..... 26  
    Special Management Areas ..... 27  
    General Comments ..... 28  
Comments Requiring Clarification..... 28



---

## Figures

1	Butte RMP Planning Area.....	3
2	Butte Field Office RMP/EIS Schedules.....	6
3	Planning Process .....	7
4	Butte RMP Website Homepage.....	8

## Tables

1	Meeting Location/ Attendance.....	12
2	Summary of Verbal Scoping Concerns and Suggestions .....	13
3	Written Comment Source Data.....	18
4	Written Comment Category Enumeration.....	19

## Appendices

Appendix A: Federal Register Publication: Notice of Intent

Appendix B: Notes from Meetings with County Commissioners, the Big Hole Watershed Committee, the Resource Advisory Council, and American Wildlands

Appendix C: Legal Notices and Press Releases

Appendix D: Scoping Meeting Handouts, Sample Sign-In Sheet, and BLM Butte Field Office PowerPoint Presentation

Appendix E: Agency Letter Received During Scoping Period

Appendix F: Written Comments Summary

Copies of all comments received during the scoping period are available for review at the Butte Field Office.



## Executive Summary

This report documents the public scoping process for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Butte Field Office (FO) Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Scoping Report includes an introduction; an overview of the planning schedule; a description of the scoping process; a description of the six scoping meetings; a summary of verbal comments and written comments submitted by the public; and an overview of the issues identified through all scoping comments.

The purpose of "scoping" is to identify issues important to the future management of public lands and resources. These issues will guide development of alternatives that will be evaluated in the EIS and will ultimately guide development of the RMP. The scoping process also provides an opportunity to educate the general public about the management of public lands and for BLM to gauge the concerns of those who have a stake in the resources of the area.

### Public Scoping and Issue Identification

Upon publication in the Federal Register of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an RMP, the BLM Butte FO initiated the first phase of the public scoping process, including a call for resource information and the identification of issues for this planning effort. The official 60-day scoping period began December 19, 2003 with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI), documenting BLM's intent to prepare an RMP. The formal scoping period lasted until February 17, 2004.

Throughout the scoping process, the BLM approach has been one of open communication and dialogue. The agency solicited input above and beyond minimum regulatory requirements. A total of six scoping meetings were held. Comments were accepted through a variety of methods (email, website, mail, fax) to ensure that those who wished to comment could do so.

### Public Scoping Meetings

During the six scoping meetings, 37 people registered their attendance. The meetings started with a formal presentation by the Butte FO District Manager. After the presentation, the meetings were structured in an open house format, with four resource stations: (1) Fire/Fuels, (2) Range, Wildlife/Fish, Forestry, Weeds, (3) Realty, Recreation/Access, Mining, Cultural/Historic, and (4) Planning, ACECs, and Special Designations. BLM specialists staffed these resource stations and were available to answer any questions. This open house format allowed BLM staff to mingle with the public in a casual environment.



---

## Public Scoping Comments

Comment forms were available at the six scoping meetings to collect comments. No written comments were offered during public meetings; however, verbal comments were received and recorded. In addition, approximately 554 written comments were received through the various methods. For organization and analysis purposes, comments were categorized into the following 18 topic areas:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Lands and Realty
- Minerals/Mining
- Recreation Resources, including Public Access
- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use
- Transportation and Access
- Socioeconomics
- Soils
- Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions, including Erosion Control
- Vegetation, including Weed Control
- Fire Management
- Forestry Management
- Livestock Grazing
- Water Quality and Watershed
- Wildlife and Fisheries
- Special Management Areas
- General Comments

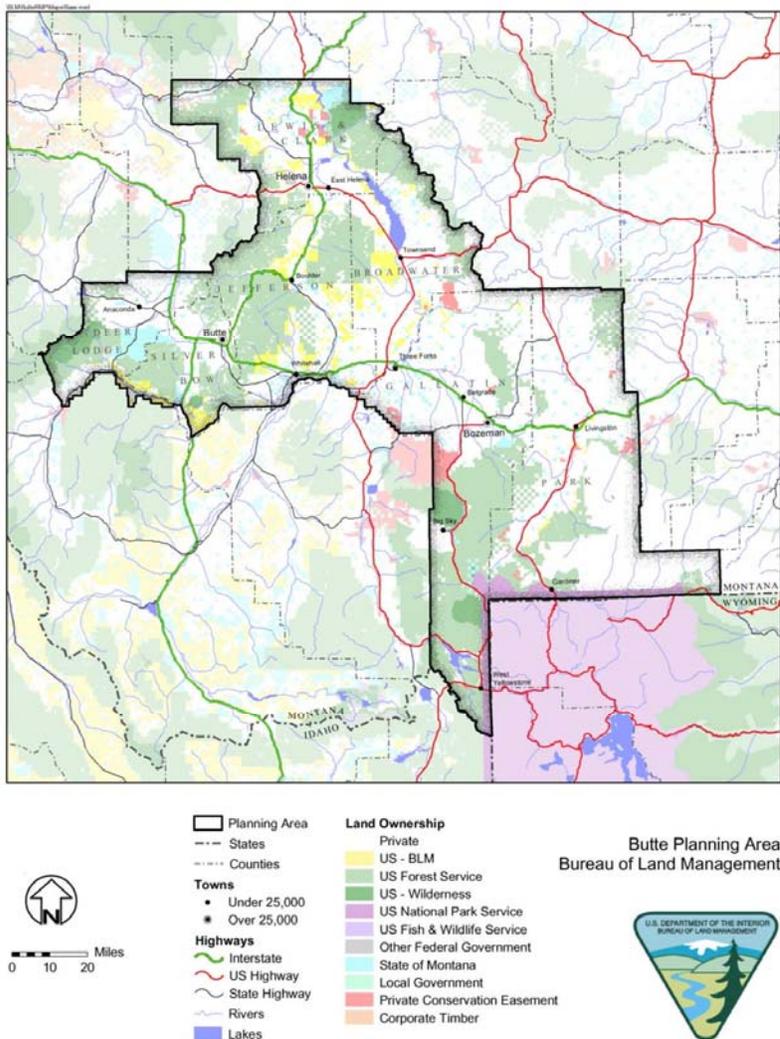
This scoping report summarizes both verbal and written comments that were received during the Butte RMP scoping process.



# Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Butte Field Office (FO) is starting a process to revise its existing Resource Management Plan (RMP) for approximately 311,000 acres of public land surface and 656,000 acres of federal mineral estate land in eight counties in midwestern Montana. The RMP will address management concerns for surface and mineral estate land administered by the BLM and will provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating public land and resources within the Butte FO boundary. A supporting environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared. The EIS will address a wide variety of issues and analyze a reasonable range of alternatives for resource management in the planning area. Figure 1 shows the Butte FO boundary.

Figure 1. Butte RMP Planning Area.



Lands administered by the Butte FO are currently being managed under the 1984 Headwaters RMP. The Butte FO needs an updated RMP to incorporate changes that have occurred in the last 20 years. A jurisdictional transfer of land in 1983 resulted in a boundary adjustment for the RMP planning area and, in 1997, the Butte BLM District office was designated a field office. The Butte RMP revision will, pursuant with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), result in a document that will (1) update existing management decisions for lands in the Butte FO, (2) address new data, (3) address changes in resource conditions and a new Butte FO boundary, and (4) integrate and modify uses of public land that have occurred since the Headwaters RMP and other plans were completed.

## Informational Documents, Planning Criteria, and Issues

The Butte FO prepared and distributed a newsletter titled “Planning for the Future: Resource Management Plan for Public Land Administered by the BLM Butte Field Office in the Mid-Western Portion of Montana.” This newsletter was sent to individuals on the mailing list and was provided at public meetings. A copy is on the Butte FO website and is also contained in Appendix D.

Using applicable laws, regulations, and guidance, the Butte FO developed proposed planning criteria consisting of constraints or ground rules that will direct the preparation of the RMP. This criterion will be used throughout the RMP/EIS and may be adjusted, based on public comment. In addition, the Butte FO identified preliminary planning issue areas of concern and resources having specific management concerns. Additional issues and management concerns will likely be added throughout the process, based on public input. A copy of the proposed planning criteria and planning issues and management concerns is contained in Appendix D. The Butte FO also developed a Preparation Plan for the Butte RMP/EIS. The purpose of this Preparation Plan is to:

1. Identify anticipated planning issues and management concerns;
2. Identify preliminary planning criteria and outstanding questions that must be addressed to support management decisions;
3. Identify a standard document format (e.g., documents, maps, tables, photos, etc.) for the presentation of the process, information, and decisions, including presentation on the Internet;
4. Identify information or data needed to resolve or address identified issues, management concerns, planning criteria, and outstanding questions;
5. Identify available data and data collection/format standards, and provide an explanation of how the data support the plan itself, and how the data address the planning requirements and anticipated issues or outstanding questions;
6. Identify any known or anticipated data gaps and provide an explanation of why the data are needed to support the plan itself, how the data support the planning requirements and how the data address anticipated issues or outstanding questions;



7. Establish a data inventory and collection activity plan, that is coordinated with other agencies, which include data standards, work-month costs, staffing and skill requirements, and estimated time-frames needed to establish an integrated, automated geospatial database for filling in data gaps;
8. Establish a communication process for direct communication with the public and to ensure greater public involvement in the planning process and to ensure wide distribution of relevant information;
9. Establish a work plan that identifies the staffing and technology needs to support public involvement and communication through the use of the Internet; and
10. Identify the analytical process required to answer or address outstanding questions, issues, or concerns.

A complete copy of the Preparation Plan is located on the Butte RMP/EIS website at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>. The Butte FO is currently working on data management and the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) will address data gaps in greater detail.

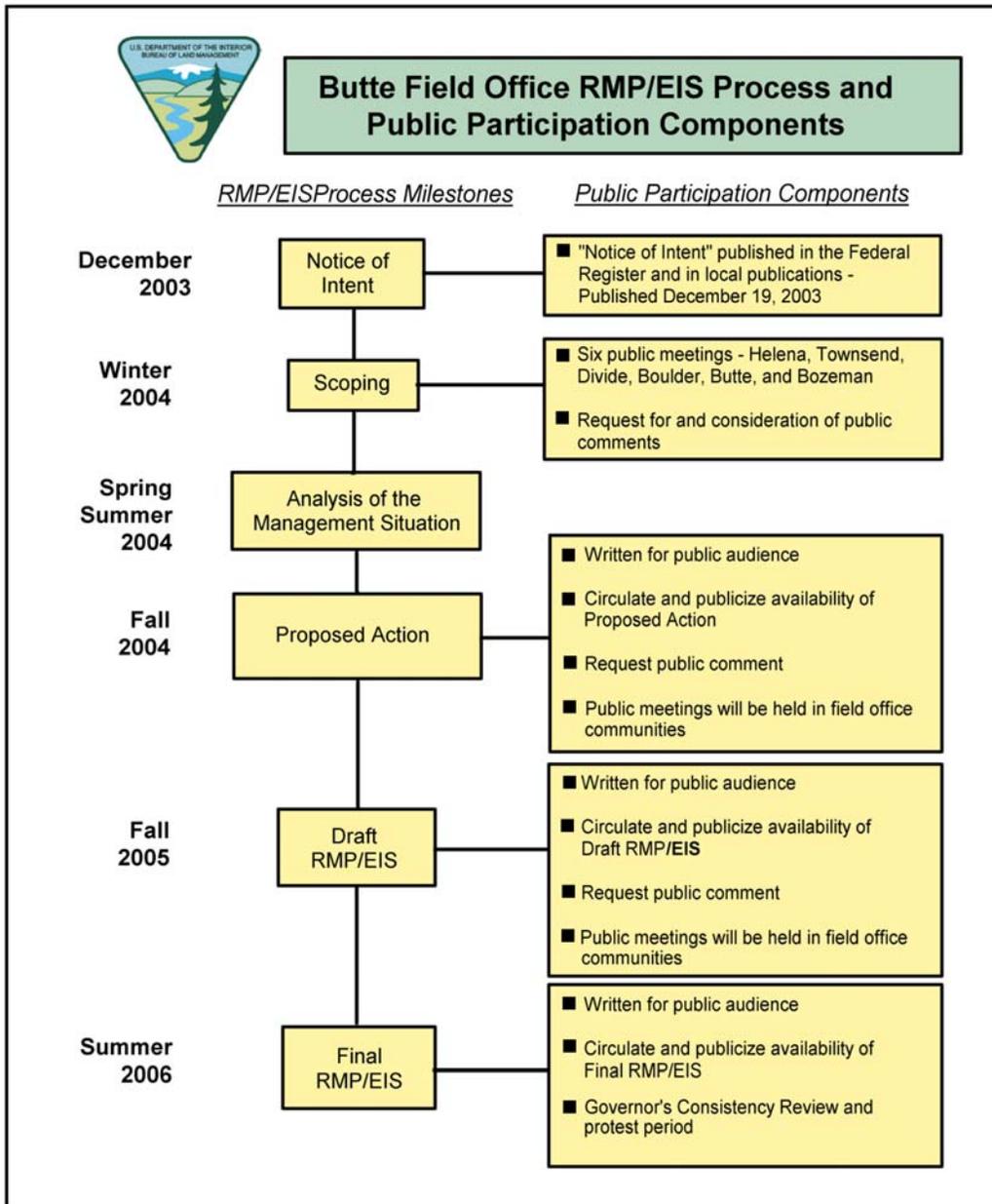
In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the BLM initiated a scoping process to determine issues related to the development of the Butte FO RMP and the associated EIS. This report describes the scoping process, the methods of comment retrieval, and a summary of issues brought forward during scoping categorized by resource area.



## Butte Field Office RMP/EIS Planning Schedule

As illustrated in Figure 2, the process for the Butte RMP revision and accompanying EIS began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on December 19, 2003. The process continues through scoping, alternatives development, and the development of a Draft EIS and Final EIS. The public will have the opportunity to comment throughout the scoping process. Some methods for ongoing public involvement are identified in the newsletter titled "Planning for the Future: Resource Management Plan for Public Land Administered by the BLM Butte Field Office in the Mid-Western Portion of Montana," which is contained in Appendix D.

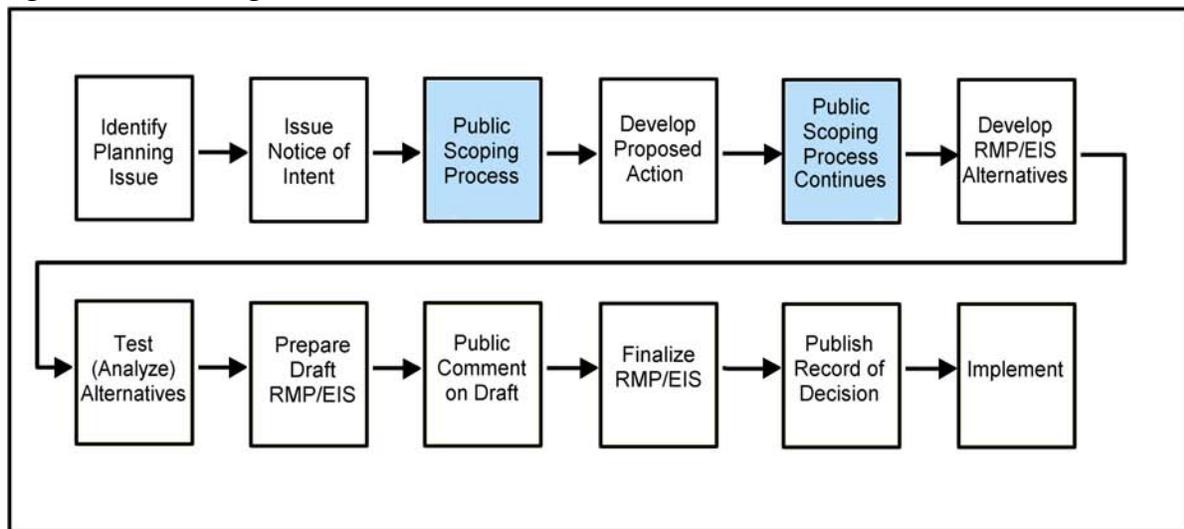
Figure 2. Butte Field Office RMP/EIS Planning Schedule



## Scoping Process

Scoping is the process required by NEPA in the early stages of developing an EIS to determine the scope and significance of issues related to a proposed action, in this case, the writing and implementation of a new RMP (40 CFR 1501.7). Knowing the scope and the significance of issues allows for an accurate and timely environmental analysis. In addition to this, scoping helps identify issues important to the management of the area, as well as issues to be examined in the planning process. The scoping process is designed to encourage public participation and to solicit public input. Although only one of the many steps in the planning process, scoping is an essential step to ensure that all issues are brought to the table.

Figure 3. Planning Process



Rationale will be provided in the plan for each issue included. Alternatives will then be developed and analyzed incorporating the issues identified during the scoping process and the Draft EIS will be published and made available for public review.

In accordance with the planning schedule (Figure 2), the scoping process formally began with the publication of the NOI (Appendix A), documenting BLM's intent to prepare an RMP. In addition, interested individuals and organizations, affected Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as affected Indian Tribes were invited to submit comments to the BLM. The BLM FO also met with several groups, including County Commissioners (Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, and Jefferson counties); the Big Hole Watershed Committee, the Resource Advisory Council (RAC); American Wildlands; and the East Pioneers Stewardship Group. Notes for these meetings are included in Appendix B. The BLM invited the State of Montana, four Native American Tribes, and eight counties to be cooperating agencies in the RMP revision; no responses were received for formal cooperating agency status, however,



regular briefings and other forms of collaboration will occur for those governments wishing to stay involved throughout the process.

The official 60-day scoping period began December 19, 2003 with the publication of the NOI. Although the scoping period ended February 17, 2003, the BLM will consider issues brought forward any time during the planning process. Only comments submitted during the initial scoping period, however, are summarized in this report. Comments heard regarding the draft RMP (proposed action) will be added to this report.

## Butte RMP Website

An important vehicle used during the scoping process to solicit comments and educate the public is the Butte RMP Website. Located at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>, the website houses the latest information on the development of the RMP/EIS, including background documents, maps, meeting announcements, published bulletins, and other documents. An interactive feature entitled “Public Participation” enables the user to be added to the Butte RMP mailing list

Figure 4. Butte RMP Website Homepage



The site is divided into 12 main sections:

- **Home:** Provides a general overview of the program, details of the RMP, and includes a site map
- **RMP Schedule:** Lists the preliminary project schedule
- **Digest:** Briefly describes the purpose of the RMP and provides links to additional information



- **Public Participation:** Provides information of time/date/location of all public meetings
- **Issue Overview:** Describes critical issues for the plan
- **Updates:** Contains the most current information developed by the RMP project team
- **News Releases:** Contains press releases, project newsletters, and the NOI
- **Planning Team Minutes:** Contains notes from meetings with the project interdisciplinary (ID) team.
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers:** States that special consideration must be given to wild and scenic rivers throughout the RMP.
- **Maps:** Contains a variety of maps, including the Butte FO base map
- **Photographs:** Contains photographs taken throughout the RMP planning area
- **Contacts:** Provides information of project leaders to contact for additional information



## Public Scoping Meetings

Public scoping meetings provide an opportunity for interested parties to submit scoping comments and may be a part of the early and open scoping process NEPA requires (40 CFR 1501.7). These meetings are particularly important when there is “substantial environmental controversy concerning the proposed action or substantial interest in holding the [meeting]” (40 CFR 1506.6c1).

### Meeting Logistics and Attendance

The Public Scoping Notice (Appendix C) announced six public scoping meetings. Public notice of the scoping meetings was published in the following newspapers:

- The Boulder *Monitor* – December 31, 2003
- The Dillon *Tribune* – December 31, 2003
- The Great Falls *Tribune* – December 23, 2003
- The Jefferson County *Courier* – December 31, 2003
- The Montana *Standard* – December 23, 2003

A press release was sent to the following newspapers, radio stations, and television stations via fax and e-mail:

#### Newspapers

Anaconda Leader (Anaconda)  
 Associated Press (Helena and Billings)  
 Billings Gazette (Billings)  
 Bitterroot Star (Stevensville)  
 Blackfoot Valley Dispatch (Lincoln)  
 Boulder Monitor (Boulder)  
 Bozeman Daily Chronicle (Bozeman)  
 Bozeman Daily Chronicle (Livingston)  
 Butte Weekly (Butte)  
 Dillon Tribune (Dillon)  
 Great Falls Tribune (Great Falls)  
 Helena Independent Record (Helena)  
 High Plains Guardian (Malmstrom AFB)  
 Idaho Post Register  
 Jefferson County Courier (Clancy)  
 Livingston Enterprise (Livingston)  
 Madisonian (Ennis)  
 Missoula Independent (Missoula)  
 Missoulia (Missoula)  
 Montana Standard (Butte)  
 Montana Standard (Dillon)



Philipsburg Mail  
Queen City News (Helena)  
RounTown Review  
Seeley Swan Pathfinder  
Silver State Post (Deerlodge)  
Three Forks Herald  
Townsend Star  
Whitehall Ledger  
Wolf Creek Newspaper

Radio Stations

KBLL (Helena)  
KCAP/KZMT (Helena)  
KGR (Helena)  
KMTX (Helena)  
KGVO/KLCY/KYSS (Missoula)  
KMSO (Missoula)  
KGGI/KZOO/KYLT/KGRZ/KDXT (Missoula)  
KUFM (PBS - Missoula)  
KQUY/KAAR/KMBR/KXTL (Butte)  
KBOW/KOPR (Butte)  
KANA/KGLM (Anaconda)  
KDBM/KBEV (Dillon)  
KQRV (Deer Lodge)  
KPKX/KBOZ/KOBB/KZLO (Bozeman)  
KMMS/KSKY/KXLB (Bozeman)  
KPRK (Livingston)  
KTVM Butte Montana Today  
University of Montana

Television Stations

HCTV (Helena)  
KCTZ TV (Bozeman)  
KECI TV (Missoula)  
KPAX TV (Missoula)  
KTVH TV (Helena)  
KTVM TV (Butte)  
KXLF TV (Butte)  
KTVQ TV (Billings)  
KULR8 TV (Billings)  
KRTV (Great Falls)  
KFBB (Great Falls)  
KTGF TV (Great Falls)



Six public meetings were held over a two-week period in January, 2004. Total registered attendance for all six meetings was 37. Table 1 illustrates the attendance at each scoping meeting.

Table 1. Meeting Location/ Attendance

MEETING LOCATION	MEETING DATE	ATTENDANCE
Helena, MT	January 6, 2004	7
Boulder, MT	January 8, 2004	2
Wise River/Divide, MT	January 13, 2004	6
Butte, MT	January 13, 2004	14
Bozeman, MT	January 14, 2004	4
Townsend, MT	January 15, 2003	4

Attendance at each public scoping meeting was recorded using a sign-in sheet at the registration station at each meeting. An example of this sign-in sheet can be found in Appendix D. Four resource-specific handouts were made available to the public. Copies of the handouts can also be found in Appendix D.

Comments were solicited in a manner that provided an opportunity for everyone attending the public meeting to provide input.



## Verbal Scoping Comments

During the six scoping meetings, participants asked questions, expressed concerns, and made suggestions. Table 2 summarizes verbal comments that were expressed during the scoping meetings. The public was encouraged during the meetings to document all comments in writing using public comment forms to ensure that their comments were accurately recorded. Written comments are summarized in the following section.

**Table 2. Summary of Verbal Scoping Concerns and Suggestions**

Date/Location	Concerns and Suggestions
<b>January 6, 2004</b> <b>Helena, Montana</b>	Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maintaining access to public land</li> <li>✓ Weed management by goats in the Scratchgravel Hills</li> <li>✓ Fuel management policies: should think out of the box, try a let-it-burn policy for some areas</li> <li>✓ Means by which the public can weigh in on site-specific plans</li> <li>✓ Planning process is not site-specific enough</li> <li>✓ Land-ownership adjustments</li> </ul> Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Put public comments on the website</li> <li>✓ Update the website frequently</li> </ul>
<b>January 8, 2004</b> <b>Boulder, Montana</b>	Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Grazing</li> <li>✓ Fire/fuels management</li> </ul>
<b>January 13, 2004</b> <b>Divide, Montana</b>	Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sage grouse and lynx preservation efforts vs. grazing rights</li> <li>✓ Ecosystem management practices might hamstring the grazer</li> <li>✓ Impact of the Plan on fluvial grazing (how far south and north?)</li> <li>✓ Will the RMP/EIS include non BLM land when evaluating cumulative impacts to grazing?</li> <li>✓ Impact of the Threatened and Endangered Species Act on grazing rights</li> <li>✓ Cost effectiveness of revising the 1984 Plan vs. amending it</li> <li>✓ Questions about a national RMP and Dillon's RMP</li> <li>✓ Incorporation of Dillon RMP area issues into the Butte area RMP.</li> <li>✓ Catalyst for a new plan, is it because of a change in political administration? Will another plan be written if there is a new administration in Washington DC?</li> <li>✓ Continuity of BLM planning procedures as they change from the old RMP to a new one.</li> <li>✓ Tetra Tech's capability to assist the BLM with the RMP/EIS</li> <li>✓ A public working group organization, scope and association with the RAC</li> <li>✓ Danger of losing objective approach to the planning process if someone writing the RMP has a personal agenda or axe to grind</li> </ul>



Date/Location	Concerns and Suggestions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Selection process for the contracted consultants. What kind of company has people just waiting around for an RMP to be written?</li> <li>✓ Fuels management policies, need to be more judicious with fire fighting efforts. Don't waste resources on nonproductive efforts.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Holding meetings in Divide is much easier for locals to attend than in Butte</li> <li>✓ Meeting times: evenings are better</li> <li>✓ Meeting advertising: put a poster in the Post Office</li> <li>✓ Use fewer acronyms</li> </ul>
<p><b>January 13, 2004</b> <b>Butte, Montana</b></p>	<p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Land-ownership adjustments</li> <li>✓ Access to public lands</li> <li>✓ Inappropriate land exchanges</li> <li>✓ Valuation methodology for land exchanges (should consider recreation and wildlife habitat and more valuable than grazing and timber)</li> <li>✓ No updated map available to view past land exchanges and ownership adjustments</li> <li>✓ Consider the cumulative effects of loss of BLM public land in addition to lost state lands</li> <li>✓ Interaction with other agencies when relevant issues are addressed in Plans (such as the USFS, Bureau of Reclamation, DNRC, etc)</li> <li>✓ Federal expenditures to write the Butte RMP</li> <li>✓ Openness of the contracting process</li> <li>✓ Capability of the contractor to assist the BLM with this RMP</li> <li>✓ Meaningfulness of the RMP (is it a paper exercise or will it make a difference?)</li> <li>✓ Adequacy of an inventory of who the users really are of BLM land</li> <li>✓ Legal requirements regarding found arrowheads</li> <li>✓ Potential for land with a private cabin to be purchased (some BLM land is leased by WWII veterans)</li> <li>✓ The origin of BLM land (for the most part, originally from the Louisiana Purchase, some from failed homesteads acquired through the Homestead Act)</li> <li>✓ Public access to other public comments during scoping</li> <li>✓ Access to public land for hunting and fishing has been curtailed</li> <li>✓ Criteria for disposal of public land</li> <li>✓ BLM's ability to reclaim access that has been lost to some public lands (specifically near the Big Hole River)</li> <li>✓ How land exchanges are addressed in the existing RMP and how they will be addressed in the new RMP</li> <li>✓ The accessibility of the RMP and EIS to the average citizen (not hard to read, not voluminous)</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Make the RMP readable and understandable and easy to access</li> </ul>



Date/Location	Concerns and Suggestions
<p><b>January 14, 2004</b> <b>Bozeman, Montana</b></p>	<p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Prefer use of fee title purchase to acquire lands rather than trading value for value because land values that are important to me are not taken into account when valuing the land for trade</li> <li>✓ The criteria for valuing land for land exchange, disposal or acquisition should be different.</li> <li>✓ Are there any BLM wilderness areas in your field area?</li> <li>✓ Mining on BLM land is not appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the abandoned mine program?</li> <li>• Do you try to find the responsible party before spending taxpayer money?</li> <li>• How much is BLM involved in the Golden Sunlight Mine (GSM)?</li> <li>• Did you ever dispose of land to GSM?</li> <li>• Concern about mineral estate and what areas should be open for mineral extraction.</li> <li>• What land is open for mining under the 1872 Mining Act?</li> <li>• How are claims “proved up”?</li> <li>• Is BLM considering patenting any new mining claims in there area (speaker is against any new patented claims or loss of public land in any way).</li> <li>• There should be a moratorium on patenting mining claims.</li> <li>• How will working groups be organized, by issue or geographic area, or will there be only one group?</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ The fate of the Elkhorn area is important for wildlife habitat</li> <li>✓ Would like to see the Muskrat Wilderness Study Area remain as a study area</li> <li>✓ What are the main aquatic issues for the RMP so far?</li> <li>✓ Does the checkerboard private land north of Whitehall belong to one owner or different owners?</li> <li>✓ How many streams will be eligible for wild and scenic designation?</li> <li>✓ What is the history of BLM land?</li> <li>✓ How many grazing permits do you have?</li> <li>✓ Grazing in riparian areas should be addressed in the RMP and should be better controlled. Does the BLM have recreational residences like the USFS does?</li> <li>✓ What is the criteria for an ACEC?</li> </ul>
<p><b>January 15, 2004</b> <b>Townsend, Montana</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What is a “Special Designation”?</li> <li>✓ I would like to buy 120 acres of land by the Toston Dam from the BLM, will there be any opportunities for a land exchange?</li> <li>✓ Will the BLM coordinate with the local weed board regarding the RMP?</li> </ul>

Representatives from the Butte FO also met with several groups, including County Commissioners (Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, and Jefferson counties); the Big Hole Watershed Committee, the Resource Advisory Council (RAC); American Wildlands; and the East Pioneers Stewardship Group. Table 3 summarizes



comments that were made during these meetings. Notes for these meetings are included in Appendix B.

**Table 3. Summary of Verbal Concerns Expressed by County Commission, the Big Hole Watershed Committee, the RAC, and American Wildlands**

<b>Date/Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>February 24, 2004 Lewis and Clark County Commissioners</b>	✓ Add a statement to Proposed Planning Criteria #8 regarding “including infrastructure” for impacts to local governments.
<b>February 26, 2004 Silver Bow County Commissioners</b>	✓ <u>Expressed concern over how public meetings are announced (they should be better publicized in the newspaper).</u> ✓ <u>Expressed concern over weeds.</u>
<b>March 1, 2004 Broadwater County Commissioners</b>	✓ Asked questions regarding the proposed withdrawal of the Limestone Hills Training Area and how this relates to the RMP. ✓ Asked questions regarding a “no hunting” sign near River Road. ✓ Discussed the possibility of Broadwater County serving as a Cooperating Agency.
<b>March 2, 2004 Deer Lodge County</b>	✓ Asked questions regarding specific roads in the area - concern over travel planning.
<b>March 3, 2004 Jefferson County</b>	✓ Asked questions regarding the overall RMP/EIS process. ✓ Stated they would like to see the Proposed Action before it is sent to the public.
<b>March 17, 2004 Big Hole Watershed Committee</b>	✓ Wanted the Recreation Issue to be separate/clearer - it is currently under commercial uses and needs to be its own issue to address things like fishing access, camping, etc. and not just commercial uses and travel planning. ✓ In general, they would like the Issues explained better (e.g., the sub-categories in the large issues). ✓ Would we be doing travel planning in the Big Hole River area (collaboration meetings)? ✓ Are there any more chances for public involvement? ✓ Were we working with the Dillon Field Office and FS during our RMP (collaborating with the other agencies)?
<b>October 30, 2003 Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) in Billings, MT</b>	✓ When would we like the RAC to be involved? ✓ What do we mean by getting away from traditional range of alternatives (i.e., the preservation oriented and commercial oriented)? ✓ How would the collaboration meetings work? ✓ What is our schedule? ✓ They like the idea that we’re focusing on collaboration early in the process. ✓ They like the idea of alternatives that are focused/responsive to the issues.
<b>February 27, 2004 American Wildlands</b>	✓ Wanted to discuss their Scoping Letter; written information from this letter has been incorporated into the following section of this report and into Appendix F.



Date/Location	Comments
April 27, 2004 East Pioneers Stewardship Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Why does BLM show private conservation easements and corporate timber lands?</li><li>✓ The BLM lands should show up more on the maps.</li><li>✓ Is BLM going to do things the same as Dillon?</li></ul>



## Written Scoping Comments

In addition to receiving verbal comments during the public scoping meetings, the Butte FO also received written comments through the mail, fax, and e-mail. Written comments summarized in this report were received during the scoping period (December 19, 2003 through February 17, 2004), as well as comments that were received shortly after the deadline, yet postmarked by February 17th, to compensate for mail delay.

### Method of Submittal

Written scoping comments were accepted via mail, e-mail, and fax resulting in a total of 17 responses, containing 554 comments. A response is defined as one letter, e-mail, or written scoping meeting comment. One person could submit more than one response. Because some responses had more than one comment, the total number of comments received is greater than the number of respondents, or individuals who submitted comments. For example, one person could submit two emails with one e-mail containing a comment on wildlife and another on forestry. The second e-mail could contain one comment on wilderness. Thus, this example would be calculated as two responses and three comments, all from one person.

**Table 3. Written Comment Source Data**

Method of Submittal	Responses Received	Comments Received
Mail/Letter	8	514
E-Mail	5	33
Scoping Meetings (Public Comment Forms)	4	7
Total Comments	17	554

A majority of the comments are from the Capital Trail Vehicle Association (319 comments) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (126 comments). Comments from the Capital Trail Vehicle Association have off-highway vehicle (OHV) use as their primary issue. Comments from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have proposed management direction, resource management, wildlife and fisheries management, water quality and watershed management, fire and vegetation management, habitat management, OHV management, and Tribal coordination as their main issues.

Agency comments received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8 are provided in Appendix E.



## Number and Type of Comments Received

Each comment was provided an identification number that corresponds to the 17 response letters, emails, and public comment forms received. Each letter was numbered with an “SC,” for “scoping comment,” followed by the letter number (i.e. SC1 through SC 17). A table was created for comments and organized by response identification number, comment type, and respondent affiliation (see Appendix F). Repetitive comments within one response letter were not included. Each response was read in its entirety and all distinct comments were categorized for enumeration and analysis.

Table 4 indicates the relative interest of respondents who submitted written comments towards various broad topics. This enumeration is not intended to show bias towards any issue; it is simply to indicate the level of interest in various issue areas. All issues will be addressed equally in the EIS and RMP. It is important to again note that most comments are from the Capital Trail Vehicle Association and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As a result, the enumeration in Table 4 is skewed to reflect the interests of these two groups.

**Table 4. Written Comment Category Enumeration**

Comment Category	Number Received	Percentage
Air Quality	6	1 %
Cultural Resources	1	Less than 1 %
Lands and Realty	17	3 %
Minerals/Mining	11	2 %
Recreation Resources, including Public Access	70	13 %
Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use	240	43 %
Transportation and Access	27	5 %
Socioeconomics	9	2 %
Soils	1	Less than 1 %
Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions, including Erosion Control	6	1 %
Vegetation, including Weed Control	23	4 %
Fire Management	23	4 %
Forestry Management	3	Less than 1 %
Livestock Grazing	12	2 %
Water Quality and Watershed	47	8 %
Wildlife and Fisheries	24	4 %
Special Management Areas	19	3 %
General Comments	15	3 %
Total	554	100 %



## Written Comment Summaries

As previously discussed, each of the comments were categorized into one (or more than one if necessary) particular resource category. Following is a summary of the comments received, organized by such categories.

### Air Quality

Air quality issues were raised regarding public health and welfare impacts caused by wildland and prescribed fires. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommended following the Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires (May 15, 1998) to assure that and air quality analysis was completed if prescribed burning was proposed on projects tied to a programmatic land management plan.

### Cultural Resources

Comments directed toward cultural resources addressed the need for protecting historic trails and abandoned mine sites that provide points of interest and access routes for OHV use. Cultural, historical, and archaeological resource analysis was recommended as part of the environmental analysis for the EIS. Several comments suggested that the presence of cultural resources should not prevent public access on public lands.

### Lands and Realty

Comments received in this category expressed concern over the cumulative loss of public land to private ownership and loss of public access to public lands through access closures. Comments also expressed concern with land exchanges and land pooling practices that have reduced access to public lands. Other comments addressed land management policies regarding small, isolated tracts of land that are being sold or exchanged because they are "hard to manage." Additional comments reflected the concern that the BLM land adjustment program provides no long-term benefit to the public. One respondent wanted the commercial use of public lands to be encouraged and promoted over all other considerations.



---

## Minerals/Mining

Most comments received in this category expressed the need to identify and decommission abandoned mines to protect the public (hikers, pets, and children) from hazardous conditions at the abandoned mines. Respondents also suggested that access to active mining operations be restricted for safety purposes and that the mine owners should pay for putting up fences or signs. Comments also suggested the support of mining and resource development on public land. One respondent expressed concern that vast sums of money have been approved for mine reclamation and safety but no changes to the mines have been made. Other respondents indicated that efforts should be made to retain mine sites as points of interest and to allow collecting of rocks.

Agency comments expressed concern over the impacts to public health and the environment from hard rock mining, specifically that the RMP and EIS should evaluate the potential for acid mine drainage and metal or nutrient transport, or pollution that could occur during mineral exploration and development on Federal lands. Comments also suggested that it would be useful if the EIS discussed the Hard Rock Mining Act of 1872, its benefits and impacts, and potential conflicts with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act. Other comments recommended that responsible parties conduct and pay for cleanup at mine sites.

## Recreation Resources

Comments suggested that the RMP address the fact that user demand and recreational access has increased significantly and management practices have shifted over the last 15 years, where motorized vehicles can access much further into the forest than they could historically. The EPA encouraged locating campgrounds and concentrated recreational uses away from ecologically sensitive areas. Many respondents felt that the largest numbers of recreational users were those using motorized vehicles (cars, campers, OHV, motor bikes, etc.) and that access for motorized users was significantly decreasing because of the influences that non-motorized recreational users have on the decision-making processes for recreational access on public lands. Many comments suggested that public lands be available to all users, motorized and non-motorized, and that non-motorized recreational users should not be able to have more access to public lands than motorized users. Some comments suggested that well-funded and organized anti-motorized groups have systematically reduced economic and recreational opportunities for motorized users. Some respondents expressed concern that multiple-use management goals are not meeting the needs of the public equally for all users, including motorized and non-motorized users, and that multiple-use goals are inconsistent with directives from Congress and other federal land-use policies.

Several respondents felt that public lands should be open for multiple use, but also to have some areas and trails with limited types of use (hiking only or OHV use only) since some recreational uses did not mix well, or were not compatible.



One respondent requested that there should be more camping areas along motorized routes, due to the lack of available camping spots on holiday weekends. One respondent requested that outfitters be able to take camping/river trips on the Big Hole River. Another respondent expressed concern that the East Bank Campground on the Big Hole River not be expanded since the river already had all the rafters it could handle. One respondent felt that restrictions on firearms possession be removed from all public lands.

## Off-Highway Vehicle Use

One OHV group submitted nearly 250 comments; many of these comments focused on the availability of public lands to OHV users. Most of the comments in this category favored OHV use on most public lands, with less restrictions on motorized vehicle access. Many of the comments expressed concern that there has been a significant closure of motorized access due to federal land management actions and policies. Comments in this category expressed concern that there have been a disproportionately large amount of adverse impacts to motorized recreational users who want to use public lands and that the desires of non-motorized users are being favored over the desires of motorized users. Some respondents indicated that concerns of OHV recreationists were not being addressed or adequately represented during the EIS and RMP process. Comments in this category suggested that the federal agencies did not adequately acknowledge the public need for OHV recreation and did not take the responsibility to provide adequate management for OHV recreation. Comments received expressed that there has not been an evaluation of the cumulative impact of all of the access closures to motorized users over the past 35 years. Comments suggested that mitigation measures be evaluated and taken before an access route is closed to motorized users.

Several comments reflected that federal agencies were not able to assess if the needs of motorized users were being met because the data did not exist. Data should be gathered that reflects an inventory of all existing motorized routes in use by the public; each road and trail should be evaluated to determine its recreational value, motorized loop, or connected route value; and source of dispersed campsite, exploration opportunities, or historical or point-of-interest destinations. Respondents indicated that there was no hard evidence of the potential impacts of OHV use on wildlife and vegetation when compared to the impacts of non-motorized users. Some respondents suggested that adequate and accurate field data for visitor use in the project area be developed. Respondents feel that if representative recreational use data was available that more opportunities for motorized users would be justified and available. Respondents also expressed concern that data from the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) project would not be used to accurately portray the importance of motorized access and mechanized recreation on public lands. Additionally, some respondents felt the 1994 Montana Trail Users Study, 1998 Montana's Assessment of Montanan Fish,



Wildlife, and Parks Programs, and the Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) did not accurately assess the numbers and needs of motorized recreationists.

Respondents in this area also believed that OHV use could coexist with other recreational uses and that more public access should be available for OHV users. Some respondents recommended that certain areas on public lands be designated for different types of recreational uses, to avoid conflicts between different types of recreational users that are not compatible. Several respondents indicated that the Visitor Maps are not consistent with the Travel Plan maps and that this difference causes misunderstandings between motorized and non-motorized users.

Some OHV users expressed the concern that the NEPA process was overwhelming and that it was difficult to be able to attend or comment on every BLM land action that may affect motorized access on public lands. Respondents indicated that the NEPA process was complicated and unapproachable and that there has not been more of an effort to inform, educate, and increase the public's awareness and ability to work with the NEPA process.

One respondent complained that OHV users drove all over the public land and that no BLM employees enforced the recreational use regulations. Another respondent recommended consideration of a policy that prohibits off-trail snowmobile use until at least 6 inches of snow has accumulated in areas with fragile alpine vegetation.

## Transportation and Access

Most respondents in this category expressed that the RMP needed to maintain public access and right-of-ways throughout the project area. Many respondents indicated that they wanted all existing public access to remain open, and that land ownership transfers and other property issues should not prevent public access to public lands.

Most respondents expressed concern over the past and potential loss of access to public lands. Comments received focused on not losing any more public access during the ownership adjustment process or the consolidation of public lands and to stop and reverse the trend of closing access to public lands. Respondents expressed concern that the EIS and RMP evaluate the cumulative, long-term effects of removing access to public lands, based on what has occurred over that last 35 years and what it could mean for future recreational users that will want to access public lands.

Some respondents indicated that the RMP needs to provide for access to the elderly and physically impaired. Other respondents requested that additional forest roads be designated as dual-use so that OHV users and other recreationists can travel more easily between OHV routes that are not connected.



Another respondent encouraged the BLM to include the use of airplane access and airstrips because it provided recreational access to beautiful areas and allowed emergency landing places for pilots when flying over remote locations.

## Socioeconomics

Several comments in this category indicated that social and economic concerns should focus on the beneficial economic and social use of public lands, not locking them up from development or public access. One respondent indicated that the RMP should not allow livestock allocations to be converted into wildlife allocations unless valid economic studies show that the conversion was equal to, or better for, the local area economic structure and tax base. Another respondent suggested that the EIS look at the importance of OHV and other motorized recreationists have on the economies of local communities, and the adverse impacts that would be created if areas were closed off to motorized use. Agency comments recommended that the EIS include an analysis of long-term economic value of leaving the forest landscape as it is and that there may be economic gains in non-disturbance methods versus the economy of forest product utilization.

## Soils

One respondent indicated that the EIS and RMP needs to recognize that Natural Resources Conservation Service soil surveys are the documents for which all public land decisions and activities related to soil conservation would be based.

## Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions

The EPA indicated that the RMP needs to provide direction for minimizing road impacts to water quality, fisheries, and wildlife. The EPA recommended that the RMP allow for reductions in road density, improvements in road drainage, and reductions in sediment delivery from roads, which were important components for improving aquatic health in project area streams. The EPA also suggested that the RMP provide management direction that required inspections and evaluations to identify existing road conditions that cause non-point source pollution and stream impairment.

## Vegetation

Several respondents indicated that measures be taken to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. One respondent indicated that there seemed to be an equal amount of noxious weeds in non-motorized areas as there were in motorized areas and that as part of their vehicle registration for OHVs, a certain amount of money went to weed abatement, but non-motorized users did not have to pay this fee. The EPA recommended that noxious weeds and exotic species should be identified and that the EIS should discuss the



magnitude and occurrence of weed infestations, strategies for prevention, early detection, and control procedures.

## Fire Management

Most of the comments in this category were from the EPA and include policy development recommendations for the RMP including (1) recognizing the role of fire as a disturbance process, (2) implementing the National Fire Plan which directs a full range of fire management activities, (3) implementing the 1995 Federal Wildlands Fire Management Policy and Program Review which provides direction for fire management planning, working with landowners, and directing landscape level analysis, and (4) identifying areas appropriate for wildland fire use. Some respondents expressed concern regarding the potential air quality and respiratory hazards associated with prescribed and catastrophic fires. The EPA recommended that the RMP incorporate the 1998 Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires to address and minimize public health impacts caused by fires. The EPA also recommended that although fire suppression seemed to be a major theme of forest management for wildfires, the RMP should promote public education programs to increase the public's understanding of the benefits of prescribe burns for vegetation management and wildfire risk.

## Forestry Management

Most of the comments regarding forestry management were from the EPA including that forestry and land management should be based on understanding of all natural disturbance processes such as fire, insects and disease, and ecosystem processes and dynamics. The EPA recommended that it was important that ecosystem integrity be maintained to allow sustainable levels of timber production along with other resource uses over the long term. Another comment from the EPA recommended that the EIS discuss the economic consequences of implementing the various management alternatives including estimates of job additions or losses attributed to timber management. One comment in this category also recommended that pine beetles be controlled in an expedient and cost effective manner.

## Livestock Grazing

Several comments on livestock grazing expressed dislike over the current livestock grazing and vegetation management programs, saying the programs were poorly managed and detrimental to vegetation, wildlife forage, and soil condition. In these instances, the respondents recommended going from management by fencing off areas, to rest-rotation grazing programs like the programs designed by Gus Hormay, formerly of the BLM. Another respondent asked how did designating an area as an 'area of critical environmental concern' impact livestock grazing at an adjacent ranch owners' property. Other comments favored livestock grazing on public lands and improving



forage for livestock, as well as wildlife. Comments also favored reducing forage allotments during drought or other natural disasters, then increasing the forage allotments when areas were restored. The EPA recommended livestock grazing management should be aimed at maintaining a sustainable grazing program that protects range and riparian resources, water quality, and fisheries.

## Water Quality and Watershed

Many comments in this category indicate that it is important to protect water quality and watersheds in the project area. The primary issues raised by the EPA included that the RMP should support maintenance of hydrological and aquatic species goals and restoration of watershed health; protection of riparian and wetland habitat and aquatic species; achievement of water quality levels that fully supports designated beneficial uses of surface waters; and protection of high quality waters consistent with EPA and State anti-degradation and non-degradation policies, including the Clean Water Act (see Appendix E for EPA's specific comments and recommendations for preserving water quality and watersheds in the project area). The American Wildlands group completed an Aquatic Integrity Area analysis and River Integrity Area analysis that identified high quality watersheds and rivers in and outside the project area. The American Wildlands group recommended using their data and maps as management tools to identify watersheds and rivers needing special protection or restoration in the project area.

One respondent requested that the BLM disclose the list of impaired watersheds within the project area. Another respondent expressed support for the protection of waters and aquatic species, but not at the expense of meaningful development of public lands.

## Wildlife and Fisheries

Most comments in this category supported the need to protect wildlife and fish and their habitat. The EPA believed the RMP should provide for the protection and conservation of wildlife including conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species and diversity of plant and animal communities. The EPA recommended BLM implement the Interior Columbian Basin Strategy which identifies the BLM's responsibility to provide habitat for productive and diverse populations of terrestrial wildlife species while coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Montanan Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Another respondent recommended that the RMP identify impaired streams and to provide for the restoration of native fisheries and aquatic strongholds that support native fisheries. Some respondents recommend that the BLM should not allow motorized use in Wilderness Study Areas because some studies have shown that areas with poorly maintained roads, along with non-native fish species introductions, are responsible for the decline of native fish species and their habitat.



One respondent recommended the effective management of wildlife corridors in the project area by using the least-cost-path corridor model as a basis for managing and preserving connected habitat; managing corridor areas as critical habitat for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; maintaining the integrity and un-motorized character of all roadless areas within the region; maintaining at least two alternative routes between each of the large core reserves; maintaining a corridor of high quality habitat about 5 kilometers in width, with a 5 kilometer buffer zone of medium quality or low quality habitat on either side of the core; and ensuring that no segment of the corridor core was less than one kilometer wide to either side of the centerline. This same respondent recommended that the RMP consider that wildlife corridors extend beyond the project area and include whole mountain ranges. Another comment suggested that wildlife connectivity should be considered as a dominant use of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern during the travel management decision process.

Several respondents supported the preservation of introduced, threatened, and endangered species, but not to the point where it resulted in detrimental effects to the area economy, lifestyle, access to public lands, and development of public lands. Some respondents expressed concern over the building of high pole fences as part of ranching activities, without apparent concern for the movement or migration of big game animals and wildlife.

## Special Management Areas

Many respondents in this category support the designation, use, and management of special management areas. Specific special management areas cited include areas of critical environmental concern, wild and scenic river areas, recreational river areas, and wilderness study areas. Respondents recommend that the RMP inventory and identify all rivers, streams, and areas that are eligible for one of these designations and that the value of these areas be maintained and protected. The American Wildlands group had evaluated most of the rivers, streams, and areas within the project area, and provided specific recommendations in their comments for special management area designations.

One respondent suggested not to designate any more special management areas without a thorough evaluation of the economic resources that would be lost if recommended. Another respondent indicated that wilderness designation was not good for recreation and that an alternative designation was needed to allow motorized recreation on more public lands.



## General Comments

Comments that were categorized as “General” did not have a single theme that was easily identifiable or in some cases covered many different topics. Some of the comments related to issues that were extremely focused on a specific issue or were so general that the comment did not apply to a specific issue. Because a summary of the comments in this category would be impractical, a sample of some topics is listed below.

- Consider solid waste management when evaluating BLM facility needs
- Identify and address any oil and gas development activities
- Identify pollution prevention strategies
- Focus on multiple use
- Incorporate recommendations of Big Hole River Land Use Plan in RMP
- Develop guidelines to determine if perceived impacts are significant or insignificant

## Comments Requiring Clarification

Public comments that requested clarification or expressed a concern about the process are listed in this section with agency responses. All other verbal and written comments presented in this document will be considered in development of the RMP/EIS.

The comments listed in this section address either an issue of concern that is beyond the scope of the RMP or a planning process concern that can be addressed immediately. These comments were not included in the tallying of the total comments received during the scoping process. Because a summary of the comments in this category would be impractical, a sample of some issues, along with BLM’s responses, are listed below.

Comment	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enforce public land management policies and laws</li> <li>✓ Follow appropriate Federal and State guidance and policies for preparing EIS and RMP</li> </ul>	<p>The RMP/EIS will follow all existing policies and laws.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Streamline the RMP planning process</li> <li>✓ Use easily understandable tables, maps, charts, and photos as much as possible in EIS and RMP</li> <li>✓ Educate the public more on NEPA process</li> </ul>	<p>BLM will make every effort to provide concise, understandable planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents.</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify purpose and need for revision to existing RMP</li> <li>✓ The EIS should identify the decisions made with the RMP</li> </ul>	These will be identified in the EIS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordinate with tribal governments</li> </ul>	The Butte FO is currently coordinating this effort with tribal governments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Incorporate environmental justice issues</li> </ul>	Environmental justice issues will be addressed in the EIS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Explain the rationale for the project area boundary</li> </ul>	The project area boundary is comprised of the eight counties that encompass the Butte FO lands. This will be explained further in the EIS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 'Cooperating agency status' should not be considered for non-government agencies</li> </ul>	Cooperating Agency status will not be considered for non-government agencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ OHV recreationists in Montana generate total state and federal annual gas tax revenue on the order of \$8 million. A federal excise tax refund program for gasoline used for off-road purposes does not exist at this time. Excise tax on gasoline used for off-road fuel use should either be refunded to off-highway recreationists or used to fund programs that benefit off-highway recreationists.</li> <li>✓ OHV recreation and tourism has not been promoted or supported by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks as aggressively as other recreation and tourism associated with fish and wildlife programs. OHV users request that Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks actively promote OHV recreation and tourism.</li> </ul>	The BLM has no authority over these programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Recommend no lands be withdrawn from full multiple use</li> </ul>	The RMP/EIS will examine all land use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ BLM managers should develop and maintain communications with adjacent landowners</li> </ul>	The BLM managers are always willing to meet, and work with, adjacent landowners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do not agree with paying Texas Tech (out of state) firm to prepare EIS and RMP</li> </ul>	The firm assisting BLM with the Butte FO RMP/EIS is Tetra Tech Inc., with offices in Helena, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Missoula, Montana (not a Texas firm).



<p>✓ Do not pursue environmental perfectionism when balancing the needs of humans versus the environment</p>	<p>The RMP/EIS will examine both environmental and socioeconomic alternatives, and impacts.</p>
<p>✓ Do not make the comment process a voting process for how important an issue is based on the number of comments received in a certain category</p>	<p>The comment process is not a voting process; we will examine the substance of each comment, not the volume of comments.</p>



**APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER PUBLICATION: NOTICE OF INTENT**

---

(NEPA). The IID is the lead State of California agency for the preparation of this EIS/EIR in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Dated: September 29, 2003.

**John R. Kalish,**

*Acting Field Manager.*

[FR Doc. 03-31101 Filed 12-18-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[MT-070-1610-DO-030E]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan for the Butte Field Office and Associated Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Butte Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Butte Field Office and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to prepare an RMP with an associated EIS for the Butte Field Office. The planning area is located in Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Park, and Silver Bow Counties, Montana. The plan will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM management policies. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns. The public scoping process 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.

**DATES:** This notice initiates the public scoping process. Formal scoping will end February 17, 2004; however, collaboration with the public will continue throughout the process. Comments on issues and planning criteria can be submitted in writing to the address listed below. All public meetings will be announced through the local news media, newsletters, and the BLM Web site (<http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo>) at least 15 days prior to the event. The minutes and list of attendees for each meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days to any

participant who wishes to clarify the views they expressed.

**Public Participation:** Public meetings will be held throughout the plan scoping and preparation period. In order to ensure local community participation and input, public meeting locations will be rotated among the towns of Boulder, Bozeman, Butte, Helena, Townsend, and Wise River. Early participation is encouraged and will help determine the future management of the Butte Field Office public lands. In addition to the ongoing public participation process, formal opportunities for public participation will be provided upon publication of the BLM Draft RMP/EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to Bureau of Land Management, Ruth Miller, RMP Project Manager, Butte Field Office, 106 North Parkmont, Butte, MT, 59701; Fax:—(406) 533-7660. Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Butte Field Office. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Butte Field Office during regular business hours 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ruth Miller, on (406) 533-7645, Bureau of Land Management, RMP Project Manager, Butte Field Office, 106 North Parkmont, Butte, MT, 59701.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The lands within the Butte Field Office are currently being managed according to the 1984 Headwaters RMP. In 1983, while the Headwaters RMP was being developed, the Butte and Lewistown Districts (now called Field Offices) adjusted their jurisdictional boundaries (as well as the Dillon Resource Area and Headwaters Resource Area within the Butte District). This resulted in lands covered by the Headwaters RMP being managed by both Districts.

The BLM lands in the following areas are now being managed by the Lewistown Field Office and will not be covered in the Butte RMP process:

Pondera, Teton, Cascade, Meagher, and the north half of Lewis and Clark County. Also, the BLM lands within Silver Bow and Deerlodge Counties (and a small portion of Beaverhead County along the Big Hole River) were included in the Dillon Resource Area Management Framework Plan (MFP) of 1979 and will now be covered in this Butte RMP revision.

Because this RMP will follow the existing Butte Field Office boundary, the name of the RMP will be the Butte RMP. This will help separate the new document from the existing Headwaters RMP, and from the Lewistown portion that will still be managed under the Headwaters RMP until its revision.

The RMP revision to be prepared for the public lands administered by the Butte Field Office will identify goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for management of a variety of resources and values. The plan will specify actions, constraints, and general management practices necessary to achieve desired conditions. The plan will also identify any areas requiring special management such as ACECs. The scope of the RMP will be comprehensive. Certain existing standards and guidelines and other BLM plans will be incorporated into the RMP.

The changing needs and interests of the public necessitate a revision to the Butte Field Office RMP. Preliminary issues and management concerns have been identified by BLM personnel, other agencies, and in meetings with individuals and user groups. They represent the BLM's knowledge to date on the existing issues and concerns with current management. The major issue themes 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.

After gathering public comments on what issues the plan should address, the suggested issues will be placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan;
2. Issues resolved through policy or administrative action; or
3. Issues beyond the scope of this plan.

Rationale will be provided for each issue placed in categories two or three. In addition to these major issues, a number of management questions and concerns will be addressed in the plan.

The public is encouraged to help identify these questions and concerns during the scoping phase.

An interdisciplinary approach will be used to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Disciplines involved in the planning process will include specialists with expertise in minerals and geology, forestry, range, fire and fuels, outdoor recreation, archaeology, paleontology, wildlife and fisheries, lands and realty, hydrology, soils, sociology and economics.

The following planning criteria have been proposed to guide development of the plan, avoid unnecessary data collection and analyses, and to ensure the plan is tailored to the issues. Other criteria may be identified during the public scoping process. After gathering comments on planning criteria, the BLM will finalize the criteria and provide feedback to the public on the criteria to be used throughout the planning process.

- The plan will be completed in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws.
- The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with NEPA standards.
- The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the Butte Field Office.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*, the *Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota*; and, when signed, the *Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan*.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior Wilderness designations and Wilderness Study Area findings that affect public lands in the planning area.
- The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
- The plan will recognize the State's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, tribal, and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.

- The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with Bureau-wide standards and program guidance.

- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.

- The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.

The BLM is also requesting public input for nominations considered worthy of 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 FO 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.

Dated: September 12, 2003.

**Richard M. Hotaling,**

*Field Office Manager.*

[FR Doc. 03-28963 Filed 12-18-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310--55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[UT080-1310-00]

#### **Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Greater Deadman Bench Oil and Gas Producing Region Field Development Project, Uintah County, UT**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Vernal Field Office, Vernal, Utah, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will focus on Questar Exploration and Production Company's (QEP) proposed gas and oil development on about 99,000 acres in the Greater Deadman Bench oil and gas production region.

**DATES:** Public scoping comments will be accepted on or before February 4, 2004. A public scoping open house and information meeting will be held on

January 14, 2004 from 7-9 p.m., at the Uintah County Commission Chambers, 147 E Main Street, Vernal, Utah. If you have any information, data, concerns, or suggestions related to the potential impacts of the proposed action, including the issues identified above, please submit them to the address listed below.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The project area, located about 20 miles south of Vernal, Utah, involves about 85% BLM-administered lands (83,864 acres); 12% (11,448 acres) State of Utah-administered lands; and, 3% (3,473 acres) patented land. Currently 278 oil and water-injection wells and about 300 gas wells with their attendant service roads exist within the project area. The proponent anticipates the drilling of up to 1239 new wells over a period of 10 years, or until the resource base is fully developed. Of these new wells, 826 would be new locations and 470 would be twins drilled from existing locations (representing 38% of the total new wells that would be drilled). Required infrastructure includes electric power lines, roads, oil and gas flow lines and pipelines, well pads (with pumping units for oil wells), central facilities, water injection facilities, gas treatment and compression facilities. Gas would be transported via pipeline to centralized compression and treatment facilities. Produced water would be trucked or piped to one of several existing QEP water injection plants where it would be re-injected into the oil reservoir or disposal zone via an injection well system.

Major issues at this time include potential impacts on desert and semi-desert ecosystems and their dependent wildlife species (including antelope, sage grouse, white-tailed prairie dog colonies and their associated species), vegetation (including noxious weeds and reclamation), riparian habitat associated with the Green River corridor. Alternatives identified at this time include the proposed action and the no action alternatives.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jean Nitschke-Sinclear, (435) 781-4437 or e-mail: [jean\\_nitschke-sinclear@blm](mailto:jean_nitschke-sinclear@blm).

**ADDRESSES:** Written scoping comments should be sent to: Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Field Office, 170 South 500 East, Vernal, Utah 84078, Attn: QEP Field Development Project.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents will be available for public review at the BLM Vernal Field Office and will be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). They may be

**APPENDIX B: NOTES FROM MEETINGS WITH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, THE  
BIG HOLE WATERSHED COMMITTEE, THE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL,  
AND AMERICAN WILDLANDS**

---

## **RAC Briefing on Butte RMP**

**October 30, 2003**

Ruth Miller attended the RAC meeting in Billings to brief them on the Butte RMP and where we were in the process (NOI, proposed schedule, etc.). Rick Hotaling then explained how their involvement might occur (i.e., after we conduct scoping and meetings and find out which issues we feel we may need the RAC's assistance on).

Ruth and Rick then answered the following questions/statements from the RAC about the proposed process:

- When would we like the RAC to be involved?
- What do we mean by getting away from traditional range of alternatives (i.e., the preservation oriented and commercial oriented)?
- How would the collaboration meetings work?
- What is our schedule?
- Like the idea that we're focusing on collaboration early in the process.
- Like the idea of alternatives that are focused/responsive to the issues.

The handout provided to the RAC is attached below.

## **October 2003 Update on the Butte RMP Revision**

The Butte Field Office will be revising the Headwaters (south) Resource Management Plan (RMP) over the next 3 years. Because the new RMP will follow the Butte Field Office boundary (as opposed to being split between Butte and Lewistown Field Offices), the new name of the RMP will be the Butte RMP. This will help separate the new document from the old, and from the Lewistown portion that will still be managed under the Headwaters RMP until its revision.

---

### **Issues**

The issues and management concerns are preliminary and based on the best information known to date. Preparation of the RMP will afford many opportunities for collaboration with local, State, Federal and Tribal governments and land management agencies, public interest groups, and public land users. As a result, issues and concerns may need to be modified to reflect public comments and concerns raised during scoping.

Issues identified in the Preparation Plan are:

- Vegetation Management
- Special Status Species
- Water Quality/Quantity/Aquatic Species
- Travel Management and Access
- Special Management Area Designations (W&S Rivers, ACECs)
- Commercial Uses (including oil and gas)
- Land Ownership Adjustments

Other Management Concerns identified for the RMP revision include: Air Quality, Abandoned Mine Lands, Soil Resources, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Visual Resource Management, and Social/Economic Concerns.

---

### **Progress to Date**

In December 2003 a Preparation Plan was approved by the State Office; this outlined the main issues for the RMP, data needs, schedule, staffing, budget, etc. In August 2003 a contractor (Tetra Tech) was hired to assist the Butte Field Office in the preparation of the Butte RMP and associated environmental impact statement.

Public scoping will begin this Fall; a Notice of Intent has been sent to Washington and will begin the official scoping period when published in the Federal Register. The State of Montana, eight counties, and four Native American Tribes have all been invited to be Cooperating Agencies in this process; to date, three counties have indicated an interest this process, but no agreements have been signed. The Butte FO will work closely with any Cooperating Agencies, the public, the Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, EPA, and the Resource Advisory Council throughout the RMP process.

## Butte RMP Revision Schedule

Events	Proposed Due Date
NOI and 60-day Scoping Period	Fall 2003
MSA/collaboration	Winter-Summer 2004
Develop Proposed Action	Spring 2004
Release Proposed Action for public scoping*	Summer 2004
Develop Alternatives based on scoping comments	Fall-Winter 2004/5
Release DEIS/RMP	Summer 2005
Final EIS/RMP	Winter 2006
Record of Decision (ROD)	Spring 2006

\*This may be a 2<sup>nd</sup> scoping period for purposes of the EIS

## Process Highlights

An NOI will be published in the Federal Register to start the official scoping period. The goal of this 60-day comment period is to find out from public/collaborators what they feel needs to be changed in the RMP, what their main issues of concern are, etc.

It will take approximately 6-8 months to develop the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) and a detailed Proposed Action. The BLM Proposed Action would then be presented to the public and further public involvement/scoping/collaboration would occur at this point. From this effort, Alternatives to the Proposed Action would be developed and then the Draft EIS/RMP.

### What We Hope to Accomplish with the RMP Process

- **More effective/meaningful public involvement.** First, find out what the public and collaborators think needs changing in the RMP through the official scoping period, then present a Proposed Action for the public to review; this should help public comments be more focused for the development of Alternatives.
- **Reasonable Alternatives to the Proposed Action.** By having a detailed Proposed Action for the public to comment on, we can focus the Alternatives development around issues of concern, while not spending a lot of time on other issues. This will help eliminate the traditional: No-Action, Proposed Action, “Use-Oriented”, and “Preservation-Oriented” Alternatives; the objective is to meet the intent of NEPA by presenting/analyzing alternatives from which the Decision Maker has a true choice.
- **Focus on Key Issues/Concerns Early.** By ‘front-loading’ the public participation/collaboration process in the first year of revision, we hope to focus on the key issues regarding the RMP, and lessen the possibility of discovering some key concern as the Draft EIS is being published.

<b>Butte RMP Meeting Record Form</b>	
<b>Meeting/Conference Call Date</b>	February 24-25; March 1-3
<b>Subject of Meeting/Call</b>	RMP Briefing for County Commissioners
<b>BLM Members</b>	Rick Hotaling, Ruth Miller
<b>Tetra Tech-Maxim Members</b>	n/a
<b>Other Agency Members</b>	Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, and Jefferson County Commissioners

**Brief Description of Meetings:**

Rick and Ruth attended the county commissioner meetings to provide a briefing on the scoping that was done for the RMP and where we go from here (an update to keep the counties informed of the RMP progress). Rick reminded each county that we have invited them to be a Cooperating Agency – while all counties expressed their interest in being involved (and being kept informed), no county indicated an interest in pursuing cooperating agency status further.

**Lewis and Clark County (2/24)** – They didn’t have too much to discuss regarding the RMP (mostly only interested in Holter Lake Road – Rick set a date for a separate meeting regarding that subject). There was one comment about adding a statement to Proposed Planning Criteria #8 regarding ‘including infrastructure’ for impacts to local governments.

**Silver Bow County (2/26)** – The only concern regarding the RMP was how we announce our public meetings (e.g., add in the newspapers) and weeds (the person who asked about weeds would call John Sandford).

**Broadwater County (3/1)** – The questions were regarding Limestone Hills project (withdrawal and Kevin’s replacement) and a ‘no hunting’ sign near the River Road. They did ask about Cooperating Agency status; Ruth had sent Elaine an example MOU to use, but the county is not sure it has the time or resources to dedicate to the RMP. We told them that they can certainly be involved without the official MOU (Rick offered to meet with them anytime to keep them informed of the process).

**Deer Lodge County (3/2)** – Rick attended this meeting. Not many specific questions for the RMP. Rick?

**Jefferson County (3/3)** – There were a few project-specific questions, however, not too many questions regarding the RMP. There were some questions on the process (e.g., likelihood of appeals/protests). They would like us to come back when we have a specific proposed action (before we send to the public).

## Butte RMP Meeting Record Form

<b>Meeting/Conference Call Date</b>	February 27, 2004
<b>Subject of Meeting/Call</b>	American Wildlands Scoping Letter
<b>BLM Members</b>	Ruth Miller, Sarah La Marr, Mike Browne, Huey Long, Barb O'Neill
<b>Tetra Tech-Maxim Members</b>	None
<b>Other Agency Members</b>	

### **Brief Description of Meeting**

American Wildlands wanted to meet with the BLM to go over their scoping letter and explain their GIS data/maps.

They explained how their ranking (high quality areas) was done: INFISH; road densities; stocking histories; heritage data. They gave Sarah a CD with their data on it. They are looking for restoration opportunity areas as well.

American Wildlands wanted to know what they could help with – like restoration projects.

Mike gave a presentation on High Ore Creek. American Wildlands was interested in coming back this spring for a trip to High Ore. They asked Mike how we prioritized AML projects; Mike explained that we meet with other agencies, determine water quality impacts, TECH's monitoring project (at High Ore), and our travel plans. They also wanted to know if we worked with private landowners; Mike told them we did, and that we also worked with Watershed Committees.

The BLM explained that the State of Montana has the lead for TMDL, and that we provide them data.

Ruth asked American Wildlands to send further information regarding their ACEC nominations; they said they would send the reasons for the Sleeping Giant ACEC extension they nominated.

We discussed the Big Hole River briefly; primarily that the big issues were water rights/TMDL.

## Butte RMP Meeting Record Form

<b>Meeting/Conference Call Date</b>	March 17, 2004
<b>Subject of Meeting/Call</b>	Butte RMP Update
<b>BLM Members</b>	Ruth Miller, Mike Browne
<b>Tetra Tech-Maxim Members</b>	None
<b>Other Agency Members</b>	n/a

### **Brief Description of Meeting**

Ruth and Mike attending the monthly Big Hole River Watershed Committee meeting the evening of March 17<sup>th</sup> to update the Committee on the Butte RMP. Ruth gave an overview of what had been done to date, handed out the scoping newsletter to everyone (about 30-35 members present), and explained the schedule for revising the RMP. The Committee had the following questions/comments:

- They wanted the Recreation Issue to be separate/clearer – it is currently under commercial uses and needs to be its own issue to address things like fishing access, camping, etc. and not just commercial uses and travel planning.
- In general, they would like the Issues explained better (e.g., the sub-categories in the large issues).
- Would we be doing travel planning in the Big Hole River area (collaboration meetings)?
- Are there any more chances for public involvement?
- Were we working with the Dillon Field Office and FS during our RMP (collaborating with the other agencies)?

**APPENDIX C: LEGAL NOTICES AND PRESS RELEASES**

---



United States Department of Interior  
106 North Parkmont

Bureau of Land Management

Butte Field Office  
Butte, Montana 59701

Contact: Marilyn Krause  
Phone: (406) 533-7617  
Date: December 19, 2003

**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. 7<sup>th</sup> 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/>.

BOULDER MONITOR

Boulder MT 59632

Wednesday

DEC 31 2003

Superior Clipping Service

Glendive MT 406-377-6612

## **BLM meeting in Boulder January 8 will gather public input on Resource Management Plan**

The Bureau of Land Management will hold a public meeting in Boulder January 8 to gather input on a process to revise the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for public lands administered by the BLM's Butte Field Office.

The meeting, to be held in the library at the Boulder Elementary School, gets underway at 7 p.m.

Other similar meetings are slated around the state.

The meetings will share infor-

mation about the process and accept comments. After presentations, attendees will have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with BLM representatives and submit written comments.

The RMP will identify goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for the management of resources, and identify 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.

Comments on the RMP are due by February 17. For more information, contact Ruth Miller, BLM Project Manager, 406-533-7645. To read the Notice of Intent or for more information on the planning process, visit the RMP website at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>.

DILLON TRIBUNE

Dillon MT 59725

Wednesday

DEC 31 2003

Superior Clipping Service

Glendive MT 406-377-6612

# BLM eyes new management plan

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 on the following schedule:

•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 plan. 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 oppor-

tunity 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 concerns, comments are needed by February 17, 2004 to the Bureau of Land Management, Ruth Miller, RMP Project Leader.

Those wanting withhold their name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, must state this prominently at the beginning of their comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent al-

lowed 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, 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/>.

MONTANA STANDARD

Butte MT 59701

Daily

DEC 23 2003

Superior Clipping Service

Glenridge MT 406-377-6612

## **BLM hosts** *fix* **scoping meeting**

The Butte Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management is starting the process to revise its Resource Management Plan.

A scoping meeting and open house will be held Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m. at the BLM Butte Field Office,

106 N. Parkmont. The meetings will be held to share information and receive comments related to the Resource Management Plan. Meetings will also be held in Helena, Boulder, Divide, Bozeman and Butte.

The public scoping process 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. For details, call 533-7617.

**GREAT FALLS  
TRIBUNE**

Great Falls MT 59904

Daily

**DEC 23 2003**

Superior Clipping Service  
Glendive MT 406-377-6612

17X  
**BLM revising  
resource proposal**

The Bureau of Land Management Butte Field Office is beginning the

process of revising its Resource Management Plan.

Open houses will be held in Helena, Boulder, Divide, Butte, Bozeman and Townsend in January to collect public opinion and share information on the plan.

Information gathered at the meeting will be used to identify planning issues and interests of the public. The management plan will identify goals, objectives and standards, and guidelines for the management of resources within the Butte Field Office



**More state news on 2-6M**

over the next 10 to 15 years. An Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared at the same time to investigate the

impacts of the proposed plan and alternatives.

The BLM also is requesting public input for nominations consid-

ered worthy of Area of Critical Environmental Concern designation.

For additional information contact Ruth Miller, BLM Project Manager, at 406-533-7645 or visit <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>

JEFFERSON COUNTY  
COURIER

Clancy MT 59634

Wednesday

DEC 31 2003

Superior Clipping Service

Glendive MT 406-377-6612

## BLM meetings will gather public input on Resource Management Plan for the area

The Bureau of Land Management will hold a public meeting in Helena January 6 and another one in Boulder January 8 to gather input on a process to revise the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for public lands administered by the BLM's Butte Field Office.

The Helena meeting will be held at the Chamber of Commerce building and the Boulder meeting will be held in the library at the Boulder Elementary School. Both meetings get underway at 7 p.m.

The meetings will share information about the process and accept comments. After presentations, attendees will have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with BLM officials and submit written comments.

The RMP will identify goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for the management of resources, and identify 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 pro-

posed plan and alternatives.

Major topics identified to date that will be addressed in the RMP effort include:

- management of vegetation;
- conservation and recovery of special status species;
- water quality, quantity, and aquatic species;
- travel management and access to public lands;
- management of areas with special values;
- availability and management of public lands for commercial uses;
- and land tenure adjustments.

The RMP covers the public land administered by the Butte Field Office in portions of Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Beaverhead, Gallatin, Lewis & Clark, Park, Silver Bow and Jefferson counties.

Comments on the RMP are due by February 17. For more information, contact Ruth Miller, BLM Project Manager, 406-533-7645. To read the Notice of Intent or for more information on the planning process, visit the RMP website at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>.

**APPENDIX D: SCOPING MEETING HANDOUTS, SAMPLE SIGN-IN SHEET, AND  
BLM BUTTE FIELD OFFICE POWER POINT PRESENTATION**

---



## **Proposed Planning Criteria BLM Butte Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

The BLM Butte Field Office will use the following planning criteria throughout the RMP/EIS process. Based on applicable laws, regulations, and guidance, these criteria consist of constraints or ground rules that direct the preparation of the RMP. The planning criteria also ensure that the plan is tailored to specific issues and are open for public comment.

1. The plan will comply with Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) and all other applicable laws.
2. The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.
3. The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the Butte Field Office.
4. The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*, and, when signed, the *Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan* and *Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota*.
5. The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior Wilderness designations and Wilderness Study Area findings that affect public lands in the planning area.
6. The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
7. The plan will recognize the State's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
8. Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies as long as the decision is in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
9. The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with Bureau-wide standards and program guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, various Instruction Memos and Bulletins:
10. Geospatial data will be automated within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.
11. Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.
12. The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.



## **Planning Issues and Management Concerns BLM Butte Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP)/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

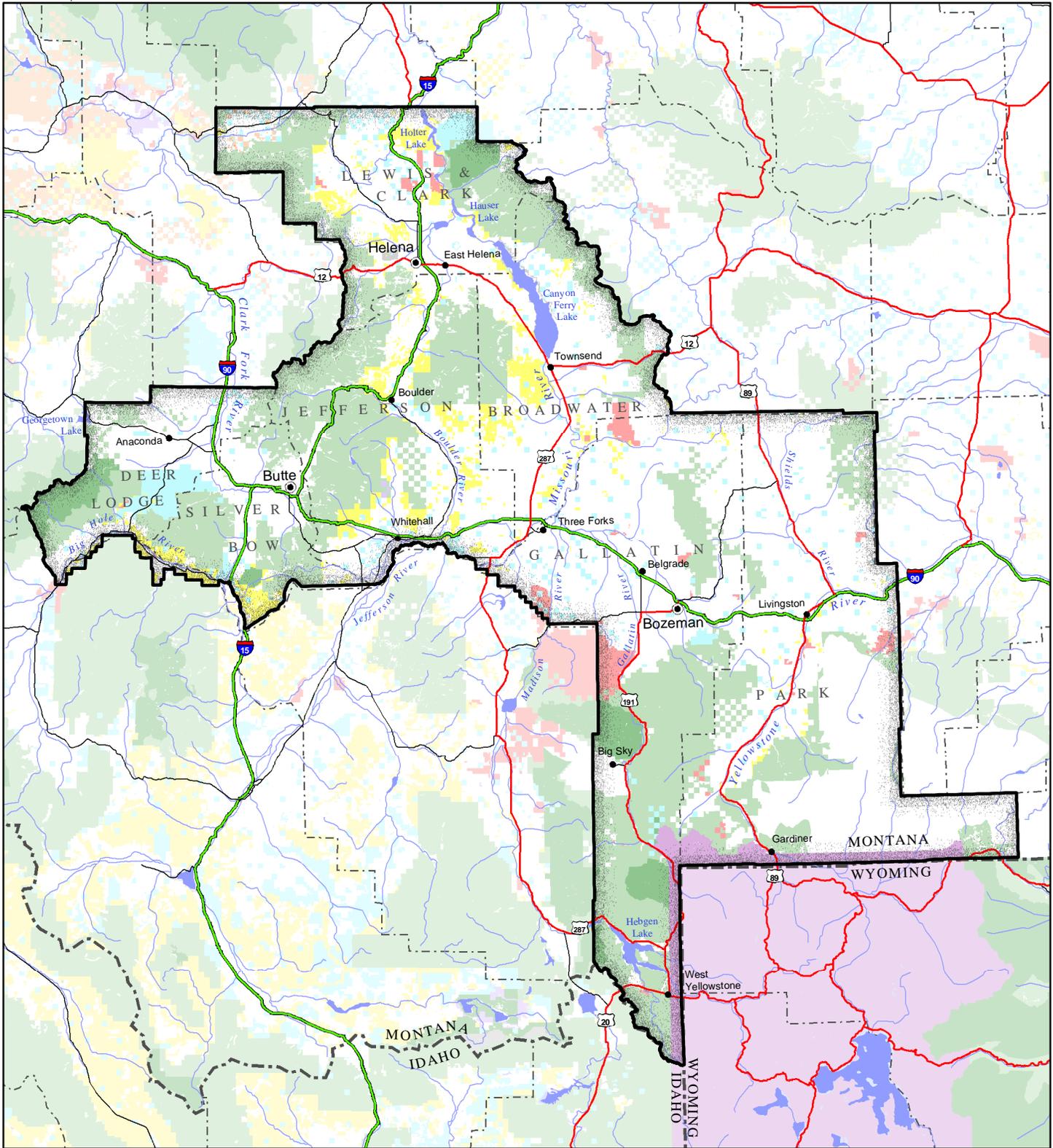
Planning issues and management concerns are currently being identified by the public, BLM, and other government agencies. General resources and land use activities in which issues of concern have been raised are listed below. "Planning Issue Areas" are those resources and activities in which overall resource planning concerns have been raised. "Areas of Management Concern" are resources in which concerns have been raised regarding a specific activity, location or resource. **Additional issues and management concerns will likely be added through the process, based on public input.**

### **Planning Issues**

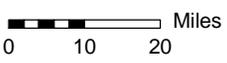
- Planning Issue Area 1: Vegetation Management
- Planning Issue Area 2: Special Status Species
- Planning Issue Area 3: Water Quality/Quantity/Aquatic Species
- Planning Issue Area 4: Travel Management and Access
- Planning Issue Area 5: Special Management Area Designation
- Planning Issue Area 6: Commercial Uses
- Planning Issue Area 7: Land Ownership Adjustments

### **Management Concerns**

- Area of Management Concern #1: Air Quality
- Area of Management Concern #2: Abandoned Mine Land Hazard and Reclamation
- Area of Management Concern #3: Soil Resources
- Area of Management Concern #4: Cultural/Paleontological Resources
- Area of Management Concern #5: Visual Resource Management
- Area of Management Concern #6: Social and Economic Concerns



Butte Planning Area  
Bureau of Land Management



- Land Ownership**
- Private
  - US - BLM
  - US Forest Service
  - US - Wilderness
  - US National Park Service
  - US Fish & Wildlife Service
  - Other Federal Government
  - State of Montana
  - Local Government
  - Private Conservation Easement
  - Corporate Timber





**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR – BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
**BUTTE FIELD OFFICE**  
**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**  
**PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING - January 2004**

Add me to the Mailing List	I am interested in becoming part of a working committee	Name	Organization	Mailing Address City, State, Zip	Phone Number E-Mail Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

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.

# Resource Management Plan Revision and Environmental Impact Statement

Bureau of Land Management,  
Butte Field Office

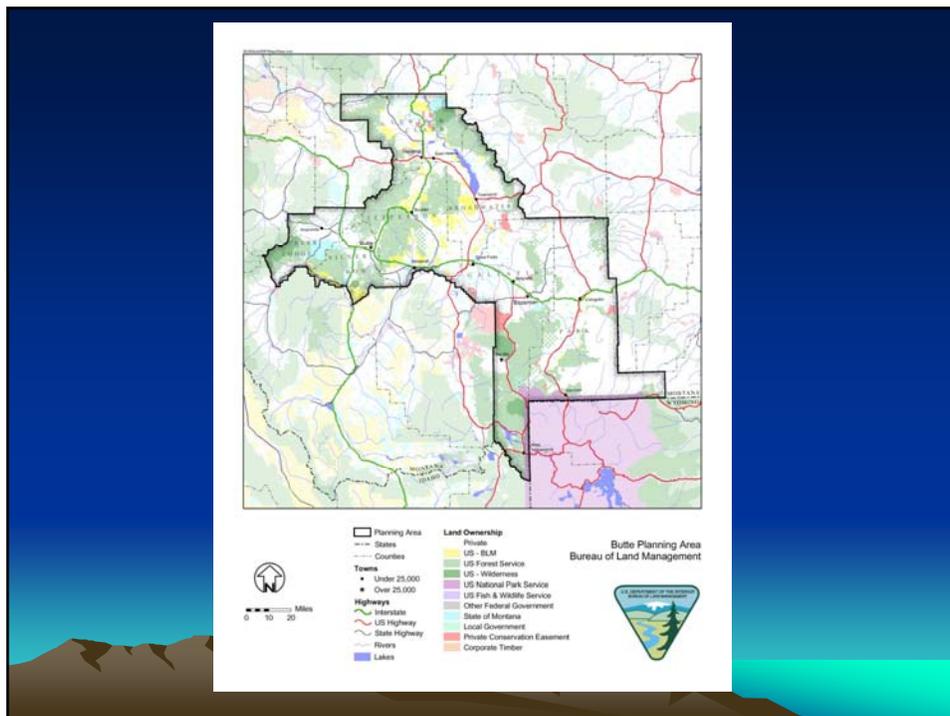


## What is an RMP?

- Addresses management concerns for surface and mineral estate land administered by BLM
- Provides a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating public land and resources within the Butte Field Office boundary

# The Butte FO RMP

- The BLM Butte Field Office (FO) has initiated the process to revise its existing RMP for approximately 311,000 acres of surface and 656,000 acres of mineral estate land in the Midwestern portion of Montana
- A supporting Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared



## Why Prepare an RMP?

- Lands administered by the Butte FO are currently being managed under the 1984 Headwaters RMP
- Need an updated RMP that will incorporate changes that have occurred over the last 20 years
- Jurisdictional transfer of land has resulted in boundary adjustment for the planning area of the Butte FO

## Objectives of the RMP

- Update existing management decisions for the lands in the Butte FO
- Address new data
- Address changes in resource conditions and a new Butte FO boundary
- Integrate and modify uses of public land that have occurred since the Headwaters RMP and other plans were completed

## Steps in the RMP Process

**1** Identification of Issues, Concerns and Opportunities

**2** Development of Planning Criteria

**3** Inventory Data and Informational Collection

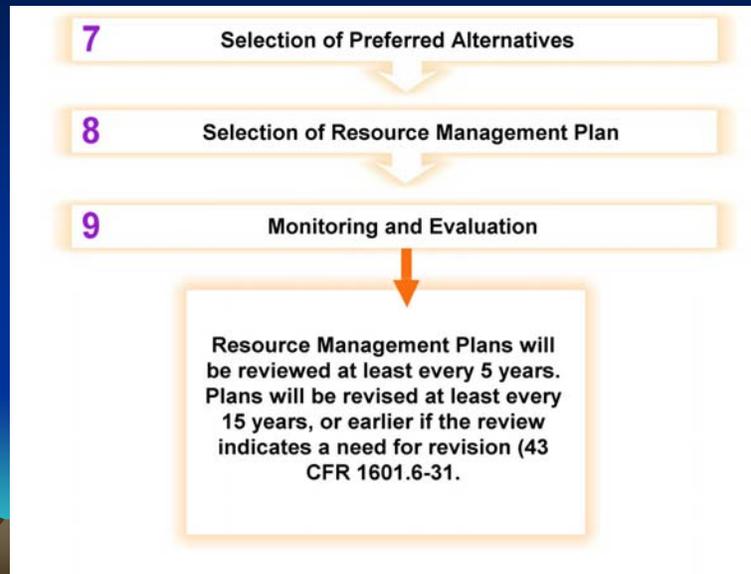
## Steps in the RMP Process – Cont.

**4** Analysis of the Management Situation

**5** Formulation of Alternatives

**6** Estimation of Effects of Alternatives

## Steps in the RMP Process – Cont.



## Issues

- Only those aspects of current management direction that may be controversial, or in need of updating, are examined.
- Seven preliminary issues have been identified:
  - Issue 1: Vegetation Management
  - Issue 2: Special Status Species

## Issues (continued)

- Issue 3: Water Quality/Quantity/Aquatic Species
- Issue 4: Travel Management and Access
- Issue 5: Special Management Area Designation
- Issue 6: Commercial Uses
- Issue 7: Land Ownership Adjustments
- Additional issues will be identified during the Scoping process

## Planning Level vs. Site Specific Issues

- Planning level issues are broad scale issues and potentially impact large portions of the field office
- Site-specific issues impact individual properties or other confined areas
- For the most part, the RMP will address planning level issues

## – Sample Issue – Fuels Management

- For example:
  - The EIS identifies areas where fuel treatment is needed and considers different types of treatment.
  - A site specific plan recommends treatment options such as burning or mechanical thinning on a definite area.

## Planning Criteria

- Defined as the ground rules that direct the preparation of the RMP
- Ensure that the plan is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided
- Based on applicable laws, regulations, and guidance

## The Importance of Public Participation

- Everyone is encouraged to actively participate and to provide input and comments during the preparation of the RMP/EIS. BLM would like input and feedback on:
  - Planning-level issues
  - Planning criteria

## How Can I Become Involved?

- Attend public meetings
- Complete comment forms
  - Can be filled out in hard-copy and mailed or can be filled out and sent electronically by visiting the project website at [www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/](http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/)
- Consider participating in an issue-based working group
- BLM is committed to involving the public through collaborative efforts throughout the process

## Schedule

- 12/19/03: Publish NOI in the Federal Register
- 2/17/04: Formal Scoping Period Ends
- Summer 2004: Compile Scoping Report
- Fall 2004: Release Proposed Planning Scenario for Comment
- Spring 2005: Complete Alternative Formulation

## Schedule (continued)

- Fall 2005: Release Draft RMP/EIS – Begin 90-day Comment Period
- Summer 2006: Release Final EIS – Begin 30-day Protest Period
- Fall 2006: Issue Record of Decision

## For Additional Information:

- Contact Ruth Miller, Project Manager at (406) 533-7645 or Ruth\_Miller @blm.gov
- Visit our website:
  - [www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/](http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/)





**Planning for the Future:  
Resource Management Plan for Public Land  
Administered by the BLM Butte Field Office in the  
Mid-Western Portion of Montana**



The Butte Field Office of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is starting a process to revise the Headwaters Resource Management Plan (RMP) for public land and resources it manages in eight counties in mid-western Montana. The RMP will address management concerns for surface and mineral estate land administered by the BLM in the planning area, and will provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating public land and resources. The RMP will specify what public and commercial uses can occur, and under what conditions these uses are appropriate. As part of the RMP, a supporting environmental impact statement (EIS) will also be prepared. The EIS will address a wide variety of issues and analyze a reasonable range of alternatives for resource management in the planning area.

Public involvement will be a critical component of the planning process. Everyone will be given an opportunity to participate meaningfully and to provide input and comments during the preparation of the RMP/EIS. The BLM would like input and feedback on planning-level issues, planning criteria, and plan implementation. The

BLM would also like input on potential special designation areas, including areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) and rivers which meet special criteria under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

**Even if you do not wish to comment at this time, you must return the business reply mailing sheet at the back of this brochure in order to stay on our mailing list for this project.** If we do not hear from you, we will remove your name from our mailing list so we do not continue sending unwanted information regarding the Butte RMP. If you are interested in the future management of public land administered by the Butte Field Office, we invite you to become involved and lend your voice as we begin to revise the RMP.

**WHY WE NEED AN RMP**

Land within the planning area is currently managed according to the 1984 Headwaters Resource Management Plan. Over the past 20 years, changes have occurred in

resource conditions and the way public land is used. Emerging issues related to topics such as threatened and endangered species, road and trail management, and fuels management need to be addressed. A new RMP will address these concerns and incorporate changes in planning and resource program guidelines that have developed at the national level. Finally, jurisdictional boundaries have changed since the time the Headwaters RMP was developed. Land in five counties that was covered in the Headwaters RMP is now managed by the Lewistown Field Office. The Butte RMP will cover all of the public and mineral estate land within the Butte Field Office boundary.

**THE PLANNING AREA**

The planning area for the Butte RMP consists of approximately 311,000 acres of public land (and 656,000 acres of mineral estate) in eight counties: Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Park, Silver Bow, and a small portion of Beaverhead County along the Big Hole River.

**THE RMP/EIS PLANNING PROCESS**

Preparing the RMP is a nine-step process (see box below). Some steps occur at the same time and it may be necessary to repeat a step as additional information becomes available. The RMP which results from this process helps field managers make decisions and guides staff efforts on a day-to-day basis. Where more detailed management direction is required, we will prepare and analyze activity plans after the RMP is completed.

**STEPS IN THE PROCESS**

1. Identify Issues
2. Develop Planning Criteria
3. Compile Inventory Data and Information
4. Analyze the Management Situation
5. Formulate Alternatives
6. Estimate Effects
7. Select a Preferred Alternative (Draft EIS)
8. Release Proposed RMP/Final EIS
9. Implement, Monitor, and Evaluate

**PLANNING ISSUES**

A planning issue is identified as a matter of controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land use. Preliminary planning issues have been identified, but new ones may be identified based on public input during the scoping process. The preliminary planning issues for

the Butte RMP have been identified as:

- Vegetation Management
- Special Status Species (threatened, endangered, proposed, sensitive)
- Water Quality/Quantity/Aquatic Species
- Travel Management and Access
- Special Management Area Designation
- Commercial Uses
- Land Ownership Adjustments

**PLANNING CRITERIA**

Planning criteria are the guidelines or ground rules that direct preparation of the RMP. They help ensure that the plan is tailored to the identified planning issues and help to avoid unnecessary data collection and analyses. They are based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, and the results of coordination with the public and other federal, state, and local agencies, and Native American tribes. Preliminary planning criteria have been developed but are subject to modification during the scoping process. Examples of preliminary criteria to be used in development of the RMP include the following:

- The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.
- The plan will recognize the State of Montana's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
- The RMP will incorporate by reference all prior Wilderness Study Area findings that affect public land.
- The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.

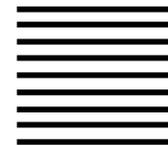
**SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA DESIGNATION**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) directs the BLM to use the planning process to "give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs)". In the 1984 Headwaters RMP, several areas were nominated as candidates for consideration as ACECs. Most of these areas were along the Rocky Mountain Front and are no longer in the Butte RMP planning area; the Butte Field Office currently manages one ACEC-the Sleeping Giant ACEC north of Helena. Additional nominations will be requested during the RMP formal scoping procedures so that evaluations can be considered as part of the comprehensive RMP process. To be considered a potential ACEC, an area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance as

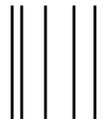
-----fold along this line-----fold along this line-----

BUTTE, MT 59701  
106 N. PARKMONT  
BUTTE FIELD OFFICE  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
RMP PROJECT LEADER

FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 14153 WASHINGTON, D.C.  
**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Return if not delivered in 10 days  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

-----cut along this line-----cut along this line-----cut along this line-----

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. All nominations which meet the ACEC criteria will be studied further during development of the RMP. Please contact the Butte Field Office for more information on nominating ACECs.

In addition, streams in the planning area are currently being evaluated for eligibility and suitability under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These are streams that have been identified as free-flowing and possessing outstandingly remarkable values. The public will be invited to comment on a draft eligibility report describing which streams are being evaluated for this designation, and final recommendations will be made in the draft and final RMP documents.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The RMP revision process is expected to take three years to complete. There are many milestones along the way with the major milestones listed below. A more detailed schedule will be developed after the scoping process is completed.

12/19/03	Publish Notice of Intent (NOI) in Federal Register
2/17/04	Formal Scoping Period Ends
Summer 2004	Compile Scoping Report
Fall 2004	Release Proposed Planning Scenario for Comment
Spring 2005	Complete Alternative Formulation
Fall 2005	Release Draft RMP/EIS – Begin 90-day comment period
Summer 2006	Release Final EIS – Begin 30-day Protest Period
Fall 2006	Issue Record of Decision

## SCOPING MEETINGS

Six scoping meetings have been scheduled to provide additional information on the RMP revision and to solicit comments (see box below).

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

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND STAY INVOLVED

During the RMP revision process there will be numerous opportunities for the public and stakeholders to shape the RMP. Some ways to be involved in this initial scoping period are listed below; however, public involvement will be ongoing throughout the RMP revision and the public will be notified as future opportunities occur.

**Website:** We invite you to browse our website at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/>, where we will post up-to-date information about the planning process. You can also use the website to submit comments.

**Mailing list:** To get on our mailing list, register on the website or return the mailing sheet included in this brochure (cut out, re-fold, and staple closed) to the BLM Butte Field Office. No postage is needed. We will use the mailing list to keep you updated throughout the planning process. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of the comment section. Requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU, WE WILL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM THE LIST SO YOU DO NOT RECEIVE UNWANTED MAIL.

**Scoping Meetings:** Come to a scoping meeting to get additional background information and express your thoughts and concerns about public land managed by the BLM Butte Field Office. The meetings will be an open house format. Locations, dates and times are listed in this brochure.

**Written Comments.** Send us written comments either by regular mail or e-mail. Send regular mail to: Ruth Miller, Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office, 106 N. Parkmont, Butte, Montana 59701. Send e-mail to [Ruth\\_Miller@blm.gov](mailto:Ruth_Miller@blm.gov). We need to receive written comments on issues, planning criteria, and ACECs by February 17, 2004 in order to give your comments full consideration as we move forward in this planning process. If you have questions, please contact Ruth Miller, RMP Project Leader, at the BLM Butte Field Office, (406) 533-7645.

RMP PROJECT LEADER  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
BUTTE FIELD OFFICE  
106 N. PARKMONT  
BUTTE, MT 59701

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

Please keep my name on the mailing list.

Please place my email address on your list so I can receive information over the Internet.  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please change my mailing address to the following:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E: AGENCY LETTER RECEIVED DURING SCOPING PERIOD**

---



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE  
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 West 15<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 3200  
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

11

RECEIVED  
2004 FEB -5 P 1:10

Ref: 8MO

February 3, 2004

Bureau of Land Management  
Ruth Miller, RMP Project Manager,  
Butte Field Office,  
106 North Parkmont,  
Butte, MT, 59701

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Re: EPA NEPA Guidance/Comments for the BLM  
Butte Field Office Resource Management Plan  
(RMP) and associated EIS

Dear Ms. Miller:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 8, Montana Office has reviewed the December 19, 2003 Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Butte Field Office and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Park, and Silver Bow Counties, Montana. The EPA reviews EIS accordance with its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Section 309 of the Clean Air Act directs EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts of any major Federal agency action. EPA's draft EIS comments will include a rating of both the environmental impact of the proposed action and the adequacy of analysis and disclosure in the NEPA document.

It is EPA's goal that the Butte Field Office RMP EIS fulfill the basic intent of NEPA, and encompass to the maximum extent possible the environmental and public involvement requirements of State and Federal laws, Executive Orders, and policies (e.g., Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, E.O. 11990-Protection of Wetlands, etc.). The EPA is particularly interested in seeing the Plan revisions and EIS address and prioritize Butte Field Office Management Area direction, prescriptions, land allocations, desired conditions, and associated goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, etc., to provide:

- 1) Protection of population strongholds and key refugia for listed or proposed species and narrow endemic populations.
- 2) BMPs for water quality protection; protection of riparian areas and wetlands; reduced water quality, fisheries, and wildlife impacts from roads; and maintenance and restoration of watershed health to achieve water quality that fully supports beneficial uses of surface waters in cooperation with State/EPA TMDL development and implementation efforts.



3) Strong monitoring and **adaptive management** programs, including support for watershed analysis, and monitoring and evaluation of **BMP** effectiveness and **watershed** restoration success.

4) Integration of National Fire Plan direction, including evaluation of the **increased** role of fire and **other natural disturbance** processes (e.g., insects, disease) and ecosystem processes (e.g., flows and cycles of nutrients and water) and their dynamics and **smoke/air** quality impacts and forest health (including **weed** management) in developing revised vegetation and fuels management strategies.

Since portions of the BLM Butte Field Office area lie within the Interior Columbia Basin we want to draw your attention to the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding **between** the Forest Service, **BLM**, EPA, USFWS, and NMFS indicating that the BLM will implement the Interior Columbia Basin **Strategy** on BLM (referred to as the **ICB** Strategy). The EPA very much supports development of management direction that is consistent with this Strategy to integrate **findings** and knowledge gained through the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem **Management** Project (ICBEMP), as well as new **information** and the best available science into **the** RMP.

We are enclosing EPA's **EIS** guidance and comments to assist in addressing NEPA requirements, and environmental and public **involvement** requirements of State and **Federal** laws, regulations and policies, and to provide a scope of issues consistent with EPA's concerns **that** will assist in the preparation of the EIS. A Summary of Significant Issues is included at the beginning of the enclosure to identify **EPA's** more significant RMP and EIS information **disclosure** and analysis issues. Our experience has shown that when environmental **concerns** are thoroughly evaluated, the EIS is a more meaningful document, that will result in better decisions.

We appreciate the **opportunity** to cooperate with you in this effort, and thank you for your willingness to consider our comments at this stage of the process. If you have any questions you may contact Mr. Stephen **Potts** of the **EPA** Region 8 Montana Office in Helena at 406-457-5022 or in **Missoula** at 406-329-3313.

Sincerely,



John F. Wardell  
Director  
Montana Office

Enclosures

cc: Larry Svoboda/Julia Johnson, EPA, 8EPR-N, Denver  
Carole Mackin, MDEQ, Helena

**US . Environmental Protection Agency Rating System for Draft Environmental Impact  
Statements  
Definitionssad Follow-Up Action\***

**Environmental Impact of the Action**

**LO . . Lack of Objections:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

**EC . . Environmental Concerns:** The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

**EO . . Environmental Objections:** The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

**EU . . Environmentally Unsatisfactory:** The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

**Adequacy of the Impact Statement**

**Category 1 . . Adequate:** EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

**Category 2 . . Insufficient Information:** The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

**Category 3 . . Inadequate:** EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA review has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

\* From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment. February, 1987.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidance and Comments for  
the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Resource Management  
Plan (RMP) for the BLM Butte Field Office**

**Prepared by EPA Region 8 Montana Office**

**Table of Contents**

<b>Summary of Significant Issues</b> .....	2
<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>NEPA Issues</b> .....	5
1) <b>Purpose and Need</b> .....	5
2) <b>Alternatives</b> .....	6
Mitigation .....	8
3) <b>Affected Environment/Existing Condition</b> .....	8
4) <b>Environmental Consequences</b> .....	9
Cumulative Effects .....	10
Indirect Effects .....	12
5) <b>NEPA Process for Site-Specific Projects</b> .....	12
<b>Resource Issues</b> .....	13
1) <b>Vegetation</b> .....	13
Natural Disturbance Processes .....	13
Noxious Weeds .....	14
2) <b>Wildlife</b> .....	16
Ofd Growth .....	17
Snags and Coarse Woody Debris .....	17
Threatened and Endangered Species .....	17
Biodiversity .....	18
3) <b>Hydrology and Aquatic Species</b> .....	18
Clean Water Act-Water Quality Standards .....	18
Water Quality Analysis .....	19
Section 319 of the Clean Water Act .....	21
303 (d) listed Waters and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) .....	22
Aquatic Monitoring .....	25
Wetlands .....	27
Riparian Areas .....	28
Public Water Supply Watersheds/Aquifers .....	29
4) <b>Recreation and Travel Management</b> .....	30

Roads .....	30
Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use .....	32
Snowmobiles .....	32
<b>5) Fire Management .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Fires & Forest Ecosystems .....	33
Prescribed Fire & Air Quality .....	34
Wildfire .....	37
<b>6) Livestock Grazing .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>7) Timber .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Economics .....	38
<b>8) Wilderness Recommendations .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>9) Other Items .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern .....	39
Wild & Scenic Rivers .....	40
Heritage Resources .....	40
Tribal Coordination .....	40
Environmental Justice .....	41
Mineral Development/Mining .....	41
Solid Waste Facilities .....	42
Oil and Gas Development .....	43
Pollution Prevention .....	43

### **Summary of Significant Issues**

This summary is intended to briefly identify EPA's more significant revision and/or EIS information disclosure and environmental analysis issues. More detailed discussion can be found in the subsequent sections.

- RMP consistency with the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy (i.e., for Butte Field Office westside areas that are within the Interior Columbia Basin).
- Alternatives should identify the purpose and need for the proposed management direction; resource/environmental conditions that will result from application of proposed management direction; and estimated outputs of goods and services, timing and flow of outputs, costs and benefits, and resource management/protection standards and guidelines.
- Include programmatic cumulative effects analyses to reduce the extent of analysis for each project tiering from RMPs using appropriate analysis area for each resource analyzed; and focusing analysis on the resources significantly impacted. Ecological effects may extend beyond BLM land boundaries;

- Protect areas with unique **resource** values, **particularly** population **strongholds** and key **refugia** for listed or **proposed** species and **narrow** endemic populations.
- **Protect** high quality waters, riparian areas, wetlands, and aquatic species, including development of **riparian protection guidelines** to protect water quality & riparian areas and gain recovery of native fish populations (e.g., **INFISH** riparian protection guidelines).
- **Promote** watershed restoration to achieve water quality that fully supports beneficial **uses** in **cooperation** with State/EPA TMDL **development** and **implementation efforts**; **link** watershed **proper** functioning condition to **water quality** that **fully** supports **beneficial** uses.
- **Improve watershed/aquatic** monitoring & assessment programs to identify impacts, detect problems, measure restoration success, and **make** changes to management based on monitoring (adaptive management), and address coordination **efforts** and budget needs for monitoring. Identify how monitoring will **improve from** the current plan.
- Reduce road impacts to water quality, fisheries and wildlife; identify road network needed for access and management which can be adequately maintained within budgets and capabilities; **close/decommission** roads that can't be maintained; minimize new roads; identify existing **road** conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source **pollution/stream impairment**, and promote conduct of necessary road maintenance to **correct** deficiencies, and reduce **nonpoint** source pollution **from** roads.
- **Integrate** National Fire Plan diction, including restoring more natural fire disturbance regimes to forest ecosystems, and evaluation of role of fire and other **natural** disturbance processes (e.g., insects, disease) & **ecosystem** processes (e.g., flows, cycles of **nutrients & water**) and their dynamics in developing revised direction for vegetation and **fuels** management.
- Discuss **Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems** and **implications** for increased **prescribed** burning, and **Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires**, and identify **participation** in **Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group** to minimize air quality impacts of prescribed fire.
- EPA recommends focusing fuels management in WUIs, and **areas** of high and severe fire risk, **and** evaluation of water quality, fisheries, wildlife impacts of **fuels** management to reduce **f i** risk vs. **risk** of and effects of potential **wildfire**.
- **Prevent** continued loss, and promote long-term **sustainability**, of old growth stands, **and** restore where possible the geographic extent and connectivity of old growth; **HRV** concepts are **most** valid at the broad landscape scale of analysis.

- Retain adequate **snags** and woody debris for wildlife **habitat** and necessary **ecological structure and functioning** (e.g., soil productivity, nutrient **cycling**, etc.).
- **Identify** noxious **weeds/exotic plants**; discuss the **magnitude** and occurrence of the weed **infestations**, and strategies for **prevention, early** detection, and **control** procedures for weed management. Promote integrated weed management, with mitigation to avoid herbicide transport to surface or ground waters.
- Maintain and restore degraded wildlife habitats, evaluating **mad** management, habitat characteristics, security, displacement, fragmentation, connectivity; wildlife movement corridors, forest openings, edge effects; and promote T&E and sensitive species recovery.
- Control and **direct** off-road vehicle use to **protect** resources (i.e., wildlife habitat and security) and prevent erosion, including adequate policing and enforcement.
- **Coordinate** with interested Indian Tribes and provide opportunities for **meaningful** Tribal input.

### **Introduction**

The EPA acknowledges **the** BLM's professional expertise and experience in **managing** Federal land **under** their jurisdiction for their multiple purposes. We realize that each EIS analysis has its own unique scope, affected environment, past and **proposed** impacts, and will require its own level of analysis, and may require consideration above and beyond what is presented **here**.

We hope the EIS will lead to an improved decision-making process for selecting among management alternatives. EPA's scoping comments for this EIS for the Butte Field Office RMP are intended to provide a scope of issues, consistent with EPA's concerns, to help assure full public disclosure of all foreseeable **direct**, indirect, and cumulative **environmental** impacts of the RMP, and consistency with environmental **and** public involvement **requirements** of **State** and Federal laws, Executive Orders and policies. We are also using **EIS** scoping as an opportunity to provide **information** on **environmental** laws, **programs**, regulations, and policies, including background and explanatory information, references, contacts, **etc.**, as well as to identify potential issues for consideration during EIS analyses.

While this EIS guidance and scoping comments are comprehensive please **keep** in mind that if issues are not significant they can be **dismissed** with **brief** explanation. A **challenge** for the RMP will be to meet ecological, economic and social needs with Federal land management while addressing the **many** requirements of the various State and Federal laws, policies and Executive Orders. The comments also provide insight into land management issues EPA may evaluate when it reviews the draft EIS. **The** EPA emphasizes six concepts in such NEPA documents:

- 1) Clear, logical **and comprehensive analysis** process and disclosure of effects;
- 2) **Disclosure** of existing conditions of Federal lands;
- 3) Discussion of guidance **and rationale** for proposed changes to management direction **and** programs for **implementation**;
- 4) Disclosure of environmental effects of proposed management direction demonstrating conformance to existing law **and** regulation;
- 5) **Disclosure** of monitoring and adaptive management programs for proposed management activities;
- 6) Disclosure of the process used to develop, revise or **waive a** objective, standard, or guideline.

The EPA will review this EIS in **accordance** with our **responsibilities** under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Section 309 of the CAA Act requires EPA to review all draft and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents, develop formal Agency comments and **publish** them for **public** review. The EPA publishes in the **Federal Register**, a dual rating of the DEIS based on the preferred alternative Identified in the document. The **rating** summarizes EPA's evaluation of: 1) the environmental impacts of the proposal; and 2) the adequacy of the draft EIS (See summary of EPA's **rating** system for EISs attached). With this broad charge, EPA is not limited in its comments to only the spectrum of laws and regulations for which it has a primary regulatory role. Comments on any aspect of the EIS and supporting documents are appropriate. Ordinarily, however, the most substantive EPA comments continue to be in areas where EPA has specific jurisdiction and expertise.

We have organized our scoping comments into two sections, **NEPA Issues and Resource Issues**. We have done this in an effort to present information and discussion regarding issues we believe should be considered, and potentially addressed, in the **EIS** in a manner that may be more relevant and useful to the Butte Field Office. We acknowledge that many issues we discuss may be more pertinent to project level analyses, but we include them here to assist in understanding EPA land management issues and concerns during programmatic planning.

## **NEPA Issues**

### **1) Purpose and Need**

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated EIS should identify the underlying purpose and need for the revision to the existing RMP. Resource needs, public issues, and management concerns should provide the focus for purpose and need.

The EIS should also include an adequate explanation of the rationale for the establishment of the analysis area boundary. The analysis area should include the environment potentially affected by implementation of the alternatives and should be a logical unit for

projecting and measuring effects, We note that potential impacts to water quality, fish, wetlands, stream drainage patterns, air quality, wildlife, biodiversity, fragmentation and connectivity to other projects, may extend beyond the immediate project area. An appropriate analysis area should encompass the potentially affected environment, and may extend beyond the Federal land boundary, and should serve as a baseline to compare projected impacts, and for measuring actual effects.

The EIS should also identify the decisions that are made with the RMP. If there are any Guiding documents that this analysis is tiered to, such as a broader programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (e.g., Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project-ICBEMP), they should be identified as well as direction or other specific requirements controlling forest management. We want to draw your attention to the Interaency Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service, BLM, EPA, USFWS, and NMFS stating that the BLM will implement the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy on BLM lands (referred to as the ICB Strategy). The EPA supports development of management direction that is consistent with this Strategy to integrate findings and knowledge gained through the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP), as well as new information and the best available science into the RMP.

## **2) Alternatives**

The RMP and associated EIS should support the purpose and need with a range of reasonable management alternatives that will meet the goals and objectives of the purpose and need; address significant issues identified during scoping; address resource and environmental needs, and management concerns. Each alternative should identify the purposes of the proposed management direction; resource and environmental conditions that will result from application of proposed management direction; and estimated outputs of goods and services, timing and flow of outputs, costs and benefits, and resource management/protection standards and guidelines. In accordance with NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14) the EIS should:

- a. Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives.
- b. Include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency.
- c. Include a no action alternative.
- d. Identify the agency's preferred alternative(s).
- e. Include appropriate mitigation measures not already included in the proposed action or alternatives.
- f. Include appropriate mitigation measures.

We recommend that tables, maps, figures, charts, photos, etc., be used as much as possible and wherever appropriate to present and display information and specific features of alternatives so that the various alternatives can be clearly understood. We highly recommend that an alternatives matrix table that summarizes major features and significant environmental impacts of alternatives be provided to facilitate understanding of the alternatives, particularly

distinctions between alternatives, and provide comparative evaluation of alternatives in a manner that sharply defines issues for the decision maker and the public to make in regard to a reasoned choice among alternatives (40 CFR 1502.14). Additionally, more specific measures are often developed for individual alternatives to mitigate particular impacts. Such measures, as well as their anticipated effectiveness in accomplishing the planned purpose should be disclosed.

Among the information and issues EPA suggests for alternative analyses for revised management direction to disclose goals, objectives, standards, suitable uses/strategies, trends/risks, monitoring and rationale are the following:

- \* Emphasis of revised plan compared to the existing program and rationale for the change (goals, priorities, outputs, timing and flow of outputs, costs and benefits, programs, etc.);
- \* Definitions used (Are there any changes in definitions from existing Plans? How do the definitions agree with Region 1's definitions and the BLM's definitions in general?)
- \* Desired Condition, Goals, Objectives, Standards & Guidelines;
- \* Revisions to rehabilitation/restoration programs, level of effort and likely success;
- \* Process used to update the RMPs as conditions, regulations and standards change or revise or waive standards or guidelines;
- \* Process to ensure that ecosystem health is restored and sustained; and rationale of why the selected process is expected to maintain ecosystem health, and/or improve the health of the ecosystem; Include "indicators" or "criteria" used to judge the health of the ecosystem and rationale of why they are considered to be representative of the health of the ecosystems;
- \* Identification of issues which cross political or other authority boundaries (i.e. cross-political, agency, administrative, ownership, etc.) & thus require coordination with other entities. Cultural boundaries (i.e. political, administrative, economic, societal, etc.) should not override scientific analysis of ecosystems;
- \* Identification of characteristics and species which need to be separately tracked to ensure protection (e.g., T&E and sensitive species & their habitat, old growth);
- \* Identification and protection of the unique, small but important (ecologically) sites that function as key elements of the ecosystem (i.e., springs, seeps, moss dominated wetlands);
- \* How the RMP establishes outputs, habitat productivity and program mixes under various levels of funding and activity. How management objectives are set. Rationale of

why they are appropriate as management goals and for **maintaining/improving** ecosystem;

\* Revised monitoring program and its objectives (what, how much, how often, data & analysis needs, level of data & analysis **required/analyzed**; How does it improve monitoring from current plan?);

\* Adaptive management, process to measuring effects and detect problems and feedback monitoring results to make **changes/corrections** to protect, restore and sustain resources

\* Expected effectiveness of the new **RMP**; strategies that maintain and/or restore watershed condition and water quality to fully support beneficial uses and evaluation of watershed restoration success

### **Mitigation**

A comprehensive discussion of proposed mitigation for direct, indirect and cumulative impacts is required by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Part 1500). The CEQ regulations state that an EIS should include the means to mitigate adverse environmental effects and disclose the effectiveness of mitigation measures in minimizing adverse effects (40 CFR 1508.7). Simply listing the mitigation measures is insufficient to qualify as the reasoned discussion and "hard look" required by NEPA. Mitigation measures must be discussed in sufficient detail to ensure that potential detrimental environmental effects and measures to mitigate those effects have been fairly evaluated. Monitoring plans are also needed for measuring the effectiveness of the mitigation measures (quantitatively-if possible, **and/or** a qualitatively), and **determining** the need for **modifying** mitigation. The RMP and associated EIS should also address coordination efforts and funding or budget needs required to undertake or implement monitoring and mitigation measures.

### **3) Affected Environment/Existing Condition**

The RMP and associated EIS should succinctly describe the existing conditions using appropriate scales within the analysis area (e.g., watershed analysis where applicable). **As** a result of the broad scope of the analysis area and resources involved, the RMP may have the potential for being very useful in identifying 1) Locations of **terrestrial**, air, water, or biological resources which have a potentially greater importance or sensitivity to impacts; and 2) Locations of resources where existing knowledge of the resource or its sensitivity is **currently Lacking**.

For these purposes, baseline resources information should characterize the biological and physical environment **sufficient** to determine adequacy of data and information for evaluating potential environmental impacts. This is needed to support and provide a basis for objectives, standards and guidelines, stipulations, mitigation measures, cumulative impact analysis, and a reference for subsequent monitoring. With the advent of Ecosystem Management and the focus

on Sustainability, the context and structure of how resources are analyzed, **tradeoffs** weighed and decisions made will change. However, the basic data gathered, analyzed and discussed within the RMP may not. We recognize that detailed baseline information for all resources may not be readily available nor appropriate for this programmatic stage of analysis. However, the programmatic EIS should, at a minimum, indicate the level of information available now, and how additional site-specific information would be collected prior to ground disturbing activities.

#### **4) Environmental Consequences**

The EIS should analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of the management alternatives, including the effect of implementing the alternative on the physical, chemical and biological resources such as air and water quality, biologic components or ecosystems, and the likelihood of success of mitigation measures. The discussion should include analysis of impacts resulting from activities on all land ownerships (i.e., including non-Federal lands), and consider the issues discussed under Resource Topic Issues below as well as unavoidable adverse environmental effects, short-term and long-term environmental considerations, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources involved with the alternatives should they be implemented. In accordance with 40 CFR 1502.16 this section should address:

- a. Direct effects and their significance.
- b. Indirect effects and their significance.
- c. Possible conflicts between the proposed action and the objectives of Federal, regional, State, and local (and in the case of a reservation, Indian tribe) land use plans, policies and controls for the area concerned.
- d. The environmental effects of alternatives including the proposed action.
- e. Energy requirements and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures.
- f. Natural or depletable resource requirements and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures.
- g. Urban quality, historic and cultural resources, and the design of the built environment, including the reuse and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures.
- h. Means to mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

Statements made in the assessment should be substantiated either by data and analysis included in the document, or by reference to readily available supporting documents. When referencing documents or data not included in the NEPA document, information should be included to ensure the reader understands the quality and type of analysis actually completed. Environmental analysis documents should reflect the level of analysis and data compilation actually completed. Unless clearly documented, the reviewer may be unable to establish whether data exists to support conclusions within the analysis. Public accessibility to supporting documents is also important.

Among the ecosystem and resource conditions that we believe should be evaluated in association with disclosure of environmental effects from revised management direction are:

- \* Process and rationale to be used to select the level of analysis for the RMP, programmatic and project analyses (i.e. local, landscape, regional, etc.);
- \* Projected conditions and trends, resource inventory (what, how much, quality, condition, how are problems addressed, historic range of variability);
- \* Effects of alternatives on the ecosystem & biological diversity including the ability of the ecosystem to absorb environmental effects during implementation without adverse effects;
- \* Identification of gaps in information and habitats where special study, care or other protection measures are needed, and the process established to obtain the information;
- \* Ecosystem Management/Sustainability disclosure covering the elements & process for analysis of ecosystem effects of implementing alternatives to: 1) provide a basis for monitoring and "fine tuning" as knowledge and Ecosystem Management & Sustainability processes improve; 2) document the process and elements considered (i.e., species, indicators, connecting corridors, etc.) to allow program review at regular intervals, and 3) disclose the process for critical (scientific) review;
- \* Projected environmental effects resulting from proposed level of outputs, including the cumulative effects of connected and similar actions reasonably foreseeable as a result of implementation of the RMP;
- \* Identification of effects to the health of the ecosystem of implementing the RMP, especially cumulative effects.

### Cumulative Effects

NEPA requires that cumulative impacts be addressed as a summary of the individual impacts of the proposed action and all other past, present, and "reasonably foreseeable" future actions, including evaluation of direct and indirect effects of these projects on all resource categories, including water quality, aquatic habitat, fisheries, wetlands, air quality and wildlife habitat. This includes analysis and disclosure of activities on adjacent private land irrespective of what agency/entity has decision-making authority or analysis responsibility.

Cumulative impacts analysis and disclosure is most relevant and important for long-term programmatic RMPs because resources must be examined at many different geographic, temporal and cross-cutting scales, and are well suited to evaluation of long term trends and sustainability. A good cumulative effects analysis done at the programmatic level should reduce

the extent of analysis for each project that tiers off the RMP. Cumulative impacts will be monitored better if a dynamic link is maintained between the programmatic RMP and project level EAs or EISs such that subsequent site-specific project level NEPA documents are analyzed and disclosed within the broad context of the broader programmatic RMP. A project level EA or EIS tiered to the RMP should update the cumulative effects analysis in the RMP to explain to the public that resources are being used in a sustainable manner within the context of the broader programmatic analysis.

In January 1997 the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published, "*Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act*", guidance that provides a framework for analyzing cumulative effects. In May 1997 EPA published a document entitled, "*Consideration of Cumulative Effects in EPA Review of NEPA Documents.*" This document is available at <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/nepa/index.html>. (Click on cumulative effects document title). EPA considers five key areas of information in reviewing cumulative effects analyses:

- 1) Clear identification of resources being cumulatively impacted and the geographic area where impacts occur.
- 2) Use of appropriate analysis area boundaries for the resource and time period over which the cumulative effects have occurred or will occur.
- 3) Identification of impacts to resources of concern in each area through analysis of **cause-and-effects** relationships (include scientifically defensible threshold levels).
- 4) Adequate evaluation of all past, present, and **reasonable** foreseeable future actions that have affected, are affecting, or would affect resources of concern (include adequate evaluation vs. benchmark or baseline conditions).
- 5) Disclosure of the overall cumulative impacts expected if the individual impacts are allowed to accumulate, including exceedances of any of the established threshold levels in comparison to baseline conditions. **Provide** comparisons of cumulative impacts for the proposed management direction and the reasonable alternatives in relation to the no action alternative **and/or** an environmental reference point.

While a broad consideration of resources is necessary for adequate assessment of cumulative impacts, the analysis should be focused on those resources that are significantly impacted. The EIS should identify the resources of concern or ecosystem components that might be affected by the proposed action or its alternatives. The ecological requirements necessary to sustain the resources of concern should be considered when assessing how the project and the other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions may **cumulatively affect** the resources of concern. Often these ecological requirements may extend beyond the boundaries of the project area, but reasonable limits should be **made** to the **scope** of the **analysis**.

A common inadequacy of environmental analyses is the lack of analysis or disclosure of the sum of individual effects of all projects on the local environment. A summary listing of other projects occurring in the vicinity without the accompanying analysis is insufficient. Another

frequent oversight is that Agencies often tend to limit the scope of their analyses to those areas over which they have direct authority or to the boundary of the relevant management area or project area. This may not cover the effects to the area or resources of concern

### Indirect Effects

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA state that the environmental consequences section of an EIS should include: "Indirect effects and their significance (40 CFR 1502.16(b))." Indirect effects are defined as "...caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems" (40 CFR 1508.9(b)). The CEQ regulations also indicate that the EIS should include the "means to mitigate adverse environmental effects," which applies to indirect effects as well as direct effects.

Increasing development on private land adjacent to Federal land is a concern. The RMP may serve as a mechanism to identify local land use controls that may affect or regulate new development adjacent to the Federal land, and provide opportunities to work with local governments to address such issues. The RMP revision serve the function of increasing city/county understanding of foreseeable environmental consequences of growth and development adjacent to Federal land (especially considering the natural role of fire in forest ecosystems). This may provide opportunity for improved planning for future growth, and to develop mitigation measures for the impacts resulting from growth and development.

### 5) NEPA Process for Site-Specific Projects

Tiering can be a useful method of reducing paperwork and duplication when used for land management plans which will later be translated into site-specific projects. NEPA supports tiering and the two-stage broad scale programmatic/site specific project level decision process. We realize that the broad scope of analysis and larger number of actions and analysis area for a programmatic EIS make it more difficult to determine site-specific environmental consequences. Site-specific analyses will generally be performed in subsequent project level documents. However, we believe management direction that will influence potential environmental impacts of proposed activities tiered to the RMP should be evaluated to disclose potential environmental impacts from programmatic actions to the extent possible (quantitatively if possible, otherwise qualitatively). The need to complete future site-specific analyses does not preclude the obligation to complete first level screening of reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed action, similar and connected actions and their cumulative effects at the RMP programmatic level, It is important for the RMP and associated EIS, although a programmatic document to which site-specific analyses will be tiered, to include adequate evaluation and disclosure of the potential environmental impacts associated with management direction for implementation of proposed projects tiered to the RMP .

Programmatic NEPA documents must contain enough environmental information to allow the decision maker to understand the impacts of the program and management options. Only then can the decision maker make a reasoned decision on whether the program should go forward, and can the public understand the impacts of such management decisions. Subsequent NEPA documents tiered to programmatic plans and EIS's need only summarize the issues discussed in the broader plan and EIS and incorporate discussions from the broader programmatic EIS by reference.

The RMP and associated EIS should describe how the NEPA process will be incorporated into future land management decisions for future site-specific projects. The framework for public involvement in future management decisions should also be made clear. Also, a clear decision point at which an appeal or litigation can be initiated should be identified. Wording in some programmatic and project documents and Records of Decision confuse where the appealable decision is made.

## **Resource Issues**

### **1) Vegetation**

The EPA supports the need to manage vegetation to restore declining habitats like whitebark pine, aspen and willow, and recognize the natural role of fire as a disturbance process, and control noxious weeds.

#### **Natural Disturbance Processes**

We fully support the need to recognize fire as a natural disturbance process, and to address competing and unwanted vegetation and fuel loads and fire risk and forest health. We believe the risks of uncharacteristic disturbances such as catastrophic wildfire should be evaluated versus the effects of active restoration designed to reduce those risks (i.e., water quality, fisheries and wildlife effects).

We also believe land management should be based on understanding and consideration of all natural disturbance processes, certainly including fire, but not limited to fire. Other natural disturbance processes such as insects and disease, and ecosystem processes (such as the flows and cycles of nutrients and water) and their dynamics also need to be considered in developing revised direction for vegetation management. The intensity, frequency and magnitude of disturbance regimes for all these natural disturbance processes (e.g., fire, insects, disease) should be considered.

We also note that the ICB Strategy indicates that direction developed in RMPs should:

- \* provide for re-patterning succession and disturbance regimes and achievement of sustainable landscape conditions, thereby contributing to reduction of events such as

**uncharacteristically large and severe wildland fires;**

\* address ways to maintain and secure **terrestrial** habitats comparable to those classified by the science findings as "source" habitats that have declined substantially from historical to the **current** period, and habitats that have old growth characteristics;

\* address **opportunities** to re-pattern these habitats when and where **necessary**, maintain and guide expansion of the extent and connectivity of source habitats that have **declined**;

\* address the restoration of the important vegetation characteristics of these habitats (such as species composition, vegetation structure, snags and coarse **woody** debris) which various terrestrial species need to survive and **reproduce**.

### Noxious Weeds

EPA fully supports management direction that addresses noxious weed infestations. Noxious weeds are a great threat to biodiversity. Weeds can out-compete native plants and produce a monoculture that has little or no plant species diversity or benefit to wildlife. Noxious weeds tend to gain a foothold where there is disturbance in the ecosystem. The RMP and associated EIS should identify the noxious **weeds/exotic** plants that occur in the BLM Butte Field Office area **and/or** specific management areas; discuss the magnitude **and occurrence** of the weed infestations; and describe strategies for prevention, early detection of invasion, and control procedures for weed management.

EPA supports integrated weed management (**e.g.**, effective **mix** of cultural, education and prevention, biological, mechanical, chemical management, etc.), however, we encourage prioritization of management **techniques** that focus on non-chemical treatments first, with reliance on chemicals (herbicides) being the last resort. Early recognition and control of new infestations is encouraged to stop the spread of the infestation and avoid wider future use of herbicides, which could correspondingly have more adverse impacts on biodiversity, water quality and fisheries.

While EPA fully supports control of noxious weed infestations, we note that weed control chemicals can be toxic and have the potential to be transported to surface or ground water following application. It is important that management direction assures that water contamination concerns of herbicide usage be fully evaluated and mitigated. Herbicide drift into streams and wetlands could adversely affect aquatic life and wetland functions such as food chain **support** and habitat for wetland species. All efforts should be made to avoid movement or transport of herbicides **into** surface waters that could adversely affect fisheries or other water uses (**i.e.**, use mitigation measures avoid herbicide drift to streams and wetlands, during ground and aerial applications of herbicide such as adequate **streamside** buffers, mechanical weed removal adjacent to streams, flagging aquatic areas on the ground,, spray nozzles that produce larger droplets to reduce drift, use of photodegradable dyes in herbicides, use of GPS technology or ground radio contact with pilots, use of spray detection cards, wind monitoring, herbicide monitoring, etc.,).

It **should** be noted that while Montana Water Quality Standards do not identify numerical criteria for aquatic life protection for many herbicides, it **should be recognized** that the research and data **requirements** necessary to establish numerical aquatic life water quality criteria **are** very rigorous, and many herbicides and **weed** control chemicals in use are toxic, although numerical aquatic life criteria have not been established. The Montana Water **Quality** Standards include a **general** narrative standard requiring surface waters to **be free** from *substances that create concentrations which are toxic or harmful to aquatic life*. The National Pesticide Telecommunication Network (NPTN) **website** at <http://nptn.orst.edu/tech.htm> which operates under a cooperative agreement with EPA and Oregon State University and has a wealth of **information on toxicity**, mobility, environmental fate on pesticides **may be helpful** (phone number 800-858-7378).

The BLM **should** include **an** objective indicating that herbicides, pesticides, and other toxicants and chemicals be used in a safe manner in accordance with Federal **label** instructions and restrictions that allow protection and maintenance of water quality standards and ecological integrity, and avoid public health and safety problems. Management direction should **include** standards, guidelines and procedures that **ensure** threatened, endangered and sensitive species **are** considered whenever the use of pesticides **are** contemplated. Language should be included in Special Use and other permits (*i.e.* grazing, recreation residence, *etc.*) that requires the **permittee** to present requests of **all** use of pesticides on Federal lands to the BLM for review and approval.

Plant seeds can be **carried from** a source area by the wind, wildlife or pack animals, on equipment **tires** and tracks, by water, and on the boots of workers, so care should be taken to implement control procedures in **all** source areas to avoid spread to unaffected areas. For your information, measures we often recommend at the project level for preventing spread from source areas to uninfested areas include:

- Ensure that equipment tracks **and** tires are cleaned prior to **transportation to an** uninfested site.
- Focus control efforts at trail heads **and** **transportation** corridors to prevent tracking of seed into uninfested areas.
- ▶ Attempt to control the spread **from** one watershed to another to reduce water as a transport vector.
- If a localized infestation exists and control is not a viable option, consider rerouting trails/roads around the infestation to reduce available vectors for spread.
- ▶ Establish an education program for industrial and recreational users and encourage voluntary assistance in both prevention **and** control activities.
- Reseed **disturbed** sites **as** soon as possible following disturbance.

Noxious weeds can be spread by vehicles. The BLM may **want** to consider some restrictions on vehicles to reduce potential for reinfestation of the area by noxious weeds after treatment. Also, if sufficient vegetation is killed during ground disturbing activities (*e.g.*, by prescribed burning) it may warrant revegetation efforts. We believe that **revegetation** (reseeding

with native grass mix) should be expanded to seed any site within the control area where the vegetation density is low enough to allow reinfestation or introduction of other noxious weeds, or erosion. The goal of the seeding program should be to establish the sustainability of the area. Where no native, rapid cover seed source exists, we recommend using a grass mixture that does not include aggressive grasses such as smooth brome, thereby allowing native species to eventually prevail. Mr. Phil Johnson, Botanist, Montana Dept. of Transportation, in Helena at 406-444-7657, may be able to provide guidance on revegetation with native grasses.

Programmatic direction should also assure that the effects of burning on the potential stimulation of noxious weeds be evaluated during site-specific project level analysis. Prescribed fire has the potential to stimulate weed growth (e.g., Dalmation toadflax or leafy spurge), and can destroy insects planted for biological weed control. Burning followed by application of appropriate herbicides can provide effective weed control. We suggest that such considerations be evaluated for during development of direction and plans for prescribed burning.

We also note that hay can be a source of noxious weed seed. Hay/straw is used as mulch to slow erosion and encourage seed germination, and used to feed horses in hunting and recreation camps, and as wildlife feed during harsh winters. The Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 prohibits the interstate transport of noxious weeds or weed parts, such as seed. Cattle that are released on grazing allotments or horses used on public lands can transport undigested weed seed and spread it in their manure. We encourage the BLM to require use of certified weed free hay in permits or projects. Montana has a weed free certification program for hay. Another option for preventing the introduction of noxious weeds is to require cattle and horses, especially those coming from areas with noxious weeds, to be penned and fed weed free hay for several days prior to being released on public lands.

## 2) Wildlife

The EPA believes the RMP should provide for protection and conservation of wildlife, including conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species, and diversity of plant and animal communities.

The ICB Strategy identifies the BLM responsibility to provide habitat for productive and diverse populations of terrestrial wildlife species thereby contributing to; 1) diversity of plant and animal species; 2) recovery of listed species; and 3) societal use of plant and animal populations, including wildlife viewing, hunting, harvest, and satisfaction of Tribal treaty rights. The Strategy indicates that management plan direction needs to address maintenance and restoration of habitats that have declined substantially, and address multi-scale analyses, road management, exotic species, and monitoring and adaptive management.

It is important that the RMP and associated EIS provide wildlife direction consistent with the ICB strategy, and that demonstrates coordination with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Management plan direction

should address maintenance and restoration of degraded habitats. The EIS should assure that alternatives and analyses address issues such as: existing quality and capacity of wildlife habitat; security, displacement, fragmentation, connectivity; maintenance of wildlife movement corridors/trails; road access, forest openings; edge effects and impacts upon species of special concern, sensitive, and T&E species. Estimated reductions in impact from mitigation should also be addressed.

### Old Growth

EPA very much protection of old growth habitats that maintain and restore large, native, late-seral overstory trees and forest composition and structure within ranges of historic natural variability (e.g., Ponderosa pine). We note that historic range of variability (HRV) concepts may be more relevant at broad scales rather than site-specific scales. Lands outside the Federal land boundary have often not been managed for the late-seral or old growth component, so BLM lands may need to contribute more to the late-seral component to compensate for the loss of this component on other land ownerships within an ecoregion. The RMP and associated EIS should consider vegetation succession regimes (early, mid, late seral) relative to historic ranges at the broad landscape scale in development of revised management direction.

Old growth tree stands are ecologically diverse and provide good breeding and feeding habitat for many bird and animal species, which have a preference or dependence on old growth (e.g., barred owl, great gray owl, pileated woodpecker). Much old growth habitat has been lost. It is important that management direction prevent continued loss of this habitat and promote long-term sustainability of old growth stands, and restore where possible the geographic extent and connectivity of old growth (e.g., using passive and active management-such as avoiding harvest of old growth trees, leaving healthy larger and older seral species trees, thinning and underburning to reduce fuel loads and ladder fuels in old growth while enhancing old growth characteristics). In addition old growth should be defined (e.g., specify large tree age, trees/acres greater than certain DBH, etc., Does old growth vary depending upon forest type?).

### Snags and Coarse Woody Debris

We also fully support the retention of adequate snags and coarse woody debris on the ground for wildlife habitat and necessary ecological structure and functioning (including soil productivity and nutrient cycling). We believe revised RMP direction should assure that projects tiered to the RMPs analyze and disclose impacts of management on snag habitat and large woody debris. Direction for snag retention and large woody debris requirements should be described, and should help restore these declining habitat characteristics.

### Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened or endangered species on the BLM Butte Field Office area should be identified (e.g., grizzly bear, bald eagle, lynx, gray wolf, bull trout, etc.). If the proposed

management direction could affect threatened or endangered species the final EIS should include the Biological Assessment and the associated USFWS or NMFS Biological Opinion or formal concurrence for the following reasons:

- (1) NEPA requires public involvement and full disclosure of all issues upon which a decision is to be made;
- (2) The CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA strongly encourage the integration of NEPA requirements with other environmental review and consultation requirements so that all such procedures run **concurrently** rather than consecutively (40 CFR 1500.2(c) and 1502.25); and
- (3) The Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process can result in the identification of reasonable and prudent alternatives to preclude jeopardy, and mandated reasonable and prudent measures to reduce incidental take. These can affect project implementation.

Since the Biological Assessment and EIS must evaluate the potential impacts on listed species, they can jointly assist in analyzing the effectiveness of alternatives and mitigation measures. EPA recommends that the final EIS and Record of Decision not be completed prior to the completion of ESA consultation. If the consultation process is treated as a separate process, the Agencies risk USFWS identification of additional significant impacts, new mitigation measures, or changes to the preferred alternative. If these changes have not been evaluated in the final EIS, a supplement to the EIS would be warranted.

### Biodiversity

Biodiversity may be a critical consideration for new projects, major construction or when special habitats (i.e., wetlands, threatened and endangered species habitat) will be affected. The state of the art for this issue is changing rapidly. CEQ prepared guidance entitled, "Incorporating Biodiversity Considerations Into Environmental Impact Analysis Under the National Environmental Policy Act," <http://tis.ch.doc.gov/nepa/tools/guidance/Guidance-PDFs/iii-9.pdf>.

### **3) Hydrology and Aquatic Species**

EPA's primary hydrological and aquatic species goals are maintenance and restoration of watershed health; riparian/wetlands and aquatic species protection; and achieving water quality that fully supports designated beneficial uses of surface waters, and protecting high quality waters consistent with EPA/State Antidegradation/Nondegradation Policies.

### Clean Water Act-Water Quality Standards

The goals and objectives of the Clean Water Act are to *"restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters,"* and have *"water quality which provides for protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife, and provides for*

**recreation in and on the water."** It is important that the desired condition, land allocations, management goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and prescriptions of programs and projects to be implemented through or authorized by the RMP be consistent with Clean Water Act goals and objectives.

Water Quality Standards (WQS) are the primary mechanism used to achieve Clean Water Act goals. Water Quality Standards are established by the States and approved by EPA (in accordance with 40 CFR Part 131). Water Quality Standards (WQS) include **designated** uses for water bodies (e.g., fishing-aquatic life, public water supply, recreation, agriculture, etc.), and narrative and numerical water quality criteria for support of the designated uses, and they protect high water quality with an Antidegradation or Nondegradation Policy. The RMP Goals, Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines should protect water quality to maintain **and/or** attain compliance with Montana WQS (e.g., Montana WQS are found in ARM 17.30 Subchapter 6).

We realize that the BLM assesses and categorizes watershed condition by functioning condition (i.e., "properly functioning condition," "functioning-at-risk," "not properly functioning"). Functioning condition and support of beneficial uses are interrelated. Since the focus of the Clean Water Act and Water Quality Standards compliance is on attainment of water quality to support beneficial uses, we believe it is important to address beneficial use support as well as "proper functioning condition" in watersheds. A link between "properly functioning condition" and full support of beneficial uses is an important component of RMP strategies that are consistent with the Clean Water Act.

#### Water Quality Analysis

Water quality impacts include chemical, physical and biological effects. Chemical effects include effects such as temperature, nutrients, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, metals, etc.. Physical effects includes suspended sediment and turbidity as well as habitat impacts on stream structure and **bank/channel** stability, streambed substrate including seasonal and spawning habitats, **pool/riffle** habitat, woody debris, **streambank** vegetation, riparian habitats, peak flows, channel condition, and spawning and rearing habitat. Biological effects include the species and abundance of fish present, and the richness and composition of other aquatic biota and communities (e.g., macroinvertebrates, **periphyton**). Beneficial uses of surface waters may be impaired or stressed by any of these impacts to water quality parameters, although sediment and aquatic habitat impacts are commonly the primary water quality concerns for land management activities.

The EIS should disclose programs and processes to identify and protect the aquatic **ecosystem** from potential adverse effects of potential resource development activities (e.g., road construction and timber harvest, mining, grazing, OHV use, etc.). Particular attention should be directed at evaluating and disclosing the **cumulative** effects of increased levels of **erosion** and sedimentation and impacts to aquatic habitat. Effects of connected actions, such as resulting from Federal, State and private land development (e.g., timber, mining, **reservoirs**, recreation,

transportation, etc.,) should be included.

We believe the EIS should summarize existing **baseline** watershed and water quality conditions. We recognize that **detailed** baseline information may not be readily **available** nor appropriate for this programmatic stage of analysis. However, the programmatic EIS should **indicate how more detailed** site-specific water quality and beneficial use support **information** would be **collected** prior to ground disturbing activities, since **baseline water quality** data and **beneficial use support at the project level** are key in the evaluation of **impacts**. We suggest that development of a framework for project level **watershed/water** quality analysis would be helpful to include in the RMP. **The** EPA suggests that the following elements be considered **for** such a framework:

- A) **A** description and analysis of **surface** and ground **water** resources (e.g., existing physical, **chemical**, and biological characteristics of **streams**, lakes, and other **water** bodies in **the** planning area; including **information** on Water Quality Standards, **beneficial** use support, impairments, **pollution** sources, fisheries information; etc.);
- B) Clear identification of potentially **affected** watersheds on maps;
- C) Discussion **of** relationships between local waters **and** proposed management activities.
- D) A framework for **future** site-specific analyses such as:
  - 1) Name of **waterbody** and name of 4<sup>th</sup> order **sub-basins** (5<sup>th</sup> order watersheds, and 6<sup>th</sup> order **sub-watersheds**, if and where possible;
  - 2) Length or size of **waterbody** and Stream **order**;
  - 3) State Water Quality Standards (**WQS**) and assigned beneficial use of **waterbody**, and e whether the **waterbody** is currently meeting standards and **supporting** its **beneficial** use (Is **waterbody** on State **303(d)** list?); identify the specific **parameters** resulting in a **303(d)** listing and show how **the** proposed **project might affect** these parameters (e.g., sediment, **temperature**, nutrients, toxics, aquatic habitat).
  - 4) **Information** on **stresses**, management **problems**, pollutant sources, habitat capability, watershed and **stream channel** conditions, and hydrologic processes and natural disturbance patterns and variability.
  - 5) Describe soils and relate to geology, topography, landform stability and **watershed** sensitivity. Areas **of** geologic **or** other instability that may affect **Land** management and water quality should be identified (areas **of** unstable terrain, mass soil failure problems, high erosion risk).

6) **Indicate** whether the stream has particular fisheries issues and values (e.g., aquatic species habitat, condition, productivity, and quality of habitat, **connectivity**, spawning or nursery area, or a conservation priority or **population** stronghold for a listed or sensitive species; identify presence of any threatened and endangered species or species of special concern, barriers to fish migration).

7) Identify **sub-watersheds** that are population strongholds for listed or proposed species or local narrow endemic **species**.

8) Identify reference streams, from monitoring, that may be used to **correlate** baseline information **and/or** effects analysis, **and** what constitutes reference **stream** conditions.

9) Delineate **mas** that fall within a source **area** for public water supply systems **and/or** where there are public water supply wells within the study area (See subsequent Public Water Supply **Watershed/Aquifer** discussion).

10) Information not available should be so indicated.

The ICB Strategy says that maintaining and restoring **the** health of watersheds, riparian, and aquatic resources on FS administered lands are necessary to sustain aquatic **and terrestrial species** and provide water of **sufficient** quantity and quality to support beneficial uses. Strategy elements to achieve this **include** riparian conservation areas, management of landslide prone areas, population strongholds, multi-scale analyses, **restoration** prioritization, **and** monitoring and adaptive management. The Strategy also indicates that a successful aquatic strategy should be developed in **cooperation** with involved regulatory agencies, and need to identify best habitats and most robust populations to use as focal points from which populations can expand, adjacent habitat can be rehabilitated, or the last **refugia** of a species can be conserved. The Strategy says that units revising plans shall:

\* Identify sub-watersheds that are population strongholds for listed or proposed species or local **narrow** endemic species.

\* Provide management that recognizes that conservation and restoration of small watersheds will ensure **short-term** persistence of important aquatic populations, while conservation and restoration of habitat networks **throughout** large basins will provide for **long-term** stability, productivity, and biological diversity.

#### Section 319 of the Clean Water Act

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act addresses **State nonpoint** source pollution water quality assessments and management programs. These assessments identify surface water that cannot reasonably be expected to attain or maintain applicable Water Quality Standards or goals without control of **non-point** source pollution. The management **programs identify** the programs, **BMPs**, and other measures used by the State to reduce pollutant loadings.

The Federal consistency provisions of Section 319(k) represents an opportunity for State and Federal agencies to more closely coordinate their activities and cooperate in achieving water quality goals. If a State determines that a Federal project is not consistent with the provisions of the non-point source management program, *the Federal agency must make efforts to accommodate the State's concerns*. Executive Order 12372 provides guidelines for using the State intergovernmental review process for conducting Section 319 Federal consistency reviews.

The NEPA process should: 1) integrate provisions of Section 319; and 2) direct reduction in nonpoint source pollution through design and mitigation measures to ensure RMP consistency with the State's nonpoint source program. Consistency of the RMPs, including the programs and projects it would implement, with State Nonpoint Source Assessment and Management plans for maintenance and improvement of specific watersheds should be demonstrated. The Montana DEQ contacts for nonpoint source issues are Robert Ray at 406-444-5319 or Carole Mackin at 406-444-7425.

The appropriate State-identified Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce potential nonpoint sources of pollution from this project's proposed activities must be designed into the alternatives under consideration and disclosed. Section 313 of the Clean Water Act requires that Federal agencies comply with State and Local pollution control requirements. Montana's Forestry BMPs can be found in the publication, Montana Forestry BMP's; Extension Publications; July 1991, Montana State University; EB0096. In addition the Montana Streamside Management Zone law and rules should be complied with (see Montana Guide to Streamside Management Zone Law & Rules, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, 2706 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59801; phone 406-542-4300).

### 303 (d) listed Waters and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

Special attention should be made regarding Montana's identification of water bodies with impaired uses in their Clean Water Act Section 303(d) report, as well as the magnitude and sources of such impairment. Information on Montana's 303(d) listed waters can be found on-line at [http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/mdm/303\\_d/303d\\_information.asp](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/mdm/303_d/303d_information.asp). The RMP and associated EIS should identify water bodies in the BLM Butte Field Office area that have been placed on the Montana 303(d) List. We suggest contacting the Montana DEQ to identify and validate waterbodies that are listed by the States as impaired or threatened (i.e., contact Robert Ray of MDEQ at 406-444-5319 or Bob Barry 406-444-5342). Stream segments designated as "water quality impaired" and/or "threatened" listed on State 303(d) lists require development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). A TMDL:

*Identifies the maximum load of a pollutant (e.g., sediment, nutrient, metal) a waterbody is able to assimilate and fully support its designated uses; allocates portions of the maximum load to all sources; identifies the necessary controls that may be implemented voluntarily or through regulatory means; and describes a monitoring plan and associated corrective feedback loop to insure that uses are fully supported;*

Or can also be viewed as, *the total amount of pollutant that a water body may receive from all sources without exceeding WQS; or as a reduction in pollutant loading that results in meeting WQS.*

Montana's approach is to include TMDLs as one component of comprehensive Water Quality Restoration Plans (WQRPs). TMDLs/WQRPs contain seven principal components:

1. Watershed characterization (hydrology, climate, vegetation, land use, ownership, etc.)
2. Description of impairments and applicable water quality standards.
3. Pollutant source assessment and estimate of existing pollutant loads.
4. Water quality goals, restoration targets (including TMDLs) and load allocations.
5. Restoration strategy
6. Monitoring Strategy
7. Public involvement (30 day public comment period, informational meetings, etc.)

The load allocations and targets established by TMDLs/WQRPs inform land managers how much sediment, nutrient or other pollutant discharge may be too much (i.e., prevent support of beneficial uses). We note that sometimes significant sources of pollutant loading occur in unlisted tributaries, and TMDLs must account for all sources of pollution, hence the need to identify and address sources throughout the watershed, including unlisted waters. A WQRP provides a means to track the health of a stream over time. If a WQRP has not restored beneficial uses within five years, the Montana DEQ conducts an assessment to determine if:

- \* the implementation of new and improved best management practices is necessary;
- \* water quality is improving but more time is needed to comply with WQS; or
- \* revisions to the plan will be necessary to meet WQS.

Pending completion of a TMDL in Montana, new and expanded nonpoint source activities may commence and continue, provided those activities are conducted in accordance with "reasonable soil, land and water conservation practices" (MCA 75-5-703). The Administrative Rules of Montana (17.30.602) define these as "methods, measures, or practices that protect present and reasonably anticipated beneficial uses."

The EPA believes land management activities carried out in the watershed of 303(d) listed streams should not further degrade impaired streams, and should be consistent with WQRPs and TMDLs. Such consistency means that if pollutants may be generated during project activities mitigation or restoration activities should also be carried out to reduce existing sources of pollution to offset or compensate for pollutants generated during project activities. Recognizing uncertainties and desiring a margin of safety, such compensation should more than offset pollutants generated, resulting in overall reductions in pollution.

The Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and EPA are under a Court Ordered schedule to prepare TMDLs. Montana has divided the State into TMDL Planning

Areas, grouping streams with similar water quality problems and land ownership as much as possible on a watershed basis. Each TMDL planning area may include 4 to 10 impaired watersheds that have specific TMDL preparation needs. The following TMDL completion schedule for the TMDL planning areas in the project area have been established:

Upper Madison TMDL Planning Area due 2004  
Lake Helena TMDL Planning Area due 2004  
Upper Madison TMDL Planning Area due 2004  
Middle Madison **TMDL** Planning Area due 2005  
Shields TMDL Planning Area due 2005  
Upper Gallatin TMDL Planning Area due 2005  
Paradise TMDL Planning Area due 2005  
Lower Jefferson TMDL Planning Area due 2005  
Upper Boulder TMDL Planning Area due 2006  
Upper Clark Fork TMDL Planning Area due 2007  
Canyon Ferry **TMDL** Planning Area due 2007  
Lower Boulder TMDL Planning Area due 2007  
Lower Madison TMDL Planning Area due 2007  
Lower Gallatin TMDL Planning Area due 2007  
East Gallatin TMDL Planning Area due 2007

The RMP and associated EIS should assure that **BLM** cooperates with States, Tribes, and other agencies and organizations to prioritize restoration needs, and develop and implement TMDLS and WQRPs to restore WQS and beneficial use support on impaired waters consistent with Court Ordered schedules. Most importantly, the EIS should demonstrate that management direction and proposed projects tied to the **RMP** will avoid further degradation of **303(d)** listed waters, and be consistent with **TMDLs**, either developed or in development, to restore water quality for support of beneficial uses. We recommend that the BLM contact the Montana DEQ (i.e., Robert Ray, TMDL Program Manager at MDEQ at 406-444-5319 or Carole Mackin, Federal Consistency Coordinator at MDEQ at 406-444-7425) to ensure such collaboration adequately addresses **TMDL** requirements in the RMP and associated EIS.

The ICB Strategy indicates that restoration priorities must be considered on the broad scale and the aquatic, riparian, and hydrologic restoration needs balanced with the restoration needs of other resources and other agencies and tribes. When revising RMPs the restoration priorities identified in recovery plans, **NWPPC** sub-basin assessments and plans, sub-basin reviews using the guide, Ecosystem Review **At the Sub-basin Scale: A Guide to Mid Scale Inquiry** (August 1999), the priorities identified by the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) Biological Opinion efforts, the high priority sub-basins identified in the ICBEMP planning process, and watersheds identified to address water quality impaired (**303(d)**) stream segments should be evaluated, validated, and modified if necessary with the most up-to-date information.

The Strategy notes that guidance should be developed to integrate restoration objectives for aquatic habitat, riparian and hydrologic processes, terrestrial wildlife, and landscape dynamics. EPA supports coordinated planning and analysis of Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act requirements wherever possible, to integrate efforts to recover and de-list threatened and endangered species at the same time that water quality in 303(d) listed waters is restored.

### Aquatic Monitoring

We believe there is a need to improve and increase support for watershed/water quality assessment and monitoring. The success of watershed restoration is dependent on monitoring programs that measure and evaluate progress toward achievement of watershed restoration goals. Monitoring and evaluation are necessary and crucial elements in identifying and understanding the impacts of management actions, and should be an integral part of adaptive management and RMP implementation.

Feedback of monitoring results to managers is critical to the success of a land management plan. It is only through monitoring of actual effects that occur that the BLM will be able to determine whether: 1) goals and objectives are being met; 2) assumptions/indicators used in developing and implementing the plan are valid; and 3) effects are as predicted (i.e., addressing uncertainties); and 4) if mitigation is effective or should be increased or decreased or otherwise adjusted to be meet project goals and objectives. A properly designed monitoring plan will also quantify how well the preferred alternative resolves the issues and concerns identified during scoping, and provides the flexible program for monitoring and feedback of monitoring results to improve predictive methodology and modify mitigation.

The achievement of Water Quality Standards for nonpoint source pollution generating activities occurs through the implementation of BMPs, and although BMPs are designed to protect water quality, they need to be monitored to verify their effectiveness. If found ineffective, the BMPs need to be revised, and impacts mitigated. It is through the iterative process of developing and implementing BMPs and mitigation measures, and monitoring effectiveness of BMPs and mitigation measures, with adjustment of measures where necessary, that Water Quality Standards are achieved.

We believe the RMP and associated EIS should include a strong, explicit commitment to monitoring, especially watershed/water quality monitoring, such as that in the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region's Forest Monitoring and Evaluation Guide in which the Regional Forester stated, "All programs and projects should contain appropriate levels of monitoring funds in their costs - or they should not be undertaken." (USDA FS 1993). EPA supports linking the approval of projects tiered to the RMP to availability of funding for conducting necessary monitoring and evaluation. The EIS should demonstrate how future decisions will affect monitoring and evaluation if financial commitments to these programs or the operating budget are reduced.

Programmatic documents provide an ideal mechanism to develop monitoring programs ultimately used through tiered documents to gather data and answer questions raised in scoping. The relationship between area wide and management area monitoring and project monitoring activities should be described. We believe the RMP and associated EIS should identify watershed/water quality assessment and monitoring programs for evaluation of watershed restoration success and achievement of proper functioning condition and beneficial use support (i.e., Water Quality Standards compliance).

The monitoring plan should address the types of surveys, parameters to be monitored, indicator species, budget, procedures for using data or results in plan implementation, and availability of results to interested and affected groups. The monitoring program should include discussion of how the three types of monitoring (implementation, effectiveness and validation monitoring) are incorporated into the BLM's adaptive management program. Information, including a contact person, should be provided on how the public can receive information on mitigation effectiveness and monitoring results. The design of monitoring programs should:

- 1) ensure State Water Quality Standards (WQS) for support of beneficial uses are met;
- 2) provide a mechanism to initiate additional measures if needed to meet State WQS;
- 3) evaluate the effectiveness of the BMPs, and/or the need for additional or revised BMPs, Standards and Guidelines, other direction or need to change existing direction;
- 4) evaluate the accuracy of estimates made in the analysis, including cumulative effects of the RMP and other activities on the health of the ecosystems being managed, and risk of potential damage to ecosystems (requires a companion process to take rapid protective steps when high risks are identified); and
- 5) provide a feedback mechanism for future projects.

The ICB Strategy also notes that monitoring and adaptive management is an important element in maintaining and restoring the health of watersheds, riparian, and aquatic resources, and are key to achieving the short and long-term intent of the Strategy. The Strategy says a continuing process of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and incorporating new knowledge into management strategies for adjustment purposes should be used, and that management plans need to be compatible with the monitoring procedures and efforts identified by the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) Biological Opinion efforts, ongoing efforts of the Northwest Power Planning Council, and State water quality efforts.

The following documents are references for developing an aquatic monitoring program:

Monitoring Guidelines to Evaluate Effects of Forestry Activities in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska; Lee H. McDonald, Alan W. Smart and Robert C. Wissmar; May 1991; EPA/910/9-91-001:

Rapid Bioassessment Protocols for use in Streams and Rivers; James A. Plafkin, May 1989. EPA/444/4-89-001.

"Montana Stream Management Guide: for Landowners, Managers, and Stream Users", Montana Dept. Of Environmental Quality; December 1995.

"Aquatic Habitat Indicators and Their Application to Water Quality Objectives Within the Clean Water Act." Stephen B. Bauer and Stephen C. Ralph, 1999, EPA-910-R99-014. (This publication is available on-line at, <http://www.pocketwater.com/> )

"Aquatic and Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Plan for the Northwest Forest Plan," Gordon H. Reeves, David B. Hohler, David P. Larsen, David E. Busch, Kim Kratz, Keith Reynolds, Karl F. Stein, Thomas Atzet, Polly Hays, and Michael Tehan, February 2001. Available on-line at, [www.reo.gov/monitoring/watershed/aremp-compile.htm](http://www.reo.gov/monitoring/watershed/aremp-compile.htm)

Western Pilot Study: Field Operations Manual for Wadeable Streams; Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program Protocols, Edited by David V. Peck, James M. Lazorchak, and Donald J. Klemm, April 2001, available on-line at, <http://www.epa.gov/emap/html/pubs/docs/groupdocs/surfwatr/field/ewwsm01.pdf>

The Forest Service Region 5 document entitled, Water Quality Management for Forest System Lands in California: Best Management Practices, September 2000, is a useful reference for BMP development and BMP effectiveness monitoring. It can be found at the website, <http://fsweb.r5.fs.fed.us/unit/ec/water/water-best-mgmt.pdf> .

Montana DEQ's Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment information can be found on the website, [http://www.deq.state.mt.us/wqinfo/MDM/WOMonitoring\\_Assessment.asp](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/wqinfo/MDM/WOMonitoring_Assessment.asp) .

## Wetlands

Wetlands are significant environmental resources that provide a wide range of important functions and values, increasing landscape and species diversity, and protecting water quality and beneficial uses. Wetlands have experienced severe cumulative losses nationally. For these reasons EPA considers the protection, enhancement, and restoration of wetlands to be a high priority. Potential impacts on wetlands include: water quality, habitat for aquatic and terrestrial life, flood storage, ground water recharge and discharge, sources of primary production, and recreation and aesthetics. Executive Order 11990 requires that all Federal Agencies protect wetlands. In addition national wetlands policy has established an interim goal of No Overall Net Loss of the Nation's remaining wetlands, and a long-term goal of increasing quantity and quality of the Nation's wetlands resource base (for information on Federal wetlands policies see website, <http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/aug93wet.htm> ).

The RMP should include direction to assure that projects tiered from the management plan adequately assess potential impacts on wetland functions; avoid or minimize wetlands impacts wherever possible; and compensate for unavoidable impacts through wetland restoration, creation, or enhancement. Wetland mitigations require evaluation of all less environmentally

damaging project alternatives. For non-water dependent activities, such as roads, alternatives to siting roads in aquatic areas, including wetlands, are presumed to be available unless demonstrated otherwise.

The RMP and associated EIS should recognize that discharge of fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States is regulated by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1344, which is administered jointly by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA. Section 404 permits from the Corps of Engineers are required where dredge or fill activity is proposed in waters of the United States. Section 404(f)(1)(A) exempts the discharge of dredged or fill material from silvicultural activities such as harvesting of forest products from 404 permit requirements unless the flow and circulation of navigable waters is impaired or the reach reduced. We recommend that the RMP ensure consultation with the Corps of Engineers where appropriate to determine applicability of 404 permit requirements and silvicultural exemptions to specific project level forest construction activities in or near streams or wetlands, (e.g., contact Mr. Allan Steidle of Corps Montana Office in Helena at 406-441-1375). The 404(b)(1) Guidelines (found at 40 CFR Part 230) and Corps of Engineers, EPA, and USFWS Wetland Specialists should be consulted to provide specific environmental criteria and guidance when projects need a 404 permit. We encourage the BLM to assure that projects tied to the RMP delineate and mark perennial seeps and springs and wetlands on maps and on the ground before disturbance so that disturbance to such areas can be avoided.

### Riparian Areas

Riparian habitats, similar to wetlands, are important ecological areas supporting many species of western wildlife. Riparian areas are sometimes functional wetlands, but may or may not be designated as jurisdictional wetlands under the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual, Technical Report Y-87-1, January 1987, Final Report, and its guidance on implementation. Riparian areas generally lack the amount or duration of water usually present in wetlands, yet are "wetter" than adjacent uplands. Riparian areas increase landscape and species diversity, and are often critical to the protection of water quality and beneficial uses. EPA considers the protection, improvement, and restoration of riparian areas to be a high priority.

The ICB Strategy indicates that riparian conservation areas or appropriate direction need to be identified in BLM management plans based on the best available science and appropriate ecological and geomorphic criteria. The Strategy says direction must include elements to:

- \* Achieve physical integrity of aquatic ecosystems;
- \* Provide an amount and distribution of woody debris sufficient to sustain physical and biological complexity;
- \* Provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation;
- \* Provide appropriate amounts and distributions of source habitats for riparian- or wetland-dependent species; and
- \* Restore or maintain water quality and hydrologic processes.

- \* Restore or maintain naturally functioning riparian vegetation communities

EPA believes RMPs should include direction that assures that **projects** tiered from the management **plan** adequately assess the **potential** impacts on riparian **functions shown** above, and protect those functions. Direction should **promote** mitigation **and/or** enhancement of **riparian areas (BMPs, treatments, buffer zones, rehabilitations, etc.,)**. We support establishment of **riparian conservation areas (i.e., buffer zones)** to avoid adverse impacts to streams and riparian areas, and that promote recovery of native fish populations into the RMP. We **note** that temperature effects from **riparian canopy/shade** removal can persist downstream for significant distance in some small stream systems (**e.g., up to 10km**)

#### Public Water Supply Watersheds/Aquifers

Source Water for many public water supplies (**PWSs**) originates on Federal **lands**. Public Water Supply owners and operators are responsible for the quality of surface and ground **water** supplies and need to be advised of RMP revisions. Effects to water quality of source watersheds for Public Water Supplies caused by projects and programs implemented through RMPs must be disclosed.

The 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act **require** all States with **primary** enforcement authority for public water supply supervision programs (such as Montana) to carry out a source water assessment program for all public water systems (**PWSs**) within the **State**. Information on source water assessments can be found on the Montana **DEQ website** at, <http://deq.state.mt.us/ppa/swp/> . It may also be of interest to know that there is a Memorandum of Understanding among several Federal Agencies, including **USDOJ**, in support of this program, called the Federal Multi-Agency Source Water Agreement, that can be found on the web at, <http://cleanwater.gov/swa/> . In addition there is a **USFS** document entitled, "**Drinking Water from Forests and Grasslands**", General Technical **Report** SRS-39, that is meant for the Forest Manager, that may be of interest.

Ground water under a project area may serve as a drinking water supply **and/or** a recharge source of nearby surface water bodies. Contamination from forest management activities could have an adverse public health or ecological impact on such resources. Management direction should **assure** that ground water is adequately protected **from** risks (**e.g., use** of mitigation measures and barriers). The discussion of ground water protection may include; identification, characterization and mapping of aquifers and confining beds; definition of flow system (**i.e., recharge and discharge areas, flow direction**); identification of **current** and anticipated ground water uses (**e.g., domestic, municipal, industrial**); and listing **BMPs** to be used as barriers for aquifer protection. We recommend that **RMPs** should:

- \* Identify the locations of drinking water sources (**i.e., surface water intakes, ground water wells**) for Public Water Supplies affected by activities caused by the RMP;
- \* Identify **activities** that may **impact** the quality of the identified **surface or ground water**

source (e.g., turbidity, total organic carbon, organic **chemicals**, inorganic chemicals; bacteriological/viral/pathogenic **organisms**, **pesticides**, radionuclides, herbicides, etc); **streamflow** characteristics potentially affecting water quality like channel stability, etc);

\* Disclose measures (i.e., Management prescriptions, standards, guidelines, **BMP's**, barriers, etc.) designed to protect water quality of the **affected sources**;

\* Review agency programs, **permits** and projects to identify and categorize risks to Public **Water Supplies** that require special considerations. Review or establish a monitoring program to **determine** whether established RMP guidance adequately protects drinking water delivered to Public Water Supplies or if **additional measures** are needed;

\* For projects and programs having high risks for pollution (such as Oil & Gas, cyanide heap leach) to sources of drinking water, **escrow** accounts **adequate** for protection. emergency cleanup and proper post-operation rehabilitation **are strongly recommended**.

\* Include language in RMP **areawide** standards that requires separate NEPA analysis and **approval** of any proposed application of toxic substances.

#### 4) Recreation and Travel Management

**User** demand and recreational access has increased significantly and management practices have shifted over the last 15 years, and **motorized** vehicles such as snowmobiles and **ATVs** can access areas much further into the forest than they **could** historically. **Also**, logging roads are now predominantly **used** for recreation and resource **protection** and restoration activities. The RMP should consider and address these changed circumstances. **The EIS should** describe the anticipated environmental effects of increased public access and **use**, and **identify** the types and extent of recreational impacts and mitigation measures necessary to **minimize** adverse impacts and ensure resource **protection**. **EPA encourages** locating campground facilities, and concentrated public recreational uses away from ecologically sensitive resources. We also encourage restricting motorized access to camping in ecologically sensitive **areas**, and **identifying/designating** camping sites to avoid **sensitive areas** and/or to encourage camping or concentrated public use in areas that **are** more resilient and can more easily recover from impacts and/or accommodate public use with less impacts.

##### Roads

The ICB Strategy indicates that roads have **significantly** modified the **aquatic** and terrestrial **resources** in the Columbia Basin and continue to affect fish, wildlife, water quality and **stream/wetlands** processes. Roads are also important for public access and accomplishing management objectives, **including** restoration, and the Strategy states that RMPs need to **provide** direction for minimizing road impacts to water quality, fisheries and wildlife. RMPs also need to identify the road network needed for land management access, public and tribal needs, and which can be adequately maintained within agency budgets and capabilities.

**EPA believes** reductions in road density, improvements in road drainage, and reductions in sediment delivery from roads **are** important components for improving aquatic health in

project area streams. For example, bull trout are exceptionally sensitive to the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of roads. The USFWS in its 1998 Bull Trout Interim Conservation Guidance identified the importance of road densities for bull trout conservation, showing general exclusion of bull trout in watersheds with high road densities (e.g., over 1.7 mi/mi<sup>2</sup> of roads), and showing bull trout strongholds to have low road densities (e.g., an average 0.45 mi/mi<sup>2</sup> of roads).

We believe RMPs and associated EIS should discuss the road and transportation network, including road closure and decommissioning (e.g., road closure and decommissioning methods, - i.e., administratively; gates or barriers; removal of culverts, restoring stable drainage ways, ripping of road surface, total obliteration of road prism, and their effectiveness at addressing aquatic concerns). EPA also supports management direction that requires inspections and evaluations to identify existing road conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source pollution and stream impairment, and the conduct of necessary road maintenance to improve road drainage and correct deficiencies. The document should address necessary road maintenance and inspection for closed, but unobliterated, roads.

Our recommendations regarding roads are to: minimize road construction and reduce road density as much as possible to reduce potential adverse effects to watersheds; locate roads away from streams and riparian areas; minimize the number of road stream crossings; stabilize cut and fill slopes; provide for adequate road drainage and control of surface erosion with measures such as adequate numbers of waterbars, rolling dips and ditch relief culverts to avoid drainage running on or along roads and avoid interception and routing sediment to streams; consider road effects on stream structure and seasonal and spawning habitats; and allow for adequate large woody debris recruitment and riparian buffers near streams. It is important to maintain crowns on roads and to provide adequate dips and/or waterbars to promote drainage off roads.

Culverts should be properly sized to handle flood events, pass bedload and woody debris, and reduce potential for washout, and should be properly aligned with the stream channel. Culverts which serve as barriers to fish migration should be adjusted to allow for fish passage/migration. Bridges or open bottom culverts that simulate stream grade and substrate and that provide adequate capacity for flood flows, bedload and woody debris are recommended to minimize adverse fisheries effects of road stream crossings.

We also support inspections and evaluations to identify existing road conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source pollution and stream impairment. Erosion control should be kept current with log skidding activities and that road maintenance (e.g., blading) be focused on reducing road surface erosion and sediment delivery from roads to area streams. Blading of unpaved roads in a manner that contributes to road erosion and sediment transport to streams and wetlands should be avoided, as should road use during spring breakup conditions.

### Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use

The EPA is concerned about increasing use of OHVs and all terrain vehicles (ATVs) that occurs away from roads and trails, including steep slopes, wet meadows, and around water bodies. Executive Order 11644, "Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands," requires agencies to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. We are concerned that OHV/ATV activity is causing erosion and habitat damage and adversely impacting wildlife habitat and security. It is difficult to effectively restrict motorized access to public lands and protect them with simple road closures (i.e., gated closures). Road obliteration is a preferred method of road closure.

We recommend that Recreation and Travel Management Standards and Objectives be consistent with the January 2001 OHV decision that only allowed motorized access within 300 feet of designated routes to access dispersed campsites, and then only when such motorized access does not damage ecologically sensitive resources. Management direction should identify designated routes available for motorized vehicle use and non-motorized recreation, and include appropriate limitations and restrictions on motorized vehicle use to protect against erosion, transport of sediment to streams, spread of noxious weeds, and degradation of aquatic habitat by off-road vehicle use in wetlands and other environmentally valuable areas.

Also, an effective policing and enforcement program is needed to assure that motorized access does not occur in restricted areas. The RMP and associated EIS should describe the BLM inspection and enforcement program that will be used to assure that ATVs and OHVs will not violate motorized vehicle access limitations. It is important that enforcement of off-road restrictions be funded and prioritized.

### Snowmobiles

EPA notes that snowmobile use is increasing. Snowmobile (and ATV) 2-stroke engines mix the lubricating oil with the fuel and both are expelled as part of the exhaust, and allow up to one third of the fuel delivered to the engine to be passed through the engine and into the environment virtually un-burned. As stated in the U.S. Department of the Interior document, "Air Quality Concerns Related to Snowmobile Usage in National Parks", Feb. 2000, hydrocarbon emission rates from 2-stroke snowmobile engines are about 80 times greater than those found in a 1995-96 automobile engines. A majority of these hydrocarbons are aromatic hydrocarbons, including polyaromatic hydrocarbons, which are considered to be the most toxic component of petroleum products, and aromatic hydrocarbons are also associated with chronic and carcinogenic effects. Increased air pollutant emissions could be problematic during short periods of poor air dispersion (e.g., river valleys where frequent inversion conditions may trap air pollutants).

There are numerous studies underway to further determine environmental effects of these pollutants. The National Park Service Final EIS for Winter Use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks contains the a good summary of the science regarding impacts from snowmobile use. EPA recommends that the **BLM** monitor the results of these studies and factor the results into travel management and resource planning. We will also try to pass on information emerging out of these studies. The EPA encourages use of the newer less polluting 4-stroke engine snowmobiles (e.g., <http://www1.newswire.ca/releases/April2001/11/c4056.html> ).

Also, we recommend consideration of a policy that prohibits off-trail snowmobile use until at least 6 inches of snow has accumulated in areas with fragile alpine vegetation. Snow in alpine areas is highly susceptible to wind movement which can leave bare or thinly covered areas that would be difficult or impossible to avoid given the speed of snowmobiles. Fragile alpine vegetation may need protection against such use.

## 5) Fire Management

The EPA supports the need to:

- Recognize the role of fire as a disturbance processes;
- Implement the new fire policy and direction.
  - 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (USDA and USDI 1995), directing integration of fire into land management planning, working with landowners and stakeholders, and directing landscape level analysis.
  - National Fire Plan directing full range of fire management activities linked to RMPs.
- Identify areas appropriate for wildland fire use.

### Fires & Forest Ecosystems

The ICBEMP scientific findings identify fire as a major natural disturbance process in forest ecosystems. It is recognized that fire is a necessary disturbance phenomena to keep fuel density in check and to maintain healthy forest ecosystems. It is also recognized that fire suppression over the last 100 years has reduced this natural disturbance phenomena in forests, which has changed the structure and composition of forest ecosystems.

We support management based on understanding and consideration of natural disturbance processes (e.g., fire, insects, disease), including the intensity, frequency, and magnitude of disturbance regimes. We recommend that the RMP and EIS also consider ecosystem processes (such as the flows and cycles of nutrients and water) and their dynamics in developing revised direction for vegetation and fuels management. The risks of uncharacteristic disturbances such as catastrophic wildfire need to be evaluated versus the effects of fuels management actions designed to reduce those risks, Methods to address competing and unwanted vegetation and fuel loads and fire risk should be evaluated vs. water quality, fisheries and wildlife effects. We

recommend emphasizing **fuels** management in wildland **urban** interface (WUI) **areas** and areas of high or severe fire risk (since **thresholds** for acceptable environmental impacts around WUI's and areas of severe fire risk may be higher).

Among the information to consider and analyze are: 1) Normal fire return intervals and mortality levels from disease or insects; 2) Post-treatment landscape vs. desired forest age class, composition, structure (How far outside the natural range of variability and disturbance regimes are areas to be treated? What forest types (e.g., cold, moist, or dry), stand densities and species composition are to be treated? Do these vary from similar sites that have experienced natural disturbances? Are fuels treatments directed at density management, thinning ~~from~~below, strategically placed treatment units, etc.); 3) Funding for fuels treatments (Are large trees being cut to fund fuels reduction? Are wildlife or restoration funds available to carry out fuels reduction to meet desired future conditions?); 4) Trade-offs of adverse water **quality**, fisheries, wildlife impacts of fuels treatments (Will fuels reduction require new road construction or reconstruction of roads? Will riparian areas, wetlands, and other important habitats be treated differently than the rest of the landscape?) 5) Monitoring (Is pre- and post-project monitoring proposed?).

#### Prescribed Fire & Air Quality

EPA supports increasing reintroduction of fire into Federal land management programs to allow fire to play its natural role and provide resource benefits, consistent with public health and environmental quality considerations. Accordingly, the EPA supports judicious **use** of prescribed fire to control forest fuel accumulation and to influence forest composition and structure. The EPA also recognizes and **supports the** national goal reduce the **risk** of uncontrolled wildfire in wildland-urban interface areas. The EIS should discuss the National Fire Plan's *Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems*, the recent budget increase to **carry** out more prescribed fires in the rural/urban interface, and what this means for the BLM.

Smoke from fire contains air pollutants, including tiny particulates (**PM<sub>10</sub>** and **PM<sub>2.5</sub>**) which can cause health problems, especially for people suffering from respiratory illnesses such as asthma or emphysema, or **heart** problems. Particulate concentrations that exceed health standards have been measured downwind from prescribed burns. In addition, prescribed fire could have impacts on Class II areas and Federally-designated Class I areas, and smoke can reduce visibility and diminish the appreciation of scenic vistas (Wilderness Areas or National Parks).

On May 15, 1998, the EPA issued the Interim Air **Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed** Fires to address public health and welfare impacts caused by wildland and prescribed fires that are managed to achieve resource benefits. The *Interim Air Quality Policy* was prepared in an effort to integrate the public policy goals of allowing fire to function in its natural role in maintaining healthy ecosystems **and** protecting public health and welfare by mitigating the

impacts of air pollutant emissions on air quality and visibility. The *Interim Air Quality Policy* was developed with the active involvement of stakeholders, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is **Federal** policy which reconciles the competing needs to conduct prescribed fires while at the same time to maintain clean air to protect public health. It is interim only in that it does not yet address agricultural burning nor **visibility/regional haze**. It is not interim with regard to how States, Tribes, and Federal land managers should address smoke from prescribed fires.

A copy of the Interim Air Quality *Policy* can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/memoranda/firefnl.pdf>, and a fact sheet can be found at: [www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/fact\\_sheets/firefl.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/fact_sheets/firefl.pdf). EPA air quality guidance can be found at [www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/pgm.html](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/pgm.html). The *Interim Air Quality Policy* calls on States to develop a Smoke Management Program and for the Federal Land Managers to participate in the State and Tribal smoke management programs. States that do not have a Smoke Management Program in place run the risk of EPA designating an area as nonattainment under the Clean Air Act if there is a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) due to smoke from prescribed fires. The development of the *Interim Air Quality Policy* was partly driven by the concern that there will be exceedances of the NAAQS in light of plans by Federal land managers to carry out more prescribed fires.

While the burden of addressing a non-attainment area falls on the State, Federal Land Managers need to ensure protection of the NAAQS by participating in certified State Smoke Management Programs. The EPA gives special consideration to smoke and high particulates attributed to fires managed for resource benefits if the State has certified to EPA that it is implementing a Smoke Management Program. We **recommend** that NEPA documents discuss the *Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires*, and disclose how ~~the~~ Federal Land Manager is participating in a certified Smoke Management Program (e.g., Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group), and describe how prescribed burns will be in line with the State certified Smoke Management Program. The RMP should provide direction that project-specific EAs, and EISs, which tier off a RMP, give an update on progress made **towards** prescribed **burn** goals. This would put the project-specific burns in context with the **overall** plan. It may be of interest to the public to display the **website** for the Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group, <http://www.smokemu.org>.

The RMP should assure that an air quality analysis is completed if prescribed burning is proposed in projects tiered to a programmatic land management plan. The EIS should designate on a map any **Class I and II** areas that fall within the planning boundaries. If there are any nonattainment areas designated within the analysis area the reasons for air quality degradation should be identified and discussed. It **would** be helpful to characterize the problem in terms of source of **pollution**, frequency, degree of severity, and what is being done or has been done to correct the problem.

The RMP for lands including Class I areas should identify what actions are being taken to determine if the national visibility goal is being met. RMP should address potential impacts on visibility if there is a **current** or potential, future impact on Class I Areas from certain activities (i.e., **slash** disposal, prescribed burning). An analysis of existing and **potential** visibility impact to Class I lands should be provided as part of the RMP (contact Bob **Habeck** of Montana DEQ in Helena at 406-444-7305).

Smoke management programs depend on favorable meteorological conditions to disperse smoke. However, despite best efforts to predict favorable conditions the weather can change causing smoke not to disperse as intended. Therefore, the **EIS** should acknowledge that there may be unintentional ground-level impacts from smoke and never presume to the public that there will be no air quality impacts. The public will naturally want to know what the BLM will do in the event smoke does not properly disperse. The discussion of the contingency measure element of the smoke management program should address this concern.

We recommend that Federal land management agencies incorporate use of techniques that minimize air pollutant emissions from fire and the adverse impacts of smoke on public health and the **environment**. These techniques include **scheduling burning** during favorable weather conditions that allow good smoke dispersal, limiting the amount of land burned at any one time, and mechanical pretreatment of fuels. Smoke dispersal and ventilation climate conditions may be found at this Forest Service **website**, [www.fs.fed.us/pnw/fera/vent](http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/fera/vent). General sound fire management practices include:

- \* Reducing the dangerous build-up of dead trees, branches, and vegetative matter on forest **floors** by using prescribed fire or the selective thinning, pruning, or cutting and removal of trees by **mechanical** means.
- \* Whenever possible, mechanical thinning can be used as an effective "pretreatment" to prescribed burning, although we also urge consideration of water quality, fishery, and ecological impacts along with air quality impacts when planning management actions (e.g., focusing mechanical treatments near roads to avoid or minimize new road construction). Mechanical treatments **may** be appropriate where the risk of **the** escape of prescribed burns is high and where nearby home developments may be threatened.
- \* Using smoke management techniques during burns to **minimize** smoke in populated **areas** as well as visibility effects. Each prescribed burn site will have unique characteristics, but smoke impacts can be minimized by **burning** during weather conditions with optimal humidity levels and wind conditions for the types of materials being burned. Smoke impacts can also be minimized by limiting the **amount** of materials and acreage burned at any one time. Careful scheduling of the many burning activities to coincide with proper climatological and meteorological conditions helps avoid **air** quality problems.

\* Implementing fire hazard awareness and mitigation programs for the public. Closure of back country roads during high fire risk periods may reduce potential for human caused fires.

Additional information on air quality issues is available from EPA websites, [www.epa.gov/airlinks](http://www.epa.gov/airlinks) or at [www.epa.gov/air/oarpubs.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/oarpubs.html), and on the Forest Service Region 1 air quality website [www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/resources/air/guidance/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/resources/air/guidance/index.shtml), including the USFS Region 1 air quality analysis document, "Describe Air Resource Impacts from Prescribed Fire Projects in NEPA Documents for Montana and Idaho in Region 1 and 4." We also recommend that efforts be made to educate home owners on the wildland-urban interface who build in fire adapted forest ecosystems regarding the need to use less flammable building materials and to manage fuel and vegetation near their homes (see websites [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) and [www.firelab.org](http://www.firelab.org)).

### Wildfire

In addition to prescribed fires, the EIS should include discussion of policies regarding situations where wildfires will be allowed to burn as a natural occurrence. Reintroduction of fire into the landscape is not limited to prescribed burns. The public should be fully aware of the Forest Service's decision making process to allow natural fires to burn uncontrolled vs. where and when fire suppression will be practiced.

We also note that while it is generally acknowledged that fire suppression has resulted in build up of forest fuels, unnatural forest conditions and increases in wildfire severity and area burned, fire suppression still seems to be a major theme of forest management. We believe RMP revisions offer opportunities to address the heavy reliance on fire suppression by promoting increased public understanding of the necessary role of fire in forest ecosystems, and attempting to restore more natural fire disturbance regimes to forest ecosystems. We encourage public education programs to increase public understanding on the trade-offs between increased use of prescribed fire vs. wildfire. Increased public understanding of prescribed fire vs. wildfire air quality trade-offs may promote increased public acceptance of and support for prescribed fire to manage vegetation and fire risk.

### **6) Livestock Grazing**

The EPA believes direction for livestock grazing should be aimed at maintaining a sustainable grazing program that protects range and riparian resources and water quality and fisheries. Grazing impacts on riparian habitat, water quality, and fisheries can be significant, particularly stream bank disturbance from livestock. Stream reaches may be impaired or functioning-at-risk or non-functioning due to grazing. The RMP should be consistent with the overall objective of maintaining healthy, sustainable rangeland and aquatic ecosystems. We encourage use of technical grazing documents to develop grazing strategies and best management practices (BMPs) that are protective of riparian areas and wetlands (e.g., the Natural Resources

Conservation Service, Montana Prescribed Grazing Practices, Code 528A, see copy attached, BLM's "Effective Cattle Management in Riparian Zones: A Field Survey and Literature Review", Montana BLM Riparian Technical Bulletin No. 3, November 1997, Montana Forest and Conservation Experiment Station; and BLM's "Grazing Management for Riparian Wetland Areas", BLM Technical Bulletins 1737-14 and 1734-6, "Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health"; and Riparian Grazing Successes on Montana Ranches, Livestock Grazing in Western Riparian Areas; Managing Change: Livestock Grazing in Western Riparian Areas). Montana's grazing BMPs can be found [http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/watershed/projects/nps\\_final/final.pdf](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/watershed/projects/nps_final/final.pdf).

A description of the current range management should be provided. This description may include sizes of allotments, number and location of pastures, number and kind of livestock, grazing strategies, number of Animal Unit Months permitted, on-off periods, utilization standards, and number and kind of improvements (e.g., fencing, off stream watering). This section should also include a discussion of the grazing management actions and how the management strategy may be adjusted over time.

We understand that the Beaverhead National Forest has developed Riparian Guidelines that are demonstrating recovery of stream channels and riparian vegetation in the presence of grazing. These guidelines rely upon permittees to monitor forage utilization, stubble height, streambank alteration, and woody browse use to determine when it is necessary to move livestock. We encourage the BLM to consider establishing such guidelines on their land, where applicable for riparian recovery from grazing impacts.

## 7) Timber

The EPA believes there is a need too identify areas where management emphasis may be on timber production, and where maintenance or restoration of properly functioning forest conditions may yield marketable timber products. The EPA believes there is also a continuing need to maintain and restore water quality, protect streamside areas, promote recovery of T&E species and their habitat, and protect characteristics and values of roadless areas. While we acknowledge potential trade-offs with timber production and social and economic values, we believe it is important that ecosystem integrity be adequately maintained to allow sustainable levels of timber production along with other resource uses and maintenance of other desired values over the long-term.

### Economics

The RMP should discuss the economic consequences of implementing the various management alternatives, including estimates of job additions or losses attributable to timber management. It is important that the management plan consider timber sale economics as a potential management concern for analysis in response to the full public disclosure intent of NEPA and in response to the controversy regarding below-cost timber sales. The management

plan should provide clear descriptions of the key assumptions regarding **Interdisciplinary Team** costs, sale preparation, timber pricing, product valuation, discount rates, rotation lengths, **road construction**, and road closure, decommissioning, and road maintenance costs.

The EIS economic evaluation should also include analysis of the long ~~term~~ economic value of leaving the forest landscape as it is. There may be economic gains to the ecosystem by non-disturbance that should be recognized as well as those to the economy of forest product utilization. Costs should also include the commercial economic value of non-forest resources that may be harvested such as **mushrooms**, berries, Christmas trees or boughs for ornamentation, etc.,.

## **8) Wilderness Recommendations**

The EPA supports the identification and discussion of additional areas with wilderness characteristics and values that may be suitable or eligible for wilderness designation; and to recommend such areas for wilderness designation; and to provide management direction for those **roadless** areas not recommended for wilderness designation. We note that **roadless** areas often include the population strongholds and key **refugia** for listed or proposed species and narrow endemic **populations** that need to be protected. EPA encourages recommendations for wilderness where such designation would be appropriate or protect unique resource values and provide a **higher** level of natural resource protection. We support wilderness recommendations for inventoried **roadless** areas that are considered **appropriate** for inclusion in Wilderness Preservation System; and to manage **recommended wilderness areas** to protect wilderness character.

## **9) Other Items**

### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

If areas with other special designations (e.g., Areas of Critical Environmental Concern-ACEC, etc.) are identified, **and/or undesignated** areas with important ecological, biological, botanical, zoological, paleontological, archaeological, scenic, historic, geological, or other characteristics are identified which **may** provide potential for additional special area designations we encourage the BLM to consider them for special designation. We also recommend that the BLM contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program to learn about any Natural Heritage Program **efforts** to identify and evaluate important or unique habitats such as high quality wetlands (e.g., contact Marc Jones at Montana **NHP** in Helena at 406-444-3488). Important or unique habitats identified by Natural Heritage **Programs** that are located on Federal land may be worthy candidates for protection through a special designation such as **ACECs**.

### Wild & Scenic Rivers

If any rivers with wild & scenic characteristics and values that may be suitable or eligible for a Wild & Scenic River designation we encourage consideration of such designation. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR), Sections 10, 11, and 12, encourages Federal agencies to enter into cooperative agreements with States and local governments in order to protect and manage WSR values. Since land ownership along a WSR is often mixed, cooperation between Federal, State, and local agencies is often key in managing and protection WSR resources. The EPA recommends that the lead agency work with the appropriate State and local agencies in developing a uniform and comprehensive WSR management strategy. If applicable, the RMP should include an ownership map of the WSR watershed that clearly identifies Federal, State, local government, and private lands. Accompanying discussion should identify jurisdictional and regulatory responsibilities for each ownership type. In addition, the management plan should estimate and discuss impacts from activities on both Federal and non-Federal lands and explain how Federal, State, and local government activities will be coordinated in order to protect WSR resources and values. Finally, the management plan and plan should identify funding priorities for WSR management and levels of funding required to provide adequate WSR resource protection.

### Heritage Resources

The environmental impact analysis for the alternative directions for forest management should include evaluation and protection of cultural, historical and archaeological resources on Federal land. Cultural, historical, and archaeological resource analyses should be conducted and completed as much as possible as part of the environmental analysis for the EIS. Knowledge of the presence or absence of significant cultural, historical and archaeological resource protection needs may be important for a reasoned choice among management alternatives.

### Tribal Coordination

Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments," was issued on November 6, 2000 to assure meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies with tribal implications, and to strengthen U.S. government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes. Trust resources are located within the exterior boundaries of reservations and outside the reservation in Usual and Accustomed fishing and hunting areas. Agencies should assess all impacts to tribal trust resource and include those impacts in the agencies' environmental documents, and should consult to the greatest extent practicable and to the extent permitted by law, with tribal governments prior to taking actions that affect federally recognized tribal governments. The environmental document shall fully disclose the potential environmental impacts, both negative and positive, on tribal trust resources. Agencies are directed to respect Indian tribal self-government and sovereignty, honor tribal treaty & other rights, and strive to meet the responsibilities that arise from the unique legal relationship between the Federal Government and

Indian tribal governments, and have an accountable **process** to ensure meaningful and timely input by tribal officials in the development of regulatory policies that have tribal implications.

### Environmental Justice

**E.O.12898**, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," requires that Federal agencies make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Environmental justice encompasses a broad range of impacts covered by NEPA, including impacts on the natural or physical environment and interrelated social, cultural, and economic impacts. The BLM should develop a strategy for effective public involvement of minority (e.g., Native American) and low-income populations in land management considerations, analyzing environmental, social, cultural and economic effects, and developing mitigation measures. Detailed guidance on addressing Executive Order 12898 in NEPA documents is available from CEQ, <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ej/justice.pdf>.

### Mineral Development/Mining

Mineral **development/mining** has the potential to cause water pollution, and other adverse environmental impacts. While minerals has not been identified as a revision topic we want to indicate EPA concerns about **hardrock** mining impacts to public health and the environment (i.e., from acid mine drainage and metal and nitrogen contamination of surface and ground waters). There is a need to protect the taxpayer from the potential expense of reclamation and remediation following **hardrock** mine financial failures or abandonment. We believe the **RMPs** and their associated EIS should evaluate and consider the potential for acid mine drainage **and/or** metal or nutrient transport or pollution to occur during mineral exploration and development on Federal lands. Pollutant discharges from mine **adits**, and mine site surface runoff and ground water seepage are regulated by EPA **and/or** the States National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act. If mining is anticipated to be a significant activity in the future the **RMPs** and EIS may need to:

- 1) Discuss **environmental** impacts and risks from inactive, **abandoned**, and active mines;
- 2) Identify proposed management direction, actions and priorities for addressing environmental impacts and risks from the inactive, abandoned and active mines;
- 3) Discuss the mineral outputs of the active mines;
- 4) Provide maps indicating sites of active and inactive mines, valid preexisting rights, and areas open to and withdrawn from mineral entry (Montana DEQ has mine site map resources, contact Vic Anderson at 406- 444-4972);

To the extent that mineral development and mining will be significant activities on the forests in the next 10-15 years, we believe it would be useful if the EIS discussed the Hard Rock Mining Act of 1872, its benefits and impacts, and potential conflicts with the Clean Water Act,

Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act. The Mining Act grants the right to private individuals to explore and develop mineral rights on Federal lands. However, while mining provides valuable raw material, it can pose environmental risks and impacts that conflict with environmental statutes. We do not believe the Mining Act preempts environmental statutes. Discussion of the legal discretion available to the BLM in granting mining permits, and how mineral exploration and development will be balanced with the protection and restoration of environmental resources, sustainability and ecosystem management may be relevant. We believe that the desired condition statement (and consequently the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines) for mineral and geology resources should reflect the changing attitudes toward mining by emphasizing ecosystem protection and restoration.

We also recommend that the BLM state their preference for having responsible parties conduct clean up at inactive or abandoned mines. The BLM may also want to state their preference for using CERCLA (Superfund) process and authorities at inactive or abandoned sites where there is no Plan of Operation or bond that covers reclamation activities. It may also be relevant to consider information regarding the bankruptcy and subsequent Superfund (i.e., CERCLA) remedial actions that occurred from mineral development on public lands at the Summitville Mine in Colorado, and Clean Water Act violations at the Zortman-Landusky Mine in northeastern Montana (on BLM land) to provide an overall context regarding such matters in the EIS. Please contact Mr. Wes Wilson of our Denver Regional Office at 303-312-6562 if you need information regarding these matters.

In regard to placer mining we draw your attention to the publication, Montana Placer Mining BMPs, Montana Bureau of Mines & Geology Special Publication 106, available from Mr. Robin McCulloch, MBMG, Main Hall, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, Butte, Montana 59701. This publication describes mine planning, design, operation and reclamation practices to mitigate environmental impacts and water quality degradation from placer mining.

### Solid Waste Facilities

The Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA), Section 4005 prohibits open dumping of solid waste (i.e., trash, garbage, refuse). The rules at 40 CFR part 257 govern non-municipal solid waste management, and at 40 CFR Part 258 disposal of solid waste at landfills. RMPs should consider solid waste management as it evaluates BLM facility needs, including: existing sources of solid waste and resource use activities that have the potential to generate solid wastes; goals and objectives for correcting any existing public health or environmental problems caused by past or present mismanagement of solid waste; goals and objectives to minimize the generation of solid wastes and to protect public health and the environment from the adverse impacts of any solid wastes that are generated under various resource use alternatives; and goals and objectives for monitoring the effectiveness of solid waste management activities within the resource unit.

### Oil and Gas Development

EPA often has concerns about protection of surface and ground water resources and air quality during oil & gas development. If there are oil & gas development activities and impacts on the Butte Field Office area that are not covered by existing oil & gas decisions please let us know and we will provide additional scoping comments in regard to oil & gas exploration and development.

### Pollution Prevention

Pollution Prevention, also known as "source reduction," encompasses practices which reduce, eliminate, or prevent pollution at its source. By reducing the total amount of pollution that is produced, there is less waste to control, treat, or dispose of, and there are less hazards posed to public health and the environment. Under Section 6602(b) of the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, Congress established a national policy that organizes preferences for pollution prevention. CEQ provided guidance for incorporating pollution prevention into NEPA through a memorandum to Federal Department and Agency heads (Federal Register, January 29, 1993, pages 6478 - 6481, <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/poll/ppguidnc.htm>). The RMP should address land management strategies to avoid/reduce pollution at the source as the preferred course of action to lessen the need to recycle, treat and otherwise implement the objectives of the 1990 Pollution Prevention Act. This may be relevant in relation to mining activities on BLM Land or management of BLM facilities.

**APPENDIX F: WRITTEN COMMENTS SUMMARY**

---

## APPENDIX F SCOPING COMMENTS

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Air Quality	Smoke from fire contains air pollutants, including tiny particulates (PM <sub>10</sub> and PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) which can cause health problems, especially for people suffering from respiratory illnesses such as asthma or emphysema, or heart problems. Particulate concentrations that exceed health standards have been measured downwind from prescribed burns. In addition, prescribed fire could have impacts on Class II areas and Federally-designated Class I areas, and smoke can reduce visibility and diminish the appreciation of scenic vistas (Wilderness Areas or National Parks).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Air Quality	On May 15, 1998, the EPA issued the Interim Air <i>Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires</i> to address public health and welfare impacts caused by wildland and prescribed fires that are managed to achieve resource benefits. The <i>Interim Air Quality Policy</i> was prepared in an effort to integrate the public policy goals of allowing fire to function in its natural role in maintaining healthy ecosystems <u>and</u> protecting public health and welfare by mitigating the impacts of air pollutant emissions on air quality and visibility. The <i>Interim Air Quality Policy</i> was developed with the active involvement of stakeholders, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is Federal policy which reconciles the competing needs to conduct prescribed fires while at the same time to maintain clean air to protect public health. It is interim only in that it does not yet address agricultural burning nor visibility/regional haze. It is not interim with regard to how States, Tribes, and Federal land managers should address smoke from prescribed fires.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Air Quality	A copy of the Interim Air Quality Policy can be found at: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/memoranda/firefnl.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/memoranda/firefnl.pdf</a> , and a fact sheet can be found at: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/fact_sheets/firefl.pdf">www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/fact_sheets/firefl.pdf</a> . EPA air quality guidance can be found at <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1pgm.html">www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1pgm.html</a> . The Interim Air Quality Policy calls on States to develop a Smoke Management Program and for the Federal Land Managers to participate in the State and Tribal smoke management programs. States that do not have a Smoke Management Program in place run the risk of EPA designating an area as nonattainment under the Clean Air Act if there is a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) due to smoke from prescribed fires. The development of the Interim Air Quality Policy was partly driven by the concern that there will be exceedances of the NAAQS in light of plans by Federal land managers to carry out more prescribed fires.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Air Quality	While the burden of addressing a non-attainment area falls on the State, Federal Land Managers need to ensure protection of the NAAQS by participating in certified State Smoke Management Programs. The EPA gives special consideration to smoke and high particulates attributed to fires managed for resource benefits if the State has certified to EPA that it is implementing a Smoke Management Program. We recommend that NEPA documents discuss the Interim Air Quality <i>Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires</i> , and disclose how the Federal Land Manager is participating in a certified Smoke Management Program (e.g., Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group), and describe how prescribed burns will be in line with the State certified Smoke Management Program. The RMP should provide direction that project-specific EAs, and EISs, which tier off a RMP, give an update on progress made towards prescribed burn goals. This would put the project-specific burns in context with the overall plan. It may be of interest to the public to display the website for the Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group, <a href="http://www.smokemu.org">http://www.smokemu.org</a> .	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Air Quality	The RMP should assure that an air quality analysis is completed if prescribed burning is proposed in projects tiered to a programmatic land management plan. The EIS should designate on a map any Class I and II areas that fall within the planning boundaries. If there are any nonattainment areas designated within the analysis area the reasons for air quality degradation should be identified and discussed. It would be helpful to characterize the problem in terms of source of pollution, frequency, degree of severity, and what is being done or has been done to correct the problem.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Air Quality	Additional information on air quality issues is available from EPA websites, or at <a href="http://www.epa.gov/airlinks">www.epa.gov/airlinks</a> or at <a href="http://www.epa.gov/air/oarpg.html">www.epa.gov/air/oarpg.html</a> , and on the Forest Service Region 1 air quality website <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/resources/air/guidance/index.shtml">www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/resources/air/guidance/index.shtml</a> , including the USFS Region 1 air quality analysis document, "Describing Air Resource Impacts from Prescribed Fire Projects in NEPA Documents for Montana and Idaho in Region 1 and 4." We also recommend that efforts be made to educate home owners on the wildland-urban interface who build in fire adapted forest ecosystems regarding the need to use less flammable building materials and to manage fuel and vegetation near their homes (see and <a href="http://www.firewise.org">www.firewise.org</a> and <a href="http://www.firelab.org">www.firelab.org</a> ).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Cultural Resources	The environmental impact analysis for the alternative directions for forest management should include evaluation and protection of cultural, historical, and archaeological resources on Federal land. Cultural, historical, and archaeological resource analyses should be conducted and completed as much as possible as part of the environmental analysis for the EIS. Knowledge of the presence or absence of significant cultural, historical and archaeological resource protection needs may be important for a reasoned choice among management alternatives.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC07	Fire Management	Vegetation Management. BLM failed to describe what this program really is. The program in reality is "Wildland Urban Interface Project"(refer to your E.A. MT-070-02-31-Pole Canyon, Little Boulder, Silver Creek). The purpose of this program is to reduce the fuel danger on our public land to protect homeowners that decided to build next to and within public land boundaries.	Individual
SC07	Fire Management	The program is 'ludicrous' since BLM will destroy the vegetation (wildlife habitat) and esthetics of the area to protect homeowners that should be reducing the fuel hazard on THEIR property and buying fire insurance like the rest of us.	Individual
SC07	Fire Management	We could say there is a fuel danger on all the public lands all over Montana. Will BLM destroy the vegetation (wildlife habitat) all over Montana in anticipation of protecting home-owners on private land? The idea is Ludicrous! That seems to be the plan. You are anticipating burning second growth Douglas fir and big sagebrush in the Whitetail area, all big game habitat.	Individual
SC07	Fire Management	You must be familiar with "Forest Service workers threaten lawsuit" MT. Standard-10-14-2003. Forest Service employees are challenging the ethics of the program "there are many Montana's living in the wildland interface who have expectation that their federal government, state government, county government will protect them from wild fires". Excellent point and since many have exclusive homes next to public lands and are only temporary Montana residents. Lack of zoning laws and real estate created the problem. Let them destroy the vegetation (privacy) on their property to protect their homes and buy more home insurance, many of which shouldn't have been built there in the first place. BLM should identify the program for what it actually is in the RMP and not mislead the public and destroy our valuable wildlife habitat.	Individual
SC11	Fire Management	We fully support the need to recognize fire as a natural disturbance process, and to address competing and unwanted vegetation and fuel loads and fire risk and forest health. We believe the risks of uncharacteristic disturbances such as catastrophic wildfire should be evaluated versus the effects of active restoration designed to reduce those risks (i.e., water quality, fisheries and wildlife effects).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	The EPA supports the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recognize the role of fire as a disturbance processes;</li> <li>-Implement the new fire policy and direction.</li> <li>-1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (USDA and USDI 1995), directing integration of fire into land management planning, working with landowners and stakeholders, and directing landscape level analysis.</li> <li>-National Fire Plan directing full range of fire management activities linked to RMPs.</li> <li>-Identify areas appropriate for wildland fire use.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	The ICBEMP scientific findings identify fire as a major natural disturbance process in forest ecosystems. It is recognized that fire is a necessary disturbance phenomena to keep fuel density in check and to maintain healthy forest ecosystems. It is also recognized that fire suppression over the last 100 years has reduced this natural disturbance phenomena in forests, which has changed the structure and composition of forest ecosystems.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	We support management based on understanding and consideration of natural disturbance processes (e.g., fire, insects, disease), including the intensity, frequency, and magnitude of disturbance regimes. We recommend that the RMP and EIS also consider ecosystem processes (such as the flows and cycles of nutrients and water) and their dynamics in developing revised direction for vegetation and fuels management. The risks of uncharacteristic disturbances such as catastrophic wildfire need to be evaluated versus the effects of fuels management actions designed to reduce those risks. Methods to address competing and unwanted vegetation and fuel loads and fire risk should be evaluated vs. water quality, fisheries and wildlife effects. We recommend emphasizing fuels management in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas and areas of high or severe fire risk (since for acceptable environmental impacts around WUIs and areas of severe fire risk may be higher).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	Among the information to consider and analyze are: 1) Normal fire return intervals and mortality levels from disease or insects; 2) Post-treatment landscape vs. desired forest age class, composition, structure (How far outside the natural range of variability and disturbance regimes are areas to be treated? What forest types (e.g., cold, moist, or dry), stand densities and species composition are to be treated? Do these vary from similar sites that have experienced natural disturbances? Are fuels treatments directed at density management, thinning from below, strategically placed treatment units, etc.?); 3) Funding for fuels treatments (Are large trees being cut to fund fuels reduction? Are wildlife or restoration funds available to carry out fuels reduction to meet desired future conditions?); 4) Trade-offs of adverse water quality, fisheries, wildlife impacts of fuels treatments (Will fuels reduction require new road construction or reconstruction of roads? Will riparian areas, wetlands, and other important habitats be treated differently than the rest of the landscape?) 5) Monitoring (Is pre-and post-project monitoring proposed?).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Fire Management	EPA supports increasing reintroduction of fire into Federal land management programs to allow fire to play its natural role and provide resource benefits, consistent with public health and environmental quality considerations. Accordingly, the EPA supports judicious use of prescribed fire to control forest fuel accumulation and to influence forest composition and structure. The EPA also recognizes and supports the national goal reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfire in wildland-urban interface areas. The EIS should discuss the National Fire Plan's <i>Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems</i> , the recent budget increase to carry out more prescribed fires in the rural/urban interface, and what this means for the BLM.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	Smoke from fire contains air pollutants, including tiny particulates (PM <sub>10</sub> and PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) which can cause health problems, especially for people suffering from respiratory illnesses such as asthma or emphysema, or heart problems. Particulate concentrations that exceed health standards have been measured downwind from prescribed burns. In addition, prescribed fire could have impacts on Class II areas and Federally-designated Class I areas, and smoke can reduce visibility and diminish the appreciation of scenic vistas (Wilderness Areas or National Parks).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	On May 15, 1998, the EPA issued the Interim Air <i>Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires</i> to address public health and welfare impacts caused by wildland and prescribed fires that are managed to achieve resource benefits. The <i>Interim Air Quality Policy</i> was prepared in an effort to integrate the public policy goals of allowing fire to function in its natural role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and protecting public health and welfare by mitigating the impacts of air pollutant emissions on air quality and visibility. The <i>Interim Air Quality Policy</i> was developed with the active involvement of stakeholders, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is Federal policy which reconciles the competing needs to conduct prescribed fires while at the same time to maintain clean air to protect public health. It is interim only in that it does not yet address agricultural burning nor visibility/regional haze. It is not interim with regard to how States, Tribes, and Federal land managers should address smoke from prescribed fires.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	A copy of the Interim Air Quality Policy can be found at: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/memoranda/firefnl.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/memoranda/firefnl.pdf</a> , and a fact sheet can be found at: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/fact_sheets/firefl.pdf">www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/fact_sheets/firefl.pdf</a> . EPA air quality guidance can be found at <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/pgm.html">www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/pgm.html</a> . The Interim Air Quality Policy calls on States to develop a Smoke Management Program and for the Federal Land Managers to participate in the State and Tribal smoke management programs. States that do not have a Smoke Management Program in place run the risk of EPA designating an area as nonattainment under the Clean Air Act if there is a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) due to smoke from prescribed fires. The development of the Interim Air Quality Policy was partly driven by the concern that there will be exceedances of the NAAQS in light of plans by Federal land managers to carry out more prescribed fires.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	While the burden of addressing a non-attainment area falls on the State, Federal Land Managers need to ensure protection of the NAAQS by participating in certified State Smoke Management Programs. The EPA gives special consideration to smoke and high particulates attributed to fires managed for resource benefits if the State has certified to EPA that it is implementing a Smoke Management Program. We recommend that NEPA documents discuss the Interim Air Quality <i>Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires</i> , and disclose how the Federal Land Manager is participating in a certified Smoke Management Program (e.g., Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group), and describe how prescribed burns will be in line with the State certified Smoke Management Program. The RMP should provide direction that project-specific EAs, and EISs, which tier off a RMP, give an update on progress made towards prescribed burn goals. This would put the project-specific burns in context with the overall plan. It may be of interest to the public to display the website for the Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group, <a href="http://www.smokemu.org">http://www.smokemu.org</a> .	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	The RMP should assure that an air quality analysis is completed if prescribed burning is proposed in projects tiered to a programmatic land management plan. The EIS should designate on a map any Class I and II areas that fall within the planning boundaries. If there are any nonattainment areas designated within the analysis area the reasons for air quality degradation should be identified and discussed. It would be helpful to characterize the problem in terms of source of pollution, frequency, degree of severity, and what is being done or has been done to correct the problem.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	The RMP for lands including Class I areas should identify what actions are being taken to determine if the national visibility goal is being met. RMP should address potential impacts on visibility if there is a current or potential, future impact on Class I areas from certain activities (i.e., slash disposal, prescribed burning). An analysis of existing and potential visibility impact to Class I lands should be provided as part of the RMP (contact Bob Habeck of Montana DEQ in Helena at 406-444-7305).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<b>Letter ID</b>	<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Comment Summary</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
SC11	Fire Management	Smoke management programs depend on favorable meteorological conditions to disperse smoke. However, despite best efforts to predict favorable conditions the weather can change causing smoke not to disperse as intended. Therefore, the EIS should acknowledge that there may be unintentional ground-level impacts from smoke and never presume to the public that there will be no air quality impacts. The public will naturally want to know what the BLM will do in the event smoke does not properly disperse. The discussion of the contingency measure element of the smoke management program should address this concern.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	We recommend that Federal land management agencies incorporate use of techniques the minimize air pollution emissions from fire and the adverse impacts of smoke on public health and the environment. These techniques include scheduling burning during favorable weather conditions that allow good smoke dispersal, limiting the amount of land burned at any one time, and mechanical pretreatment of fuels. Smoke dispersal and ventilation climate conditions may be found at this Forest Service website, <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/fera/vent">www.fs.fed.us/pnw/fera/vent</a> .	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	General sound fire management practices include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reducing the dangerous build-up of dead trees, branches, and vegetative matter on forest floors by using prescribed fire or the selective thinning, pruning, or cutting and removal of trees by mechanical means.</li> <li>* Whenever possible, mechanical thinning can be used as an effective "pretreatment" to prescribed burning, although we also urge consideration of water quality, fishery, and ecological impacts done with air quality impacts when planning management actions (e.g., focusing mechanical treatments near roads to avoid or minimize new road construction). Mechanical treatments may be appropriate where the risk of the escape of prescribed burns is high and where nearby home developments may be threatened.</li> <li>* Using smoke management techniques during burns to minimize smoke in populated areas as well as visibility effects. Each prescribed burn site will have unique characteristics, but smoke impacts can be minimized by burning during weather conditions with optimal humidity levels and wind conditions for the types of materials being burned. Smoke impacts can also be minimized by limiting the amount of materials and acreage burned at any one time. Careful scheduling of the many burning activities to coincide with proper climatological and meteorological conditions helps avoid air quality problems.</li> <li>* Implementing fire hazard awareness and mitigation programs for the public. Closure of back country roads during high fire risk periods may reduce potential for human caused fires.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	Additional information on air quality issues is available from EPA websites, or at <a href="http://www.epa.gov/airlinks">www.epa.gov/airlinks</a> or at <a href="http://www.epa.gov/air/oarpubs.html">www.epa.gov/air/oarpubs.html</a> , and on the Forest Service Region 1 air quality website <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/resources/air/guidance/index.shtml">www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/resources/air/guidance/index.shtml</a> , including the USFS Region 1 air quality analysis document, "Describing Air Resource Impacts from Prescribed Fire Projects in NEPA Documents for Montana and Idaho in Region 1 and 4." We also recommend that efforts be made to educate home owners on the wildland-urban interface who build in fire adapted forest ecosystems regarding the need to use less flammable building materials and to manage fuel and vegetation near their homes (see and <a href="http://www.firewise.org">www.firewise.org</a> and <a href="http://www.firelab.org">www.firelab.org</a> ).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	In addition to prescribed fires, the EIS should include discussion of policies regarding situations where wildfires will be allowed to burn as a natural occurrence. Reintroduction of fire into the landscape is not limited to prescribed burns. The public should be fully aware of the Forest Service's decision making process to allow natural fires to burn uncontrolled vs. where and when fire suppression will be practiced.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Fire Management	We also note that while it is generally acknowledged that fire suppression has resulted in build up of forest fuels, unnatural forest conditions and increases in wildfire severity and area burned, fire suppression still seems to be a major theme of forest management. We believe RMP revisions offer opportunities to address the heavy reliance on fire suppression by promoting increased public understanding of the necessary role of fire in forest ecosystems, and attempting to restore more natural fire disturbance regimes to forest ecosystems. We encourage public education programs to increase public understanding on the trade-offs between increased use of prescribed fire vs. wildfire. Increased public understanding of prescribed fire vs. wildfire air quality trade-offs may promote increased public acceptance of and support for prescribed fire to manage vegetation and fire risk.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC16	Fire Management	Fire and forest fuel loads should be monitored and controlled through thinning, controlled burns, etc.	Individual
SC03	Forestry Management	Pine beetles should be controlled in the most expedient and cost effective manner possible.	Individual
SC11	Forestry Management	We also believe land management should be based on understanding and consideration of all natural disturbance processes, certainly including fire, but not limited to fire. Other natural disturbance processes such as insects and disease, and ecosystem processes (such as the flows and cycles of nutrients and water) and their dynamics also need to be considered in developing revised direction for vegetation management. The intensity, frequency and magnitude of disturbance regimes for all these natural disturbance processes (e.g., fire, insects, disease) should be considered.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Forestry Management	The EPA believes there is a need too identify areas where management emphasis may be on timber production, and where maintenance or restoration of properly functioning forest conditions may yield marketable timber products. The EPA believes there is also a continuing need to maintain and restore water quality, protect streamside areas, promote recovery of T&E species and their habitat, and protect characteristics and values of roadless areas, While we acknowledge potential trade-offs with timber production and social and economic values, we believe it is important that ecosystem integrity be adequately maintained to allow sustainable levels of timber production along with other resource uses and maintenance of other desired values over the long-term.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC01	General	A general comment concerning the ACEC, VRM, SMRA, and WSR concepts. These are tools to be used only within the context of and consistent with, the multiple use sustained yield mandate of FLPMA. These concepts are not to be used as excuses to de facto manage as a "non-impairment" scheme which contradicts FLPMA's multiple use and sustained yield mandate. This comment should be incorporated as a guideline to the plan.	Individual
SC01	General	A general comment on wilderness characteristics vs. the BLM created concept of, wilderness character. Having wilderness characteristics on a piece of ground does not mean the overall character of that land is wilderness. Wilderness character is a collective term. Wilderness character exists when all of the characteristics that constitute wilderness exist. Wilderness characteristics such as solitude or historical value, may exist in an area that contains roads, or other signs of development. In such areas wilderness character does not exist and wilderness characteristics are simply unique attributes of the area that should be considered in the planning process separate from the context of wilderness. This comment needs to be used as guidance in the development of the plan.	Individual
SC07	General	Why has BLM hired all the people they have if they cannot do the job they were hired to do including you? What is BLM doing with all the appropriated public money each fiscal year (F.Y.) for wildlife and recreation? Nothing seems to be happening on the ground and your staff spends all day in the office, all week. We need an audit by the U.S. General Accounting Office of BLM in Montana. I feel wildlife and recreation are paying for programs detrimental to those public values especially your land adjustment program. Wildlife being used to pay the wages of realty specialists who plan to 'rid' us of our public wildlife habitat.	Individual
SC09	General	The Big Hole Planning Group has been working on developing a Big Hole River Land Use Plan for several years. Plan recommendations have been submitted to Beaverhead, Silver Bow, Madison, and Deerlodge counties for consideration. I understand the recommendations will be accepted by the counties and included in their Land Use Plans. BLM should incorporate the recommendations and standards in the RMP where applicable along the Big Hole River. One of the standards is a 150-foot development setback from the river. This setback could affect future BLM recreation site development along the river.	Individual
SC11	General	EPA often has concerns about protection of surface and ground water resources and air quality during oil and gas development. If there are oil and gas development activities and impacts on the Butte Field Office area that are not covered by existing oil and gas decisions, please let us know and we will provide additional scoping comments in regard to oil and gas exploration and development.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	General	Pollution prevention, also known as "source reduction," encompasses practices which reduce, eliminate, or prevent pollution at its source. By reducing the total amount of pollution that is produced, there is less waste to control, treat, or dispose of, and there are less hazards posed to public health and the environment. Under Section 6602(b) of the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, Congress established a national policy that organizes preferences for pollution prevention. CEQ provided guidance for incorporating pollution prevention into NEPA through a memorandum to Federal Department and Agency heads (Federal Register, January 29, 1993, pages 6478 - 6481, <a href="http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/poll/ppguidnc.htm">http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/poll/ppguidnc.htm</a> ). The RMP should address land management strategies to avoid/reduce pollution at the source as the preferred course of action to lessen the need to recycle, treat and otherwise implement the objectives of the 1990 Pollution Prevention Act. This may be relevant in relation to mining activities on Land or management of BLM facilities.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC12	General	One of the basic requirements of NEPA is to "achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities" (Public Law 91-190, Title I, Section 101 (b) (5)). The wording of NEPA was carefully chosen and was intended to produce a balance between the natural and human environment. Practice and interpretation since the law has strayed far from that intent.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	General	The maps used in the environmental document should be familiar and easily interpreted by all citizens. The public is most familiar with Forest Visitors Maps and other common visitors maps. The environmental document mapping should follow the guidelines required by 40 CFR 1502.8 which states that <i>“Environmental impact statements shall be written in plain language and may use appropriate graphics so that decision-makers and the public can readily understand them”</i> . Many visitors who traditionally use roads and trails in the project area may not comment during travel management process unless they understand which roads and trails are proposed for closure. This lack of understanding could lead to resentment and poor support of the closures by the community because a wide range of needs have not been adequately addressed. We request that mapping identify streams, road numbers, trail numbers, landmarks and key topographic features in a manner that all citizens can easily interpret.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	General	Many citizens have not understood the extent of the motorized closures proposed in past travel management processes. This lack of understanding is due to inadequate communication in many forms including mapping, documents, and on-the-trail public involvement. We are concerned that this lack of public understanding and buy-in will lead to poor support and resentment of closures. We request that public understanding and buy-in be stressed throughout the process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	General	Positive impacts to the environment in areas such as fisheries, wildlife habitat, sediment reduction, and noxious weeds are largely based on personal judgment or predictive models. These models are not calibrated or based on data from the study area. All models are wrong, so honest modelers first report the expected uncertainty of the model and then the predictions. There are no case histories to back up any of the predictions.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	General	Past analyses of the affected environment and environmental consequences have failed to adequately recognize that resources such as fisheries, wildlife, and sediment production are affected far more by nature than by motorized visitors. Drought has a significant impact on fisheries, OHV recreation does not compare. Erosion and other activities of interest such as the spread of noxious weeds occur naturally and at significant rates. For example, floods, fires, drought, and wildlife diseases have historically created significantly greater impacts than motorized visitors have. In many cases it is not reasonable to deem as unacceptable the relatively small increase caused by motorized recreation on natural activities. Comparing man-caused impacts to natural impacts is a reasonable approach that should be used to test for the significance of impacts and improvements. The improvements to the natural environment from this action are not significant when compared to the naturally occurring impacts. The picture shows Copper Creek near Lincoln, Montana following the August 2003 fire. Prior to the fire the Forest Service was concerned about the public camping next to the creek. The potential impacts from the public camping along this stream compared to this fire are insignificant yet closure of this recreation opportunity was being considered. Why are there so many double-standards in the impact analyses? We request that all impact analyses in all resource areas compare the relative magnitude of man-caused impacts to the background level of naturally occurring impacts or management actions such as the “Let it burn” policy.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	General	Natural conditions should be used as the benchmark for the test of impacts on natural resources. All impacts should be measured against a realistic assessment of natural conditions including natural sound levels, sedimentation rates and natural events such as fires, glacial periods, and floods. We request that guidelines be developed to help determine if perceived impacts are significant or insignificant. All measures of perceived impacts should be compared to natural levels of activities over the course of time to test for significance. A significant difference in magnitude should be required before a perceived impact can be considered significant. This standard is required in order to remove personal opinions from the process and to restore impartial and reasonable judgment to the process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC16	General	BLM should not set policy based upon individual instances or abuse, but rather upon the broadest use that benefits the largest user base. Individuals that violate the law or cause damage should be prosecuted, but not used as an excuse to restrict the public from public lands. In my opinion almost all of the use of BLM lands is done in accordance to existing policy, with common sense and causes no problems.	Individual
SC17	General	I don't have a lot of insight on public lands resource management planning, but ask that the plan focus on multiple use.	Individual
SC17	General	Generally, I'd like the planning process to focus on how BLM lands can be enjoyed by all, for all uses. I'd like restrictions to be minimized. By and large, I believe that current BLM plans are appropriate to my interests, with a couple exceptions.	Individual
SC03	Lands and Realty	Encourage and promote commercial use of our public lands over all other considerations. Give commercial use highest priority.	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC07	Lands and Realty	Land Ownership Adjustment. This program has created more problems with public land access and 'ridding' us of valuable public land than any other program in place. The program was spawned from the Babcock-Benion land swap where we lost valuable public wildlife habitat north of Jordan, Montana with 100% public land access for the 'rock pile' along the Missouri River. Also from the article enclosed "\$100-a -foot price on Babcock's land" (article enclosed) The program name was changed many times from" land exchange adjustment" to "land pooling" to now what you describe as" land ownership adjustment". The results are the same BLM exchanges our public land for low appraisal dollar values and uses high dollar values for land received. The public pays a third party (a realty estate firm) to handle the' slick deal' and the recipient receives additional acreage and / or direct payment to make up the difference in land appraisal values since public land was appraised low and didn't consider dollar values for all resources and public land access.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	Look at BLM public land actually connected to other BLM public lands that were exchanged in the land pooling only a few years ago BLM map numbers 520,522,538,378 (adjoining N.F.) 336,353B, 362,298,15B,470,266,475,519,525,532,127 and the list goes on. BLM stated during the land pooling project public lands are" isolated and difficult to manage" the same statement was made by BLM at the public meeting and is untrue. Include the history of your past land exchanges to benefit real estate companies for a fast profit not the public interest that should be included in the RMP. BLM realty personnel work more for the real estate firms than the public. The staff should be reduced by 90%. Put this in the RMP.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	So BLM exchanged public land touching other public land including National Forest and public state land and now on what was public land there is fancy new house and signs and locked gates to other public land. The lands were NOT isolated. The BLM program is real estate' fraud' anyway you look at it and BLM realty personnel and managers should be held accountable for approving the 'pooling exchange'. The BLM also ignores the report U.S. General Accounting Office on the subject of the appraisal system used by BLM for not evaluating the true value of the public lands and public trust. Your office should read the report and pay attention. Include this report in the RMP.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	Over the years BLM realty personnel and managers have been dealing directly with real estate firms and avoiding the public. The 'real estate firm' with the land pool program was/is calling all the shots and making the resource decisions. They contact the private segment and promise them our public lands. The private land-owner pays them a deposit and expects to receive our public land in the deal. The decision has been made before the E.A. goes out for public review. We have dealt with this in the past on the BLM' land pooling' and we know the facts. The entire program should have been subject to a comprehensive E.I.S. There has never been any credibility in the program.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	We need a Congressional investigation of the program and BLM employees should be held accountable now. In the 8 county area of your 'plan' we have many examples of the loss of public land access as a result of "pooling". Now DNRC is attempting to do the same with HB223 to rid us of our public state land. DNRC may have been advised by BLM realty personnel? Would be interesting to find out. If so, it is another "conflict of interest". Do you have any idea what public land is worth in Gallatin County for example? How many acres is BLM planning to exchange in Gallatin County. We want none exchanged there or anywhere else. Put this in the RMP.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	At the public meeting on January 13, 2004 a sportsmen (Mr. Bob Conklin asked you and your employees if BLM has any plans to exchange public land and the acreage. You and your employees were evasive. I know for a fact that your realty personnel have maps there with circles around the public land and numbered that you would like to exchange through a 3rd party real estate firm and that you do know the acreage. I am sure as well all is documented in your computer system and probably the real estate firm has the information now. We need a moratorium on ANY land exchanges until the so-called 'plan' and E.I.S. is developed. Without this we will continue to loose valuable public land through a seriously flawed appraisal system and land exchange program. Is BLM using appropriated wildlife and recreation dollars to support the land exchange program?	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	I mentioned to you about the public access we lost just within the past two years in the Hogback area south of the Bighole River as well as access to the Bighole River as a result of your land exchange program. An out-of State non-resident Californian is now blocking access to all of our public land. We need and want a new one track road that will by-pass his private land and connect us with our public roads/trails to our land as before. A new one-track road could easily be constructed from the radio tower site. Refer to the BLM map T.5 S.R.8 W., Section 9,E1/2 and section 3, north to the Bighole River. BLM realty personnel and managers must be held accountable for giving away our access to our land and now we the public have to fight to get it back. BLM is doing little to nothing for public land access. Put this in the RMP.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	BLM also has the authority under section 205 of FLPMA (Federal Land Policy & Management Act of 1976) the right to condemn. That authority has yet to be carried out by your office and the BLM in Montana. That must be included in the RMP. The roads in that particular area as well should fall under 2477 since many mining claims and existing roads were in existence for years such as the Sodak Mill. It is also ironic that the Californian put the lock on a BLM gate on a BLM funded fence in section 9. The Californian should build and pay for his own fence and BLM should remove this fence.	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC07	Lands and Realty	At the public meeting a sportsmen asked if BLM has sold any public land and you said "no". Check with your realty personnel on a tract with 100% public access touching the county road on the north side of the Bighole River between Chokeycherry and Ziegler Gulch. Sold with no E.A. and public review.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	Funding must be curtailed that supports realty personnel within the BLM. These personnel are not representing the public nor are they promoting access to and on public lands, which is one of the most important issues we have now in Montana. The public must know how much money goes into this program and the public benefits being achieved. The BLM "land adjustment ownership program" is a hoax and borders on real estate fraud. The so-called 'plan and E.I. S. must state that public land access is a serious issue and all public land must be retained in public ownership. We need a total moratorium on all land exchanges by BLM.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	As a professional wildlife biologist and advocate of public land access I see nothing wrong with retaining public lands that BLM continually describes as "small isolated tracts and hard to manage". Many if not most of all of those tracts have high wildlife values that may not be apparent and appreciated to the BLM realty employee and manager. Many lie adjacent to public state land and provide "core" habitat's that sustain and produce wildlife populations including upland bird and waterfowl especially with other lands being over developed, wetlands drained and the vegetation altered. Those tracts as you describe them will only increase in dollar values over the years for the public. BLM exchanges public land in the past and only a few years ago that was not 'isolated' at all and not in the best interest of the public.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	BLM land adjustment program provides no long-term benefit to the public with the increase in land values. It is also interesting that those lands are being sold for the high price today because of wildlife, esthetics and other public lands over the fence where access can be blocked. BLM will continue to appraise our land for livestock AUM and some timber dollar low dollar values and it is ludicrous.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	On a broader land base the BLM land exchange program inadequately evaluates our land for the true values today. Who knows what is going on with BLM on these land deals all over Montana today? Your program works in favor of real estate firms seeking an immediate profit. Public lands must be carefully evaluated for all resources by competent professionals and it is not being done. I don't trust the BLM to be evaluating wildlife habitat and public land access today with the inexperienced personnel you have chosen to hire. FWP has not been able to participate because of lack of biologists and this purpose. BLM should pay FWP to do the necessary evaluations. DNRC will try the same thing. They do not want to know the land is important for wildlife and public land and water access.	Individual
SC07	Lands and Realty	For a realty employee to set is the office around a map and draw a circle around public land, assign a number, determine the acreage and then to ask for reams of information why he or she cannot 'rid' us of our public land and say wildlife is a "consideration" is ludicrous. That is what is going on in BLM today. Some retired BLM realty personnel went to work for real estate firms when they left BLM. The realty staff in the BLM should be drastically reduced and replaced with competent professionals, such as competent graduates from Montana universities and have knowledge about Montana resources.	Individual
SC08	Lands and Realty	In our experience, the BLM has given away more public access and our public lands faster than anyone can keep track of it. Some of our access dealings with the BLM have been positive but most have been very negative.	Public Lands Access Association
SC08	Lands and Realty	We definitely don't want any more of our public lands traded away under any title or disguise. We want everything up front.	Public Lands Access Association
SC01	Livestock Grazing	The plan needs to improve forage for both livestock and wildlife, and when forage levels have increased, allocations for both wildlife and livestock should be increased proportionately.	Individual
SC01	Livestock Grazing	The plan needs to recognize and involve both wildlife agencies and livestock permit holders in management decisions concerning forage allocations and establishing forage allotments.	Individual
SC01	Livestock Grazing	The plan needs to allow forage reductions resulting from forage studies, drought, or other natural disasters to be implemented on an allotment basis, and reductions should be applied proportionately to all allocations. Forage allocation reductions should be temporary and when forage production is restored, grazing allocations should be restored.	Individual
SC03	Livestock Grazing	We need to minimize loss of our soil resources, as we've always done. But this issue should not be used as an excuse to minimize or curtail commercial grazing on public lands by stockmen. Up the fees you need to but encourage grazing on public lands.	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC07	Livestock Grazing	I am continually appalled by BLM's lack of knowledge on the value of sagebrush and mature and second growth timber cover to all forms of wildlife. You plan to burn big sagebrush and second growth Douglas under your WUIP and it will be news worthy. The problem is the poor grazing management programs on the public land and that is what your office should be looking at and correcting the problem. BLM continue to promote continuous season long livestock grazing the most detrimental form of grazing to vegetation and soil condition. BLM will not implement rest-rotation grazing programs. Why? Show me one. Put this in the RMP.	Individual
SC07	Livestock Grazing	Livestock Grazing Management. The 'scoping process' of your RMP is silent on this subject. Doesn't BLM consider grazing management an "issue"? BLM needs to understand the best way to improve the 'range health' and change the downward trend of both vegetation and soil condition is through a properly designed livestock grazing programs utilizing the principles and concepts of August L. Hormay. True rest rotation grazing, not the 'half-ass riparian program' of fencing and protection and excluding livestock altogether BLM has promoted for the last 12 years has always been doomed for failure. With all the money BLM has wasted on fencing riparian areas and anti-livestock grazing efforts BLM could have developed purposeful programs.	Individual
SC07	Livestock Grazing	This was the case between 1967-1974 when BLM had a number of excellent grazing allotments under rest-rotation grazing and under the guidance of Gus Hormay. The Sage Creek allotment (Matador) was designated by BLM, Washington Office to be a National Demonstration area for rest rotation grazing and was designed in 1974 by Gus Hormay, Matador Cattle Company and BLM. The vegetation was monitored by Gus Hormay for years as well. I am enclosing a recent publication by Joe Egan, Game Manager with FWP now retired on the subject. "Managing The Range With Livestock" 6/12/2000. FWP supports rest-rotation grazing and has implemented the system on many wildlife management areas and elsewhere and very beneficial for wildlife and FWP has the data to support it. The publication is well written and in simple terms that BLM should be able to understand it if they read closely.	Individual
SC07	Livestock Grazing	In the Malta area where you were more recently transferred from there were many good rest-rotation programs during the 1967-1976 period. My last trip to Malta as well as a few other times it revealed BLM let them go by the way side and the Milk River allotment was plowed up with the aid of BLM and reseeded with non-native grasses and the stock ponds previously important for waterfowl production and use were dewatered from this action. Wildlife habitat was destroyed that was recovering under rest-rotation grazing the site potential was destroyed with the BLM plow project. The Square Butte allotment had a 4-pasture rest rotation grazing formula is now it is continuous grazing as it was back in the late 1950s. The BLM public lands in the Malta area are back to continuous long grazing as was the case in 1950s and under your watch while in Malta.	Individual
SC10	Livestock Grazing	I'm interested both as a permittee (BLM) and as an adjoining landowner as to the ramifications of the RMP. I've heard some discussion as to designating the BLM area an "area of critical environmental concern." I would like to know what that means especially as to the management of resources concerning cows.	Individual
SC11	Livestock Grazing	The EPA believes direction for livestock grazing should be aimed at maintaining a sustainable grazing program that protects range and riparian resources and water quality and fisheries. Grazing impacts on riparian habitat, water quality, and fisheries can be significant, particularly stream bank disturbance from livestock. Stream reaches may be impaired or functioning-at-risk or non-functioning due to grazing. The RMP should be consistent with the overall objective of maintaining healthy, sustainable rangeland and aquatic ecosystems. We encourage use of technical grazing documents to develop grazing strategies and best management practices (BMPs) that are protective of riparian areas and wetlands (e.g., the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Montana Prescribed Grazing Practices, Code 528A, see copy attached, BLM's "Effective Cattle Management in Riparian Zones: A Field Survey and Literature Review", Montana Riparian Technical Bulletin No. 3, November 1997, Montana Forest and Conservation Experiment Station; and BLM's "Grazing Management for Riparian Wetland Areas", BLM Technical Bulletins 1737-14 and 1734-6, "Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health"; and Riparian Grazing Successes on Montana Ranches, Livestock Grazing in Western Riparian Areas; Managing Change: Livestock Grazing in Western Riparian Areas). Montana's grazing BMPs can be found at <a href="http://ww.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/watershed/projects/nps_final/final.pdf">http://ww.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/watershed/projects/nps_final/final.pdf</a> .	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Livestock Grazing	A description of the current range management should be provided. This description may include sizes of allotments, number and location of pastures, number and kind of livestock, grazing strategies, number of Animal Unit Months permitted, on-off periods, utilization standards, and number and kind of improvements (e.g., fencing, off stream watering). This section should also include a discussion of the grazing management actions and how the management strategy may be adjusted over time.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Livestock Grazing	We understand that the Beaverhead National Forest has developed Riparian Guidelines that are demonstrating recovery of stream channels and riparian vegetation in the presence of grazing. These guidelines rely upon permittees to monitor forage utilization, stubble height, streambank alteration, and woody browse use to determine when it is necessary to move livestock. We encourage the BLM to consider establishing such guidelines on their land, where applicable for riparian recovery from grazing impacts.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC07	Mineral/Mining	Mining reclamation. Your office has received vast sums of public money for mine reclamation and safety. I still see the same mine dumps and open holes out there on the ground. What did BLM do with all the money? Nothing has happened in the Whisky Gulch-Pole creek and Hogback area south of the Bighole River. Was all the money used for training, meetings, computers and conferences? It seems to be the case.	Individual
SC03	Minerals/Mining	Ask USGS and MBMG to assist in delineating all areas within the Butte office area of responsibility that are known to have or may have mineral potential, and so designate as Recognized Area of Mineral Potential (RAMP). RAMP areas do not restrict any other activity or use but are merely a "heads up designation" for those that may have restrictive ideas for these lands. This designation should help prevent future conflict and litigation over land use.	Individual
SC03	Minerals/Mining	We need to continue to identify and decommission abandoned mines. Those still active need to be made safe via restricted access and this should be at owners expense.	Individual
SC03	Minerals/Mining	Do not allow "visual resource management" issues to be used as an excuse to stop meaningful development of our natural resources on public lands. Have the mine dumps painted if necessary but do not stop the mining.	Individual
SC11	Minerals/Mining	Mineral development/mining has the potential to cause water pollution, and other adverse environmental impacts. While minerals has not been identified as a revision topic we want to indicate EPA concerns about hardrock mining impacts to public health and the environment (i.e., from acid mine drainage and metal and nitrogen contamination of surface and ground waters). There is a need to protect the taxpayer from the potential expense of reclamation and remediation following hardrock mine financial failures or abandonment. We believe the RMPs and their associated EIS should evaluate and consider the potential for acid mine drainage and/or metal or nutrient transport or pollution to occur during mineral exploration and development on Federal lands. Pollutant discharges from mine adits, and mine site surface runoff and ground water seepage are regulated by EPA and/or the States National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Minerals/Mining	If mining is anticipated to be a significant activity in the future the RMPs and EIS may need to:  1) Discuss environmental impacts and risks from inactive, abandoned, and active mines; 2) Identify proposed management direction, actions and priorities for addressing environmental impacts and risks from the inactive, abandoned and active mines; 3) Discuss the mineral outputs of the active mines; 4) Provide maps indicating sites of active and inactive mines, valid preexisting rights, and areas open to and withdrawn from mineral entry (Montana DEQ has mine site map resources, contact Vic Anderson at 406-444-4972);	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Minerals/Mining	To the extent that mineral development and mining will be significant activities on the forests in the next 10-15 years, we believe it would be useful if the EIS discussed the Hard Rock Mining Act of 1872, its benefits and impacts, and potential conflicts with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act. The Mining Act grants the right to private individuals to explore and develop mineral rights on lands. However, while mining provides valuable raw material, it can pose environmental risks and impacts that conflict with environmental statutes. We do not believe the Mining Act preempts environmental statutes. Discussion of the legal discretion available to the BLM in granting mining permits, and how mineral exploration and development will be balanced with the protection and restoration of environmental resources, sustainability and ecosystem management may be relevant. We believe that the desired condition statement (and consequently the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines) for mineral and geology resources should reflect the changing attitudes toward mining by emphasizing ecosystem protection and restoration.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Minerals/Mining	We also recommend that the BLM state their preference for having responsible parties conduct clean up at inactive or abandoned mines. The BLM may also want to state their preference for using CERCLA (Superfund) process and authorities at inactive or abandoned sites where there is no Plan of Operation or bond that covers reclamation activities. It may also be relevant to consider information regarding the bankruptcy and subsequent Superfund (i.e., CERCLA) remedial actions that occurred from mineral development on public lands at the Summitville Mine in Colorado, and Clean Water Act violations at the Zortman-Landusky Mine in northeastern Montana (on BLM land) to provide an overall context regarding such matters in the EIS. Please contact Mr. Wes Wilson of our Denver Regional Office at 303-312-6562 if you need information regarding these matters.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Minerals/Mining	In regard to placer mining we draw your attention to the publication, Montana Placer Mining BMPs Montana Bureau of Mines & Geology Special Publication 106, available from Mr. Robin McCulloch, MBMG, Main Hall, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, Butte, Montana 59701. This publication describes mine planning, design, operation and reclamation practices to mitigate environmental impacts and water quality degradation from placer mining.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC13	Minerals/Mining	Management Issue #2 – Efforts should be made to retain mine sites as points of interest or to provide collecting of rocks.	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC16	Minerals/Mining	We would like some help identifying how to fill in and safely close the abandoned mines on BLM land as they are a hazard to hikers, bikers, animals and children.	Individual
SC01	OHV Use	OHV planning needs to be in complete compliance with the BLM Washington DC. Memorandum No. 2004-005 dated October 1, 2003.	Individual
SC02	OHV Use	I believe that this land should be retained for multiple usage to include hiking, horseback riding and off road vehicle up to 4 wheeler size.	Individual
SC02	OHV Use	I would like to see some recreational improvements such as trail markings and would view some designation of particular trails for limited types of use (hiking only, 4 wheeler, etc.) as reasonable and acceptable.	Individual
SC07	OHV Use	In addition the mess BLM left in Pole Creek area should be cleaned up. Last fall during the hunting season vehicles and ATVs drove all over this area and no BLM was there to protect our land and enforce the ORV regulations.	Individual
SC07	OHV Use	Last fall vehicles including drove all over the public land. No BLM personnel could be found to enforce the regulations. Big game animals were displaced from the area as a result of BLM not enforcing the ORV regulations.	Individual
SC11	OHV Use	The EPA is concerned about increasing use of OHVs and all terrain vehicles (ATVs) that occurs away from roads and trails, including steep slopes, wet meadows, and around water bodies. Executive Order 11644, "Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands," requires agencies to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. We are concerned that OHV/ATV activity is causing erosion and habitat damage and adversely impacting wildlife habitat and security. It is difficult to effectively restrict motorized access to public lands and protect them with simple road closures (i.e., gated closures). Road obliteration is a preferred method of road closure.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	OHV Use	We recommend that Recreation and Travel Management Standards and Objectives be consistent with the January 2001. OHV decision that only allowed motorized access within 300 feet of designated routes to access dispersed campsites, and then only when such motorized access does not damage ecologically sensitive resources. Management direction should identify designated routes available for motorized vehicle use and non-motorized recreation, and include appropriate limitations and restrictions on motorized vehicle use to protect against erosion, transport of sediment to streams, spread of noxious weeds, and degradation of aquatic habitat by off-road vehicle use in wetlands and other environmentally valuable areas.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	OHV Use	Also, an effective policing and enforcement program is needed to assure that motorized access does not occur in restricted areas. The RMP and associated EIS should describe the BLM inspection and enforcement program that will be used to assure that ATVs and OHVs and will not violate motorized vehicle access limitations. It is important that enforcement of off-road restrictions be funded and prioritized.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	OHV Use	EPA notes that snowmobile use is increasing. Snowmobile (and ATV) 2-stroke engines mix the lubricating oil with the fuel and both are expelled as part of the exhaust, and allow up to one third of the fuel delivered to the engine to be passed through the engine and into the environment virtually un-burned. As stated in the U.S. Department of the Interior document, "Air Quality Concerns Related to Snowmobile Usage in National Parks", Feb. 2000, hydrocarbon emission rates from 2-stroke snowmobile engines are about 80 times greater than those found in a 1995-96 automobile engines. A majority of these hydrocarbons are aromatic hydrocarbons, including polyaromatic hydrocarbons, which are considered to be the most toxic component of petroleum products, and aromatic hydrocarbons are also associated with chronic and carcinogenic effects. Increased air pollutant emissions could be problematic during short periods of poor air dispersion (e.g., river valleys where frequent inversion conditions may trap air pollutants).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	OHV Use	There are numerous studies underway to further determine environmental effects of these pollutants. The National Park Service Final EIS for Winter Use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks contains a good summary of the science regarding impacts from snowmobile use. EPA recommends that the BLM monitor the results of these studies and factor the results into travel management and resource planning. We will also try to pass on information emerging out of these studies. The EPA encourages use of the newer less polluting 4-stroke engine snowmobiles (e.g., <a href="http://www1.newswire.ca/releases/April2001/11/c4056.html">http://www1.newswire.ca/releases/April2001/11/c4056.html</a> ).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	OHV Use	Also, we recommend consideration of a policy that prohibits off-trail snowmobile use until at least 6 inches of snow has accumulated in areas with fragile alpine vegetation. Snow in alpine areas is highly susceptible to wind movement which can leave bare or thinly covered areas that would be difficult or impossible to avoid given the speed of snowmobiles. Fragile alpine vegetation may need protection against such use.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	We request that all reasonable motorized roads and trails be kept open. We ask that you develop, select, and defend a reasonable multiple-use alternative to address the concerns and issues that we have brought forward in this submittal including the information and issues presented in Appendix A. All of the issues presented in Appendix A describe the current management situation which is effectively removing equal opportunities for motorized recreationists and to the excessive benefit of non-motorized recreationists. Because of this management situation, we request that this project include adequate mitigation to compensate for the excessive amount of motorized closures that have occurred.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Why are the extreme motorized closure alternatives presented and a middle of the road alternative based on existing routes plus new motorized routes needed to meet the public's need not presented? We are concerned that this demonstrates a significant prejudice in the current process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Why are motorized recreationists expected to identify and provide accurate inventories of our resources when inventories for all other groups and resources are accounted for by the agency? We are concerned that this burden demonstrates a significant partiality in the current process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Evaluations and decisions have been limited to natural resource management issues. Issues associated with motorized access and motorized recreation must be adequately addressed during the evaluation and decision-making including social, economic, and environmental justice issues. There are more than just natural resource management issues associated with access and recreation on public land. Agencies cannot pick and choose the issues to be evaluated. Montana ranks very low for social conditions (44 <sup>th</sup> state per Fordham Institute for Innovation in Social Policy, ) and social issues are relevant to this action. Additionally, motorized recreation is a healthy social activity. These types of issues are associated with motorized access and recreation in the project area and these issues must be adequately addressed. Social issues must be adequately evaluated per the SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS (SIA): PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES TRAINING COURSE (1900-03) ( <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nepa/includes/sia.html">http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nepa/includes/sia.html</a> ) and Environmental Justice issues per Departmental Regulation 5600-2.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Over the past 35 years, motorized recreationists have had to bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from the significant closure of motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities by federal land management actions and policies. Negative environmental consequences include negative consequences to the human environment. We continue to ask for a reasonable explanation of "Why are we the only ones to lose in every action?" And yet the trend of motorized closures continues at an ever increasing pace.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We believe that federal environmental justice compliance requirements as initiated by Executive Order 12898 should be applied immediately to correct the disproportionately significant and adverse impacts that motorized recreationists have been subjected to. In order to accomplish this we request that this proposed action comply with the accepted DEFINITION of environmental justice:  <i>ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE means that, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, all populations are provided the opportunity to comment before decisions are rendered on, are allowed to share in the benefits of, are not excluded from, and are not affected in a disproportionately high and adverse manner by, government programs and activities affecting human health or the environment.</i>  While some of the guidance published on environmental justice refers to specific minority and low-income populations, the intent of the guidance must be taken in a broader sense as recommended by the EPA in order to avoid discrimination or unfair treatment of any significantly impacted sector of the public:	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In order to correct the disproportionately significant and adverse impacts that motorized recreationists have been subjected to we request that the proposed action comply with EPA's Office of Environmental Justice ( <a href="http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/ej/ej_guidance_nepa_epa0498.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/ej/ej_guidance_nepa_epa0498.pdf</a> ) including:  <i>The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.</i>  <i>The goal of this "fair treatment" is not to shift risks among populations, but to identify potential disproportionately high and adverse effects and identify alternatives that may mitigate these impacts.</i>  Unfortunately, the treatment of motorized recreationists does not meet the definition of fair treatment and environmental justice requirements must be complied with in order to correct the situation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	<p>We request that the proposed action comply with the Council on Environmental Quality (<a href="http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ej/justice.pdf">http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ej/justice.pdf</a>) recommendations in order to correct the disproportionately significant and adverse impacts that motorized recreationists have been subjected to including:</p> <p><i>Thus, agencies have developed and should periodically revise their strategies providing guidance concerning the types of programs, policies, and activities that may, or historically have, raised environmental justice concerns at the particular agency.</i></p> <p><i>The Executive Order requires agencies to work to ensure effective public participation and access to information.</i></p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>The significant cumulative impact of all closures on motorized recreationists warrants a revised strategy to deal with the issues surrounding this condition.</p> <p><i>Agencies should recognize the interrelated cultural, social, occupational, historical, or economic factors that may amplify the natural and physical environmental effects of the proposed agency action. These factors should include the physical sensitivity of the community or population to particular impacts; the effect of any disruption on the community structure associated with the proposed action; and the nature and degree of impact on the physical and social structure of the community.</i></p> <p>To date, all of these factors have not been adequately examined with respect to motorized recreationists and the trend of excessive motorized access and recreational closures.</p> <p><i>Agencies should encourage the members of the communities that may suffer a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect from a proposed agency action to help develop and comment on possible alternatives to the proposed agency action as early as possible in the process.</i></p> <p>Motorized recreationists have not had the opportunity to develop mitigation plans required to address the significant cumulative impact of all closures.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p><i>When the agency has identified a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes from either the proposed action or alternatives, the distribution as well as the magnitude of the disproportionate impacts in these communities should be a factor in determining the environmentally preferable alternative.</i></p> <p>We maintain that the intent of identifying low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes is simply to portray examples of affected groups. The EPA guidance included above supports this conclusion. To date, the disproportionate impact on motorized recreationists has not been a factor when determining the preferred alternative and it should be, in fact, just the opposite is occurring (our needs are being ignored).</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p><i>Mitigation measures include steps to avoid, mitigate, minimize, rectify, reduce, or eliminate the impact associated with a proposed agency action. Throughout the process of public participation, agencies should elicit the views of the affected populations on measures to mitigate a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect.....</i></p> <p>Motorized recreationists have been affected in a <i>disproportionately high and adverse manner</i> by the significant cumulative impact that has occurred by all forms of motorized access and motorized recreational closures that have resulted from government programs including actions by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management associated with travel planning, forest planning, watershed planning, water quality districts, wilderness study areas, research areas, timber sales, and creation of monuments, non-motorized and wildlife management areas. As an additional rub, the impacts on motorized recreationists that we are concerned about have all occurred on lands intended by congress to be managed for multiple-uses. Multiple-uses include motorized access and motorized recreation.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>The efforts to involve motorized recreationists in the process using unique methods as required by the environmental justice regulations have not happened. The process must allow for and accommodate that needs of citizens who, for the most part, act and live independently and are not organized to the level of environmental organizations. Thomas Mendyke, Outdoor Editor for the Independent Record made the following statement in his article on November 20, 2003 <i>Outdoor enthusiasts frequently find themselves at odds with big money interests. Generally speaking, people who pursue outdoor interests tend to be an independent lot. Sporting groups usually are poorly funded, loosely organized and ill-prepared to match the financial and legal power their adversaries often possess.</i></p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>The process should not allow well-organized and funded groups to take opportunities away from less-organized and funded individuals. This certainly is an environmental injustice. Moreover, the development of measures as required by environmental justice regulations to mitigate the <i>disproportionately high and adverse</i> impacts that have affected motorized recreationists has not happened.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	We request a corrective action and over-arching mitigation plan that will undo the significant cumulative impact that all motorized access and motorized recreational closures has had on motorized recreationists over the past 35 years. We also request a monitoring program be provided by an unbiased third-party to assure that this correction occurs within our lifetime.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>There has never been an accounting of the cumulative impact of all motorized closures that have occurred over the past 35 years. Actions that have contributed to a significant cumulative impact on motorized recreation include millions of acres and thousands of miles of roads and trails associated with Endangered Species Act; Continental Divide National Scenic Trail; forest fires; timber harvests, forest plans; view shed plans; resource plans; watershed plans; roadless plan; creation of wildlife management areas, monuments, non-motorized areas, wilderness areas, and wilderness study areas; area closures, and last but certainly not least, travel plans. This significant cumulative impact has not been quantified and is being ignored by this evaluation and many others.</p> <p>In order to evaluate this cumulative effect, an accounting of all motorized closures must be done at 5-year increments going back to the creation of the wilderness act. This accounting needs to be done on a local forest or district level in addition to statewide and regional levels. For example, loss of motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities since 1986 in our immediate area (Helena National Forest) include: 18 separate closures in the Big Belts with the loss of 42.15 miles; 130 miles in other areas; closure of 191,000 acres and 75 miles in the Elkhorn Mountains; and closure of 625,447 acres in the remainder of the forest. Both adjoining public lands and public lands further away have experienced similar trends. Therefore, the cumulative impact of all motorized access and recreational closures is significant. Simply, there are very few places left where motorized recreationists can recreate and yet the trend continues. This stealthy attack on motorized recreational opportunities must be acknowledged. Please quantify and consider these cumulative impacts and develop a preferred alternative that will mitigate the significant cumulative impact on motorized recreationists that has occurred.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We are concerned that the lack of accounting for the cumulative impact of all forms of motorized closures over the past 35 years is an undisclosed strategy to squeeze motorized recreationists into the smallest possible area. Once this is accomplished, then the agencies will take the position that the impacts on that small area left for use is significant and everything will be completely shut down. All of the plans, strategies, actions, and evidence support this concern.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	One agency cannot ignore the cumulative impact that another agency's actions are having on motorized access and motorized recreation. For example, the BLM cannot ignore cumulative impact of all of the closures that have occurred in the Helena National Forest during the evaluation of BLM projects in the area and vice versa.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	For the most part, adequate OHV opportunities do not exist. As OHV use becomes concentrated in smaller areas because of closures or restrictions, the frequency of encounters between motorized and non-motorized trail users increases dramatically. Resource damage can also results from use concentrated in smaller areas. Certainly with the acceptance of millions of acres of area closure by motorized recreationists, the use of the existing network of roads and trails including spurs for camping and exploring is reasonable. Additionally, we have seldom asked for any new routes and the level of use would justify many new routes.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>The need for more non-motorized hiking trails has not been demonstrated or documented. Non-motorized hiking trails in the project are not over-used. At the same time there is need for more motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities yet the dominant thinking within the agency is to close motorized roads and trails and increase non-motorized recreational opportunities.</p> <p>We do not understand why the public's needs do not carry any weight in the process. Why is it acceptable to make decisions that fly in the face of public need? It appears to be done as conscious and organized efforts to eliminate a sector of the public from public lands. The needs of the public are being ignored in favor of a management agenda that is contrary to the needs of the public. Priorities for management of public land have swung to this ridiculous extreme. We request that the hidden agenda of closure of motorized roads and trails which is so contrary to the needs of the public be addressed and corrected.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>During a House Resources Committee hearing in San Diego during August, BLM California State Director Mike Pool, made a statement while being questioned by Congressman Bob Filner about closures of the Sand Mountain area to motorized recreationists. Mr. Pool indicated that he, as a public lands manager, is forced to manage lands to avoid litigation.</p> <p>This is an often repeated example of "managing to avoid litigation." This has become a huge issue with the current management of public lands. Neither the butterfly nor the buckwheat plant is threatened or endangered at Sand Mountain. No "critical habitat" is defined or required. But the threat of lawsuits by environmental groups is real and that's what drives the decision-making. Motorized recreationists have not used lawsuits to the extent that the environmental groups have and consequently, motorized opportunities are being eliminated because they are a "lesser threat" of lawsuit and the overarching needs of the public are being ignored.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV use	The evaluation and decision-making must also take into account that the total area of BLM managed lands in Montana equals 8,000,396 acres and out of that total 173,499 acres or 2% is designated wilderness and the remaining 7,826,897 acres or 98% are intended for multiple-uses.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Additionally, use of public lands and the needs of the public are described on Table 2-7 in the Social Assessment of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest dated October 2002 ( <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest_plan/revision/reports_documents/social/Forest%20Social%20Assessment%20Masterfinal%20.pdf">http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest_plan/revision/reports_documents/social/Forest%20Social%20Assessment%20Masterfinal%20.pdf</a> ) estimates that the total number of forest visitors in Forest Service Region 1 for year 2000 was 13,200,000. The total number of wilderness visits was estimated at 337,000 or 2.55%. Therefore, nearly all (97.45%) visitors to public lands benefit from management for multiple-use and benefit from motorized access and mechanized recreational opportunities which is consistent with our observations of visitors enjoying motorized access and mechanized recreation on public lands. However the current allotment of resources in Region 1 is unbalanced with 5,935,000 acres or 24% of Region 1 in wilderness designation of some sort while only 2.55% of the visitors are wilderness visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The prevailing trend of the past 35± years has been to convert large areas of our public lands from multiple-use lands to wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use lands which is direct contradiction to the number of visitors and their needs. The remaining multiple-use areas are the only areas where most of the public can access and experience the forest. Therefore, the remaining multiple-use lands must remain open for multiple-use, motorized access and motorized recreation in order to adequately and reasonably meet the needs of 97.45% of the public and the BLM should take this direction in the RMP.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Pursuing environmental perfectionism is not an equitable goal for management of public lands. "The pursuit of perfectionism often impedes improvement" (George F. Will). The unyielding pursuit of environmental perfection could ultimately lead to radical changes in environmental laws and reduced public support for protection of the environment. It is important that a fundamental difference in doctrines be recognized. We believe that public lands are here for us to enjoy and use responsibly for the large number of purposes. The underlying doctrine of the extreme environmentalists on the other hand is that humans are intruders on and have no place in the natural environment. Expecting any or all of the public to be required to live with the consequences of uncompromising environmental perfectionism is an unreasonable expectation and it must be recognized as such.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Additionally, the expectation of a static environment is unnatural. Ecosystems have been changing since the beginning of time and they should be expected to continue to change and adapt at both micro and global levels. We are equally concerned about protection of the environment but we request the pursuit of a reasonable and practical course of action, which will do more to protect the environment in the long-term. We request that the impacts associated with the pursuit of environmental perfectionism on the human environment be evaluated and that the cumulative impact of environmental perfectionism on the human environment be adequately considered.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In order to conserve energy, adequate motorized recreational opportunities are needed within a short distance of the cities and towns in our area. In order to conserve energy, we request that all reasonable OHV routes within short distance of urban areas be developed and that urban OHV trail heads be developed where ever public right-of-way allows access to public land.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The evaluation and decision-making must also take into account that millions of acres of public land near the project area are designated national parks, monuments, wilderness and non-motorized areas where motorized access and recreation is not allowed or severely restricted. Therefore, the project area includes a significant number of non-motorized recreational opportunities that can be quantified in many ways including acres, miles of trails, an infinite number of miles of cross-country travel opportunities, and acres per visitor. At the same time motorized access and recreation is limited to a relatively small corridor and network of roads and trails. We request that the difference in visitor use between designated wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use lands and multiple-use lands be acknowledged and adequately addressed in the evaluation. We also request a motorized recreation alternative with a recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) comparable to the surrounding ROS available for non-motorized recreationists be adopted as the "proposed action".	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The evaluation needs to distinguish the difference in trail requirements and impacts between atvs and motorcycles and use that difference to justify keeping more single track trails open to motorcycles.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>		
SC12	OHV Use	<p>We suggest the following hierarchy of uses be followed on lands intended for multiple-uses where resource conditions dictate allowable uses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) all roads are important for access and recreation for all multiple-uses including those listed in the introductory letter. Roads are essential for handicap access. Therefore, wherever reasonable, all roads should remain open for all multiple-use access and recreation;</li> <li>(2) where a road or trail is not appropriate for 4x4, use, then it should remain open to atv, motorcycle, mountain bike, equestrian and hiking use;</li> <li>(3) where a road or trail is not appropriate for atv use, then it should remain open to motorcycle, mountain bike, equestrian and hiking use;</li> <li>(4) where a road or trail is not appropriate for motorcycle use, then it should remain open to mountain bike, equestrian and hiking use; and lastly</li> <li>(5) where a road or trail is not appropriate for mountain bike use, then it should remain open to equestrian and hiking use.</li> </ol> <p>In all cases, if user conflict is claimed as a reason for consideration of motorized closures, then the use of alternating weeks for motorized and non-motorized access must be considered as a reasonable alternative to total motorized closure.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.		
SC12	OHV Use	For the most part, the existing levels of roads and trails have acceptable natural environmental impacts because of the dispersed level of use that it allows. Mitigation can be implemented in those cases where there are environmental problems. The management trend of closure after closure is concentrating recreationists into smaller and smaller areas. The cumulative impact of the closure trend will either produce more impact than allowing use of the existing roads and trails or squeeze us completely out from public lands. We request that this fact be acknowledged and the trend of wholesale closures be reversed so that public land can be managed using the most sound natural and human environmental principles.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.		
SC12	OHV Use	It appears that the agencies do not want to; (1) accept or acknowledge the public need for OHV recreation, and (2) the responsibility as a public agency to provide adequate management for that recreation. OHV recreation is something that the public wants and enjoys and the agencies must get off the fence and accept the responsibility to develop OHV recreational resources and manage public lands for OHV recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.		
SC12	OHV Use	Some National Forest officials have stated that all challenging motorized roads and trails would be eliminated due to their concerns about hazards on those routes. For many of us, these are the very routes that we consider to have the greatest recreational value. We consider this position discriminatory. Discrimination is to make a choice, a distinction. We all make choices, every day. Discrimination becomes illegal when choices made limit the possibilities of some groups or some individuals. Other forest visitors and their recreation opportunities are not subjected to this criterion. This same concern has never been expressed for hunters, fisher folks, woodcutters, equestrians, river floaters, campers, hang gliders, rock climbers, hikers, skiers, anyone driving anywhere in the forest, etc. We request that this unreasonable and discriminatory criterion be dropped immediately from the process and that the process be restarted without this criterion.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.		
SC12	OHV Use	The significant cumulative impact of multiple-use and motorized recreational closures (in acres of unrestricted area and miles of roads and trails) by all past decisions including plans, and the creation of wildlife areas, wilderness, wilderness study areas, roadless areas, monuments, national parks and non-motorized areas has not been adequately recognized. We have not seen the agencies tabulate the amount of motorized recreational opportunity lost during the past 35 ± years. We have experienced the significant cumulative loss first hand. We estimate that today's motorized recreational opportunities are less than 50% of the level available in 1970. This is a significant cumulative impact.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.		
SC12	OHV Use	<p>The significant cumulative loss to date of motorized recreation and access opportunities further combined with the proposed actions, and then combined with current policy proposals including these shown</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;">           (inter-agency) Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan            (inter-agency) Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment            B-DNF 2003 Forest Plan Update            B-DNF Continental Divide trail near Feely             B-DNF Social Assessment            BLM Headwater Resource Management Plan            BLM Bruneau Resource Area Travel Plan            BLM Missouri Breaks Monument            BLM National OHV Strategy             BLM San Rafael Travel Plan            BLM Whitetail/Pipestone Rec. Management Strategy            BLM Sustaining Working Landscapes Initiative             BNF Fire Salvage EIS            BNF Sapphire Divide Trail            Custer National Forest Travel Plan         </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;">           (inter-agency) ICBEMP            (inter-agency)3-States OHV Strategy            B-DNF Analysis of the Management Situation            B-DNF Continental Divide trail near Whitetail-Pipestone             B-DNF Mussigbrod Post Fire Roads Management            BLM Arizona Strip Travel Plan            BLM Escalante Grand Staircase Monument            BLM Moab Resource Management Plans            BLM National Mountain Biking Strategic Action Plan             BLM Sleeping Giant Travel Plan            BLM Lake Havasu RMP            BLM Rocky Mountain Front Scenery Evaluation Project             BNF Post-fire Weed Mitigation EIS            BNF Forest Plan Revision            EPA Tenmile Creek Watershed Plan         </td> </tr> </table>	(inter-agency) Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (inter-agency) Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment B-DNF 2003 Forest Plan Update B-DNF Continental Divide trail near Feely  B-DNF Social Assessment BLM Headwater Resource Management Plan BLM Bruneau Resource Area Travel Plan BLM Missouri Breaks Monument BLM National OHV Strategy  BLM San Rafael Travel Plan BLM Whitetail/Pipestone Rec. Management Strategy BLM Sustaining Working Landscapes Initiative  BNF Fire Salvage EIS BNF Sapphire Divide Trail Custer National Forest Travel Plan	(inter-agency) ICBEMP (inter-agency)3-States OHV Strategy B-DNF Analysis of the Management Situation B-DNF Continental Divide trail near Whitetail-Pipestone  B-DNF Mussigbrod Post Fire Roads Management BLM Arizona Strip Travel Plan BLM Escalante Grand Staircase Monument BLM Moab Resource Management Plans BLM National Mountain Biking Strategic Action Plan  BLM Sleeping Giant Travel Plan BLM Lake Havasu RMP BLM Rocky Mountain Front Scenery Evaluation Project  BNF Post-fire Weed Mitigation EIS BNF Forest Plan Revision EPA Tenmile Creek Watershed Plan	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
(inter-agency) Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (inter-agency) Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment B-DNF 2003 Forest Plan Update B-DNF Continental Divide trail near Feely  B-DNF Social Assessment BLM Headwater Resource Management Plan BLM Bruneau Resource Area Travel Plan BLM Missouri Breaks Monument BLM National OHV Strategy  BLM San Rafael Travel Plan BLM Whitetail/Pipestone Rec. Management Strategy BLM Sustaining Working Landscapes Initiative  BNF Fire Salvage EIS BNF Sapphire Divide Trail Custer National Forest Travel Plan	(inter-agency) ICBEMP (inter-agency)3-States OHV Strategy B-DNF Analysis of the Management Situation B-DNF Continental Divide trail near Whitetail-Pipestone  B-DNF Mussigbrod Post Fire Roads Management BLM Arizona Strip Travel Plan BLM Escalante Grand Staircase Monument BLM Moab Resource Management Plans BLM National Mountain Biking Strategic Action Plan  BLM Sleeping Giant Travel Plan BLM Lake Havasu RMP BLM Rocky Mountain Front Scenery Evaluation Project  BNF Post-fire Weed Mitigation EIS BNF Forest Plan Revision EPA Tenmile Creek Watershed Plan				

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
		FNF Forest Plan Revisions FNF Spotted Bear Road Closures HNF Blackfoot Travel Plan HNF Cave Gulch Fire Salvage Sale HNF North Belts Travel Plan HNF Noxious Weed Plan HNF South Divide Travel Plan HTNF Charleston-Jarbridge Road KNF Bristow Project Area Lolo NF Forest Plan Revision L&CNF Rocky Mountain Front Travel Plan L&CNF Travel Plan update Montana State Trail Grant Program PEIS Montana FWP Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan NPS Yellowstone Winter Plan (snowmobile closure) Habitat Conservation USFS Roadless USFS Roads Policy USFWS CMR National Wildlife Refuge Road Closures	
		FNF Moose Post Fire Road Closures GNF 2002 Travel Plan Update HNF Blackfoot Water Quality Plan HNF Clancy-Unionville Plan HNF North Divide Travel Plan HNF South Belts Travel Plan HNF Continental Divide National Scenic Trail HTNF Spring Mountains NRA KNF Forest Plan Revisions L&CNF Judith Restoration Plan L&CNF Snowy Mountain Travel Plan Montana State Wolf Plan Montana State Trail Plan PEIS NPS Salt Creek Road Closure USFS Forest Plan Amendments for Grizzly Bear USFS National Strategic Plan 2003 Update USFS Roadless Rule II USFWS Westslope Cutthroat Trout ESA	
		<p>These projects typically propose to or have reduced motorized recreation from 20% to 100%. Additionally, each time an action involving travel management is updated it typically closes another 20% to 50% to motorized access and motorized recreation. The cumulative effect of past actions has contributed to a reduction in motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities over the past 35 ± years that is great than 50%. This trend has produced an immensely significant cumulative impact on motorized visitors.</p>	
SC12	OHV Use	<p>We request an adequate evaluation of the significant cumulative loss in miles, acres, and quality of motorized recreation and access opportunities within public lands as required under 40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25, and guidelines published by the Council on Environmental Quality "Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act".</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>Because of the large number of projects affecting the public (Table 1) and the limited amount of time that individuals have, agencies can not expect the level of public participation to be high. This does not justify taking recreation opportunities from the public.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>The resource management planning process tends to influence motorized access and motorized recreation in an undisclosed manner that is deceiving the public. For example, RMP, forest plans, watershed plans and view shed plans such as the Helena National Forest Plan, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Plan, Little Blackfoot River Watershed Plan, Tenmile Creek Watershed Plan and Scenery Evaluation Plan for the Rocky Mountain Front often set management goals for areas that will ultimately result in the elimination of motorized recreation yet motorized recreationists are unaware that these actions will ultimately affect them. This back door process does not meet the NEPA requirement for adequate public disclosure of the impacts of the proposed action. Adequate public disclosure in these cases would require direct means of communication with motorized recreationists to inform them of the potential changes that will result from the respective plan. This process of non-disclosure has been used to effectively eliminate many motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities and contributes to the cumulative impact of closures on motorized recreationists. We request that the cumulative impact of past planning actions on motorized recreationists be adequately evaluated and considered during the decision-making process.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>If allowed to continue the trend of closure after closure of motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities will result in an extremely limited number of motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities. If allowed to continue to that end as proposed by current management schemes, motorized access and motorized will become so concentrated that the impacts on natural resources will become significantly greater than the alternative of continuing to allow a reasonable level of motorized access and motorized recreation on all multiple-use lands. We believe that it is time that this trend to terminate motorized access and motorized recreation on public be evaluated. We request that the trend of cumulative closures, the cumulative impacts associated with that trend and the reasonable alternative of maintaining the existing level of motorized access and motorized recreation must be adequately addressed. We also request that the proposed action include an adequate mitigation plan to compensate for the significant negative cumulative impacts from past actions that have affected motorized access and motorized recreationists.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized visitors are continually losing significant recreational opportunities by conversion of multiple-use areas to non-motorized areas. We are greatly concerned about the significant cumulative impact associated with the reduction of multiple-use and OHV recreation opportunities. We do not expect to have the freedom to go anywhere and do anything that we want. However, we are losing the basic freedom to travel to places and experience outdoor opportunities that the public has benefited from for decades. We are losing routes that fathers have taught sons and daughters and even grandchildren to ride on. The continual loss of motorized access and recreational opportunities and the negative attitudes toward multiple-use recreationists is seriously degrading our culture and quality of life. We are opposed to any proposed action that further contributes to this significant cumulative impact on multiple-use and OHV recreationists. Recreation opportunities for multiple-use and OHV recreationists are being significantly reduced at a time when the need for these categories of recreation is growing. There is no reasonable justification for closing these lands to multiple-uses. Management of public lands for multiple-use is the most equitable and responsive approach available to meet the needs of all citizens including motorized recreationists. We request that the evaluation and proposed action adequately address this condition and not contribute further to this significant cumulative impact.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The trend of closure after closure after closure after closure of motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities and the associated cumulative impacts of that trend is no longer acceptable without adequate mitigation. A reasonable mitigation plan must be developed for each action in order to avoid contributing to already significant cumulative impacts on motorized access and motorized recreationists and to compensate for cumulative impacts associated with past actions.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Current land management trends are applying wilderness standards and criteria to lands intended for multiple-use. For example, total National Forest area equals 191,856,000 acres ( <a href="http://roadless.fs.fed.us/documents/feis/data/sheets/acres/appendix_forest_acres.html">http://roadless.fs.fed.us/documents/feis/data/sheets/acres/appendix_forest_acres.html</a> ). Total designated wilderness/protected areas equal 42,351,000 acres or 28% of the total forest area. Additionally, there are other non-motorized designations that effectively eliminate motorized access and motorized recreation in large areas of the forest.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Other designations that preclude unrestricted multiple-uses include roadless areas which total 54,327,000 acres or 22% of the total forest area. First, the rules governing identified roadless areas clearly allow motorized recreation and roadless areas currently provide many important motorized recreational opportunities. However, in practice roadless areas are managed with restrictions that severely restrict multiple-use and access of those areas by the public. Therefore, the national forest area with severe access and use restrictions totals at least 96,678,000 acres or 50% of the total forest area.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Similar trends have occurred on lands managed by the Department of Interior (DOI) which total 507 million acres which is about one-fifth of the land in the United States. Acreages managed by each Interior agency include: 262 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management, 95 million acres managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, 84 million acres managed by the National Park Service, 8.6 million acres managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, and 56 million acres managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Statistics summarizing acres of multiple-use and restricted-use on DOI lands are not readily available to the public, however, a significant portion of these lands have limited motorized access and limited motorized recreational opportunities. DOI should adequately disclose these land use statistics to the public including motorized recreationists as quickly as possible.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Therefore, the cumulative effect of the pre-Columbian scheme, wilderness designations, wilderness study areas, national parks, monument designations, roadless designations, non-motorized area designations, travel management, wildlife management areas and other restrictive management designations over the past 35 ± years have restricted the public land area (USDA and DOI) available to multiple-use visitors seeking motorized access and/or mechanized recreational experiences (over 95% of the public land visitors) to less than 50% of the total national forest and public land area.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	It is not reasonable to close this area to the majority of uses. In order to be responsive to the needs of the public all of the remaining (100%) multiple-use public lands should be managed for multiple-uses including motorized access and motorized recreation. Therefore, all public lands such as those in this project area must remain open as multiple-use lands in order to avoid contributing to the significant cumulative effect associated with the trend of converting multiple-use lands to limited-use lands. We request that the document and decision evaluate the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists and adequately evaluate the significant cumulative impacts that have resulted from inadequate evaluation in past actions. We also request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Our observations of recreationists on multiple-use public lands from 1999 through 2002 (available upon request) indicate that out of 3,091 observations, 2,927 recreationists or 95% of the visitors were associated with multiple-uses that involved motorized access and/or mechanized recreation. Additionally, Table 2-7 in the Social Assessment of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest dated October 2002 estimates that the total number of forest visitors in Forest Service Region 1 for year 2000 was 13,200,000. The total number of wilderness visits was estimated at 337,000 or 2.55%. Therefore, nearly all (97.45%) visitors to public lands benefit from management for multiple-use and benefit from motorized access and mechanized recreational opportunities which are consistent with our observations.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Therefore, over 95% of the public land should be managed for multiple-uses including motorized access and mechanized recreation. However, over 50% of the public land is managed by wilderness, wilderness study area, national park, monument, roadless, non-motorized area, wildlife management, and other restrictive management criteria that eliminates most or all motorized access and motorized recreation. Note that the Final Roadless Rule published on January 5, 2001 included the following directive "The proposed rule did not close any roads or off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails."	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Therefore, all (100%) of the remaining public lands including roadless areas must be managed for multiple-uses in order to avoid further contributing to the excessive allocation of resources and recreation opportunities for exclusive non-motorized use.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The cumulative effect of management trends over the past 35 ± years has significantly increased non-motorized recreational opportunities while motorized recreational opportunities have been significantly decreased. Non-motorized recreationists have many choices while motorized recreationists have few choices. We request that the document evaluate the significant cumulative effects of this trend and that the decision be based on correcting this trend in order to equitably meet the needs of motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agency staff has told us that they intend to focus on resource management issues. Issues related to the management of natural resources have received most of the attention during the evaluation while socio-economic issues surrounding motorized access and recreation are largely ignored. This lack of adequate recognition has led to the creation of significant socio-economic issues affecting the quality of the human environment for motorized recreationists. Land management agencies must acknowledge that public land has significant meaning and socio-economic value to the public. We request that all significant issues involving the human environment for motorized recreationists be adequately considered during the evaluation and decision-making process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Travel management documents have historically over-emphasized the potential positive impacts to some resource areas and under-emphasized the impacts to other resource areas both in numbers of pages devoted to a resource and in the conclusions. For example, in the Clancy-Unionville FEIS and DSEIS there are about 100 pages discussing potential positive impacts to wildlife and fisheries and less than 2 pages discussing negative impacts to motorized recreationists. This emphasis in the process has pre-determined that the human environment will be sacrificed for incrementally small benefits to some resources. The emphasis in the analysis does not reasonably consider incrementally small improvements (0-5%) to the natural environment against an incrementally significant impact (50%) to the human environment. We request that significant human environment issues involving motorized recreationists be adequately considered and weighed in the travel management process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The existing level of motorized access and recreation was developed by the community through years of involvement in direct relation to the need for motorized access and recreational opportunities. The community is accustomed and relies on this level of access and recreation. We request that the project area remain open to multiple-use and the public and that a reasonable preferred alternative be based on the existing level of motorized access and motorized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Why use so many indirect attempts such as public meetings and open houses to gather feedback from motorized recreationists? Why not just go directly to motorized recreationists in the field and at club meetings and ask them? NEPA encourages direct coordination with the impacted public instead of a process tailor made for special-interest environmental groups.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The dominant direction taken by the agencies is to use the travel planning process as a process to eliminate motorized access and recreation opportunities. Instead, the travel management process should be directed to meet the needs of the public for multiple-use, motorized access and motorized recreation on public lands. NEPA requires that agencies "Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives...." [40 CFR 1502.14(a)]. We ask that you develop a preferred alternative that preserves and enhances multiple-use interests and motorized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The greatest communal need for public lands is for multiple-use opportunities. We promote management for multiple-use because it allows everybody to enjoy the resources and it also promotes sharing and non-polarization of visitors. Other management schemes promote non-sharing and polarization of visitors. We can solve more problems by resisting polarization and working together.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	A significant closing of roads and motorized trails in the project area is not consistent with meeting the needs of the public and the goals of Multiple-Use Management as directed under Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and P.L. 88-657. The cumulative effects of other proposed and enacted federal land management policies have resulted in a significant reduction of multiple-use and OHV recreation opportunities. The result has been a significant conversion of multiple-use areas to exclusive non-motorized areas. We request compliance with multiple-use policies and laws and a preferred alternative that will support these policies and laws and the needs of the public. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The following statement on Page 117 of the Big Snowy EA is made in regards to cumulative effects and OHV recreation; <i>“It would appear that the combination of all these actions by land management agencies may have a cumulative effect on opportunities for OHV recreation. It is impossible to quantify the effect, because the Forest Service does not have a State-wide tally of number of miles of roads and trails open to OHVs. Likewise, no one has an estimate of numbers of miles of roads and trails needed to meet the demand for motorized OHV recreation.”</i>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Page 262 of the Supplement to Big Snowy EA. <i>“In looking deeper into the issue of equitable opportunities, we found that the Forest Service reported 133,087 miles of trail nationally in 1996, but unfortunately there is no breakdown of how many miles of these trails are open to motorized travel versus non-motorized travel.”</i>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Page 263 of the Supplement to Big Snowy EA. <i>“Region 1 of the Forest Service reports 18,024 miles of trail within just Montana. Unfortunately, none of these reports break down the information into miles of road or trail open to motorized use.”</i>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	These statements in the Supplement indicate that the agency was not able to assess whether the needs of motorized recreationists are being met because data does not exist. It appears that OHV user data is not being collected because the agency does not want to quantify or recognize OHV use and popularity. Our observations of recreationists on multiple-use public lands from 1999 through 2002 (available upon request) indicate that out of 3,091 observations, 2,927 recreationists or 95% of the visitors were associated with multiple-uses involving motorized access and/or mechanized recreation. This is also consistent with the Social Assessment for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest which estimated that 97.45% of the visitors to Region 1 in year 2000 enjoyed recreation opportunities found in multiple-use areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	These statements also indicate that the agency was not able to assess the cumulative impacts on motorized access and recreationists because data does not exist. This lack of information is a significant reason why motorized recreationists are suffering such significant reductions in recreation opportunity. Because data does not exist, agencies cannot quantify the individual and cumulative impacts of each motorized access and recreation closure on motorized recreationists. This lack of data and consideration is being used to the advantage of antimultiple-use interests because the agency is not recognizing the significant need for multiple-use opportunities including motorized access and motorized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	If the present trend continues for a few more years, the loss of motorized access and recreation will be so significant that the collection of meaningful data will be precluded because motorized opportunities will be largely eliminated and motorized visitors will be permanently displaced (absent from public lands). Based on our observations, we estimate that motorized access and recreation opportunities have been reduced by at least 50% since the 1960's by the significant cumulative effect of wilderness designations, wilderness study areas, national parks, monument designations, roadless designations, non-motorized area designations, travel management, wildlife management areas and other restrictive management designations.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized visitors are continually losing significant recreational opportunities by conversion of multiple-use areas to non-motorized areas. This is a significant impact that has occurred cumulatively by a process of thousands of individual closures. The lack of data does not justify imposing a significant impact on motorized recreationists. We request that this cumulative impact be addressed by the collection of data and the fair evaluation of the need for motorized access and motorized recreation. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Mailings and telephone interviews as done in past studies do not accurately locate the people visiting public lands. Our field observations of trail use in multiple-use areas and the Social Assessment for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest have found that over 95% of the visitors were associated with multiple-uses that involved motorized access and/or mechanized recreation. We request that effective methods be developed to involve and account for motorized access and mechanized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	There was considerably more human activity in the project area during the period from 1870 to 1940 when mining, logging, homesteading, ranching, and pioneer activity was high. Therefore, there is considerably less human activity and human-caused impact now than during any period in the last 130 years. We request that this trend be included in the analysis. This trend also contributes to the significant cumulative impact of less access and less use of public lands. We request that the decision-making reverse the trend of less access and less use of public lands by including an adequate mitigation plan as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized recreation is recognized as one of the fastest growing activities on federal lands within this country yet recreation opportunities for motorized recreationists are always being reduced. Motorized recreationists have suffered significant cumulative impacts in the form of motorized road, trail and area closures. Motorized visitors are being systematically removed from the majority of public lands. National Forests are largely becoming a "National Forest Park" or "limited-use" or "exclusive-use" areas at the expense of citizens who enjoy or depend on multiple-use. The concepts of "Multiple-Use" and the "Land of Many Uses" need to be restored as envisioned by the first Forest Service Chief, Gifford Pinchot who directed that "... National Forest lands are managed for the greatest good for the greatest number of people...". This is no longer the case and, consequently, the Forest Service no longer has any credibility with the public. We request that the document address restoration of these concepts and steps be taken to restore reasonable multiple-use management and decision-making to public lands.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A CNN poll (available upon request) asked the question "Do you think off-road vehicles (ORVs) should be banned from unpaved areas of natural forest land?" and found about 15% said yes and 85% did not think ORVs should be banned. Therefore, elimination of motorized access and recreation on public lands is not widely supported. We request that the document and decision-making reflect citizens' support for motorized access and recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Because most OHV machines are not street legal, they cannot be legally ridden on forest roads unless they are designated as dual-purpose roads. The proposed action must include these designations in order to provide a network of OHV routes. An adequate Travel Management alternative should include a system of dual-purpose roads, and OHV roads and trails that interconnect. This will allow OHV enthusiasts to operate within existing laws without traveling illegally on roads. We request that a system of dual-purpose roads, and OHV roads and trails that interconnect be one of the primary objectives of the travel management plan and that this objective be adequately addressed in the document and decision.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The continual closure of motorized trails has forced OHVs to be operated on forest roads in order to provide a reasonable system of routes and to reach destinations of interest. The lack of dual-use designations on forest roads then makes OHV use on these routes illegal. The cumulative effect of motorized closures and then combined with the lack of a reasonable system of roads and trails with dual-use designation has not been adequately considered in past evaluations and decision-making. We request that all reasonable routes be designated for dual-use so that a system of roads and trails can be used by motorized recreationists. Additionally, we request that the cumulative effect of all past decisions that have adequately considered dual-use designations be evaluated and considered in the decision-making and that this project include an adequate mitigation plan to compensate for inadequate consideration in the past.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Past travel management actions have started from the beginning with a proposal to close the majority of existing roads and trails to motorized recreation and access with the exception of a few major roads. This practice forces motorized visitors and recreationists to start with the worst case scenario and then expend great effort (that is not very successful) to add routes currently in use back into the process. This practice places an enormous burden on motorized visitors just to maintain the status quo. This process, in effect, provides preferential treatment for antimultiple-use visitors who do not have to identify routes and challenge the process to protect their recreation opportunities. We request that travel management process be practiced in a manner that does not put motorized visitors at a disadvantage.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A fair travel management process would start with a comprehensive inventory of all existing motorized routes in use by the public. Then, in order to avoid further cumulative loss and significant impact on motorized access and recreation opportunities, we request that the travel management process include a preferred alternative based on preserving all existing motorized routes. Existing motorized roads and trails have been around for decades and have not caused any significant problems. Therefore, it is not reasonable to close a significant number of existing motorized routes. Any significant negative impact associated with a specific motorized route should be the basis for an evaluation to close or keep that route open and should carefully consider all reasonable mitigation measures. The cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities within public lands has been significant. In order to avoid further cumulative impacts, we request that the majority of existing motorized routes remain open and the closure of an existing motorized route be offset by the creation of a new motorized route.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Oftentimes, many of the motorized roads and trails proposed for closure are primitive roads and trails that provide the ideal experience sought by motorized visitors. We request that the analysis adequately evaluate the type and quality of experiences that motorized visitors enjoy and want maintained in the area.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Each road and trail should be inventoried and viewed on the ground to determine its recreational value and any significant problem areas that require mitigation measures. Each road and trail should be evaluated for its value as a motorized loop or connected route. Each spir road and trail should be evaluated for its value as a source of dispersed campsite, exploration opportunities, destination or as access for all multiple-use visitors. Every problem has a solution. Every impact has a mitigation measure. We request that travel management alternatives be developed with the objective of including as many roads and trails as possible and addressing as many problems as possible by using all possible mitigation measures.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized trail recreationists have been very reluctant in the past to give up the “open” designation because we believe we may lose legitimate and historic trails that are located in “open areas” that are crucial to loop opportunities. Our fear has been, and remains, that the agency will define key trails we currently utilize as “user created” because they are not on a current travel plan or forest map and because they are not identified that they will be closed. Many of these trails are recorded on earlier maps but others are not. While in fact they may have been created to access an activity such as mining or logging in the late 1800’s or early 1900’s when these uses and activities were more popular.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized recreationists would accept area closure (restriction of motorized vehicles to designated routes and elimination of cross-country travel) when reliable documentation demonstrates that it would provide measurable and significant improvement to the natural environment in exchange for a reasonable number of designated motorized routes. We request that the analysis develop a preferred alternative with a reasonable number of designated routes in exchange for the environmental improvements that have been realized by motorized visitor’s acceptance of millions of acres of area closure under the 3-State OHV Plan.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In most locales, visitors to public lands have given up motorized cross-country travel opportunities and accepted millions of acres of area closure. Therefore, motorized recreationists cannot travel cross-country using motorized vehicles and motorized recreational opportunities are limited to existing roads and trails that are open to motorized use. At the same time, non-motorized recreationists can hike cross-country. Therefore, hiking opportunities are unlimited.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In most locales, public land visitors have given up motorized cross-country travel opportunities and accepted many acres of area closure. However, most often motorized recreationists have not been given credit for the benefits associated with the implementation of cross-country travel restrictions and area closures. Then along comes travel planning which seeks to further restrict motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that these trends and the significant cumulative impacts of these trends on motorized access and motorized recreationists be evaluated and that motorized trail projects be undertaken to mitigate the significant cumulative impacts on motorized access and motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Most of the motorized roads and trails in the project area have served as important public access routes since the turn of the century. This is demonstrated by the number of historic mines and structures that are located along these routes. We have observed that these travelways are currently significant recreation resources for motorized visitors in the area including ATV, motorcycle, and four-wheel drive enthusiasts. Many of these travelways have right-of-ways as provided for under the provisions of Revised Statute 2477. These roads are shown on older mapping sources including: aerial photographs, 15-minute USGS quadrangle sheets, and older county maps. The cut and fill sections and obvious roadbed indicate that these roads were constructed and used by the citizens for access to the forest. RS 2477 was created to provide adequate access to public lands. Now this public access is being eliminated. We request that these travelways remain open based on; (1) their history of community access, (2) the access that they provide to interesting historical sites, and (3) their importance to community access. We request that the document evaluate all of the issues surrounding RS 2477 including the significant cumulative impact of all past closures of RS 2477 routes.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Site-specific analysis should be provided for every road and trail so that the benefits of keeping each motorized travelway is adequately addressed and accounted for in the decision. Site-specific questions will need to be discussed during the process. We request that the mapping be sufficient to allow site-specific analysis.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	All too often actions have been enacted based on proclaimed benefit to the environment and without any tangible evidence or follow-on monitoring to document whether proclaimed benefits occurred or not. All too often these same actions have produced significant negative impacts on multiple-use interests. Significant recreational opportunities have been taken from multiple-use and motorized recreationists based on theoretical environmental improvements that may never happen. This lack of accountability is not acceptable.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request that sufficient background data be collected to quantify the existing conditions in the resource areas of interest. Then, if a motorized closure is enacted, sufficient data should be collected to demonstrate whether or not there was significant improvement to each resource area. If significant measurable improvement cannot be demonstrated, then, in order to be accountable, motorized closure actions should be reversed. Additionally, we request that the cumulative impact from all past actions based on inadequate documentation and accountability for improvements be determined. Again, if significant measurable improvement cannot be demonstrated, then, in order to be accountable, motorized closure actions should be reversed.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Impacts should be evaluated in a fair and unbiased manner and with a relative sense of magnitude. For example, if natural events including floods, wildfires, and their associated impacts are natural and acceptable as stated by some agency personnel and environmental groups, then (in order to be consistent and equitable) impacts from OHV recreation should be compared in relative magnitude to the impacts associated with floods, wildfire, and other natural events. This comparison should include the impact of floods, wildfire, and other natural events on all resource areas including noxious weeds, deforestation, erosion and sediment production, loss of organic material, loss of recreation and economic opportunities and other socio-economic impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The use of soil erosion as a reason to close motorized recreational opportunities is an example of the prejudice that exists per the following example. Soil erosion associated with fires that have burned severely has been reported in the range of 50 tons per hectare (20 tons per acre). Nearly all fires increase sediment yield, but wildfires in steep terrain produce the greatest amounts (12 to 165 ton per acre per year, 28 to 370 Mg per hectare per year) (table 5 and figure 11). This soil loss occurs over the burned area due to the lack of vegetative cover to hold the soil in place on steep slopes during precipitation events and increased peak rates of runoff. Flood peak flows after wildfires that burn large areas in steep terrain often produce significant impacts. Peak flow increases of 10 to 100 times are common, but some have been measured as high as 2,300 times pre-fire conditions. Since 1994 the acres burned nationally have ranged from 2.3 to 8.4 million acres and averaged 4.8 million acres. At a typical sediment yield of 20 tons per acre per year, about 96,000,000 tons of sediment has been produced by fires or about 9,600,000 dump truck loads. On a more local basis in the Helena National Forest several hundred thousand acres have burned since 1988. Sediment production associated with these fires would equal 4,000,000 tons or 400,000 dump truck loads. Sediment production associated with motorized recreation cannot begin to compare to this magnitude and, therefore, it is not reasonable use sediment as a basis to close motorized recreational opportunities when impacts from let it burn and other management policies are a million times greater and considered acceptable.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In a fair and unbiased evaluation, the source of the impacts (natural versus human caused) should not be a factor. In a fair and unbiased evaluation, relative impact associated with natural events including floods and wildfires is thousands of times greater than impacts associated with timber harvests and OHV recreation, yet proposed action involving timber harvests and OHV recreation are considered to have unacceptable impacts. The absence of a rational connection between the facts found and the choice made has been defined by the courts as arbitrary and capricious (Natural Resources. v. U.S., 966 F.2d 1292, 97, (9th Cir.'92)). A clear error of judgment; an action not based upon consideration of relevant factors and so is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion or otherwise not in accordance with law or if it was taken without observance of procedure required by law (5 USC. 706(2)(A) (1988)). We request fair and unbiased evaluations and judgments during this evaluation and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The transport mechanism for noxious weeds includes all visitors and uses of public lands including hikers, equestrians, and cattle grazing in addition to motorized recreationists. Many events including fire, floods, and the importation of invasive species also contribute to noxious weed problems. For the most part, vehicles do not have a surface texture that will pick up and hold noxious weeds seeds. Transport mechanisms based on hair, fur, manure, shoes, and fabrics are more effective than the smooth metal and plastic surfaces found on vehicles. Additionally, motorized recreationists practice the "Wash your Steeds" policy. However, closures due to noxious weed concerns are only placed on motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Current management directives seek to aggressively decommission non-beneficial or unclassified roads, reduce the existing backlog on road maintenance and reconstruction, and reduce the resource impacts of the current roads network. The Forest Service in the Roadless Rule EIS reported that the backlog of forest road maintenance was about \$8.4 billion. This estimate includes many primitive roads and trails that motorized recreations would prefer not to have improved except for mitigation measures such as water bars and reroutes to avoid sensitive environmental areas. The challenge and recreation value of these types of primitive roads and trails is what most motorized recreationists are looking for. Therefore, this maintenance effort is overstated and a more reasonable alternative would be to incorporate reasonable mitigation measures and convert roads to unrestricted-width or restricted-width trails to provide motorized recreation opportunities and then remove these roads from the roads inventory. We request that this reasonable alternative be included as part of the preferred alternative.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Management decisions should be based on input from a management team that is representative of all citizens needs. This is especially necessary to provide a balanced perspective on the travel management team and when consulting and coordinating with other agencies. We request that the interdisciplinary team (IDT) include motorized recreation planners and enthusiasts in order to adequately speak for the needs of multiple-use and motorized visitors. A multiple-use and motorized recreationists advisory board could also be used to advise the IDT and decision-makers.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Presently, very few agency staff members are OHV enthusiasts and can represent OHV recreation interests in day-to-day operations and long-term management decisions. OHV enthusiasts understand how to educate, manage, and meet the needs of OHV recreationists. We request that the staff of each unit include an adequate number of OHV enthusiasts in order to adequately represent and address the needs of OHV recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	For example, the lack of adequate policy and implementation of fire management practices has lead to many catastrophic fires. The sedimentation resulting from these fires should be measured and compared to all OHV activity in the forest. The results will demonstrate that the rate of sediment resulting from fires is thousands of times greater than that of all OHV activity in the forest. The determination of the natural rate of sedimentation over the course of time will also demonstrate that the natural rate of sedimentation is many times greater than that of all OHV activity in the forest. These are examples of the sense of magnitude and big picture perspective that should be required when evaluating impacts in the document and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The Forest Service Stream Systems Technology Center has found, in a paper published in the July 2000 issue of Stream Notes, that roads and trails can easily be hydrologically disconnected from streams. Therefore, the sedimentation concerns can be easily mitigated and should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures except in exceptional cases that cannot be adequately mitigated.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A study of sound levels from OHV use was found to be less than the background noise of the wind in treetops (Nora Hamilton, Mendocino National Forest, memorandum to the file, November 17, 1992). Also, the USDA FS Technology and Development Program in a report prepared in 1993 and titled "Sound Levels of Five Motorcycles Traveling Over Forest Trails" found that at distances over 400 feet, motorcycles do not raise the ambient sound level (they are no louder than background levels of noise). Absolute quiet is not a reasonable expectation. Sound from motorized sources such as airplanes exists even in the most remote areas. It is not reasonable to expect absolute quiet in areas intended for multiple-use. The sound level of motorized recreation use is not greater than natural sounds, and therefore, sound level should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A study of National Park elk habituated to human activity and not hunted were more sensitive to persons afoot than vehicles (Shultz, R.D. and James A. Bailey "Responses of National Park Elk to Human Activity", Journal of Wildlife Management, v42, 1975). Therefore, hikers disturb elk more than motor vehicles and "disturbance of wildlife" should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Hikers disturb nesting birds (Swarthout, Elliott and Steidl, Robert, Journal of the Society of Conservation Biology, February 2003) yet restrictions on hiking and other non-motorized recreationists to reduce impacts on nesting birds are rarely imposed.  Hiking, cross-country hiking and wilderness uses also causes trail impacts yet these impacts are seldom acknowledged. For example, the USDA FS Intermountain Research Station Research Paper INT-450 "Changes on Trails in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Montana, 1978-89" and dated 1991 found that many trail segments changed markedly, depending on site and use.  Additionally the report "Keeping Visitors on the Right Track - Sign and Barrier Research at Mount Rainer", Park Science 14(4) published in 1994 found that off-trail hiking is a major source of impact that creates trails and erosion throughout the several thousand acres of sub-alpine meadows.  Additionally the report "Erosional Impact of Hikers, Horses, Motorcycles, and Off-Road Bicycles on Mountain Trails in Montana", Mountain Research and Development, Volume 14, No. 1, and published in 1994 found that multiple comparison test results showed that horses and hikers made more sediment available than wheels, and this effect was most pronounced on pre-wetted trails.  Why are there so many double-standards in the impact analyses and decision-making? If the issues surrounding motorized travel are significant enough to justify closures, then, in order to avoid introducing a bias to the evaluation and process the same issues and restrictions should also be applied to hiking, mountain climbing, cross-country hiking, wilderness users, etc.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A study of the heart rate of elk found that humans walking between 20 to 300 meters from the elk caused them to flee immediately 41% of the time while an OHV passing within 15 to 400 meters of the elk caused them to flee 8% of the time (Ward, A. L. and J. J. Cupal. 1976. Telemetered heart rate of three elk as affected by activity and human disturbance. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. Laramie, WY. 9 pp.). Therefore, hikers disturb elk more than motor vehicles and "disturbance of wildlife" should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A study of mule deer found that 80% fled in reaction to encounters with persons afoot while only 24% fled due to encounters with snowmobiles (David J. Freddy, Whitcomb M. Bronaugh, Martin C. Fowler, "Responses of Mule Deer to Persons Afoot and Snowmobiles", Wildlife Society Bulletin, 1986). Therefore, hikers disturb deer more than motor vehicles and "disturbance of wildlife" should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	The wildlife sections of many travel plan documents tend to promote two underlying themes; (1) wildlife and forest visitors cannot coexist, and (2) there are significant negative impacts to wildlife from visitors to the forest. Observations of wildlife in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and the 400 deer that live within the Helena city limits combined with common sense tell us that wildlife can flourish with millions of visitors and motorized vehicles.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Wildlife can and do effectively coexist with motorized visitors in even the most heavily visited places. Therefore, concerns with motorized forest visitors and wildlife are often over-stated and over-emphasized which unfortunately demonstrates a prejudice in the process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The wildlife/visitor interaction in national parks demonstrates that the manner in which visitors coexist with wildlife is the most significant factor in the interaction between wildlife and visitors. The manner in which visitors coexist with wildlife in national forest can be shaped by adequate use of mitigation measures including seasonal closures, educational programs and trail rangers. Therefore, reasonable alternatives to the closure of motorized roads and trails exist and can be used to address wildlife concerns. We request that these sorts of reasonable alternatives to closure of roads and trails to motorized visitors be adequately considered and incorporated into the preferred alternative.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>“Present day populations of white-tailed deer and elk are at their highest levels recorded in recent history” (Montana Wolf Conservation and Management Planning Document, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, January 2000. (<a href="http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/wildthings/wolf/wolfmanagement011602.pdf">http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/wildthings/wolf/wolfmanagement011602.pdf</a> )</p> <p>Additionally, the number of hunters has leveled off (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. <a href="http://library.fws.gov/nat_survey_1996.pdf">http://library.fws.gov/nat_survey_1996.pdf</a> ).</p> <p>Therefore, there are no compelling reasons “to elevate the level of elk security in the project area and...enhance elk populations” as frequently suggested by wildlife biologists (example; Fish, Wildlife and Parks letter dated February 27, 2002 to Helena National Forest on the Clancy-Unionville Travel Planning Project, bottom of page 9). Additionally, there are no compelling reasons to justify reduced road densities as a sought-after or necessary wildlife management criterion. Lastly, there are reasonable alternatives including permit hunting and seasonal travel restrictions that can better accomplish the outcome sought by reduced road and trail densities. NEPA requires consideration and implementation of all reasonable alternatives. Not considering and implementing reasonable alternatives demonstrates a prejudice in the process.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Our observations over decades of trail riding have established that significant wildlife mortality does not result from OHV activity. We are not aware of any reports of large animals such as deer, elk, or bear being hit or injured by OHV activity. Additionally, it is extremely rare for OHVs to injure any small animals such as squirrels or chipmunks. We request that wildlife mortality from OHV activity be considered minor and that wildlife mortality not be used as a reason to close roads and trails to OHV visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	OHV use and wildlife can and do coexist. We do not see any evidence in the field that would indicate that summer motorized recreation use is a significant wildlife problem. We support motorized closures where necessary to protect wildlife during the spring calving season and hunting season while maintaining a reasonable level of access during those periods.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	It is obvious from aerial observation of the project area that under the existing conditions so much of the area is inaccessible to motor vehicles and that the existing level of motorized access and motorized recreation is entirely reasonable. Reduced motorized road and trail density is often used as a desired management goal but is not reasonable. The trend of reduced motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities is not necessary and is not consistent with multiple-use management of the area.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Wildlife management also depends on adequate motorized access. For example, the lack of adequate roads and motorized access for hunter access has led to reduced hunter success and reduced harvest of game animals and affected the overall number and balance of game animals. This in turn has led to the need for cow permits and special hunts. In order to be consistent with the Forest Plan and meet the goal of no net change in herd numbers requires no net change in hunter access which in turn justifies the current level of motorized roads and trails.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The encroachment of residences into the forest is often the most significant factor contributing to the loss of summer and/or winter wildlife habitat. First, we request that the impact of these permanent encroachments be quantified and compared to the relatively minor impact that mechanized forest visitors have on wildlife habitat. Secondly, public land visitors should not have to pay the price in the form of motorized closures required to offset the impact of permanent encroachments by private residences. Proper assignment of restrictions would rest on those private individuals who permanently encroached on the natural habitat.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	We are greatly concerned about the prevailing management trend for public lands that has significantly reduced or eliminated motorized recreation and access opportunities. Why does the closure of public lands permeate the current management mind set? This mind set is not in line with the best interests of the public. The closure of any existing motorized trail will add to the significant cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities that has occurred within public lands during the past 35 ± years. In order to avoid contributing further to the significant cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access, we request that the closure of a motorized trail or access should be offset by the creation of a new motorized trail or access of equal value.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	<p>Page 279 of the Supplement to Big Snowy EA. <i>As previously stated in our response to 3c – Roadless/Wilderness comments, we fail to see how the Roadless Rule has a cumulative effect on multiple-use recreationists. The Roadless Area Conservation Strategy did not prohibit motorized use on roads and trails that already exist within inventoried roadless areas. It also did not prohibit construction of new motorized trails. It did not designate the areas as wilderness. It did not prohibit the Forest Supervisor from making local decisions about motorized travel within roadless areas. Therefore, we consider this comment beyond the scope of the project.</i></p> <p>We disagree with the conclusion that the Roadless Rule will not have a cumulative effect on motorized recreationists. The Final Roadless Rule published on January 5, 2001 included the following directive “The proposed rule did not close any roads or off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails”. Even though motorized recreation is allowed by the Roadless Rule, wilderness groups will contest every inch of motorized trail in roadless areas. The comments submitted by anti-motorized use groups as part of this proposed action are representative of their position. All too often, the preferred alternative implements a significant reduction in motorized access and recreation. Every action involving travel management in the region has had significant motorized access and recreation closures associated with it. There is no evidence that future actions will be any different.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Montana has a total of 16,843,000 acres in National Forests. Of that area, 3,372,000 acres or 20% are designated wilderness. Areas subject to the Roadless Rule total 6,397,000 acres or 38% of our National Forest area. Therefore, 9,769,000 acres or 58% of the National Forest in Montana is either wilderness or subject to the Roadless Rule. This number of acres must be balanced with the fact that wilderness visits account for only 2.55% of the visits to public land (Table 2-7 in the Social Assessment of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest dated October 2002). Therefore, nearly all (97.45%) visitors to public lands benefit from land management for multiple-use and benefit from motorized access and mechanized recreational opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Based on our experience with past actions and current proposed actions, motorized recreationists will lose significant recreational opportunities and suffer significant cumulative impacts from the Roadless Rule. Therefore, we disagree that this issue is out of scope. We request that the cumulative impact of the Roadless Rule, past actions and future actions be considered a significant issue and adequately considered in the document and decision-making. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	An alternative land designation is needed to resolve the Wilderness and Roadless area debate. Off-highway motorcycles, snowmobiles, 4X4s, mountain bikes, ATVs, and personal watercraft are not allowed in designated Wilderness and, most likely, Roadless areas. Therefore, these popular recreation pastimes are severely impacted by the Wilderness and Roadless designation. Motorized uses that have been grand fathered into some Wilderness areas, such as use of aircraft and powerboats, are subjected to harassment. Horseback riders, hunters and other non-motorized recreationists are also increasingly under attack from Wilderness advocates who push more restrictive regulations in existing Wilderness areas and those areas proposed for that designation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The U.S. Congress should act on legislation establishing a federal designation that is less restrictive to recreational use than Wilderness and the proposed Roadless designation. We propose it should be called "Back Country Recreation Area" ( <a href="http://www.sharetrails.org/backcountry.htm">http://www.sharetrails.org/backcountry.htm</a> ). This designation should be designed to protect and, if possible, enhance the backcountry recreation opportunities on these lands while still allowing responsible utilization of these areas by the natural resource industries.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	This designation should be used for those areas currently identified by the federal land management agencies as "roadless" and thus currently under consideration for Wilderness designation. Areas considered may or may not be recommended for Wilderness designation or classed as Wilderness Study Areas. In addition, the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have administratively developed non-Congressionally designated Wilderness-like reserves or buffer zones. The Forest Service's buffers are called natural and near-natural areas. The BLM's reserves are named primitive and semi-primitive. These non-Congressionally approved land classifications should be receive the Back Country Recreation Area (BCRA) designation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Many roadless areas have been under consideration for Wilderness designation for over 35 years. The opposition to Wilderness designation in many of these areas has been largely from recreationists whose preferred form of recreation isn't allowed in Wilderness areas. Recreational resources need not be sacrificed for responsible resource extraction. The BCRA designation will encourage cooperation, not only between diverse recreation interests, but also between recreationists and our resource industries.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request that all "roadless" federal lands, not currently designated as Wilderness, be reviewed for their importance to back country recreationists and designated as Back Country Recreation Areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) for motorized recreationists should consist of an equivalent number, type and quality of opportunities as compared to non-motorized recreationists including access to back country recreation areas, long distance back country discovery routes, and destinations including historic areas, lakes, vistas, streams and rivers.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Many visitors who traditionally use roads and trails in the project area may not participate in a formal NEPA process. The process is both time consuming and confusing to many citizens. Multiple-use interests oftentimes struggle to provide participants due to many other time commitments. At the same time, non-motorized groups funded by foundations have well-organized, trained and experienced staffs that are readily available to participate in the NEPA process and collaborative sessions. These groups are able to participate on a wide front of actions from travel management to timber sales to non-motorized designations. The magnitude of foundation funding available to non-motorized groups tends to amplify their limited-use interests in comparison to the needs of the public. The number of groups and the magnitude of their funding can be found at <a href="http://www.green-watch.com/search/directory.asp">http://www.green-watch.com/search/directory.asp</a> . For example, there are over 45 special-interest environmental groups operating in our area. This setting often results in non-motorized interests getting undue benefits by creating and manipulating the process. This setting is not based on the principles of addressing public need and technical merit. We request that the effectiveness and impact of foundation-funded organizations versus the needs of all citizens be evaluated and factored into the agencies decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Given the current setting (number of actions and time required to address each), most of the public not associated with foundation-funded special-interest environmental organizations does not have the time and money to adequately protect their recreation rights. This characterization typifies most motorized and multiple-use recreationists who already struggle to balance family obligations with work obligations. It is not reasonable to require major involvement in the NEPA process from the working public in order to protect their recreation rights. Conversely, it is not reasonable to reward those groups backed by foundation funding and paid positions with an advantage in the NEPA process and undue recreational opportunities. We request that the cumulative impact associated with this setting be adequately evaluated and factored into the decision-making for this action.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We have also observed from past NEPA travel management processes that the lack of participation by motorized recreationists has been due to the cumulative effect of confusing and poor documentation of the proposals, which included maps that did not have clearly defined characteristics, landmarks, trails, roads, routes and historical sites that would be removed from communal use by the proposed closure action. We are concerned that this lack of understanding will lead to resentment and poor support of motorized closures by the community. We request that the travel management process seek out and document the needs of all motorized visitors including those who traditionally use the primitive roads and trails, plus the handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired as required under 40 CFR 1506.6 (a) <i>Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing the NEPA process, (3) (vii) Publication in newsletters that may be expected to reach potentially interested persons. (ix) Posting of notice on and off site in the area where the action is to be located, and (d) Solicit appropriate information from the public.</i>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request that the process adequately meet public involvement requirements with respect to motorized visitors. The process should include methods of public involvement that effectively reach motorized visitors and methods to account for the needs of citizens who may not participate for diverse reasons. Some public involvement methods that would be effective include; (1) the use of trail rangers (who are motorized enthusiasts) to count and interview visitors using the travelways and distribute Travel Management materials to them, (2) publication in the newsletters of motorized association, (3) attendance at motorized club meetings, (4) posting of information packets at motorized trail head areas, and (5) mailings to OHV enthusiasts and owners.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The number of NEPA actions is overwhelming. For example, each Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service jurisdiction publishes a NEPA Quarterly Report and there are typically at least 30 actions ongoing at any moment. We typically recreate in at least 5 to 6 Forest Service or BLM management areas. The number of NEPA actions at any moment that we would have to evaluate and comment on in order to be involved would total 150 to 180. Refer to Table 1 also. Therefore, the public cannot possibly comment on every road, trail, or document. If this is a over-arching strategy, then it is grossly unfair. It is not reasonable to expect citizens to comment on every NEPA action that affects them.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Additionally, in order to facilitate our involvement, we have requested each agency in our area to notify us when a travel management action is proposed. Unfortunately, we are rarely notified. Because of the overwhelming number of actions we request that all of the basic needs of the community be adequately identified and considered during the process and provided for by the Agencies decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We are concerned with the way that comments are being used by agencies in the decision-making process. Agency management has said that the total number of comments received during the process is considered during the decision-making. There is a clear indication that decisions are being made based on those interests producing the most comments. We strongly disagree with a decision-making process using comments as a voting process where the most comments wins the most trails and recreation opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Communal needs are best met by management of public lands and programs for multiple-uses. Motorized roads and trails are a significant source of recreation for all of the public. The public expects decision-makers to adequately protect the existing standards of living and opportunities (human environment) in their decisions. The public expects and needs public agencies to be on their side. NEPA did not intend for citizens who do not comment on NEPA actions to give up their standard of living to those that do. We ask that public comments not be used as a voting process and that the needs of all citizens be fairly addressed in the document and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We are concerned about the magnitude and influence of foundation funding to antimultiple-use organizations. The level of funding provided to antimultiple-use organizations from national foundations is tens of thousands of times greater than that available to individuals and local organizations representing multiple-use and motorized recreationists. This level of funding provides antimultiple-use organizations with significant staffing, management, and legal support. We request the significant impact that national foundation funding to environmental groups has on motorized recreationists be adequately evaluated and considered including: (1) the impact that foundation funding has on the NEPA process, (2) the impact that foundation funding has on the decision-making, and (3) the impact that foundation funding has on the NEPA process through significant use of legal challenges to nearly every decision involving multiple-use proposals for public lands. In addition, the document and decision-makers should evaluate the significant cumulative impact national foundation funding has had on all past NEPA actions involving multiple-use and motorized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	It has been stated that motorized recreationists should participate in collaborative sessions with antimultiple-use groups in order to obtain motorized recreational opportunities on public lands. The agencies may think that the definition of a collaborative effort as "working together to develop a solution that reasonably meets the needs of all parties" but the dictionary definition of collaborate is "To cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy".	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Both sides would be further down the trail towards measurable protection of the human and natural environment if multiple-use, motorized access and motorized recreation were accepted at a reasonable level and we all focused our energy on visitor education, site-specific problems and site-specific mitigation measures. Consensus and collaborative processes cannot by nature produce reasonable results and motorized recreationists should not be forced into these processes where they are guaranteed to lose.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Each and every travel management plan has significantly reduced motorized access and motorized recreation. Therefore, non-motorized recreationists gain more opportunities with each and every travel plan compromise that closes motorized roads and trails and areas to motorized recreation. This trend is effectively converting significant areas of multiple-use public land to defacto wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use land. This conversion is being repeated over and over and the cumulative impact of this trend on motorized access and motorized recreation is significant and must be evaluated as part of this action.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Any significant closing of motorized routes in the project area does not meet the basic requirement of the NEPA act of 1969 as stated in "Sec. 101 (b) (5) <i>achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities</i> ". High standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities should include recognizing and meeting the need for motorized access and recreation opportunities in the project area. All visitors should be expected to share the project area with others and to tolerate the presence of others. We have met very few hikers on the multiple-use roads and trails that we use. We have not perceived any problems with the non-motorized visitors that we have met. We ask that the analysis and decision-making be based on sharing and tolerance and to avoid unreasonable accommodation of visitors to public lands that are not reasonably tolerant and sharing.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Adequate and accurate field data for visitor use in the project area has not been developed by the agency and does not exist. Our field data and the Social Assessment for Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest show that over 95% of the forest visitors are associated with multiple-uses that involve motorized access and/or mechanized recreation. Mechanized visitors end up losing significant recreational opportunities by conversion of multiple-use areas to non-mechanized areas and they are used at a lesser level. We request that sufficient and accurate background data be collected and used to determine the existing visitor use of the area. We request that needs and resource allocation be considered equal to visitor use. A reasonable alternative can only be formulated after sufficient data has been collected and analyzed.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	We are concerned that the data from the National Visitory Use Monitoring project (NVUM) will not be used to accurately portray the importance of motorized access and mechanized recreation on public lands. For example, the Social Assessment of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest dated October 2002 is one of the first documents to have done that on page 2-14. The table on page 2-14 represents that OHV use accounted for only 4% of those interviewed and that only 2% reported OHV use as their primary activity in the forest. However, a more accurate representation would key in on the importance of driving for pleasure, motorized access and mechanized recreation to all forest visitors. For example, our monitoring data for the period from 1999 through 2003 (available upon request) indicate that out of observations, 4,570 recreationists or 95% of the visitors were associated with multiple-uses (activities) that involved motorized access and/or mechanized recreation. This is also consistent with the Social Assessment for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest which found that 97.45% of the visitors to Region 1 in year 2000 enjoyed recreation opportunities in multiple-use areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The results from NVUM do not directly or adequately reflect the importance of motorized access and mechanized recreation to the typical visitor to public lands. The importance and magnitude of motorized access and mechanized recreation is hidden and dispersed within a number of different categories including: viewing wildlife, birds, fish, etc. (motorized access); picnicking (motorized access); viewing natural features (motorized access); hunting (motorized access); fishing (motorized access); general/other (motorized access and mechanized recreation); driving for pleasure on roads (motorized access and mechanized recreation); hiking or walking (motorized access to trail heads); gathering mushrooms, etc.(motorized access); camping (motorized access); resorts (motorized access); visiting historic and prehistoric sites/areas (motorized access); nature study (motorized access); off-road vehicle travel (motorized access and mechanized recreation); downhill skiing (motorized access); cross-country skiing (motorized access); primitive camping (motorized access); backpacking (motorized access); visiting a nature center, etc. (motorized access); snowmobile travel (motorized access and mechanized recreation); motorized water travel (motorized access and mechanized recreation); other motorized activities (motorized access and mechanized recreation), horseback riding (motorized access); bicycling (motorized access and mechanized recreation); non-motorized water travel (motorized access); and other non-motorized activities (motorized access).	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We are very concerned that NVUM will be used to produce significant and unjustified cumulative impacts on motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that the data from NVUM be correctly interpreted to demonstrate the importance of motorized access and mechanized recreation to all public land visitors. For example, Table 2-7 in the Social Assessment of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest estimates that the total number of forest visitors in Region 1 for year 2000 was 13,200,000. The total number of wilderness visits was estimated at 337,000 or 2.55%. Therefore, nearly all (97.45%) visitors to public lands benefit from management for multiple-use and benefit from motorized access and mechanized recreational opportunities. However, the document was written so that the minority visitor group was emphasized. This is another example of prejudice that we are very concerned about.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Documents such as the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks 1994 Montana Trail Users Study, 1998 Montanan's Assessment of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Programs and Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and others do not accurately assess the numbers and needs of motorized recreationists including driving for pleasure. These studies have attempted to predict the number and needs of public land visitors by using methods including telephone interviews with a random sampling of a small group of motor vehicle registrants. These documents are not based on a representative sampling of actual visitors to public lands and their recreation needs. The results from these studies are often cited as justification for less motorized access and less motorized recreation. We are very concerned that these studies are being used to produce significant and unjustified cumulative impacts on motorized access and motorized recreation. These studies are based on processes such as telephone interviews to selected groups that do not relate accurately to actual visitors in the field. Our observations of 4,789 real visitors to multiple-use lands from 1999 to 2003 (CTVA, Multiple-Use Observations 1999-2003) indicate the 95% of the visitors rely on motorized access and enjoy motorized recreation. The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program has found that over 97% of the visitors to public lands enjoy multiple-use recreation associated with motorized access and motorized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request that the data from the Trail Users Study and SCORP not be used because it is inaccurate and prejudiced and that CTVA data and NVUM be used to demonstrate the overall importance of motorized access and mechanized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The methodology and references used to develop SCORP tend to ignore and under-estimate the popularity of motorized recreation and the needs of the public with respect to motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities. Driving for pleasure, motorized access and motorized recreation including OHV recreation are the most popular, fastest growing and most fundable forms of recreation and should be given a much higher priority. The National Center for Appropriate Technology found that <i>An estimated 12 to 13 percent of Montana households own one or more OTV (OHV) —the same percentage of household owning snowmobiles.</i> Additionally, multiple-use recreationists who rely on motorized access represent 97% of the visits to public lands in Region 1 (National Visitor Use Monitoring Project).	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	SCORP mentions increased grooming of snowmobile trails in the recommendation section (Chapter 6) but does not mention OHV trails or projects at all. The lack of adequate recognition of OHV recreation by MDFWP continues to damage OHV recreation and other multiple-use recreationists in several ways including: (1) the lack of LWCF funding for OHV related projects, and (2) SCORP is often referenced as a document representative of the recreation needs of all Montanans and it is not an accurate document with respect to the popularity and needs of OHV recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The continuing lack of adequate support and recognition of the popularity and needs of OHV recreation by MDFWP will further contribute to significant cumulative negative impacts on motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that these issues surrounding SCORP including the lack of recognition of OHV recreation and associated negative impact on OHV recreation be adequately evaluated in the document and adequately considered in the decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The first sentence on the inside cover of most federal environmental documents includes a statement similar to “ <i>The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a diverse organization committed to equal opportunity in employment and program delivery.</i> ” We are greatly concerned about the lack of equal recreation opportunity and quality within public lands. Everyone should have equal access and opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. There is a need for motorized recreation and access opportunities (areas and trails including inter-forest and interstate routes, OHV back country discovery routes, and OHV byways) equal to our non-motorized/wilderness opportunities (examples include Pacific Crest Trail, Continental Divide Trail, Pacific Crest Trail and National Recreation Trails). We request actions that will develop regional (inter-forest and interstate connections) motorized recreational opportunities such as the proposed Great Western Trail and Oregon Back Country Discovery Route. OHV back country discovery routes and OHV byways are required to provide opportunities for motorized recreationists equal to existing long-distance non-motorized opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Our vision for motorized recreation includes opportunities such as the proposed Great Western Trail and Oregon Back Country Discovery Route, and other regional opportunities that include connections between forests and adjoining states. A system of OHV back country discovery routes and OHV byways could provide loops and interconnecting trails to points of interest including lakes, streams, rivers, ghost towns, and scenic overlooks. This system of OHV routes could also include connections to small towns for access to motels and restaurants and could be a significant source of economic revitalization for the project area. OHV recreation and tourism could be a significant boost to many local economies. This potential has yet to be recognized and tapped. Examples of OHV tourism can be found at: <a href="http://www.visitid.org/Outdoor/ATV.html">http://www.visitid.org/Outdoor/ATV.html</a> , <a href="http://www.marysvale.org/">http://www.marysvale.org/</a> , <a href="http://www.trailscout.com/">http://www.trailscout.com/</a> , <a href="http://www.transamtrail.com/main.htm">http://www.transamtrail.com/main.htm</a> , <a href="http://www.motorcycleexplorer.com/">http://www.motorcycleexplorer.com/</a> , and <a href="http://www.visitnorthidaho.com/wallace.html">http://www.visitnorthidaho.com/wallace.html</a> . We request that the positive benefits of OHV recreation and tourism be considered as part of the evaluation and implemented for this action.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Inadequate attention and passive support of OHV recreation by agencies in a position to support and manage OHV recreation has contributed to the issues impacting OHV recreationists. Again, motorized access and motorized recreation including OHV recreation are the most popular, fastest growing and most fundable forms of recreation and should be given a much higher priority. We request that the cumulative impact on OHV recreation resulting from less than adequate and enthusiastic support from managing agencies be adequately evaluated in the document and adequately considered during the decision-making. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Equal treatment and access to public lands must be provided for all people including motorized visitors. One example of unequal treatment is demonstrated by the number of publications and information on web sites promoting non-motorized recreation versus the publications and web site information pages provided for motorized recreationists. Non-motorized recreation opportunities are easy to find using agency web sites and printed information. Most often little or no information is provided about motorized recreation opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized visitors are extremely concerned over the significant cumulative loss of many historic travelways. Motorized visitors are unwilling to compromise any further because of the cumulative loss of motorized access and recreation opportunities that has resulted in the lack of equivalent recreation and access opportunities within public lands. Motorized visitors have the need for trail systems and areas equal to those available to non-motorized visitors (areas and trails including inter-forest, interstate routes, Continental Divide Trail, Pacific Crest Trail and National Recreation Trails). There are no new opportunities within public lands to make-up for the closure of roads and motorized trails. Therefore, a substantial need for motorized recreation and access opportunities will not be met if a substantial number of roads and trails are closed. We request that the impacts associated with the significant loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities be adequately addressed in the environmental document and decision-making, i.e. Where will displaced motorized visitors go? And, due to the lack of any reasonable motorized access and recreation opportunities, what will they do? Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	We request that the loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities due to millions of acres of area closure (motorized travel restricted to designated routes) be adequately addressed in the document and decision-making. The area closure action without closing of any existing roads and trails is a significant loss of recreation and access opportunities to motorized visitors. The lack of adequate consideration of the negative impact of area closure on access and motorized recreation has produced a significant cumulative impact. We request adequate consideration of area closure impacts on motorized visitors in the project area and the cumulative impact of all area closures. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Past actions have closed many roads and trails to motorized recreation and access without addressing the merits of each one. We are concerned with the lack of site specific analysis for past road and trail closures. Justification has included reasons such as non-system roads or trails, ghost roads, user created roads etc. that are not site specific and do not provide adequate justification. The fact is that many roads and trails in use today have been created by visitors going back to the early days of history when all public lands were "open" to motorized access. Agencies cannot select which roads are useful to keep and which are not without a site-specific analysis. The cumulative effect of not analyzing each road and trail segment is tremendous. We request that the decision-making be based on the individual and site-specific merits of each travelway. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Non-system roads and trails are a significant OHV recreation resource. However, non-system roads and trails are, most often, not inventoried and considered in the travel management process. Failing to identify and consider non-system roads and trails in the travel management process will under-estimate the existing use and needs of motorized recreationists. Therefore, the impact that the resulting closure of non-system roads and trails by non-consideration will have on motorized recreationists will also be under-estimated. NEPA requires adequate disclosure of all impacts and this is not happening with respect to all existing non-system roads and trails that are in use by the public. We request that adequate consideration be given to a comprehensive inventory and analysis of all non-system roads and trails and the current recreational opportunity that they provide to motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	All public lands were largely open to motorized access prior to the 1960's. Many existing roads and trails were created by legal logging, mining and public access during this period. Nearly all of the roads and trails in the project area have been in existence for many years with many dating back to the turn of the century. The term "unclassified road or ghost road" may give the impression that these roads evolved illegally. We request a clarification in the document that travelways with these origins are legal travelways as recognized by the 3-States OHV ROD. We are very concerned that the agencies are not honoring this agreement and decision. Additionally, we request that these roads and trails continue to provide recreation opportunities for motorized visitors and that mitigation measures be used, as required, to stabilize or address any environmental concerns.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The concept of area closure is not consistent with Forest Service regulations as established by appeals to the Stanislaus National Forest Travel Management Plan ( <a href="http://sv0505.r5.fs.fed.us:80/appeals/1998/fy98_stanislaus.htm">http://sv0505.r5.fs.fed.us:80/appeals/1998/fy98_stanislaus.htm</a> ). We request that the findings of that appeal be included in this evaluation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Furthermore, the signing of "closed unless posted open" is not consistent with the 3-States OHV ROD and is confusing to the public. Signs will become damaged and/or destroyed and then the public does not know whether they are legally open or closed. It is an impossible system, somebody pulls down a sign and it's unlawful for the public to travel on an open road.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A science-based approach to the analysis of forest roads is presented in the Forest Service publication FS-643 Roads Analysis which was published in August 1999. This document includes a comprehensive overview of considerations and issues, suggested informational needs and sources, and analytical tools that should be evaluated during the analysis of forest roads. Many of the considerations and issues presented in FS-643, if evaluated adequately and fairly, would support keeping primitive roads and trails in the project area open for motorized recreation, handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired. We request that FS-643 be used in this evaluation to determine the specific values of each motorized road and trail.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request full use of the FS-643 Roads Analysis Manual in order to adequately account for the social, economic, cultural, and traditional values that motorized roads and trails provide to the public. FS-643 should be used on every road and trail segment in order to adequately identify and evaluate the needs of motorized visitors and in order to avoid contributing to additional cumulative impacts to motorized visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	The environmental document should be an issue driven document as required under NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines. The driving issue is the development of a reasonable travel management alternative that addresses the needs of the public. NEPA requires that agencies "Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated" [40 CFR 1502.14(a)]. We request that the environmental document adequately addresses the social, economic, and environmental justice issues associated with multiple-use access and motorized recreation. We request that the environmental document include a travel management alternative for the project area that adequately responds to these issues and the needs for multiple-use access and recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A new strategy for travel management actions should be to enhance the level of opportunities for motorized visitors in order to be responsive to the needs of the public. Enhancement could include roads and trails systems with loops, exploration destinations such as lakes, mines, scenic overlooks, and inter-connections to other public lands and regional trails. We request that the preferred alternative include the enhancement of motorized recreational opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request evaluation of the loss of opportunities for off-highway vehicles due to the lack of a continuous system of roads and trails on which off-highway vehicles can be legally ridden and the formulation of a preferred alternative to address that issue. In areas where OHVs must use a roadway, we request that a reasonable travel management alternative be developed that includes the designation of a reasonable network of dual-use roads to allow inter-connection access to OHV recreational resources.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The preferred travel management alternative should maintain existing travelways that provide motorized access to recreational loops and destinations. We also request that the preferred alternative avoid cutting off access to motorized looped trail systems, exploration opportunities, destinations, and motorized access areas located outside the project area. The cumulative effect and lack of motorized access to loop trail systems and destinations outside of the project area should be adequately addressed in the analysis and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A reasonable travel management alternative is needed in order to avoid contributing to the significant cumulative impacts that motorized recreationists have experienced. A reasonable alternative would incorporate all existing motorized roads and trails and restrict motorized travel to those travel ways. Under the requirements of NEPA, all reasonable alternatives should be addressed in the environmental document and decision-making. In order to avoid contributing to further cumulative impacts, we request that an alternative based on incorporating all existing motorized roads and trails and restricting motorized travel to those travelways be included in the analysis and selected by the decision-makers.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The environmental document should consider the following visitor profiles in addition to OHV enthusiasts as motorized visitors who use roads and trails within public lands. People out for weekend drives, sightseers, picnickers, campers, hunters, hiking, rock climbing, target shooters, fisherman, snowmobile enthusiasts, woodcutters, wildlife viewing, berry and mushroom pickers, equestrians, mountain bikers, and physically challenged visitors who must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands. We request that the significant cumulative impact of all statewide-motorized closures on all of these visitors be included in the environmental document. A statewide analysis is required because cumulative effects are forcing motorized visitors to travel farther and farther to fewer and fewer places to find motorized access and recreation opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Visual and other impacts associated with motorized trails have been cited as significant negative impacts. Many non-motorized trails have environmental impacts similar to motorized trails. Existing wilderness and non-motorized areas include many trails that are visually and functionally similar to primitive motorized roads and motorized trails. For example, the Mount Helena trails, and the main trails into the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness at Benchmark, Holland Lake, and Indian Meadows and the main trails into the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness are similar visually and functionally to many primitive motorized roads and motorized trails. Additionally, trails resulting from activities including wild animals and Native Americans have always been a part of the natural environment. We request that the existence of trails be considered part of the natural landscapes, and that the visual appearance of motorized trails and non-motorized trails be recognized as equal in most cases and that the environmental impacts of motorized and non-motorized trails be addressed fairly and equally.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	If the issue of cross-country motorized travel is significant enough to justify closures, then the issue and restrictions should also be applied to cross-country hiking and mountain climbing. Motorized recreationists relinquished cross-country travel opportunities as part of the Three-State OHV and National BLM Record of Decision. Because of this wholesale action, motorized recreationists gave up recreational opportunities such as retrieval of big game and trials bike riding in areas where cross-country travel was acceptable. Cross-country hiking and mountain climbing also create trails that provide visible evidence of human activity. Non-motorized trails and motorized trails are often equal in visual and resource impact.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	With the elimination of cross-country travel and millions of acres of area closures, motorized recreational opportunity can only be expressed as miles of roads and trails open to OHV visitors. Land area in acres cannot be used as a measure of motorized recreational opportunity. However, non-motorized recreational opportunities can be measured in acres of cross-country travel area available and miles of trails available. Therefore, motorized recreational opportunities are limited to a set number of designated motorized routes while non-motorized recreational opportunities can include cross-country travel opportunities and are, therefore, unlimited. We request that this distinction and advantage be recognized in the analysis, formulation of motorized alternatives and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The use of the existing network of motorized roads and trails is part of local culture, pioneer spirit, heritage and traditions. All of these values have ties to the land. Visitors to public lands benefit from all of the motorized roads and trails that exist today. The quality of life for the multiple-use public is being impacted by the cumulative effects of all motorized and access closures. The significant closing of motorized routes in the project area does not meet the basic requirement of the NEPA act of 1969 as stated in "Sec. 101 (b) (5) <i>achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities</i> ". We request that the criteria for high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities include the preservation of motorized roads and trails based on the recognition of the values (ties to the land) that they provide to local culture, pioneer spirit, heritage, traditions, and recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The prevailing trend of the past 35 ± years has been to close motorized recreation and access opportunities and not create any new ones. Additionally, roads or trails closed to motorized access are seldom, if ever, re-opened. The underlying objective of the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service has been to restrict the public to a few major roads within public lands. We request that the cumulative effects of these policies be thoroughly evaluated so that a reasonable travel management decision is made. The evaluation of cumulative impacts should include all associated impacts such as social, economic, cultural, and the recreation needs of motorized visitors. It should also address the dilemma facing motorized recreationists after so many closures, i.e., where do motorized visitors go and what will they do due to the lack of motorized recreation opportunity?	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We are concerned about the preservation of historic mines, cabins, settlements, railroads, access routes and other features used by pioneers, homesteaders, loggers, settlers, and miners. These are important cultural resources and should not be removed from the landscape. Western culture and heritage has been characterized by opportunities to work with the land and preservation of all remnants of this culture and heritage is important. Current management practices are not adequately protecting western culture and heritage including the opportunity to work with the land. We request that the ties to the land that are part of our local western culture and heritage be protected and that the preferred travel management alternative include opportunities to visit these features as part of motorized interpretative spur destinations and loops.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We live in this area and accept the economic compromises of living here so that we can access and recreate on our public lands. Now travel planning and other initiatives are severely restricting that access and recreational opportunities. We have only one lifetime to enjoy these opportunities and these opportunities are being systematically eliminated. The impacts of lost opportunities on motorized recreationists are significant and irretrievable and irreversible. We won't be living this life again. NEPA requires adequate evaluation and consideration of irretrievable and irreversible impacts. We request that the evaluation and decision-making adequately identify and address these impacts. NEPA also requires adequate mitigation of irretrievable and irreversible impacts. We request that the decision-making provide for adequate mitigation to avoid the irretrievable and irreversible impacts of lost opportunities on motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized visitors have had to devote the majority of their available energy and time addressing local and national level travel management actions. The combination of these actions has created a significant cumulative effect on motorized visitors by consuming their free time and money, and significantly impacting their quality of life.  Additionally, this cumulative effect has lead to the loss of opportunity for motorized recreationists to further the awareness and education of other motorized visitors in areas such as proper riding ethics, safety, and environmental protection. This cumulative effect has also reduced the opportunity for motorized recreationists to improve and maintain existing motorized opportunities. This cumulative impact includes reduced maintenance of trailheads and trails and reduced ability to undertake mitigation projects to protect the environment and public safety. We request that these cumulative effects be addressed in the analysis, preferred alternative and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The negative social and economic impact experienced by motorized recreationists when motorized recreational opportunities do not exist in nearby public lands must be adequately evaluated and considered in the decision-making. These impacts include the complete loss of recreational opportunities and the cost of having to travel farther and farther in search of fewer and fewer motorized recreational opportunities in times of increasing travel costs. A 200-mile roundtrip costs at least \$73 and that cost will increase substantially in the future. We request the evaluation of the economic cost of fewer motorized recreation opportunities on motorized recreationists and the significant cumulative effect of all travel management decisions that contribute to these social and economic impacts on motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized recreationists are very concerned that a reasonable alternative will not be adequately addressed in the environmental document and decision-making and that the process is prejudiced. To prevent this from happening again, we request a Multiple-Use Review Board be established to assure that the decision-making reflects the multiple-use management goals and the needs of the public. We request that a Multiple-Use Review Board look into all past travel management decisions within public lands to determine whether all decisions have adequately considered the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists. Where decisions have not adequately considered the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists, we request that the reasons be identified and that corrective actions be taken.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Ofentimes, the text and maps in travel management documents do not effectively cummicate or describe to motorized visitors the trails and roads that they are accustomed to visiting. Therefore, motorized visitors do not realize that the Agency proposes to close many of the roads and trails that have been used for decades by generations of motorized visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Other methods could include the use of information kiosks and trail rangers as discussed in other sections. We request a commitment by the agencies to these sorts of direct communications with motorized visitors to reach and involve them. NEPA does not preclude these types of methods and, in fact, requires the process to be user friendly.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	An alternative to motorized closures in many cases would be to keep motorized opportunities open and use education on principles such as those found in the Tread Lightly program and Blue Ribbon Coalition Recreation Code of Ethics and Principles to address and eliminate specific issues associated with motorized recreationists. These efforts could include the use of pamphlets, information kiosks, and presentations. Education can also be used to address and eliminate issues associated with antimultiple-use recreationists by encouraging their use of reasonable expectations, reasonable tolerance of others, and reasonable sharing of our land resources.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	To date, educational measures have not been adequately considered, evaluated or implemented. We request that educational measures be incorporated as part of this proposed action and that the significant cumulative impact on motorized recreationists of not using education in all past actions involving motorized recreational opportunities be addressed. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts associated with inadequate use of education measures in past actions.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The roads and trails in the project area are not new or "user created" travelways. These roads and trails have existed for many years. The public has relied on them for access for many years and for many purposes. This pattern of use is well established. A reasonable travel management alternative would use area closure to prevent the creation of unwanted trails by visitors and, at the same time, allow the public to use all of the existing motorized routes. Too many management actions have been enacted without the development of this reasonable alternative. The cumulative impact of the travel management process on motorized access and recreation opportunities has been significant. We request that the preferred alternative be based on the existing motorized routes that are considered important resources by motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	A reasonable Travel Management alternative would maintain existing travelways that provide motorized recreationists with a system of loops and destinations. The preferred alternative should provide access to motorized looped trail systems, spurs for exploration and destinations, and motorized access to areas located outside the project area. We request that the cumulative effect of reduced recreation and access opportunities for motorized visitors within the project area be adequately considered in the document and decision-making. The cumulative effect of eliminating motorized access to loop trail systems, provide exploration opportunities and destinations outside of the project area should also be adequately considered in the document and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Current management trends are attempting to restrict public access to narrow corridors along major roads. This management trend is widespread among all agencies. If allowed to continue, this trend will concentrate over 95% of the visitors to less than 10% of the area. The cumulative impact from concentrating visitors to narrow corridors will result in poor management of public lands and unreasonable access to public lands and recreational opportunities. We request the evaluation of the cumulative impacts from management goals that tend to concentrate visitors to narrow corridors and reduce recreation opportunities for motorized visitors. Other associated negative impacts that should also be evaluated include loss of dispersed recreation opportunities, reduced quality of recreation, loss recreation diversity, and unequal allocation of recreation opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	OHV and other motorized recreationists seek the challenge and sense of exploration that primitive roads and motorized trails provide. The preferred travel management alternative should not restrict motorized access and recreation to narrow corridors along a few major roads. This restriction would not provide for the type of experiences that most motorized visitors are seeking and, therefore, does not meet the needs of motorized visitors. We request that the analysis and decision-making avoid restricting motorized access and recreation opportunities to narrow corridors along major roads.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Timber harvests have included many motorized closures as associated actions. Many timber harvests such as those in the area of Treasure Mountain and Bison Mountain in HNF have had associated motorized closures that were done without adequately addressing the impact on motorized visitors. Many of these motorized closures were done as a concession to those opposed to the timber sales and without input from motorized recreationists. Many of the closures and obliterations included historic travelways used for exploration, mining, and travel since the pioneer days. Additionally, forests are a renewable resource and impacts associated with cutting units are relatively short-lived. Therefore, many motorized routes that were closed due to timber harvests could be reopened (returned to pre-harvest condition) now because the vegetation and cover has been reestablished. However, most of the motorized closures associated with cutting units have been long-term. All past motorized closures and road and trail obliterations done as part of timber sales should be adequately evaluated and the significant cumulative impact of those closures on motorized access and recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In the past, timber harvests have been conducted without consideration for maintaining existing motorized trails through the area. Therefore, motorized recreation opportunities have been eliminated as part of timber sales. The Little Blackfoot and Telegraph Creek areas are examples of motorized closures done as part of timber harvests that have fragmented the motorized road and trail system. Now as mitigation measure to offset the significant cumulative impact of past actions, motorized trail systems should be developed using timber sale roads and trails. Existing timber sale roads and trails should be inter-connected by construction of new trail segments or rehabilitation of existing trail segments to provide mitigation for lost motorized recreation opportunities. Connector trails should be constructed to avoid dead-end trails. These systems could provide recreation opportunities for a variety of skill levels and visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In some cases conflict of uses has been created by Visitors Maps that are not consistent with Travel Plan maps. All visitors (motorized and non-motorized) need to clearly understand what areas, roads or trails are open for motorized travel and what areas, roads, or trails are closed to motorized travel. We have experienced a number of misunderstandings by both non-motorized and motorized visitors. We recommend that the Travel Plan Map and Visitors Map be the same and that this combination map should include as much detail as possible (such as contour information) so that the public can better determine the location of roads and trails that are open or closed.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The environmental document should be an issue driven document as required under NEPA and guidelines published by the Council on Environmental Quality. The driving travel management issue is the development of a reasonable alternative that meets the needs of the public. NEPA requires that all reasonable alternatives be evaluated. We request that the environmental document include a travel management alternative that is responsive to the public's multiple-use needs. A reasonable alternative would incorporate all existing motorized roads and trails and restrict motorized travel to those travel ways. A reasonable travel management alternative should provide a continuous system of roads and trails on which off-highway vehicles can be legally ridden. A reasonable travel management alternative is needed in order to avoid contributing to the significant cumulative impacts that motorized recreationists have experienced. In order to avoid contributing to further cumulative impacts we request that the preferred alternative be based on incorporating all existing motorized roads and trails and restricting motorized travel to those travel ways.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Executive Order 11644 was passed on February 8, 1972 and Executive Order 11989 was passed on May 24, 1977. These Executive Orders have been used to enact thousands and thousands of motorized access and recreation closures since the 1970's. The cumulative effect of Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 has been a dramatic loss of recreation and access opportunities for motorized recreationists and a dramatic increase in recreation opportunities for non-motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 promote intolerance and non-sharing in a manner that allows one group of recreationists to eliminate another group of recreationists from public lands. The Sierra Club ORV Manual ( <a href="http://www.sierraclub.com/chapters/id/orv/index.htm">http://www.sierraclub.com/chapters/id/orv/index.htm</a> ) states, "Remember, one adverse impact is 'user conflict'. We are advising a wonderful legal tactic. Next time you are on a hike and a dirt bike roars by, get 40 friends to all call or write to the Forest Supervisor and say, We demand immediate closure of the trail to dirt bikes....". Other organizations such as Wild Wilderness provide Incident Reporting Forms ( <a href="http://www.wildwilderness.org/wi/report.htm">http://www.wildwilderness.org/wi/report.htm</a> ) to report conflicts with visitors using vehicles and encourage the use of these forms. As demonstrated by these examples, some non-motorized interests are creating "user conflicts" because it promotes their self-interests. Actions by some non-motorized special-interests have gotten to the extreme where they should be considered harassment. All visitors to public lands must respect each other and accommodate each other with reasonable expectations and reasonable actions. We have always been respectful of other visitors and have never observed a conflict between non-motorized and motorized visitors during our visits to public lands spanning 40 years.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Over the past 4 years we have met 75 hikers in the multiple-use public lands areas that we visit. There have been no conflicts during these meetings. In fact, most often we have stopped and visited with these hikers and exchanged information. At the same time over the past 4 years we have observed well over 2600 motorized recreationists. We have coexisted for years without any measurable conflict. Why is coexistence suddenly considered such a problem by some people? We are concerned that this position has been taken for self-serving reasons. There is no evidence of any real conflict.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	In our locale, we see so few non-motorized recreationists on multiple-use trails that we cannot understand how a conflict of uses could be substantiated. Additionally, it is not reasonable for non-motorized users to claim a conflict of uses based on their observation of motorized wheel prints on a road or trail (do they feel the same way about mountain bikes?). It is not reasonable to provide one group of recreationists with the opportunity to claim a "conflict of uses" and use that as a basis to deny other recreationists equal access to public lands. This form of conflict creation and then resolution by elimination of motorized recreational opportunities is not equitable.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The reasonable and equitable way to deal with differences is to accept each others difference. How else can diversity survive? All of us have a responsibility to accept and promote diversity of recreation on public lands. An unwillingness to accept diversity is a fundamental failing of those who seek to eliminate things that don't fit their perspective. Diversity of recreation opportunities can only be accomplished through management for multiple-use and attitudes that promote tolerance, sharing and coexistence. Behaviors that are non-sharing or intolerant of other recreationists on public lands should not be rewarded yet it is. The continual loss of motorized access and recreational opportunities and the negative attitudes toward multiple-use recreationists is seriously degrading our culture and quality of life. We request that elimination and restrictions of recreation opportunities not be imposed on motorized visitors because other visitors are not able to share and be tolerant. We request that revisions to Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 be made in order to return equitable guidance to federal land-use managers.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	During the 1970's, when Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 were created, snowmobile and motorcycles were much louder than today's machines. Concern with sound levels probably lead to the creation of Executive Orders 11644 and 11989. Today's technology provides machines that are significantly quieter than in the 1970's. Furthermore, the technology now exists to make vehicles even quieter. Therefore, concern with sound levels can be mitigated by establishing a reasonable decibel limit for exhaust systems. States such as California and Oregon have enacted sound emission limits. We encourage all jurisdictions to adopt the stationary sound test procedures as set forth in the Society of Automotive Engineers J-1287 June 1980 standard. Public land-use agencies could establish reasonable sound limits and use this approach to address the sound level issue. This alternative would be more equitable than closures. We request that this reasonable alternative to motorized closures be pursued and incorporated into the preferred alternative and decision-making.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	It is not reasonable to enact motorized closures based on the issue of sound when viable alternatives could be pursued. The Sierra Club's in their ORV Handbook makes the following statement " <i>The fact is that most ORV noise is unnecessary; even motorcycles can be muffled to relatively unobjectionable noise level</i> ". We request that agencies initiate an education campaign (loud is not cool) to promote the development and use of quiet machines. OHV brochures such as those published by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest include public awareness information on the importance of sound control.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	We request that the process include consideration of the negative impacts that proposed motorized road and trail closures will have on fire management, fuel wood harvest for home heating, and timber management. The analysis should include an analysis of the benefits to the public from the gathering of deadfall for firewood from each of the roads and trails proposed for closure. These analyses are especially significant following a devastating fire season and a period of rising energy costs. The need for firewood gathering is increasing given the increasing energy costs ( <a href="http://www.helenair.com/articles/2003/11/02/montana/a01110203_05.txt">http://www.helenair.com/articles/2003/11/02/montana/a01110203_05.txt</a> ). The closure of roads and trails is occurring at a large scale on all public lands. Therefore, the analysis should also evaluate the cumulative impacts of motorized road and trail closures and the conversion of multiple-use lands to limited-use lands on fire management, timber management, and firewood gathering.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The opportunity for solitude must be reasonably balanced with the multiple-use needs of the public. For example, the Montana Standard in an article on December 14, 2000 reported that hikers on the Continental Divide trail "walked for 300 miles without seeing another human being". This article illustrates a significant long-distance interstate recreational opportunity available to non-motorized visitors and the negligible use that it sees. In contrast, a long-distance interstate recreational opportunity for OHV recreationists does not exist.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	It is not equitable to provide recreationists seeking solitude and wilderness experiences exclusive access to tens of millions of acres and thousands of miles of non-motorized trails while restricting the public seeking multiple-use opportunities access to an inadequate road and trail system. We request an equitable and balanced allocation of motorized access and recreational opportunity.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The language cited above from the National Trails System Act indicates the intent of the original act. The creation of non-motorized sections of the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) by converting motorized sections is not equitable and was not within the intent of the original act. We request that the legality of converting motorized sections of the CDT to non-motorized and intent of Congress be adequately evaluated as part of this action. Furthermore, we request an evaluation of the significant cumulative impact on motorized recreation and access opportunities that occurs when motorized routes are converted to non-motorized routes to establish the CDT.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	We request a network of national recreation trails for motorized visitors equivalent to the Continental Divide Trail (CDT), Pacific Crest Trail, National Recreation Trail and other national non-motorized trails that travel a long distance and interconnect with other forests. If motorized recreationists had trails of regional and national significance, they would see considerable use. Non-motorized recreationists have considerably more national trail recreation opportunities than motorized recreationists. We request that the needs of motorized recreationists for regional and national travelways be evaluated. We request an evaluation of the cumulative impacts and environmental justice issues surrounding the lack of regional and national motorized trails for motorized recreationists. We request that regional and national motorized recreational trails be identified and actions be taken to implement those trails.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The Elkhorn Wildlife Management Area in the Helena National Forest is an example of management of an area for a relatively narrow range of public needs. The underlying management criterion in the Elkhorn area is for ideal wildlife conditions and not for the diverse needs of the public. The diverse need of the public can only be met by management for multiple-use. While there are designated routes within the area, they are mostly roads with no challenge and limited access to interesting areas and features. There are few OHV loops or destinations. Roads and trails such as those in Section 1 and 11, T6N, R2W; Sections 13 and 4, T6N, R3W; Sections 31 and 31 in T7N, R2W; Section 36, T7N, R3W; Sections 25, 35, and 36, T8N, R1W and others could have been kept open for summer season recreation use and closed during calving and hunting seasons where necessary for wildlife management. Instead, they were closed. The alternative of seasonal closures would have benefited far more people and still maintained a more than reasonable wildlife habitat.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to keep all existing trail systems open to motorized visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to add all existing road and trails that are not on the trail system inventory to the roads and trail inventory.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to return trails that used to be on trail inventories to the current inventory.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Where possible, agencies are encouraged to provide trailheads for motorized trails that are convenient to urban areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Where possible, agencies are encouraged to provide trailheads for motorized trails that are located at the boundary of urban areas and trails that connect urban areas to public lands and form motorized recreation opportunities similar to the Paiute Trail in Utah ( <a href="http://www.marysville.org/paiute_trail/contents.html">http://www.marysville.org/paiute_trail/contents.html</a> ).	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to keep motorized access through private land open to the public. Every public access closure through private land should be challenged and protected by asserting legal right-of-ways. The cumulative impact of this lack of action has created private motorized reserves on public lands or defacto wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use areas accessible only to private landowners.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to acquire private land and right-of-ways to provide access to public land that is now blocked off to the public. This action is necessary to reverse the prevailing trend over the past 35 ± years of less access to public land and the significant cumulative impact of that trend on motorized access and motorized recreation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Implement seasonal closures, where required, with input and review by OHV recreationists that will: (1) provide the maximum amount of OHV recreational opportunity during the summer recreation season in order to disperse all forms of trail use and thus minimize impacts to trail users; (2) provide winter OHV recreation opportunities in low-elevation areas that are not critical winter game range; (3) provide OHV recreation and access during hunting season by keeping major roads and OHV loops open while closing spur roads and trails necessary to provide reasonable protection of game populations and a reasonable hunting experience; and (4) provide OHV recreation opportunities during spring months in all areas where erosion and wildlife calving conditions reasonably allow.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Existing seasonal closures tend to separate the motorized and non-motorized peak use seasons. One size does not necessarily fit every circumstance but standardize or simplify seasonal closure dates as much as possible. The number of different closure periods should be kept to a maximum of two, if possible, in order to avoid confusion and resulting misunderstandings.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Motorized recreationists would be willing to accept area closure when necessary to protect the natural environment in exchange for a reasonable network of OHV roads and trails.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	In areas where OHVs must use a roadway, travel management plans should include the designation of dual-use roads to allow OHV's to move from one trail segment to another.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Provide open or play areas for motorized recreation opportunity and trials bikes where acceptable in selected areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<b><u>Letter ID</u></b>	<b><u>Comment Category</u></b>	<b><u>Comment Summary</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>
SC12	OHV Use	Motorcycle trail riders enjoy riding single-track trails. Motorized single-track recreation trails are limited at this time and continue to decline. Some BLM and FS districts do not differentiate between ATV and motorcycle trails in their travel plans. Evaluations and travel plans should differentiate between ATV and motorcycle trails. Single-track trails that are not appropriate for ATV use should be kept open for motorcycle use. The number of "single track" motorcycle trails that motorcycle riders seek has been significantly reduced over the last 35 years.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	The integrity of the "loop" trail system should be maintained. Loop systems minimize the number of on-trail encounters because non-motorized trail users don't encounter motorized users going both directions, as they do on non-loop trails. Loop trails also offer trail users a more desirable recreational experience. Agencies are encouraged to provide opportunity for "motorized loop trail systems" to lessen impacts and to provide a better recreational experience. Spurs are useful for exploration and reaching destinations.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to allow use of specific roads for OHVs that are not licensed for the street use in order to develop a network of roads that tie OHV trails together.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to utilize standardized trail signing and marking in order to lessen confusion. Trails closed unless otherwise marked open are not reasonable. Trails, when closed, should be signed with an official, legitimate reason. Monitoring should be implemented to justify the reasons stated.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to utilize all trail maintenance and upgrading management techniques, such as, bridging, punchon, realignment, drains, and dips to prevent closure or loss of motorized trail use. Trails should not be closed because of a problem with a bad section of trail. The solution is to fix the problem area or reroute the trail, not to close it. If funding or manpower is a problem, then other resources should be looked to including local volunteer groups, state or national OHV funding.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to develop OHV programs that address more than law enforcement needs. OHV programs should actively promote the development, enhancement, and mitigation of OHV recreation opportunities.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to develop and use State Trail Ranger Programs similar to Idaho's program through the State OHV Fund, as well as volunteer trail maintenance programs.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to clear trails early in the year to insure maximum availability and reduction of diversion damage caused by routing around obstacles.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to avoid road and trail closures based on wildlife concerns except where negative wildlife impact can be specifically identified and documented. Motorized use on existing trails has little or no verified effect on game animal welfare. In fact, some of the areas more intensely visited by motorized visitors have experienced significant increases in wildlife populations; further substantiating the fact that motorized recreation does not create a significant impact on wildlife.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to avoid yearlong trail closures if wildlife concerns are valid only during certain seasons. In these instances, closures should be seasonal only with the dates consistent with the requirements to protect wildlife.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to avoid trail closures associated with other actions including timber sales, mining, and livestock grazing. Corrective action should be taken where trail closures in the past have resulted from these sorts of past actions. Loss of motorized trails because of past timber sales should be mitigated by connecting old and new travelways to create looped trail systems.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to re-establish and/or relocate all trails and roads disturbed by other actions such as timber harvest, mining, and livestock grazing.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to seek outside review and input by OHV recreationists on all proposed management decisions affecting motorized recreation opportunities including closures.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to establish greater credibility with motorized recreationists by having motorized recreation planners on the interdisciplinary team and a board of motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to align non-motorized area boundaries so that they do not encroach or eliminate trails located at the edge of the boundaries.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to provide for motorized trails and vista points on the boundaries outside of the non-motorized areas so the motorized visitors can view those areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to establish OHV census collection points at road and trail collection points. Include an OHV category on all trail and road census sheets.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to treat hiking, horses and mountain bikes as a form of transportation, just as motorized recreation is a form of transportation.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to correct the signing at trailheads that suggests that motorized visitors are more damaging than other visitors.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to keep trails in proposed non-motorized/wilderness/roadless areas open. Motorized-use on trails in these areas does not detract from the wild characteristics in the proposed non-motorized/wilderness area. Additionally, the Roadless Rule specifically allows for OHV activity in Roadless areas.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to avoid the closure of trails to motorized use as the "easy way out" in dealing with issues created by non-motorized users.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies should recognize that many roads and trails were not originally laid out with recreation in mind and that changes should be made in some road and trail segments to address environmental and safety problems. In most cases, problems can be mitigated to a reasonable level and closures can be avoided.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies are encouraged to recognize, in the form of access, groups who expend effort and money in maintaining and improving roads and trails.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	There needs to be better coordination between adjoining National Forest and BLM lands when making maps, laying out trails, and establishing travel plans. In some cases a trail is open in one jurisdiction but becomes closed when it crosses over the boundary to another jurisdiction resulting in an overall loss of motorized recreation opportunity.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	OHV Use	Agencies should not use motorized access in areas closed to motorized access by the public because: (a) the public will see the tracks and could become upset that the motorized closure is being violated and/or (b) the public will see the tracks and conclude that motorized access is acceptable.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC16	OHV Use	We are in favor of multiple use on public lands wherever possible. I do not own or enjoy dirt bikes, but I respect the rights of those who do own them. We would like to see some effort go into planning areas or zones where motorized users were segregated from hikers and horses, since the two do not mix well. There are plenty of areas where bikes and motorbikes would do little harm and if they are allowed to be used in some areas, they could be made to avoid areas where the land is more fragile and in need of perhaps foot travel only. Local areas can be individually assessed and with the involvement of the local land owners and area residents more individual plans made for each BLM area.	Individual
SC17	OHV Use	I'd like to see lands kept open for OHV use and even some designated more specifically for it.	Individual
SC02	Recreation Resources	I believe that this land should be retained for multiple usage to include hiking, horseback riding and off road vehicle up to 4 wheeler size.	Individual
SC02	Recreation Resources	I would like to see some recreational improvements such as trail markings and would view some designation of particular trails for limited types of use (hiking only, 4 wheeler, etc.) as reasonable and acceptable.	Individual
SC02	Recreation Resources	I do believe that the convenience of its proximity to Helena and the fact that it is interspersed quite heavily with private holdings and roads does not make it a good candidate for limited usage such as walk-in only - such regs would be virtually unenforceable and would lock out a significant portion of the current users.	Individual
SC03	Recreation Resources	I understand and support consolidation of public lands to eliminate, where possible, inholdings which often only lead to conflict. However, during the "ownership adjustment" process, every effort should be made ensure continued public access to these lands, as was requested last night.	Individual
SC03	Recreation Resources	By now I am sure all cultural/paleontological resources have been identified. Do not allow this issue to be used as an excuse to inhibit or prohibit access to public lands.	Individual
SC05	Recreation Resources	I am an outfitter and have owned and operated a fly fishing lodge in Wise River since 1984. I would like to be able to camp on the Big Hole River with 2-4 clients for one overnight at a time and probably eight trips per summer.	Individual
SC06	Recreation Resources	Please do not expand the east bank campground on the Bighole River as the river already has all the rafters on the weekends it can handle.	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Recreation Resources	<p>User demand and recreational access has increased significantly and management practices have shifted over the last 15 years, and motorized vehicles such as snowmobiles and ATVs can access areas much further into the forest than they could historically. Also, logging roads are now predominantly used for recreation and resource protection and restoration activities. The RMP should consider and address these changed circumstances. The EIS should describe the anticipated environmental effects of increased public access and use, and identify the types and extent of recreational impacts and mitigation measures necessary to minimize adverse impacts and ensure resource protection. EPA encourages locating campground facilities, and concentrated public recreational uses away from ecologically sensitive resources. We also encourage restricting motorized access to camping in ecologically sensitive areas, and identifying/designating camping sites to avoid sensitive areas and/or to encourage camping or concentrated public use in areas that are more resilient and can more easily recover from impacts and/or accommodate public use with less impacts.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Over the past 35 years the overarching public land management trend has been to close access to and use of public lands. This trend of closure upon closure has become epidemic and is out of control as demonstrated by popular public opinion. A sampling of different users and perspectives is provided below to demonstrate this trend and the cumulative impacts that it has produced.</p> <p> <a href="http://www.billingsgazette.com/index.php?id=1&amp;display=rednews/2003/11/11/build/wyoming/30-blm.inc">http://www.billingsgazette.com/index.php?id=1&amp;display=rednews/2003/11/11/build/wyoming/30-blm.inc</a>  <a href="http://www.dailyinterlake.com/NewsEngine/SelectStory.tpl?command=search&amp;db=news.db&amp;eqskudata=57-816431-10&amp;search-var=multiple">http://www.dailyinterlake.com/NewsEngine/SelectStory.tpl?command=search&amp;db=news.db&amp;eqskudata=57-816431-10&amp;search-var=multiple</a>  <a href="http://www.dailyinterlake.com/NewsEngine/SelectStory.tpl?command=search&amp;db=news.db&amp;eqskudata=9-816800-3&amp;search-var=multiple">http://www.dailyinterlake.com/NewsEngine/SelectStory.tpl?command=search&amp;db=news.db&amp;eqskudata=9-816800-3&amp;search-var=multiple</a>  <a href="http://espn.go.com/outdoors/hunting/news/2001/1106/1274551.html">http://espn.go.com/outdoors/hunting/news/2001/1106/1274551.html</a>  <a href="http://www.aapg.org/explorer/2003/05may/slc_publandside.cfm">http://www.aapg.org/explorer/2003/05may/slc_publandside.cfm</a>  <a href="http://www.nanpa.org/docs/PublicLandsAccess.pdf">http://www.nanpa.org/docs/PublicLandsAccess.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.washington-state-rockhounding.info/Trespass-index.htm">http://www.washington-state-rockhounding.info/Trespass-index.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.sdorc.org/news/tortoise_lawsuit.html">http://www.sdorc.org/news/tortoise_lawsuit.html</a>  <a href="http://www.amfed.org/sfms/sfms-alaa-jwright.html">http://www.amfed.org/sfms/sfms-alaa-jwright.html</a>  <a href="http://www.gamineral.org/land-access.html">http://www.gamineral.org/land-access.html</a>  <a href="http://www.paragonpowerhouse.org/bush_promises_collaboration_on_p.htm">http://www.paragonpowerhouse.org/bush_promises_collaboration_on_p.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.sportsmenslink.org/articles/PublicLandsBriefing.html">http://www.sportsmenslink.org/articles/PublicLandsBriefing.html</a>  <a href="http://www.delalbright.com/landuse.htm">http://www.delalbright.com/landuse.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.off-road.com/orcland.html">http://www.off-road.com/orcland.html</a>  <a href="http://www.hcn.org/servlets/hcn.Article?article_id=5735">http://www.hcn.org/servlets/hcn.Article?article_id=5735</a>  <a href="http://www.sportsmenslink.org/articles/FinalWhitePage-Total.pdf">http://www.sportsmenslink.org/articles/FinalWhitePage-Total.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.4x4wire.com/access/news/united/dea_2002.htm">http://www.4x4wire.com/access/news/united/dea_2002.htm</a>  <a href="http://responsiblerecreation.policy.net/newsroom/">http://responsiblerecreation.policy.net/newsroom/</a>  <a href="http://www.helenair.com/articles/2003/06/01/opinions/a04060103_02.txt">http://www.helenair.com/articles/2003/06/01/opinions/a04060103_02.txt</a>  <a href="http://www.maccusa.com/">http://www.maccusa.com/</a> </p> <p>Many additional articles can be found by searching the web for “public land access”. By far the loss of access and the trend of motorized closures upon motorized closure on public lands are the most common themes. From the public’s perspective the #1 problem is access to adequate multiple-use access and recreational opportunities and the fact that these opportunities are being eliminated at a record pace by federal land use agencies. It is time to recognize that the trend of closure of public land to the public is inequitable. It is also time to undertake adequate correction to reverse the cumulative impact of 35 years of closure upon closure. It is also time to implement adequate mitigation to compensate for the significant cumulative impacts that the public has been subjected to by the trend of inequitable closures.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>The overarching trend of the last 35 years has been to remove people from the land. This trend has occurred as a result of many different factors including creation of national parks and monuments; creation of wilderness, non-motorized, and roadless areas; policies of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management; influx of dollars for conservation easements and land trusts; decline of farming and ranching; and decline of mining and timber harvests. People still have the same need and desire to work and recreate on the land but they no longer have the same opportunity. The cumulative effect of the different trends that have removed people from the land is so significant now that any additional impacts must be avoided. Additionally, because the cumulative effect is so significant, adequate mitigation measures must be included as part of all future actions.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Almost all visitor use surveys including NVUM and those sponsored by Fish, Wildlife and Parks have found that a category defined as “driving for pleasure” is by the largest activity within public lands. This category includes all sorts of off-highway use including atv, camping, fishing, firewood and food gathering, hunting, RVs, motorcycling, picnicking, rock climbing, rock hounding, target shooting, and wildlife viewing. The importance and need for primitive roads and trails to support these and other activities must be recognized in the analysis and decision-making.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	There is a shortage of dispersed camping areas along all of our motorized routes. This can be confirmed by going out on any holiday weekend and trying to find a camp spot. In order to meet the needs of the public, camps spots and access to them must not be closed because of access and/or sanitation concerns. There are ways to mitigate any access concerns. Sanitation concerns can be addressed by constructing vault toilets or limiting camping to self-contained camping units which are the most popular means of camping now. Additionally, non-self-contained campers can be required to pack wastes out by using porta-potties or similar devices.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Well-funded and organized anti-motorized groups have systematically attacked and reduced economic and recreational opportunities associated with multiple-use of public land by ordinary citizens. This attack has included the introduction of an unreasonable expectation into all NEPA and land management processes. This unreasonable expectation is built around the concept that non-sharing of public lands is acceptable and that conversion of multiple-use public lands to non-motorized, narrow-use or de facto wilderness lands is acceptable. Non-motorized special-interests do not use the existing roads and trails as much as the public uses them for motorized access. Non-motorized special-interests simply do not want anyone using them. This is not a reasonable expectation, it is inequitable to the public and these perspectives must not be rewarded any further. It is not acceptable to reward people who seldom or never use a road or trail and allow them to shut out those that use them frequently.  The endorsement of this unreasonable expectation by agency actions has significantly impacted multiple-use opportunities on public lands and the public in general. The cumulative impact of this unreasonable expectation is significant. Adequate recognition of this trend and mitigation must now be implemented in order to counter the inequities that have been created by allowing this unreasonable expectation to have so much influence on our land use decisions.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	We request that the over-arching management goals for all multiple-use public lands be to: (1) Manage multiple-use lands for the greatest benefit to the public; (2) Manage multiple-use lands in an environmentally sound and reasonable manner; (3) Manage multiple-use lands in a way that avoids the pursuit of environmental extremism; and (4) Manage multiple-use lands in a way that promotes the shared-use that they were intended for versus segregated-use or exclusive-use.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The most equitable management of public lands is for multiple-uses. Congress has recognized this need with many laws including the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528 et seq.) and National Forest Management Act of 1976. Multiple-Use was defined as <i>“The management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forests so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people...”</i> . Outdoor recreation is the first stated purpose of the act. Note that the pre-Columbian management scheme has not been enacted by Congress. Therefore, the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service have a responsibility to provide recreational opportunities that meet the needs of the public just as government entities provide road, water and wastewater systems that meet the needs of the public.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Public Law 88-657 states that <i>“the Congress hereby finds and declares that the construction and maintenance of an adequate system of roads and trails within and near the national forests and other lands administered by the Forest Service is essential if increasing demands for timber, recreation, and other uses of such lands are to be met; that the existence of such a system would have the effect, among other things, of increasing the value of timber and other resources tributary to such roads; and that such a system is essential to enable the Secretary of Agriculture (hereinafter called the Secretary) to provide for intensive use, protection, development, and management of these lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield of products and services.”</i> .	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) states that <i>“(7) goals and objectives be established by law as guidelines for public land use planning, and that management be on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law; and, (c) In the development and revision of land use plans, the Secretary shall -- (1) use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield set forth in this and other applicable law;”</i> .	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The BLM Strategic Plan FY 2000 to 2005 states that: <i>“To achieve this mission, the Bureau of Land Management follows these principles: Manage natural resources for multiple use and long-term value, recognizing that the mix of permitted and allowable uses will vary from area to area and over time.”</i>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Multiple-use management goals are the only goals that will “best meet the needs” of the public and provide for equal program delivery to all citizens including motorized visitors. All of visitors have a responsibility to accept and promote diversity of recreation on public lands. Diversity of recreation opportunities can only be accomplished through management for multiple-uses and reasonable coexistence among visitors. Multiple-use lands must be managed for shared-use versus segregated-use or exclusive-use.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	Any language in existing management plans for multiple-use areas that does not support multiple-use is inconsistent with directives from Congress, the needs of the public and should be struck. Any proposed language for the management plans for multiple-use areas that does not fully support multiple-use is inconsistent with directives from Congress, the needs of the public and should be dropped.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Managing public lands for exclusive-use by a few people or non-use is not in the best interest of the community. There are limited public lands available. We need to manage those lands for maximum communal benefit. We request that available uses of the project area be maximized as required by NEPA so that life's amenities can be enjoyed by as many people as possible.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The over-arching intent of NEPA was not to eliminate humans from the natural environment as proposed by some. Instead, the intent of NEPA was to provide for a practical and reasonable protection of the natural environment while providing for a wide sharing of life's amenities. Note that NEPA specifically used the word "sharing". Sharing can only be accomplished by managing public land for multiple uses.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	It is time to implement a practical and sensible application of NEPA. The intent of NEPA when it was created in the late 1960's was to better incorporate environmental concerns into proposed actions while still meeting the needs of the public. Up until that time, consideration of the natural environment was not always required and impacts to the natural environment were not always adequately considered. A significant correction has been made since then. Concerns with the natural environment now receive considerable attention and natural resource issues are adequately considered for nearly all proposed actions. Additionally, many ways and means have been developed to mitigate impacts to the natural environment and still meet the needs of the human environment.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Most environmental documents have not taken into consideration the fact that motorized multiple-use designation serves all recreation activities, instead of the few served by non-motorized/wilderness designations. For example, motorized roads and trails allow access to dispersed camping sites for RVs, the collection of firewood, access for fishing and hunting, target shooting, access for bird and wildlife viewing, walking and bicycling opportunities, and family picnics. We request that the analysis and decision-making fully recognize all of these activities and the significant cumulative impact that closing roads and trails has had on all multiple-use recreationists. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The elimination of public access to public lands through private property has also contributed to the loss of motorized access and motorized recreation opportunities. We request that agencies acquire private land and right-of-ways to provide access to public land that is now blocked off to the public. This action is necessary to reverse the prevailing trend of significantly less public access to public land over the past 35 ± years and the significant cumulative impact of that trend on multiple-use recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Private property owners that border public land should not benefit from public land without providing access to the public. Any private landowner that owns land that borders public land and does not provide public access to that public land should also be denied access to that public land under the principles of fairness and reciprocity. This action is necessary to reverse the prevailing trend of significantly less public access to public land over the past 35 ± years and the significant cumulative impact of that trend on multiple-use recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Anytime there is a land exchange between private and public entities, a public access easement or right-of-way should be required in order to offset the trend of less public access to public land over the past 35 ± years and the significant cumulative impact of that trend on multiple-use recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Natural resources are renewable and sustainable when reasonably managed and used. Environmental health is not significantly improved under management for wilderness or roadless character. Reasonable management and use for the benefit of all citizens is best provided under multiple-use policies. We request that decision-making be based on restoring reasonable management and use of public lands.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The NEPA process is complicated and unapproachable to most of the public yet there has never been a program to inform, educate, and increase the public's awareness and ability to work with the NEPA process. The lack of widespread information, education, awareness and NEPA skills has contributed to extremely low participation in the NEPA process by some sectors of the public. Public participation for even the most controversial proposed action (roadless rule) has involved less than 1% of the affected public. Additionally, the general lack of understanding of the NEPA process has resulted in poor acceptance and opinions of the process by the public.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	A quantification of the level of public understanding and participation in the NEPA process has never been undertaken. Additionally, a quantification of the level of public acceptance of the NEPA process has never been undertaken. We request that the significant negative impact on the majority of the public resulting from the lack of information, education, training, understanding and acceptance of the NEPA process be evaluated and that the significant negative cumulative impacts on the public be adequately mitigated. We also request that the significant cumulative negative impacts on the public be adequately mitigated.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	We have been told that motorized recreationists must participate in the travel management process and/or collaborative sessions in order to realize future motorized recreational opportunities. While we agree that motorized recreationists have the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process, the level and effectiveness of participation should not be the deciding factor when making decisions about who gets what recreational opportunities within public lands. NEPA does not identify the quality and quantity of individual and group participation as a decision-making criterion. Agencies should not be overly influenced by the network of influence groups that foundations and environmentalists have established. The network of influence groups has a significant advantage over common citizens in areas including funding, staffing, training and advertising through radio, television, web sites, and newspapers. This setting allows environmental groups to get undue benefits by manipulating the NEPA process. This setting does not address the principles of meeting public need. NEPA and other laws do not intend for independent individuals who are less organized to give up their life's amenities to better-organized and funded groups.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The establishment of recreational opportunities on public lands should be based on public need. Other government entities are directed to address and meet the needs of the public. For example, cities provide water and sewer systems based on public need. Highways are constructed based on public need. The need for these facilities is not based on the level of citizen involvement. The need for these facilities is based on an assessment of need developed by water and sewer usage, traffic counts, etc. The public expects agencies to respond to public need in this manner. Just because members of the public did not comment on the upgrade of a water treatment plant or the construction of a highway does not mean that their water is shut off or that they can't drive to Bozeman. We request that the use of public participation in decision-making for this proposed action be monitored to assure that it is does not obscure the needs of all citizens who rely on the project area for their recreation and livelihoods.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Multiple-use recreationists are receptive to reasonable actions that benefit both the human and natural environment. The intent and goals of antimultiple-use groups can be examined by reviewing their comments submitted on this action and other similar proposed actions, reviewing the list of legal actions that they have sponsored, and browsing websites.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	A common stated goal of antimultiple-use groups is the elimination of as much multiple-use on public lands as possible and the establishment of as much wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use area as possible ( <a href="http://www.weedenfdn.org/grantsummaries.htm">http://www.weedenfdn.org/grantsummaries.htm</a> ). While collaborative agreement on a travel management plan between two opposing interests is a desirable solution from an Agency's perspective, the reality of the current setting is that collaborative sessions have failed because a reasonable allocation of recreational opportunities that would meet the needs of all citizens never stays on the table. The approach to travel management taken by the agencies is to pit user groups against each other in the process. Furthermore, the lack of a reasonable multiple-use alternative combined with the significant cumulative effects that motorized recreationists have experienced (loss of over 50% of motorized recreational opportunities during the past 35 ± years) precludes motorized recreationists from accepting any additional unbalanced proposals coming out of collaborative sessions. The collaborative approach must produce reasonable multiple-use alternatives for all (100%) of the remaining lands intended for multiple-use.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Additionally, we must make decisions based on adequate consideration of the needs of both the human and natural environment. Recreational opportunities should be established based on the needs of the public and not the negotiating skills of participants in collaborative sessions.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The reality of the current setting is that we must share public lands with all visitors. Sharing requires coexistence among exclusive-use and multiple-use recreationists. It is not reasonable to take the position that motorized and non-motorized recreationists cannot coexist at the levels of use typical in the project area. The motive behind a non-coexisting attitude is a selfish one. Collaborative sessions and decision-makers must not yield to those unwilling to share or accept diversity. All parties must accept diversity and coexist. All parties must be responsive to and willing to meet the needs of the public. The reality of the current setting is that we must make balanced decisions that meet the needs of the public. We have been told that motorized recreationists must participate in the travel management process and/or collaborative sessions in order to realize future motorized recreational opportunities. While we agree that motorized recreationists have the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process, we disagree that the level and effectiveness of participation should be the factor deciding when making decisions about who gets what recreational opportunities within our public lands.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	NEPA does not require or suggest that the quality and quantity of individual and group participation be used as a decision-making criterion. Agencies should not be overly influenced by the network of influence groups that environmentalists have established. The network of influence groups has a significant advantage over common citizens in areas including funding, staffing, training and advertising through radio, television, web sites, and newspapers. Collaborative sessions or other types of negotiations often result in undue benefits for environmental groups because they have manipulated the process. The decision-making process should be solidly founded on the principles of unbiased information and public need.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>We request that the use of public participation in decision-making for this proposed action be monitored to assure that it does not obscure the needs of all citizens who rely on this area for their recreation and livelihoods. Collaborative sessions are inequitable and a travesty if they do not meet a true cross-section of public needs. The needs of the public are best met by managing public lands for multiple-uses. Multiple-use includes motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that agencies conduct collaborative sessions that produce reasonable multiple-use outcomes.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Many handicapped, elderly, or physically impaired citizens can only access and recreate on public lands by using motorized roads and trails. The needs of these citizens should be adequately considered. On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998, President Clinton signed Public Law 105-359, requiring the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to improve access for persons with disabilities to outdoor recreation opportunities made available to the public. This law states:</p> <p><i>(a) STUDY REQUIRED. – The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior shall jointly conduct a study regarding ways to improve the access for persons with disabilities to outdoor recreational opportunities (such as fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, hiking, boating and camping) made available to the public on the Federal lands described in subsection (b).</i></p> <p><i>(b) COVERED FEDERAL LANDS. – The Federal lands referred to in subsection (a) are the following:</i></p> <p><i>(1) National Forest System lands.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Units of the National Park System.</i></p> <p><i>(3) Areas in the National Wildlife Refuge System.</i></p> <p><i>(4) Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management</i></p> <p>The Study prepared to address P.L. 105-359 (Improving Access to Outdoor Recreational Activities on Federal Land, prepared by Wilderness Inquiry, June 27, 2000) found and recommended the following areas of action:</p> <p><i>1) Agencies must re-dedicate their efforts to achieve the goal of equal opportunities for access to outdoor recreation by persons with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>2) Agencies should conduct baseline assessments of existing facility and programmatic accessibility, and develop and implement transition plans for facilities and programs that are not now accessible to bring them into compliance.</i></p> <p><i>3) Increase accessibility related awareness and educational opportunities for agency personnel, service providers, and partners.</i></p> <p><i>4) Increase funding to federal land management agencies for accessibility.</i></p> <p><i>5) Increase accountability and oversight in implementing accessibility initiatives.</i></p> <p><i>6) Improve communications about opportunities for outdoor recreation to persons with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>7) Clarify the balance between resource protection and accessibility.</i></p> <p>We request that the proposed action adequately address and comply with the recommendations of the Study conducted to address P.L. 105-359</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>We are concerned about the loss of access and impact on the handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired produced by each motorized closure to historic sites and traditional use areas. The proposed closures deny these citizens access to public lands that are especially important to them. We request that all the roads, trails, and features of interest be analyzed for the access and recreation opportunity that they provide for handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired visitors.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>The environmental document should be an issue driven document as required under NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines. The driving issue is the development of a reasonable travel management alternative that addresses the needs of the public. NEPA requires that agencies “Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated” [40 CFR 1502.14(a)]. We request that the environmental document adequately addresses the social, economic, and environmental justice issues associated with multiple-use access and motorized recreation. We request that the environmental document include a travel management alternative for the project area that adequately responds to these issues and the needs for multiple-use access and recreation.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	We are concerned about the protection of our western culture. This culture is characterized by access to the land for multiple-uses, friendliness, good neighborliness, tolerance and sharing. Motorized access to the land provides opportunities for sightseeing, exploring, weekend drives and picnics, hiking, rock climbing, skiing, mountain biking, riding horses, camping, hunting, target shooting, fishing, viewing wildlife, OHV recreation, snowmobiling, gathering of firewood, rocks, natural foods, etc. and physically challenged visitors who must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands. Both our observations and the Social Assessment for Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest found that these multiple-use visitors represent over 95% of the total visitors and that these visitors rely on motorized access. We are fortunate to have extensive public lands to support the western culture. While mechanized and multiple-use recreationists are tolerant of others as noted by the District Ranger, this does not mean that antimultiple-use interests should be allowed to dominate resource allocation decisions. We request that multiple-use management principles be used to protect western culture and values including access to the land for multiple-uses, friendliness, good neighborliness, tolerance and sharing.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Our public lands are a tremendous national resource both in total area and features. Public lands should be available for conflict-free use and enjoyment by everyone. Unfortunately public lands have been turned into a conflict zone by non-motorized fanatics. What is right about this situation? It is a great disservice to the public. We request a management initiative be introduced that will return public lands for the use and enjoyment of everyone for once and for ever.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The environmental document should evaluate how the number of policy proposals over the past several years has overwhelmed the public. There is no way that the public could evaluate and comment on each proposed action (see partial listing of actions in Table 1). The cumulative impact of the overwhelming number of proposals has been decision-making that does not provide for the needs of the public and a significant reduction in multiple-use and motorized access and recreation opportunities. We request that this cumulative impact be adequately evaluated and factored into the decision-making for this action. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts on the public associated with the overwhelming number of NEPA actions.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	The public has not developed a clear understanding as to what is about to happen to the roads and trails that they routinely visit because the travel management process has not effectively communicated the extent of the roads and trails proposed for closure. Instead, the public will go out to their favorite road and trail and find it closed to their use after the proposed action is enacted.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	It will take different approaches to effectively communicate to the public, which roads and trails are subject to the proposed action. For example, one alternative communication method could include posting of the roads and trails proposed for closure with signs for a period of 1 year prior to the EIS process stating "Road or Trail Proposed for Closure, for more information or to express your opinion please call xxx-xxxx or send written comments to xxxxx."	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Current management philosophy seems to be that the only way to address a problem is by closing access to public lands. Eliminating opportunities does not solve problems. An approach that is more reasonable to the public including motorized visitors is to maintain recreation opportunities by addressing problems through mitigation measures such as education, signing, seasonal restrictions, user fees, and structural improvements such as water bars, trail re-routing, and bridges. There may be problems with certain motorized roads and trails but we should work to solve and mitigate them and not to compound them by enacting more closures. We request the agencies to support and use mitigations and education as a means to address and mitigate problems rather than closures.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Most problems associated with visitors can be addressed by education. Education should be the first line of action and all education measures should be exhausted before pursuing other actions. The elimination of much needed recreational opportunities is not reasonable without first exhausting all possible means of education to address the problem. Educational programs could include use of mailings, handouts, improved travel management mapping, pamphlets, TV and radio spots, web pages, newspaper articles, signing, presentations, information kiosks with mapping, and trail rangers.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	Restrictions or closures are not always obvious to the public. Education can also be in the form of measures such as the use of jackleg fences with signs at the end of motorized trails in sensitive areas so that public is made aware of the end of the motorized trail and the surrounding area closure. The use of public education to address problems may require effort and time but it is more reasonable than the use of closures. We request the full use of education to address visitor problems. Additionally, individual motorized recreationists and groups can be called upon to assist with the implementation of the educational process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Management of public lands to maximize wild game populations at the expense of other uses is not reasonable and does not meet the requirements of multiple-use laws and policies. We support hunting but we question why hunting's impact on wildlife is acceptable and non-destructive viewing by motorized visitors is not acceptable. We are concerned that public lands that were designated for multiple-use management are not being managed for multiple-use as required under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528 et seq.)</li> <li>2. Public Law 88-657</li> <li>3. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)</li> <li>4. The BLM Strategic Plan FY 2000 to</li> </ol> <p>We request careful consideration of the multiple-use needs of the public and implementation of the objectives of multiple-use laws and policies as part of the proposed action.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>There is a significant need to standardized signs within and across all agencies. For example, there are often misunderstandings about seasonal motor vehicle restrictions due to the "No" symbol with the actual closure period shown below in small text that is often not seen or understood. In this case, the road or trail is open except during the period show below but the sign is often misinterpreted as closed. We suggest that travel management signs be made easier to understand and standardized. Signs are the backbone of a good management program.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Some examples of how signs could be used to implement management are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs should be displayed at key access points to public lands explaining the basics; "OHV's allowed on designated routes to protect foliage and prevent erosion"; "Expect to see other visitors on the trails – shared trail area"; "Report violations to 1-800-TIP-MONT"; etc.</li> <li>• Trailhead signs should not only list restrictions but should also tell visitors what to expect. Signs that say "expect to see other trail users" with universal symbols indicating the uses they can expect to see would work well. This approach is used successfully in nearly every forest across the country except those in Forest Service Region 1.</li> <li>• Reinforce travel allowed and restricted at intersections.</li> <li>• Reinforce important messages; say the same thing in a different way.</li> </ul>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Along with the standardization of signs, there is also a significant need to standardize or simplify seasonal closure dates as much as possible. We suggest that the number of different closures periods should be kept to a maximum of two, if possible, in order to avoid confusion and resulting misunderstandings.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 allow agencies to "minimize conflicts among the various uses". The Executive Orders did not state "minimize conflict with other users". However, the implementation of Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 has been largely based on the incorrect interpretation to "minimize conflict with other users". The bottom line is that "use" conflict is rather different from "user" conflict. There are certainly "uses" that are incompatible from an objective standpoint. For example, a ski run and a mine cannot operate in the same place at the same time...it is physically impossible and therefore a clear "use conflict." However, in the case of a mine located next to a ski hill, both can operate without a use conflict.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Whether there is a "user conflict" or not depends primarily on user attitudes. Just because someone says it is a conflict does not mean that it is a "reasonable" or "significant" conflict. We request that a reasonable definition for "significant" conflict be developed and used as part of this action.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Conflict on multiple use trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of Practice; Report No.: FWWA-PD-94-031 "Conflict in outdoor recreation settings (such as trails) can best be defined as "goal interference attributed to another's behavior" (Jacob &amp; Schreyer 1980, 369). As such, trail conflicts can and do occur among different user groups, among different users within the same user group, and as a result of factors not related to users' trail activities at all. In fact, no actual contact among users need occur for conflict to be felt. Conflict has been found to be related to activity style (mode of travel, level of technology, environmental dominance, etc.), focus of trip, expectations, attitudes toward and perceptions of the environment, level of tolerance for others, and different norms held by different users. Conflict is often asymmetrical (i.e., one group resents another, but the reverse is not true).</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>The use of Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 to "minimize conflict with other uses" should be evaluated from the perspective of "fair-mindedness of expectations". To provide non-motorized experiences we have designated and set-aside wilderness/non-motorized use areas. Just as motorized recreationists do not expect to be able to use motorized vehicles in wilderness/non-motorized use areas, non-motorized enthusiasts should not expect to go to multiple-use areas and experience wilderness conditions. If some non-motorized recreationists cannot accept motorized recreationists in multiple-use areas, then they need to become familiar with travel plan maps and restrict themselves to the many wilderness/non-motorized areas that are available to them.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Congress has recognized the need to share our lands for multiple-uses and has directed federal land agencies to manage for multiple-uses under laws including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and Public Law 88-657. Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 tend to conflict with these multiple-use directives.</p> <p>These two executive orders interfere with the management of public lands for multiple-uses and promote non-sharing and intolerant attitudes. We request that the analysis, preferred alternative and decision-making not let Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 interfere with an equitable management of public land for multiple-uses.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>All users of multiple-use lands must be willing to share and tolerate with all others. Motorized visitors are willing to share and tolerate other visitors. A small minority of antimultiple-use visitors should not be able to inflict such a large impact on the majority of visitors. We request that the significant negative and inequitable impacts that Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 have imposed on motorized recreationists be adequately evaluated, and factored into the preferred alternative. We request that the decision-making provide for actions necessary to provide responsible use of these two Executive Orders.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>User conflict is vastly overstated by non-motorized recreationists for self-serving reasons. This overstatement is confirmed by data collected by the Wildlands Center for Preventing Roads (<a href="http://maps.wildrockies.org/orv/database.html">http://maps.wildrockies.org/orv/database.html</a> ). This organization has assembled all of the conflict of users data available from the Forest Service. Records from 134 national forests indicate a total of 1,699 noise violations, 145 smoke violations, and 1,272 safety violations for a total of 3,116 violations during the period from 1987 to 1998. The average violations per year would equal 283 or about 2 violations per forest per year. Most likely, many of these violations were not related to OHV recreationists. Motorized recreationists are committed to reducing the number of violations and using education to increase public awareness of visitor and land use ethics. However, considering the tens of millions of visitors to our national forests during this 11-year period, the 3,116 violations are statistically insignificant and do not support the argument that user conflict is a significant problem. Lastly, the total number of violations reported in Northern Region forests was zero.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>We acknowledge the value of solitude and point out that there are many acres of wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use available to provide that solitude. Our concern is in regards to the diminishing amount of multiple-use lands and the unreasonable concept that multiple-use lands should be managed as wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use lands. Managing multiple-use lands by wilderness criteria and for perfect solitude does not meet the communal needs of the public and is not a reasonable goal for multiple-use lands.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Agencies are encouraged to insure that access to trails is not blocked by private lands and that private landowners do not have special access privileges. Where private landowners have elected to block public access to public lands, the boundary between that landowner and public land should be closed to motorized access using a "boundary closure" in order to avoid special access privileges for private landowners onto public land. Motorized access for the public on the public lands side should remain open to the boundary closure and the acquisition of public right-of-way should be pursued with the private landowner.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Agencies are encouraged to provide good statistics on the level of use by the various public land visitors and use these statistics in the decision processes.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Agencies are encouraged to promote multiple-use and not exclusive-use. Exclusive-use is the antithesis of public access and recreational opportunities within public lands. Management for exclusive-use runs counter to Congressional directives for multiple-use.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Agencies are encouraged to make Travel Plan maps more readily available. Vending machines could be placed in areas that are accessible at any time of the day or week at BLM and FS offices.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Agencies are encouraged to publish all Travel Plan maps in the same format and in an easy to read format. The Travel Plan map and Visitors map should be the same. All visitors need to clearly understand what areas, roads or trails are open for motorized travel and what areas, trails, or roads are closed to motorized travel. Current maps lead to misunderstandings by both non-motorized and motorized visitors.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Recreation Resources	<p>Agencies are encouraged to implement a standard signing convention that is easily understood. For example, there are often misunderstandings about seasonal motor vehicle restrictions due to the "No" symbol with the actual closure period shown below in small text that is often not seen or understood. In this example, the road or trail is open except during the period below but it is often misinterpreted as closed.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC16	Recreation Resources	<p>Access, access, access! Montana is under siege by landowners, new to the state and existing, that are systematically blocking access to public lands by the public. Guaranteed access to public lands ultimately must be address by the legislature, but BLM should work diligently to preserve the historical accesses to public lands that are already in place. You should do what you can to increase the access points so that no one homeowner carries the burden of all access through just one road. We personally paid \$2000 in attorney fees last year to keep the existing public access into the Stratchgravel Hills open, with no help from BLM. This should have been as much a BLM effort to keep it open as it was for private citizens.</p>	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC16	Recreation Resources	We are in favor of multiple use on public lands wherever possible. I do not own or enjoy dirt bikes, but I respect the rights of those who do own them. We would like to see some effort go into planning areas or zones where motorized users were segregated from hikers and horses, since the two do not mix well. There are plenty of areas where bikes and motorbikes would do little harm and if they are allowed to be used in some areas, they could be made to avoid areas where the land is more fragile and in need of perhaps foot travel only. Local areas can be individually assessed and with the involvement of the local land owners and area residents more individual plans made for each BLM area.	Individual
SC17	Recreation Resources	I'd like to see restrictions on firearms possession removed from all public lands, such as the Scratchgravel Hills. Montana has laws that make it illegal to endanger others through firearms use and I think it is inappropriate for land management policies to address such matters. While we would probably agree that the Scratchgravel Hills are dangerously close to populated areas, for example, prohibition of firearms possession doesn't make sense to me.	Individual
SC01	Socioeconomic	The RMP needs to allow for compensation to be paid to any individual or entity physically harmed by federal actions, including negative impacts on the local government tax base.	Individual
SC01	Socioeconomics	The plan needs to provide a detailed economics analysis, including cumulative impacts, of proposed agency actions on the local government tax base, economy, cultural and heritage values.	Individual
SC01	Socioeconomics	The plan should not allow livestock allocations to be converted to wildlife allocations unless valid economic studies show the conversion is equal to or better for the local area economic infrastructure and tax base.	Individual
SC03	Socioeconomics	Social and economic concerns should focus on the beneficial economic and social use of our public lands, not locking them up from development or public access. Multiple-use was a good management principal until it fell victim to the environmental/preservational hysteria we've had to suffer through for the past 30 years. Through proper management and respect for the wisdom of Multiple-Use, benefits to all of society will be recognized. For far too long public land managers have had to suffer the "tyranny of the vocal minority", and it should all end now.	Individual
SC11	Socioeconomics	The RMP should discuss the economic consequences of implementing the various management alternatives, including estimates of job additions or losses attributable to timber management. It is important that the management plan consider timber sale economics as a potential management concern for analysis in response to the full public disclosure intent of NEPA and in response to the controversy regarding below-cost timber sales. The management plan should provide clear descriptions of the key assumptions regarding Interdisciplinary Team costs, sale preparation, timber pricing, product valuation, discount rates, rotation lengths, road construction, and road closure, decommissioning, and road maintenance costs.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Socioeconomics	The EIS economic evaluation should also include analysis of the long-term economic value of leaving the forest landscape as it is. There may be economic gains to the ecosystem by non-disturbance that should be recognized as well as those to the economy of forest product utilization. Costs should also include the commercial economic value of non-forest resources that may be harvested such as mushrooms, berries, Christmas trees or boughs for ornamentation, etc.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC12	Socioeconomics	A recent study by David Sunding, an associate professor of natural resource economics, David Zilberman, a UC Berkeley professor of agriculture and resource economics, and graduate student Aaron Swoboda to the California Resource Management Institute found that the economic impacts from designation and preservation of special plant and animal habitat areas continue to cost society hundreds of millions of dollars because of delays, court fees and opportunities forgone. Sunding's report, released Feb. 20, found that agencies had underestimated the actual economic and social impact by seven to 14 times.  Certainly, natural resource decisions cannot and should not be made entirely on economic impacts. However, NEPA requires that both economic and environmental facts should be considered in the final land management decisions. The U.C. Berkeley study displays the fact that the full economic and social facts and impacts are not being adequately considered by the federal land management agencies. We request adequate evaluation of the economic and social impacts of this proposed action be considered in the analysis and decision-making. Additionally, we request that the cumulative impact resulting from inadequate evaluation of economic and social impacts in past actions are considered in the analysis and decision-making and that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative impacts.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Socioeconomics	The positive economic impact on the economy of the area must be adequately considered in the decision-making. Arizona State Parks has prepared a good example of an economic analysis of OHV recreation for Coconino County, AZ ( <a href="http://www.gf.state.az.us/pdfs/w_c/OHV%20Report.pdf">http://www.gf.state.az.us/pdfs/w_c/OHV%20Report.pdf</a> ). The economic impacts of OHV recreation in one county are significant with \$258.3 million statewide impact and a \$215.3 million impact locally that supports 2,580 jobs. This evaluation should be used as guideline to evaluate the existing and potential positive economic impacts associated with OHV recreation in the project area. Additionally, the study does a good job assessing the activities and reasons that recreationists enjoy using off-highway vehicles.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Socioeconomics	<p>Additional information on the importance of OHV recreation to the economy of the project area can be found at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gilmore Research Group, 1989, Washington DNR, Assessment of ORV impact and use in Roslyn-Cle Elum, WA.</li> <li>2. Haas, Glenn et al, 1989, Colorado Sate University, Estimated CO recreational use and expenditures for OHV in FY 1988.</li> <li>3. Tyler &amp; Associates, 1990, CA DOT, A study of fuel tax attributable to OHV and Street Licensed vehicles used for recreation off-highway.</li> <li>4. CA OHMVR Division , 1994, CA Department of Parks and Recreation, A 26 page study of the \$3 Billion economic impact of OHV use in CA.</li> <li>5. Oak Ridge National Laboratory, 1994, Federal Highway Administration, Report ORNL/TM-1999/100, Federal Highway Administration, An 80 page summary of the fuel used for OHV recreation, <a href="http://www.cta.ornl.gov/publications/offroad.pdf">http://www.cta.ornl.gov/publications/offroad.pdf</a> .</li> <li>6. CA OHMVR Division, 1991, CA Department of Parks and Recreation, A 119 page summary of the status of OHV recreation in CA.</li> <li>7. Schuett, Michael , 1998, West Virginia University, 14 page report on OHV user values and demographics.</li> <li>8. Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), 1998, 20 page statistical report of motorcycle population, sales and usage.</li> <li>9. Generoux, John &amp; Michele, 1993, Minnesota DNR, 33-page report on feasibility of Iron Range OHV Rec'n Area.</li> <li>10. Hazen and Sawyer, 2001; Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle CO, 144-page analysis of economic impact of OHV recreation in Colorado which is estimated at \$230 million, (<a href="http://cohvco.org/economics/main.html">http://cohvco.org/economics/main.html</a> ).</li> <li>11. Tennessee OHV Economic Impact, A \$3.4 Billion Industry, <a href="http://www.state.tn.us/environment/ohv/ohvimpacts.pdf">http://www.state.tn.us/environment/ohv/ohvimpacts.pdf</a>, <a href="http://www.state.tn.us/environment/ohv/econimpact.pdf">http://www.state.tn.us/environment/ohv/econimpact.pdf</a> .</li> <li>12. March 2003 Presentation at the National OHV Managers Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, <a href="http://www.etra.net/Newsletters/2003/July2003.htm">http://www.etra.net/Newsletters/2003/July2003.htm</a>.</li> </ol>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC01	Soils	The plan needs to recognize that the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey is the document for which all public land decisions and activities relating to soil conservation will be based.	Individual
SC11	Soils - Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions	The ICB Strategy indicates that roads have significantly modified the aquatic and terrestrial resources in the Columbia Basin and continue to affect fish, wildlife, water quality and stream/wetlands processes. Roads are also important for public access and accomplishing management objectives, including restoration, and the Strategy states that RMPs need to provide direction for minimizing road impacts to water quality, fisheries and wildlife. RMPs also need to identify the road network needed for land management access, public and tribal needs, and which can be adequately maintained within agency budgets and capabilities.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Soils - Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions	EPA believes reductions in road density, improvements in road drainage, and reductions in sediment delivery from roads are important components for improving aquatic health in project area streams. For example, bull trout are exceptionally sensitive to the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of mads. The USFWS in its 1998 Bull Trout Interim Conservation Guidance identified the importance of road densities for bull trout conservation, showing general exclusion of bull trout in watersheds with high road densities (e.g., over 1.7 mi/mi <sup>2</sup> of roads), and showing bull trout strongholds to have low road densities (e.g., an average 0.45 mi/mi <sup>2</sup> of roads).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Soils - Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions	We believe RMPs and associated EIS should discuss the mad and transportation network, including road closure and decommissioning (e.g., road closure and decommissioning methods, i.e., administratively; gates or barriers; removal of culverts, restoring stable drainage ways, ripping of road surface, total obliteration of road prism, and their effectiveness at addressing aquatic concerns). EPA also supports management direction that requires inspections and evaluations to identify existing road conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source pollution and stream impairment, and the conduct of necessary road maintenance to improve road drainage and correct deficiencies. The document should address necessary road maintenance and inspection for closed, but unobliterated, roads.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Soils - Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions	Our recommendations regarding roads are to: minimize road construction and reduce road density as much as possible to reduce potential adverse effects to watersheds; locate roads away from streams and riparian areas; minimize the number of road stream crossings; stabilize cut and fill slopes; provide for adequate road drainage and control of surface erosion with measures such as adequate numbers of waterbars, rolling dips and ditch relief culverts to avoid drainage running on or along roads and avoid interception and routing sediment to streams; consider road effects on stream structure and seasonal and spawning habitats; and allow for adequate large woody debris recruitment and riparian buffers near streams. It is important to maintain crowns on roads and to provide adequate dips and/or waterbars to promote drainage off roads.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Soils - Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions	Culverts should be properly sized to handle flood events, pass bedload and woody debris, and reduce potential for washout, and should be properly aligned with the stream channel. Culverts which serve as barriers to fish migration should be adjusted to allow for fish passage/migration. Bridges or open bottom culverts that simulate stream grade and substrate and that provide adequate capacity for flood flows, bedload and woody debris are recommended to minimize adverse fisheries effects of road stream crossings.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Soils - Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions	We also support inspections and evaluations to identify existing road conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source pollution and stream impairment. Erosion control should be kept current with log skidding activities and that road maintenance (e.g., blading) be focused on reducing road surface erosion and sediment delivery from roads to area streams. Blading of unpaved roads in a manner that contributes to road erosion and sediment transport to streams and wetlands should be avoided, as should road use during spring breakup conditions.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC03	Special Management Areas	Do not recommend any more special management areas without thorough investigation of the economic resources that will be lost if recommended.	Individual
SC11	Special Management Areas	The EPA supports the identification and discussion of additional areas with wilderness characteristics and values that may be suitable or eligible for wilderness designation; and to recommend such areas for wilderness designation; and to provide management direction for those roadless areas not recommended for wilderness designation. We note that roadless areas often include the population strongholds and key refugia for listed or proposed species and narrow endemic populations that need to be protected. EPA encourages recommendations for wilderness where such designation would be appropriate or protect unique resource values and provide a higher level of natural resource protection. We support wilderness recommendations for inventoried roadless areas that are considered appropriate for inclusion in Wilderness Preservation System; and to manage recommended wilderness areas to protect wilderness character.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Special Management Areas	If areas with other special designations (e.g., Areas of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC], etc.) are identified, and/or undesignated areas with important ecological, biological, botanical, zoological, paleontological, archaeological, scenic, historic, geological, or other characteristics are identified which may provide potential for additional special area designations we encourage the BLM to consider them for special designation. We also recommend that the BLM contact the Montana Natural Heritage Program to learn about any Natural Heritage Program efforts to identify and evaluate important or unique habitats such as high quality wetlands (e.g., contact Marc Jones at Montana NHP in Helena at 406-444-3488). Important or unique habitats identified by Natural Heritage Programs that are located on Federal land may be worthy candidates for protection through a special designation such as ACECs.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Special Management Areas	If any rivers with wild & scenic characteristics and values that may be suitable or eligible for a Wild & Scenic River designation we encourage consideration of such designation. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR), Sections 10, 11, and 12, encourages Federal agencies to enter into cooperative agreements with States and local governments in order to protect and manage WSR values. Since land ownership along a WSR is often mixed, cooperation between Federal, State, and local agencies is often key in managing and protection WSR resources. The EPA recommends that the lead agency work with the appropriate State and local agencies in developing a uniform and comprehensive WSR management strategy. If applicable, the RMP should include an ownership map of the WSR watershed that clearly identifies Federal, State, local government, and private lands. Accompanying discussion should identify jurisdictional and regulatory responsibilities for each ownership type. In addition, the management plan should estimate and discuss impacts from activities on both Federal and non-Federal lands and explain how Federal, State, and local government activities will be coordinated in order to protect WSR resources and values. Finally, the management plan and plan should identify funding priorities for WSR management and levels of funding required to provide adequate WSR resource protection.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC12	Special Management Areas	The wilderness designation is not good for recreation and an alternative designation is needed. Many U.S. citizens do not trust our federal land managers to manage our natural resources responsibly. Wilderness advocates have taken advantage of this situation to promote the Wilderness designation and now the Roadless designation as a means to protect these areas. Wilderness designation was originally conceived, by the Wilderness advocates involved in the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act, as appropriate for about ten million acres of administratively designated Primitive Areas. Present day Wilderness advocates have since expanded the concept to a system of over one hundred million acres and they say we need much more.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC15	Special Management Areas	In addition, the RMP must provide the strongest protections and monitoring of enforcement to ensure the Humbug Spires Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and adjacent Humbug Spires Wilderness Study Area (WSA) are not compromised. The WSA must be protected from all types of vehicle and ORV use, grazing, and all other damaging activities. Moose Creek, Soap Gulch, and Camp Creek flow on and adjacent to the WSA and thus must be provided the strictest protections to ensure the aquatic integrity of the Humbug Spires WSA and the SRMA.	American Wildlands

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC15	Special Management Areas	<p>American Wildlands nominates the following lands (listed below) within the Butte Field Office Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for wildlife linkage and aquatic importance. The sponsors have identified these areas, which we refer to as the proposed ACECs, as a potential ACEC based on the relevance and importance criteria as outlined in BLM Manual 16 13. Two ACECs are nominated because of their importance for wildlife migration and movement between high security habitats. In addition, we request the RMP to consider the High Ore Creek as a potential ACEC, based on its restoration to a higher integrity stream and its potential as an important native fishery.</p> <p>The proposed Sleeping Giant Extension ACEC  The proposed Lemhi Pass ACEC  The proposed High Ore Creek ACEC</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Management Areas	<p>The uniqueness and importance of these proposed ACECs have been recognized by a number of government agencies and conservation groups. The USFS and USFWS have identified the Centennial Valley as a potentially important corridor between the Greater Yellowstone and Salmon Selway Ecosystem. The Nature Conservancy has is targeting conservation work in the valley due to its importance for wildlife habitat and movement. Several conservation groups have worked to restore wildlife linkage through participation in site-specific projects in Alaska Basin. Scientific analyses from Dr. Lance Craighead, Dr. Richard Walker, Dr. Reed Noss and others have confirmed that the Alaska Basin and Lemhi Pass areas serve as current and potential wildlife linkage habitat. The Proposed Amendment to the Lemhi RMP (March, 2001) on the BLM's Salmon Field Office states, "The timbered slopes at the upper elevations run to the Continental Divide and, in concert with adjacent forest cover along the Divide, provide a relatively secure movement corridor for many species."</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Management Areas	<p>To be nominated, potential ACECs must meet relevance and importance criteria, as outlined in BLM Manual 1613. These definitions will be used to discuss the relevance and importance of the proposed Alaska Basin and Lemhi Pass ACECs.</p> <p>The proposed Alaska Basin and Lemhi Pass ACECs meets the relevance criterion as outlined in BLM Manual 1613. An area meets the "relevance" criterion if it contains one or of the following criterion: historic, cultural or scenic values; fish and wildlife resource; natural process or system; or natural hazards.</p> <p>We, the sponsors, ask that the proposed Alaska Basin and Lemhi Pass ACECs be used for their wildlife and fish, scenic and recreational, scientific, historical and archeological resources. We also contend that the above listed resources are incompatible with other resource uses, including motorized use and extractive industries.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Management Areas	<p>The proposed ACECs meet the importance criterion, as outlined in BLM Manual 1613, for two reasons. First, the area "has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource." Designation of these areas as ACECs is a unique conservation opportunity, as discussed in the body of this document. The importance of wildlife connectivity is not only of local importance; connectivity must be established on a regional level (i.e., between mountain ranges or the Greater Yellowstone and Salmon-Selway or Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems) for the persistence of sensitive, wide-ranging wildlife species.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Management Areas	<p>Second, the proposed ACEC areas "have qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change." Many threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, which have suffered population declines due to increasing habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, occur within the site. In order to achieve viable wildlife populations, this area requires special management to ensure wildlife movement between secure habitats. Travel management and extractive uses may further fragment this important linkage habitat. ACEC designation will highlight the importance of the Alaska Basin and Lemhi Pass areas for local and regional wildlife connectivity.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Management Areas	<p>American Wildlands suggest that the proposed ACECs be managed in a manner that protects their unique ecological values. Habitat should be managed to minimize human disturbance and habitat alteration.</p>	American Wildlands

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC15	Special Mangement Areas	<p>The federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Act) states that certain selected rivers of the United States possessing outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that the rivers and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Act is implemented via the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that inventories rivers and river segments which possess outstandingly remarkable values. The Act states that "Every wild, scenic or recreational river in its free-flowing condition, or upon restoration to this condition, shall be considered eligible for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system and, if included, shall be classified, designated, and administered as one of the following:</p> <p>(1) <i>Wild river areas</i> -- Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.</p> <p>(2) <i>Scenic river areas</i> --Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.</p> <p>(3) <i>Recreational river areas</i> --Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.</p> <p>Based on this mandate, the Butte Field Office RMP must inventory all river and streams situated in the Butte Field Area to determine which segments are eligible for Wild and Scenic designation Any river or stream determined as possessing one or more outstandingly remarkable values must be maintained in this condition, protected and monitored to ensure no degradation of these values. In addition, any river or stream that could be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, upon restoration to a free-flowing condition, must be inventoried for inclusion to the Nationwide Rivers Inventory for the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Mangement Areas	The Butte Field Office has identified the following streams and river segments that flow, at least in part, on Butte Field Office land, as possessing outstandingly remarkable values eligible for Wild and Scenic designation: Camp Creek; segments of the Missouri River; Silver Creek; segments of the Yellowstone River, segments of the Bighole River; Whitetail Creek; Muskrat Creek; Moose Creek, Soap Gulch; Confederate Gulch; and Towhead Gulch. These stream and river segments qualify for Wild and Scenic eligibility for their historic and cultural significance, recreational attributes, scenic values or fishery merits. American Wildlands requests the RMP to include the above-mentioned river and stream segments for Wild and Scenic eligibility and to maintain the outstandingly remarkable values for each. Furthermore, the RMP must examine <i>all</i> Butte Field Office river and stream segments to ensure that no eligible water is omitted from the Nationwide Rivers Inventory for inclusion to the Wild and Scenic Act.	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Mangement Areas	American Wildlands has a strong commitment to both the protection and restoration of native aquatic species and the protection and restoration of their habitat. Thus, it is imperative that Whitetail Creek, Muskrat and Moose Creeks are included on the list of eligible rivers under Wild and Scenic Act designation, as these streams possess outstandingly remarkable values as native fisheries and are historic strongholds for westslope cutthroat trout (WCT), a native Montana Species of Special Concern.	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Mangement Areas	In particular, Muskrat Creek must be included as a Wild and Scenic River and stringently protected until such designation occurs, as this water contains the Butte Field Office's only strain of pure westslope cutthroat trout (WCT). American Wildlands supports the Butte Field Office's current efforts to restore WCT to Muskrat Creek and requests the Field Office provides strong restoration strategies and commitments to this key native fishery during the RMP.	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Mangement Areas	Similarly, the protection and Wild and Scenic designation of Moose Creek is of critical importance, as this Big Hole tributary historically contained pure populations of WCT and the Creek has been heavily impacted by non-native fish stocking and subsequent WCT hybridization with rainbow, brook and yellowstone cutthroat trout. Moose Creek is also culturally significant for its history during Montana's mining boom, making it eligible as a Wild and Scenic River for historic values.	American Wildlands
SC15	Special Mangement Areas	Whitetail Creek, heavily impacted by brown trout stocking, must be targeted during the RMP process for restoration of its native WCT population and a clear restoration strategy must be communicated in the revision process. As mentioned above, Whitetail Creek must also be included as eligible for Wild and Scenic designation.	American Wildlands
SC01	Transportation and Access	The afore-mentioned RMP needs to acknowledge and protect the RS 2477 rights-of-ways throughout the plan area.	Individual
SC01	Transportation and Access	The plan needs to maintain public access and rights-of-way for utilities and/or transportation of product and provide such additional access when future need is demonstrated.	Individual
SC01	Transportation and Access	The plan needs to provide for access for the elderly and the physically impaired within any given WSA. All wilderness areas need to be in complete compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA).	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC02	Transportation and Access	I would support a ban on full sized motorized vehicular traffic in the area to discourage it's usage for teen partying.	Individual
SC04	Transportation and Access	I strongly urge the BLM to include airplane access in its new RMP. Airplanes are low impact, require very small amounts land compared to other forms of vehicular transportation, take virtually no public resources to maintain, and currently enjoy BLM approval for public use. These airstrips must not be closed, and more aviation facilities should be provided in BLM future planning.	Individual
SC06	Transportation and Access	Please do not change the Tie Creek Road to make it a through road to Bryant Creek near Mile Marker 60 on Hwy 113 near Wise River, MT.	Individual
SC07	Transportation and Access	Travel and Access Management. We need more public land access to and on our public lands. BLM should use condemnation as provided for in 205 of FLMPA if necessary. Our public lands should not be abused as they are in the Whiskey Gulch -Pole Creek area. Your own employees drove their public funded ATV all over the landscape to put up flagging for a 'boondoggle' that will never get off the ground for the burning of mule deer and elk winter range. The MOU with FWP wasn't complied with as well. I have digital photos where your employees created gullies and drove through vegetation valuable for the winter of big game animals. These employees should be reprimanded. Too lazy to walk and pack the flagging. BLM ATVs should be locked up in the warehouse and never see the light of day. BLM doesn't know how to properly use them on public land.	Individual
SC09	Transportation and Access	Retain winter closure to motorized vehicles on north side of Big Hole River between Bear Gulch and Jerry Creek.	Individual
SC11	Transportation and Access	User demand and recreational access has increased significantly and management practices have shifted over the last 15 years, and motorized vehicles such as snowmobiles and ATVs can access areas much further into the forest than they could historically. Also, logging roads are now predominantly used for recreation and resource protection and restoration activities. The RMP should consider and address these changed circumstances. The EIS should describe the anticipated environmental effects of increased public access and use, and identify the types and extent of recreational impacts and mitigation measures necessary to minimize adverse impacts and ensure resource protection. EPA encourages locating campground facilities, and concentrated public recreational uses away from ecologically sensitive resources. We also encourage restricting motorized access to camping in ecologically sensitive areas, and identifying/designating camping sites to avoid sensitive areas and/or to encourage camping or concentrated public use in areas that are more resilient and can more easily recover from impacts and/or accommodate public use with less impacts.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC12	Transportation and Access	The travel management process should be initiated with the scoping process and a full and adequate evaluation of all viable alternatives. All existing roads and trails available to motorized recreationists should be used as the starting alternative for all analyses and impact determinations. Establishment of this baseline alternative is crucial to the evaluation of all proposed impacts on motorized recreationists. Time after time the alternatives presented in the travel planning process do not include a reasonable motorized alternative. This seems to be a ploy to get the public to accept less right from the start. The process is prejudiced in that a minimal number of motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities are presented as the preferred alternative from the beginning when the needs of the public are just the opposite. We request that the process be restarted and that all existing roads and trails which are available for use by motorized recreationists be adequately identified as the baseline alternative.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	In an attempt to close as many existing roads and trails and possible, non-motorized interests keep trying to confuse the issues by suggesting that we are asking for illegally created trails. We are not. We are asking for continued use of trails that are legitimately recognized by the agencies including those defined by the: 3-State OHV decision, RS-2477 access laws, all agency mapping including current travel plan mapping and historic and current visitor mapping.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Transportation and Access	<p>We request a starting proposal that is based on all of the existing roads and trails available to the public. The process is required by NEPA to be neutral and a neutral process would include the fair presentation of all reasonable alternatives including all existing roads and trails plus new motorized opportunities required to meet the needs of the public. Why isn't this reasonable alternative being presented? We are concerned that the process is manipulating the public to believe that an entirely reasonable alternative based on existing roads and trails cannot be considered. Again, the process is prejudiced towards closures right from the start and this is neither right nor equitable.</p> <p>We request the full and fair disclosure of this information to the public. The starting benchmark could be considered deceptive. NEPA requires adequate disclosure of the potential impacts of a proposed action as stated in CEQ Sec. 1502.1 Purpose. <i>It shall provide full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and shall inform decisionmakers and the public of the reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment. Agencies shall focus on significant environmental issues and alternatives and shall reduce paperwork and the accumulation of extraneous background data. Statements shall be concise, clear, and to the point, and shall be supported by evidence that the agency has made the necessary environmental analyses.</i> These requirements have not been met. We request that these deficiencies be addressed by developing a starting benchmark alternative that identifies all of the existing roads and trails available to motorized recreationists including non-system routes and those falling under some undefined definition of "unusable" and those additional routes required to meet the needs of the public.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	The use of the name "Travel Management" for the process is deceiving the public. History has demonstrated that this is a closure and restriction process. New motorized roads or trails are seldom created by the process. When we ask visitors that we meet about the process they will either tell us; (1) that they expect the BLM and Forest Service to look out for their needs, or (2) that the BLM and Forest Service has already made up their mind on travel planning decisions and that it is pointless to participate in the process.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	The maps and figures are not easily understood. There are no identifiable or named features and no road and trail numbers on the maps. It is very difficult for the public to orient themselves and to interpret the proposed action for each specific road and trail. Therefore, the public cannot adequately evaluate the proposal and cannot develop comments with reference to specific roads and trails.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	Because most OHV machines are not street legal, they cannot be legally ridden on forest roads unless they are designated as dual-purpose roads. The proposed action must include these designations in order to provide a network of OHV routes. An adequate Travel Management alternative should include a system of dual-purpose roads, and OHV roads and trails that interconnect. This will allow OHV enthusiasts to operate within existing laws without traveling illegally on roads. We request that a system of dual-purpose roads, and OHV roads and trails that interconnect be one of the primary objectives of the travel management plan and that this objective be adequately addressed in the document and decision.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	The continual closure of motorized trails has forced OHVs to be operated on forest roads in order to provide a reasonable system of routes and to reach destinations of interest. The lack of dual-use designations on forest roads then makes OHV use on these routes illegal. The cumulative effect of motorized closures and then combined with the lack of a reasonable system of roads and trails with dual-use designation has not been adequately considered in past evaluations and decision-making. We request that all reasonable routes be designated for dual-use so that a system of roads and trails can be used by motorized recreationists. Additionally, we request that the cumulative effect of all past decisions that have adequately considered dual-use designations be evaluated and considered in the decision-making and that this project include an adequate mitigation plan to compensate for inadequate consideration in the past.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	A fair travel management process would start with a comprehensive inventory of all existing motorized routes in use by the public. Then, in order to avoid further cumulative loss and significant impact on motorized access and recreation opportunities, we request that the travel management process include a preferred alternative based on preserving all existing motorized routes. Existing motorized roads and trails have been around for decades and have not caused any significant problems. Therefore, it is not reasonable to close a significant number of existing motorized routes. Any significant negative impact associated with a specific motorized route should be the basis for an evaluation to close or keep that route open and should carefully consider all reasonable mitigation measures. The cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities within public lands has been significant. In order to avoid further cumulative impacts, we request that the majority of existing motorized routes remain open and the closure of an existing motorized route be offset by the creation of a new motorized route.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC12	Transportation and Access	<p>On July 26, 1866, as part of a move to grant access to western lands, the United States Congress enacted the 1866 Mining Act, section 8 of which granted a right-of-way to all persons over unreserved federal lands when it stated “the right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted”. In 1873, the 1866 grant was re-codified into section 2477, Revised Statutes of the United States, and rights-of-way granted by that section have since become known as the “RS 2477 rights-of-way”.</p> <p>Throughout the later half of the 19th century and the first three-quarters of the 20th century, the use of “RS 2477 rights-of-way” over federal land in the western United States became a standard method of legal access across federal lands for commercial, industrial, and recreation pursuits to such an extent that the use of the RS 2477 rights-of-way has become an inherent part of western heritage and a capital asset for the public that should be preserved for future generations.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	The use of RS 2477 rights-of-way over nearly a century has resulted in an extensive body of case law in the state and federal courts, in which owners of various types of rights-of-way have competed with holders of RS 2477 rights-of-way and in which the availability of those various rights-of-way has been decided by the courts, including the modern State Supreme Court as well as the federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, in such cases as Robertson v. Smith, Supreme Court Montana Ten., 1871; Butte v. Mikosowitz, 39 Mont. 350, 102 P. 593, (1909); Moulton v. Irish, 67 Mont. 504, 218 P. 1053 (1923); and Shultz v. Dept. of Army, 10 F.3d 649 (9th Cir. 1993).	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	RS 2477 rights-of-way have been given a liberal interpretation by state and federal courts in those judicial decisions interpreting what constitutes a “highway” within the meaning of RS 2477, those judicial opinions holding that even the barest foot trail could qualify as a “highway” and that no particular way across federal lands has even been identified, it being sufficient that travelers used an area of federal land as a method of access between two geographic points. After 110 years of public use of RS 2477 rights-of-way, the U.S. Congress repealed the most recent version of RS 2477, 43 U.S.C. 932, but that repeal was, by 43 U.S.C. 1701, specifically made subject to valid rights-of-way existing as of the date of repeal which was 1976.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	Schiller, chairman of the High Desert Multiple-Use Coalition, told the Kern County Board of Supervisors at a meeting held on February 19, 2002 to address RS 2477 issues that “the roads represent our custom, our culture, our economy and our family traditions. I know it's been argued that this is about OHV uses and off-highway vehicles,” said Schiller. “It is really about access” .We request that any routes proposed for closure and in existence before 1976 be considered as having RS 2477 rights-of-way in order to provide citizens with access to public lands.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	The environmental document should accurately address the significant negative impacts associated with disturbing existing stable roadways in order to obliterate the existing roadbed. A reasonable alternative would be to reclassify the road to either restricted-width or unrestricted-width motorized trail. We request that the preferred alternative make practical use of this management tool and the benefits that it provides including reduced sedimentation impact, reduced fisheries impact, reduced noxious weed impact, much less construction cost, reduced road inventory, reduced road maintenance and increased opportunities for motorized recreationists. Reclassifying roadways to restricted- or unrestricted-width motorized trail also avoids contributing to significant cumulative impacts on motorized recreationists.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Transportation and Access	Many multiple-use and motorized recreationists have expressed a concern about the general lack of trust in the travel management process. They feel that travel management decisions are pre-determined, that it is pointless to participate in the process, and that travel management is not intended to meet their needs. These opinions could be easily confirmed by publishing a request in local newspapers and on local television channels asking for a response to the question “Do you feel that you have been adequately involved in the closure of roads and trails on public lands to motorized use? Yes or No” and “Do you feel that the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists have been adequately considered in the travel management process? Yes or No”.	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC13	Transportation and Access	Issue #4 – All access to national forest should be maintained for motorized use (horsepower or size of vehicle could be used as a management tool).	Individual
SC15	Transportation and Access	The RMP revision should specifically identify WQLS streams, native trout streams, and high quality AIA watersheds. Travel management in these watersheds must be designed to protect the beneficial uses in each waterbody. Stream crossings must receive adequate permitting and analysis. Motorized trails that utilize drive-through fords must receive a 124 permit to ensure that there is no harm to stream banks or beds. The RMP and travel planning revision process is the only time that such analysis and decision-making is available and so these site-specific issues must be addressed during this process.	American Wildlands

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC18	Transportation and Access	<p>I would like to take this opportunity to stress that for travel management to be successfully adopted by the public that both BLM and Forest Service lands should be managed under similar systems.</p> <p>Montana Fish, Wildlife &amp; Parks strongly favors travel plans that designate (sign) roads as open, where roads/routes that are open to motorized use are posted as OPEN with the understanding that no off road/route travel is allowed. This approach discourages removal of signs, because any route that is not signed as open is automatically closed. This is the only reasonable way to expect that plan compliance can be effectively implemented in the field. At the same time, recreationists will not have to be familiar with differing management systems between Forest Service and BLM.</p>	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
SC04	Transportation and Access (Safety)	I use backcountry airports throughout northern Arizona, all over the states of Utah and Idaho, and much of Western Montana. These uses include stays as short as one hour for stretching legs and eating lunch, to overnights so as to hike, fish, or just enjoy the solitude of our beautiful national resources. In addition to these recreational uses, these numerous air strips provide emergency landing places for my single engine Cessna 185 in the event of mechanical failure. These minimally improved landing strips on BLM managed lands afford pilots the only opportunity for an emergency landing within dozens of miles, in many cases.	Individual
SC01	Vegetation	The plan needs to implement the most economical and effective weed control methods for targeted and controlling weeds.	Individual
SC03	Vegetation	Vegetation should be managed to prevent spread of noxious weeds.	Individual
SC07	Vegetation	There is no scientific basis for implement this program on public land and your office should not mislead the public that it has something to do with range ecology and management since it is all to appease homeowners that built next to our public land.	Individual
SC07	Vegetation	From our discussion on 01-09-03 you and your personnel were totally unfamiliar with the appropriate scientific literature on the subject. This includes "Final Report Of The Montana Cooperative Elk-Logging Study-1970-1985," Memorandum Of Understanding between FWP and BLM Supplement No. 1, Mechanical and Chemical Alternation of Vegetation ", "Sagebrush Ecological Implications Of Sagebrush Manipulation" FWP-Joel Peterson-1995, "Montana Sagebrush Bibliography" December 2001, Frisina, Michael and John McCarthy, "Montana Sage Grouse-Life History and Habitat Requirements Of Sage Grouse In central Montana" -1975, Richard Wallestad, Montana Dept. of Fish and Game and BLM, "Steppe Vegetation of Washington" R.F. Daubenmire. 1970. Bulletin 62. Wash. Agri. Expert. Stat." And the list goes on and on.	Individual
SC07	Vegetation	You are not following the cooperative agreement with FWP (2 ½ years prior notification as well as field reviews involving the public). All of this information must be included in the RMP including the MOU and supplement # 1. If you review the exiting Headwaters RMP I am sure you will find it in there since it was in that plan you want to change. BLM is planning to throw away the rulebook. What does Texas Tech. know about all of these issues and the scientific literature on the subject? How was such a contract awarded to Texas Tech.?	Individual
SC07	Vegetation	For BLM to destroy the vegetation on our public land to protect homeowners is 'ludicrous'. Will BLM promote continuous livestock grazing as well to prevent the accumulation of residual cover for wildlife habitat and watershed protection as well since it may be creating a fire hazard? This same ill-conceived program is promoted by BLM all over Montana. Large acreages of public wildlife habitat will be altered. This is especially true with big sagebrush communities.	Individual
SC07	Vegetation	Since this is an RMP and E.I.S. there should be an immediate moratorium on any land treatment on our public land until the plan is completed and public input, scientific literature is reviewed and agreements are followed. It doesn't make since to continue to implement programs detrimental to the resource while your plan is being developed.	Individual
SC07	Vegetation	In addition since an E.I.S. is part of the 'plan' the cumulative impacts of your actions must be addressed and not with 'piecemeal' environmental assessments (E.A.) for each burn 'venture' in order to protect homeowners. The assessment must recognize the impacts to native wildlife species with the loss of habitat and to public sport hunting opportunity.	Individual
SC11	Vegetation	The EPA supports the need to manage vegetation to restore declining habitats like whitebark pine, aspen and willow, and recognize the natural role of fire as a disturbance process, and control noxious weeds.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Vegetation	<p>We also note that the ICB Strategy indicates that direction developed in RMPs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* provide for re-patterning succession and disturbance regimes and achievement of sustainable landscape conditions, thereby contributing to reduction of events such as uncharacteristically large and severe wildland fires;</li> <li>* address ways to main and secure terrestrial habitats comparable to those classified by the science findings as "source" habitats that have declined substantially from historical to the current period, and habitats that have old growth characteristics;</li> <li>* address opportunities to re-pattern these habitats when and where necessary, maintain and guide expansion of the extent and connectivity of source habitats that have declined;</li> <li>* address the restoration of the important vegetation characteristics of these habitats (such as species composition, vegetation structure, snags and coarse woody debris) which various terrestrial species need to survive and reproduce.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	EPA fully supports management direction that addresses noxious weed infestations. Noxious weeds are a great threat to biodiversity. Weeds can out-compete native plants and produce a monoculture that has little or no plant species diversity or benefit to wildlife. Noxious weeds tend to gain a foothold where there is disturbance in the ecosystem. The RMP and associated EIS should identify the noxious weeds/exotic plants that occur in the BLM Butte Field Office area and/or specific management areas; discuss the magnitude and occurrence of the weed infestations; and describe strategies for prevention, early detection of invasion, and control procedures for weed management.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	EPA supports integrated weed management (e.g., effective mix of cultural, education and prevention, biological, mechanical, chemical management, etc.), however, we encourage prioritization of management techniques that focus on non-chemical treatments first, with reliance on chemicals (herbicides) being the last resort. Early recognition and control of new infestations is encouraged to stop the spread of the infestation and avoid wider future use of herbicides, which could correspondingly have more adverse impacts on biodiversity, water quality and fisheries.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	While EPA fully supports control of noxious weed infestations, we note that weed control chemicals can be toxic and have the potential to be transported to surface or ground water following application. It is important that management direction assures that water contamination concerns of herbicide usage be fully evaluated and mitigated. Herbicide drift into streams and wetlands could adversely affect aquatic life and wetland functions such as food chain support and habitat for wetland species. All efforts should be made to avoid movement or transport of herbicides into surface waters that could adversely affect fisheries or other water uses (i.e., use mitigation measures, avoid herbicide drift to streams and wetlands, during ground and aerial applications of herbicide such as adequate streamside buffers, mechanical weed removal adjacent to streams, flagging aquatic areas on the ground, spray nozzles that produce larger droplets to reduce drift, use of photodegradable dyes in herbicides, use of GPS technology or ground radio contact with pilots, use of spray detection cards, wind monitoring, herbicide monitoring, etc.).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	It should be noted that while Montana Water Quality Standards do not identify numerical criteria for aquatic life protection for many herbicides, it should be recognized that the research and data requirements necessary to establish numerical aquatic life water quality criteria are very rigorous, and many herbicides and weed control chemicals in use are toxic, although numerical aquatic life criteria have not been established. The Montana Water Quality Standards includes a general narrative standard requiring surface waters to be free from substances that create concentrations which are toxic or harmful to aquatic life. The National Pesticide Telecommunication Network (NPTN) website at <a href="http://pptn.orst.edu/tech.htm">http://pptn.orst.edu/tech.htm</a> which operates under a cooperative agreement with EPA and Oregon State University and has a wealth of information on toxicity, mobility, environmental fate on pesticides may be helpful (phone number 800-858-7378).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	The BLM should include an objective indicating that herbicides, pesticides, and other toxicants and chemicals be used in a safe manner in accordance with Federal label instructions and restrictions that allow protection and maintenance of water quality standards and ecological integrity, and avoid public health and safety problems. Management direction should include standards, guidelines and procedures that ensure threatened, endangered and sensitive species are considered whenever the use of pesticides are contemplated. Language should be included in Special Use and other permits (i.e., grazing, recreation residence, etc.) that requires the permittee to present requests of all use of pesticides on Federal lands to the BLM for review and approval.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Vegetation	<p>Plant seeds can be carried from a area by the wind, wildlife or pack animals, on equipment tires and tracks, by water, and on the boots of workers, so care should be taken to implement control procedures in all source areas to avoid spread to unaffected areas. For your information, measures we often recommend at the project level for preventing spread from source areas to uninfested areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that equipment tracks and tires are cleaned prior to transportation to an uninfested site.</li> <li>• Focus control efforts at trail heads and transportation corridors to prevent tracking of seed into uninfested areas.</li> <li>• Attempt to control the spread from one watershed to another to reduce water as a transport vector.</li> <li>• If a localized infestation exists and control is not a viable option, consider rerouting trails/roads around the infestation to reduce available vectors for spread.</li> <li>• Establish an education program for industrial and recreational users and encourage voluntary assistance in both prevention and control activities.</li> <li>• Reseed disturbed sites as soon as possible following disturbance.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	<p>Noxious weeds can be spread by vehicles. The BLM may want to consider some restrictions on vehicles to reduce potential for reinfestation of the area by noxious weeds after treatment. Also, if sufficient vegetation is killed during ground disturbing activities (e.g., by prescribed burning) it may warrant revegetation efforts. We believe that revegetation (reseeding with native grass mix) should be expanded to seed any site within the control area where the vegetation density is low enough to allow reinfestation or introduction of other noxious weeds, or erosion. The goal of the seeding program should be to establish the sustainability of the area. Where no native, rapid cover seed source exists, we recommend using a grass mixture that does not include aggressive grasses such as smooth brome, thereby allowing native species to eventually prevail. Mr. Phil Johnson, Botanist, Montana Dept. of Transportation, in Helena at 406-444-7657, may be able to provide guidance on revegetation with native grasses.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	<p>Programmatic direction should also assure that the effects of burning on the potential stimulation of noxious weeds be evaluated during site-specific project level analysis. Prescribed fire has the potential to stimulate weed growth (e.g., Dalmation toadflax or leafy spurge), and can destroy insects planted for biological weed control. Burning followed by application of appropriate herbicides can provide effective weed control. We suggest that such considerations be evaluated for during development of direction and plans for prescribed burning.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Vegetation	<p>We also note that hay can be a source of noxious weed seed. Hay/straw is used as mulch to slow erosion and encourage seed germination, and used to feed horses in hunting and recreation camps, and as wildlife feed during harsh winters. The Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 prohibits the interstate transport of noxious weeds or weed parts, such as seed. Cattle that are released on grazing allotments or horses used on public lands can transport undigested weed seed and spread it in their manure. We encourage the BLM to require use of certified weed free hay in permits or projects. Montana has a weed free certification program for hay. Another option for preventing the introduction of noxious weeds it to require cattle and horses, especially those coming from areas with noxious weeds, to be penned and fed weed free hay for several days prior to being released on public lands.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC12	Vegetation	<p>The transport mechanism for noxious weeds includes all visitors and uses of public lands including hikers, equestrians, and cattle grazing in addition to motorized recreationists. Many events including fire, floods, and the importation of invasive species also contribute to noxious weed problems. For the most part, vehicles do not have a surface texture that will pick up and hold noxious weeds seeds. Transport mechanisms based on hair, fur, manure, shoes, and fabrics are more effective than the smooth metal and plastic surfaces found on vehicles. Additionally, motorized recreationists practice the "Wash your Steeds" policy. However, closures due to noxious weed concerns are only placed on motorized recreationists.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Vegetation	<p>We have observed an equal amount of noxious weeds in non-motorized areas as there are in motorized areas. We request that the document make a fair evaluation of all sources and uses that contribute to the noxious weed problem including hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians (non-use of weed-free hay), etc. The document should also fairly evaluate how natural processes and wildlife spread noxious weeds. The document should include a balanced discussion of the noxious weed problem. The discussions, decisions and measures used to mitigate noxious weeds should be applied impartially to all visitors and with a realistic representation of noxious weeds natural ability to spread versus a relative magnitude for every human activity's contribution.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC12	Vegetation	<p>OHV owners in Montana, as part of their vehicle registration, contribute \$1.50 to a noxious weed abatement program. Non-motorized visitors do not contribute to a weed abatement program. We request that the analysis be based on a balanced discussion of the noxious weed problem. The discussions, decisions and measures used to mitigate noxious weeds should recognize the relatively minor impact that OHVs have on the noxious weed problem and credit OHV visitors for contributing to a program to control noxious weeds.</p>	Capital Trail Vehicle Assoc.
SC16	Vegetation	<p>Weeds should also be controlled. We spend time and money each year stopping weed infestations on our property only to have the seeds from weeds blow over from BLM land behind us. The goats were a good idea, but it needed more supervision.</p>	Individual

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC01	Water Quality and Watershed	I would like to state that watershed management practices are important and recommend that the plan address the controlling of vegetation that decreases or impairs long-term water quality or quantity to avoid jeopardy to Montana State water rights.	Individual
SC03	Water Quality and Watershed	We do need to monitor and protect, to a reasonable extent possible our waters and aquatic species, but this issue also should not be used as a surrogate issue to stop meaningful development of our public lands.	Individual
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	EPA's primary hydrological and aquatic species goals are maintenance and restoration of watershed health; riparian/wetlands and aquatic species protection; and achieving water quality that fully supports designated beneficial uses of surface waters, and protecting high quality waters consistent with EPA/State Antidegradation/Nondegradation Policies.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The goals and objectives of the Clean Water Act are to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters," and have "water quality which provides for protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife, and provides for recreation in and on the water." It is important that the desired condition, land allocations, management goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and prescriptions of programs and projects to be implemented through or authorized by the RMP be consistent with Clean Water Act goals and objectives.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Water Quality Standards (WQS) are the primary mechanism used to achieve Clean Water Act goals. Water Quality Standards are established by the States and approved by EPA (in accordance with 40 CFR Part 131). Water Quality Standards (WQS) include designated uses for water bodies (e.g., fishing-aquatic life, public water supply, recreation, agriculture, etc.), and narrative and numerical water quality criteria for support of the designated uses, and they protect high water quality with an Antidegradation or Nondegradation Policy. The RMP Goals, Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines should protect water quality to maintain and/or attain compliance with Montana WQS (e.g., Montana WQS are found in ARM 17.30 Subchapter 6).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	We realize that the BLM assesses and categorizes watershed condition by functioning condition (i.e., "properly functioning condition," "functioning-at-risk," "not properly functioning"). Functioning condition and support of beneficial uses are interrelated. Since the focus of the Clean Water Act and Water Quality Standards compliance is on attainment of water quality to support beneficial uses, we believe it is important to address beneficial use support as well as "proper functioning condition" in watersheds. A link between "properly functioning condition?" and full support of beneficial uses is an important component of RMP strategies that are consistent with the Clean Water Act.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Water quality impacts include chemical, physical and biological effects. Chemical effects include effects such as temperature, nutrients, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, metals, etc. Physical effects includes suspended sediment and turbidity as well as habitat impacts on stream structure and bank/channel stability, streambed substrate including seasonal and spawning habitats, pool/riffle habitat, woody debris, streambank vegetation, riparian habitats, peak flows, channel condition, and spawning and rearing habitat. Biological effects include the species and abundance of fish present, and the richness and composition of other aquatic biota and communities (e.g., macroinvertebrates, periphyton). Beneficial uses of surface waters may be impaired or stressed by any of these impacts to water quality parameters, although sediment and aquatic habitat impacts are commonly the primary water quality concerns for land management activities.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The EIS should disclose programs and processes to identify and protect the aquatic ecosystem from potential adverse effects of potential resource development activities (e.g., road construction and timber harvest, mining, grazing, OHV use, etc.). Particular attention should be directed at evaluating and disclosing the cumulative effects of increased levels of erosion and sedimentation and impacts to aquatic habitat. Effects of connected actions, such as resulting from Federal, State and private land development (e.g., timber, mining, reservoirs, recreation, transportation, etc.) should be included.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	We believe the EIS should summarize existing baseline watershed and water quality conditions. We recognize that detailed baseline information may not be readily available nor appropriate for this programmatic stage of analysis. However, the programmatic EIS should indicate how more detailed site-specific water quality and beneficial use support information would be collected prior to ground disturbing activities, since baseline water quality data and beneficial use support at the project level are key in the evaluation of impacts. We suggest that development of a framework for project level watershed/water quality analysis would be helpful to include in the RMP.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The EPA suggests that the following elements be considered for such a framework:  A) A description and analysis of surface and ground water resources (e.g., existing physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of streams, lakes, and other water bodies in the planning area; including information on Water Quality Standards, beneficial use support, impairments, pollution sources, fisheries information; etc.);  B) Clear identification of potentially affected watersheds on maps;  C) Discussion of relationships between local waters and proposed management activities.  D) A framework for future site-specific analyses such as:	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
		<p>1) Name of waterbody and name of 4th order sub-basins (5th order watersheds, and 6<sup>th</sup> order sub-watersheds, if and where possible;</p> <p>2) Length or size of waterbody and Stream order;</p> <p>3) State Water Quality Standards (WQS) and assigned beneficial use of waterbody, and whether the waterbody is currently meeting standards and supporting its beneficial use (Is waterbody on State 303(d) list?); identify the specific parameters resulting in a 303(d) listing and show how the proposed project might affect these parameters (e.g., sediment, temperature, nutrients, toxics, aquatic habitat).</p> <p>4) Information on stresses, management problems, pollutant sources, habitat capability, watershed and stream channel conditions, and hydrologic processes and natural disturbance patterns and variability.</p> <p>5) Describe soils and relate to geology, topography, landform stability and watershed sensitivity. Areas of geologic or other instability that may affect land management and water quality should be identified (areas of unstable terrain, mass soil failure problems, high erosion risk).</p> <p>6) Indicate whether the stream has particular fisheries issues and values (e.g., aquatic species habitat, condition, productivity, and quality of habitat, connectivity, spawning or nursery area, or a conservation priority or population stronghold for a listed or sensitive species; identify presence of any threatened and endangered species or species of special concern, barriers to fish migration).</p> <p>7) Identify sub-watersheds that are population strongholds for listed or proposed species or local narrow endemic species.</p> <p>8) Identify reference streams, from monitoring, that may be used to correlate baseline information and/or effects analysis, and what constitutes reference stream conditions.</p> <p>9) Delineate areas that fall within a source area for public water supply systems where there are public water supply wells within the study area (See subsequent Public Water Supply Watershed/Aquifer discussion).</p> <p>10) Information not available should be so indicated.</p>	
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The ICB Strategy says that maintaining and restoring the health of watersheds, riparian, and aquatic resources on FS administered lands are necessary to sustain aquatic and terrestrial species and provide water of sufficient quantity and quality to support beneficial uses. Strategy elements to achieve this include riparian conservation areas, management of landslide prone areas, population strongholds, multi-scale analyses, restoration prioritization, and monitoring and adaptive management. The Strategy also indicates that a successful aquatic strategy should be developed in cooperation with involved regulatory agencies, and need to identify best habitats and most robust populations to use as focal points from which populations can expand, adjacent habitat can be rehabilitated, or the last refugia of a species can be conserved. The Strategy says that units revising plans shall:</p> <p>* Identify sub-watersheds that are population strongholds for listed or proposed species or local narrow endemic species.</p> <p>* Provide management that recognizes that conservation and restoration of small watersheds will ensure short-term persistence of important aquatic populations, while conservation and restoration of habitat networks throughout large basins will provide for long-term stability, productivity, and biological diversity.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>Section 319 of the Clean Water Act addresses State nonpoint source pollution water quality assessments and management programs. These assessments identify surface water that cannot reasonable be expected to attain or maintain applicable Water Quality Standards or goals without control of non-point source pollution. The management programs identify the programs, BMPs, and other measures used by the State to reduce pollutant loadings.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The Federal consistency provisions of Section 391(k) represents an opportunity for State and Federal agencies to more closely coordinate their activities and cooperate in achieving water quality goals. If a State determines that a Federal project is not consistent with the provisions of the non-point source management program, <i>the Federal agency must make efforts to accommodate the State's concerns</i>. Executive Order 12372 provides guidelines for using the State intergovernmental review process for conducting Section 319 Federal consistency reviews.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The NEPA process should: 1) integrate provisions of Section 319; and 2) direct reduction in nonpoint source pollution through design and mitigation measures to ensure RMP consistency with the State's nonpoint source program. Consistency of the RMPs, including the programs and projects it would implement, with State Nonpoint Source Assessment and Management plans for maintenance and improvement of specific watersheds should be demonstrated. The Montana DEQ contacts for nonpoint sources issues are Robert Ray at 406-444-5319 or Carole Mackin at 406-444-7425.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The appropriate State-identified Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce potential nonpoint sources of pollution from this project's proposed activities must be designed into the alternatives under consideration and disclosed. Section 313 of the Clean Water Act requires that Federal agencies comply with State and Local pollution control requirements. Montana's Forestry BMPs can be found in the publication, <u>Montana Forestry BMPs</u> ; Extension Publications; July 1991, Montana State University; EB0096. In addition, the Montana Streamside Management Zone law and rules should be complied with (see Montana Guide to Streamside Management Zone Law & Rules, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, 2706 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59801; phone 406-542-4300).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Special attention should be made regarding Montana's identification of water bodies with impaired uses in their Clean Water Act Section 303(d) report, as well as the magnitude and sources of such impairment. Information on Montana's 303(d) listed waters can be found on-line at <a href="http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/mdm/303_d/303d_information.asp">http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/mdm/303_d/303d_information.asp</a> . The RMP and associated EIS should identify water bodies in the BLM Butte Field Office area that have been placed on the Montana 303(d) List. We suggest contacting the Montana DEQ to identify and validate waterbodies that are listed by the States as impaired or threatened (i.e., contact Robert Ray of MDEQ at 406-444-5319 or Bob Barry 406-444-5342). Stream segments designated as "water quality impaired" and/or "threatened" listed on State 303(d) lists require development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Montana's approach is to include TMDLs as one component of comprehensive Water Quality Restoration Plans (WQRPs). TMDLs/WQRPs contain seven principal components:	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The load allocations and targets established by TMDLs/WQRPs inform land managers how much sediment, nutrient or other pollutant discharge may be too much (i.e., prevent support of beneficial uses). We note that sometimes significant sources of pollutant loading occur in unlisted tributaries, and TMDLs must account for all sources of pollution, hence the need to identify and address sources throughout the watershed, including unlisted waters. A WQRP provides a means to track the health of a stream over time. If a WQRP has not restored beneficial uses within five years, the Montana DEQ conducts an assessment to determine if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* the implementation of new and improved best management practices is necessary;</li> <li>* water quality is improving but more time is needed to comply with WQS; or</li> <li>* revisions to the plan will be necessary to meet WQS.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Pending completion of a TMDL in Montana, new and expanded nonpoint source activities may commence and continue, provided those activities are conducted in accordance with "reasonable soil, land and water conservation practices"(MCA 75-5-703). The Administrative Rules of Montana (17.30.602) define these as "methods, measures, or practices that protect present and reasonably anticipated beneficial uses."	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The EPA believes land management activities carried out in the watershed of listed streams should not further degrade impaired streams, and should be consistent with WQRPs and TMDLs. Such consistency means that if pollutants maybe generated during project activities mitigation or restoration activities should also be carried out to reduce existing sources of pollution to offset or compensate for pollutants generated during project activities. Recognizing uncertainties and desiring a margin of safety, such compensation should more than offset pollutants generated, resulting in overall reductions in pollution.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and EPA are under a Court Ordered schedule to prepare TMDLs. Montana has divided the State into TMDL Planning Areas, grouping streams with similar water quality problems and land ownership as much as possible on a watershed basis. Each TMDL planning area may include 4 to 10 impaired watersheds that have specific TMDL preparation needs. The following TMDL completion schedule for the TMDL planning areas in the project area have been established:</p> <p>Upper Madison TMDL Planning Area due 2004  Lake Helena TMDL Planning Area due 2004  Upper Madison TMDL Planning Area due  Middle Madison TMDL Planning Area due 2005  Shields TMDL Planning Area due 2005  Upper TMDL Planning due 2005  Paradise TMDL Planning Area due 2005  Lower Jefferson TMDL Planning Area due 2005  Upper Boulder TMDL Planning Area due 2006  Upper Clark Fork TMDL Planning Area due 2007  Canyon Ferry TMDL Planning Area due 2007  Lower Boulder TMDL Planning Area due 2007  Lower Madison TMDL Planning Area due 2007  Lower TMDL Planning Area due 2007  East TMDL Planning Area due 2007</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The RMP and associated EIS should assure that BLM cooperates with States, Tribes, and other agencies and organizations to prioritize restoration needs, and develop and implement TMDLs and WQRPs to restore WQS and beneficial use support on impaired waters consistent with Court Ordered schedules. Most importantly, the EIS should demonstrate that management direction and proposed projects tied to the RMP will avoid further degradation of 303(d) listed waters, and be consistent with TMDLs, either developed or in development, to restore water quality for support of beneficial uses. We recommend that the BLM contact the Montana DEQ (i.e., Robert Ray, TMDL Program Manager at MDEQ at 406-444-5319 or Carole Mackin, Federal Consistency Coordinator at MDEQ at 406-444-7425) to ensure such collaboration adequately addresses TMDL requirements in the RMP and associated EIS.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The ICB Strategy indicates that restoration priorities must be considered on the broad scale and the aquatic, riparian, and hydrologic restoration needs balanced with the restoration needs of other resources and other agencies and tribes. When revising RMPs the restoration priorities identified in recovery plans, NWPPC sub-basin assessments and plans, sub-basin reviews using the guide, Ecosystem Review At the Sub-basin Scale: A Guide to Mid Scale Inquiry (August 1999) the priorities identified by the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) Biological Opinion efforts, the high priority sub-basins identified in the ICBEMP planning process, and watersheds identified to address water quality impaired (303[d]) stream segments should be evaluated, validated, and modified if necessary with the most up-to-date information.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The Strategy notes that guidance should be developed to integrate restoration objectives for aquatic habitat, riparian and hydrologic processes, terrestrial wildlife, and landscape dynamics. EPA supports coordinated planning and analysis of Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act requirements where ever possible, to integrate efforts to recover and de-list threatened and endangered species at the same time that water quality in 303(d) listed waters is restored.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>We believe there is a need to improve and increase support for watershed/water quality assessment and monitoring. The success of watershed restoration is dependent on monitoring programs that measure and evaluate progress toward achievement of watershed restoration goals. Monitoring and evaluation are necessary and crucial elements in identifying and understanding the impacts of management actions, and should be an integral part of adaptive management and RMP implementation.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>Feedback of monitoring results to managers is critical to the success of a land management plan. It is only through monitoring of actual effects that occur that the BLM will be able to determine whether: 1) goals and objectives are being met; 2) assumptions/indicators used in developing and implementing the plan are valid; and 3) effects are as predicted (i.e., addressing uncertainties); and 4) if mitigation is effective or should be increased or decreased or otherwise adjusted to be meet project goals and objectives. A properly designed monitoring plan will also quantify how well the preferred alternative resolves the issues and concerns identified during scoping, and provides the flexible program for monitoring and feedback of monitoring results to improve predictive methodology and modify mitigation.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The achievement of Water Quality Standards for nonpoint source pollution generating activities occurs through the implementation of BMPs, and although BMPs are designed to protect water quality, they need to be monitored to verify their effectiveness. If found ineffective, the BMPs need to be revised, and impacts mitigated. It is through the iterative process of developing and implementing BMPs and mitigation measures, and monitoring effectiveness of BMPs and mitigation measures, with adjustment of measures where necessary, that Water Quality Standards are achieved.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	We believe the and associated EIS should include a strong, explicit commitment to monitoring, especially watershed/water quality monitoring, such as that in the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region's Forest Monitoring and Evaluation Guide in which the Regional Forester stated, "All programs and projects should contain appropriate levels of monitoring funds in their costs or they should not be undertaken" (USDA FS 1993). EPA supports linking the approval of projects tiered to the RMP to availability of funding for conducting necessary monitoring and evaluation. The EIS should demonstrate how future decisions will affect monitoring and evaluation if financial commitments to these programs or the operating budget are reduced.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Programmatic documents provide an ideal mechanism to develop monitoring programs ultimately used through tiered documents to gather data and answer questions raised in scoping. The relationship between area wide and management area monitoring and project monitoring activities should be described. We believe the RMP and associated EIS should identify watershed/water quality assessment and monitoring programs for evaluation of watershed restoration success and achievement of proper functioning condition and beneficial use support (i.e., Water Quality Standards compliance).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The monitoring plan should address the types of surveys, parameters to be monitored, indicator species, budget, procedures for using data or results in plan implementation, and availability of results to interested and affected groups. The monitoring program should include discussion of how the three types of monitoring (implementation, effectiveness and validation monitoring) are incorporated into the BLM's adaptive management program. Information, including a contact person, should be provided on how the public can receive information on mitigation effectiveness and monitoring results.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The design of monitoring programs should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) ensure State Water Quality Standards (WQS) for support of beneficial uses are met;</li> <li>2) provide a mechanism to initiate additional measures if needed to meet State WQS;</li> <li>3) evaluate the effectiveness of the BMPs, and/or the need for additional or revised BMPs, Standards and Guidelines, other direction or need to change existing direction;</li> <li>4) evaluate the accuracy of estimates made in the analysis, including cumulative effects of the RMP and other activities on the health of the ecosystems being managed, and risk of potential damage to ecosystems (requires a companion process to take rapid protective steps when high risks are identified); and</li> <li>5) provide a feedback mechanism for future projects.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The ICB Strategy also notes that monitoring and adaptive management is an important element in maintaining and restoring the health of watersheds, riparian, and aquatic resources, and are key to achieving the short and long-term intent of the Strategy. The Strategy says a continuing process of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and incorporating new knowledge into management strategies for adjustment purposes should be used, and that management plans need to be compatible with the monitoring procedures and efforts identified by the Interagency Implementation Team (ITT) Biological Opinion efforts, ongoing efforts of the Northwest Power Planning Council, and State water quality efforts.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Wetlands are significant environmental resources that provide a wide range of important functions and values, increasing landscape and species diversity, and protecting water quality and beneficial uses. Wetlands have experienced severe cumulative losses nationally. For these reasons EPA considers the protection, enhancement, and restoration of wetlands to be a high priority. Potential impacts on wetlands include: water quality, habitat for aquatic and terrestrial life, flood storage, ground water recharge and discharge, sources of primary production, and recreation and aesthetics. Executive Order 11990 requires that all Federal Agencies protect wetlands. In addition, national wetlands policy has established an interim goal of No Overall Net Loss of the Nation's remaining wetlands, and a long-term goal of increasing quantity and quality of the Nation's wetlands resource base (for information on Federal wetlands policies see website, <a href="http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/aug93wet.htm">http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/aug93wet.htm</a> ).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The RMP should include direction to assure that projects tiered from the management plan adequately assess potential impacts on wetland functions; avoid or minimize wetlands impacts wherever possible; and compensate for unavoidable impacts through wetland restoration, creation, or enhancement. Wetland mitigations require evaluation of all less environmentally damaging project alternatives. For non-water dependent activities, such as roads, alternatives to siting roads in aquatic areas, including wetlands, are presumed to be available unless demonstrated otherwise.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The RMP and associated EIS should recognize that discharge of fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States is regulated by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1344, which is administered jointly by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA. Section 404 permits from the Corps of Engineers are required where dredge or fill activity is proposed in waters of the United States. Section 404(f)(1)(A) exempts the discharge of dredged or fill material from silvicultural activities such as harvesting of forest products 404 permit requirements unless the flow and circulation of navigable waters is impaired or the reach reduced. We recommend that the RMP ensure consultation with the Corps of Engineers where appropriate to determine applicability of 404 permit requirements and silvicultural exemptions to specific project level forest construction activities in or near streams or wetlands, (e.g., contact Mr. Allan Steinle of Corps Montana Office in Helena at 406-441-1375). The 404(b)(1) Guidelines (found at 40 CFR Part 230) and Corps of Engineers, EPA, and USFWS Wetland Specialists should be consulted to provide specific environmental criteria and guidance when projects need a 404 permit. We encourage the BLM to assure that projects tied to the RMP delineate and mark perennial seeps and springs and wetlands on maps and on the ground before disturbance so that disturbance to such areas can be avoided.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Riparian habitats, similar to wetlands, are important ecological areas supporting many species of western wildlife. Riparian areas are sometimes functional wetlands, but may or may not be designated as jurisdictional wetlands under the <u>Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual</u> , Technical Report Y-87-1, January 1987, Final Report and its guidance on implementation. Riparian areas generally lack the amount or duration of water usually present in wetlands, yet are "wetter" than adjacent uplands. Riparian areas increase landscape and species diversity, and are often critical to the protection of water quality and beneficial uses. EPA considers the protection, improvement, and restoration of riparian areas to be a high priority.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The ICB Strategy indicates that riparian conservation areas or appropriate direction need to be identified in BLM management plans based on the best available science and appropriate ecological and geomorphic criteria. The Strategy says direction must include elements to:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Achieve physical integrity of aquatic ecosystems;</li> <li>* Provide an amount and distribution of woody debris sufficient to sustain physical and biological complexity;</li> <li>* Provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation;</li> <li>* Provide appropriate amounts and distributions of source habitats for riparian- or wetland-dependent species; and</li> <li>* Restore or maintain water quality and hydrologic processes.</li> <li>* Restore or maintain naturally functioning riparian vegetation communities</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	EPA believes RMPs should include direction that assures that projects tiered from the management plan adequately assess the potential impacts on riparian functions shown above, and protect those functions. Direction should promote mitigation and/or enhancement of riparian areas (BMPs, treatments, buffer zones, rehabilitations, etc.). We support establishment of riparian conservation areas (i.e., buffer zones) to avoid adverse impacts to streams and riparian areas, and that promote recovery of native fish populations into the RMP. We note that temperature effects from riparian canopy/shade removal can persist downstream for significant distance in some small stream systems (e.g., up to 10km).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Source Water for many public water supplies (PWSs) originates on Federal lands. Public Water Supply owners and operators are responsible for the quality of surface and ground water supplies and need to be advised of RMP revisions. Effects to water quality of source watersheds for Public Water Supplies caused by projects and programs implemented through RMPs must be disclosed.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	The 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act require all States with primary enforcement authority for public water supply supervision programs (such as Montana) to carry out a source water assessment program for all public water systems (PWSs) within the State. Information on source water assessments can be found on the Montana DEQ website at, <a href="http://deq.state.mt.us/ppa/swp/">http://deq.state.mt.us/ppa/swp/</a> . It may also be of interest to know that there is a Memorandum of Understanding among several Federal Agencies, including USDOJ, in support of this program, called the Federal Multi-Agency Source Water Agreement, that can be found on the web at, <a href="http://cleanwater.gov/swa/">http://cleanwater.gov/swa/</a> . In addition there is a USFS document entitled, "Drinking Water from Forests and Grasslands", General Technical Report SRS-39, that is meant for the Forest Manager, that may be of interest.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	Ground water under a project area may serve as a drinking water supply and/or a recharge source of nearby surface water bodies. Contamination from forest management activities could have an adverse public health or ecological impact on such resources. Management direction should assure that ground water is adequately protected from risks (e.g., use of mitigation measures and barriers). The discussion of ground water protection may include; identification, characterization and mapping of aquifers and confining beds; definition of flow system recharge (i.e., recharge and discharge areas, flow direction); identification of current and anticipated ground water uses (e.g., domestic, municipal, industrial); and listing BMPs to be used as barriers for aquifer protection.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>We recommend that RMPs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Identify the locations of drinking water sources (i.e., surface water intakes, ground water wells) for Public Water Supplies affected by activities caused by the RMPs;</li> <li>* Identify activities that may impact the quality of the identified surface or ground water source (e.g., turbidity, total organic carbon, organic chemicals, inorganic chemicals; bacteriological/viral/pathogenic organisms, pesticides, radionuclides, herbicides, etc; streamflow characteristics potentially affecting water quality like channel stability, etc);</li> <li>* Disclose measures (i.e., management prescriptions, standards, guidelines, BMPs, barriers, etc.) designed to protect water quality of the affected sources;</li> <li>* Review agency programs, permits and projects to identify and categorize risks to Public Water Supplies require special considerations. Review or establish a monitoring program to determine whether established RMP guidance adequately protects drinking water delivered to Public Water Supplies or if additional measures are needed;</li> <li>* For projects and programs having high risks for pollution (such as oil and gas, cyanide heap leach) to sources of drinking water, escrow accounts adequate for protection. Emergency cleanup and proper post-operation rehabilitation are strongly recommended.</li> <li>* Include language in RMP areawide standards that requires separate NEPA analysis and approval of any proposed application of toxic substances.</li> </ul>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC15	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>American Wildlands has completed an Aquatic Integrity Area (AIA) analysis for the Upper Missouri, Upper Yellowstone, and Upper Columbia watersheds, in addition to a River Integrity Analysis (RIA) for the Upper Missouri River and the Upper Clark Fork Basin. <b>Appropriate AIA and RIA maps that correlate with the Butte BLM Field Office are attached.</b> These maps geographically identify high quality watersheds, crossing federal, state and private land ownership boundaries, thus including all lands situated in the Butte Field Office within their overall ecological and landscape context. American Wildlands encourages the BLM to utilize the data and maps created in this process to identify high quality watersheds needing special protection and lower quality watersheds requiring restoration/remediation. The AIA and RIA maps can also be used to identify river and stream eligibility for Wild and Scenic designation, identify aquatic areas for ACEC designation, and to highlight appropriate aquatic areas and streams for native species protection and restoration.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>When a network of aquatic strongholds and high integrity main-stem rivers are identified, such as those identified by the AIA/RIA studies, management standards should be applied that both provide rigorous protection against damage from vehicles, and appropriate restoration to allow recovery from past damage. The analyses can also be used to help assess the impacts from various management alternatives in the RMP process. The RMP's water quality analysis should determine the effects of each alternative on the AIA Rank1 and 2 watersheds and on the RIA Tier 1 and 2 river segments within the analysis area. These two rating systems are useful for analysis purposes, because unless these high quality watersheds and river segments are protected, aquatic biodiversity is threatened in the Butte Field Office.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>Based on our Upper Missouri River Basin RIA, we request the RMP provide the strongest of protections for all tributaries in the Butte Field Area that flow into Prickly Pear Creek and similar strict protections for the portion of Prickly Pear Creek that crosses the Butte Field Area. Prickly Pear Creek is identified in the RIA as a Tier 1 water of highest integrity and conservation value. Medicine Rock Creek, which flows on the Butte Field Office and is a tributary to Prickly Pear Creek, has been identified by the Field Office has a water of poor condition, due largely to past placer mining and non-native fish stocking. Due to its influence and potential negative impacts on the current high water quality of Prickly Pear Creek, the RMP must provide for restoration plans to ameliorate the poor condition of Medicine Rock Creek and restore this water to a higher integrity, in order to preserve the current excellent condition of main-stem Prickly Pear Creek.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The BLM, pursuant to the Clean Water Act's protection and restoration rubric, must consider water quality that is above water quality standards and water quality that is below water quality standards. Water that is above water quality standards comes under the antidegradation rubric, and water that is below standards comes under the water quality limited rubric.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Water Quality and Watershed	<p>The state already has over 900 waterbodies that are considered polluted and in need of clean-up plans (Total Maximum Daily Loads, or TMDLs). See <u>Friends of the Wild Swan v. Browner</u>, 130 F.Supp. 2d, 1184-1207 (D. Mont). These waters do not support some or all of their designated uses, such as drinking water, agriculture, cold or warm water fishery, and primary or secondary recreation. The Butte Field Office must disclose the list of impaired watersheds within analysis area. Until TMDLs are completed for WQLS streams in the Field Area, additional impairments should cause no harm.</p>	American Wildlands
SC01	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>The plan needs to recognize that it is not the intention of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to restore all of the original habitat once occupied by the species, but only the amount needed to conserve the species.</p>	Individual
SC01	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>The plan needs to recognize that recovery plans and experimental populations for introduced, threatened, and endangered species grow exponentially beyond boundaries and scope and result in detrimental affects on the area economy, lifestyle, culture and heritage.</p>	Individual

<b>Letter ID</b>	<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Comment Summary</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
SC03	Wildlife and Fisheries	Concerns over special status species should not override productive use of public lands, nor access to these lands. Do not allow special interest groups (professional protest groups) to use the endangered species act to inhibit meaningful development of our public lands.	Individual
SC07	Wildlife and Fisheries	Another issue. Livestock fences on public land. BLM should read the manual H-1741-1 and the Red Rim decree in Wyoming and the Unlawful Inclosures Act of 1885 as well as the State statutes for a legal fence in Montana. High tensile fences that have several wires and are electrified are detrimental to big game animals. Your Dillon office has a track record of approving and constructing these fences on public land for domestic bison grazing with little regard for big game animals. No warning signs on public land as well as warning signs for high voltage wires. Bottom wires lower than 16" as required in the BLM manual. Turner Enterprises Inc. has a strong grip on the Dillon BLM office.	Individual
SC07	Wildlife and Fisheries	The high pole fence west of the Bighole River is a serious concern. Problems with the free movement of bighorn sheep, elk and mule deer have already been identified with this fence. The fence was constructed by the Silverbow Club an out-of -state cooperation involved in real estate and sub-division. Fences detrimental to wildlife and public land access should be modified and/or removed. That must be in the RMP and E.I.S.	Individual
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	The EPA believes the RMP should provide for protection and conservation of wildlife, including conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species, and diversity of plant and animal communities.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	The ICB Strategy identifies the BLM responsibility to provide habitat for productive and diverse populations of terrestrial wildlife species thereby contributing to; 1) diversity of plant and animal species; 2) recovery of listed species; and 3) societal use of plant and animal populations, including wildlife viewing, hunting, harvest, and satisfaction of Tribal treaty rights. The Strategy indicates that management plan direction needs to address maintenance and restoration of habitats that have declined substantially, and address multi-scale analyses, road management, exotic species, and monitoring and adaptive management.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	It is important that the RMP and associated EIS provide wildlife direction consistent with the ICB strategy, and that demonstrates coordination with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Management plan direction should address maintenance and restoration of degraded habitats. The EIS should assure that alternatives and analyses address issues such as: existing quality and capacity of wildlife habitat; security, displacement, fragmentation, connectivity; maintenance of wildlife movement corridors/trails; road access, forest openings; edge effects and impacts upon species of special concern, sensitive, and T&E species. Estimated reductions in impact from mitigation should also be addressed.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	EPA very much protection of old growth habitats that maintain and restore large, native, late-seral overstory trees and forest composition and structure within ranges of historic natural variability (e.g., Ponderosa pine). We note that historic range of variability (HRV) concepts may be more relevant at broad scales rather than site-specific scales. Lands outside the Federal land boundary have often not been managed for the late-seral or old growth component, so BLM lands may need to contribute more to the late-seral component to compensate for the loss of this component on other land ownerships within an ecoregion. The RMP and associated EIS should consider vegetation succession regimes (early, mid, late seral) relative to historic ranges at the broad landscape scale in development of revised management direction.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	Old growth tree stands are ecologically diverse and provide good breeding and feeding habitat for many bird and animal species, which have a preference or dependence on old growth (e.g., barred owl, great gray owl, pileated woodpecker). Much old growth habitat has been lost. It is important that management direction prevent continued loss of this habitat and promote long-term sustainability of old growth stands, and restore where possible the geographic extent and connectivity of old growth (e.g., using passive and active management-such as avoiding harvest of old growth trees, leaving healthy larger and older seral species trees, thinning and underburning to reduce fuel loads and ladder fuels in old growth while enhancing old growth characteristics). In addition old growth should be defined (e.g., specify large tree age, trees/acres greater than certain DBH, etc., Does old growth vary depending upon forest type?).	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	We also fully support the retention of adequate snags and coarse woody debris on the ground for wildlife habitat and necessary ecological structure and functioning (including soil productivity and nutrient cycling). We believe revised RMP direction should assure that projects tied to the RMPs analyze and disclose impacts of management on snag habitat and large woody debris. Direction for snag retention and large woody debris requirements should be described, and should help restore these declining habitat characteristics.	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Threatened or endangered species on the BLM Butte Field Office area should be identified (e.g., grizzly bear, bald eagle, lynx, gray wolf, bull trout, etc.). If the proposed management direction could affect threatened or endangered species the final EIS should include the Biological Assessment and the associated USFWS or NMFS Biological Opinion or formal concurrence for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) NEPA requires public involvement and full disclosure of all issues upon which a decision is to be made;</li> <li>(2) The CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA strongly encourage the integration of NEPA requirements with other environmental review and consultation requirements so that all such procedures run concurrently rather than consecutively (40 CFR 1500.2[c] and 1502.25); and</li> <li>(3) The Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process can result in the identification of reasonable and prudent alternatives to preclude jeopardy, and mandated reasonable and prudent measures to reduce incidental take. These can affect project implementation.</li> </ol>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Since the Biological Assessment and EIS must evaluate the potential impacts on listed species, they can jointly assist in analyzing the effectiveness of alternatives and mitigation measures. EPA recommends that the final EIS and Record of Decision not be completed prior to the completion of ESA consultation. If the consultation process is treated as a separate process, the Agencies risk USFWS identification of additional significant impacts, new mitigation measures, or changes to the preferred alternative. If these changes have not been evaluated in the final EIS, a supplement to the EIS would be warranted.</p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC11	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Biodiversity may be a critical consideration for new projects, major construction or when special habitats (i.e., wetlands, threatened and endangered species habitat) will be affected. The state of the art for this issue is changing rapidly. CEQ prepared guidance entitled, "Incorporating Biodiversity Considerations Into Environmental Impact Analysis Under the National Environmental Policy Act," <a href="http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/tools/guidance/Guidance-PDFs/iii-9.pdf">http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/tools/guidance/Guidance-PDFs/iii-9.pdf</a></p>	U.S. EPA, Region 8, Montana Office
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>The RMP planning process offers the Butte Field Office a prime opportunity to address the adverse impacts to impaired watersheds in the Butte Field Area. Travel management will be a key component of RMP revision. We expect the water quality analysis to address special protection for aquatic strongholds, restoration of water quality limited streams listed on Montana's 303(d) list of impaired streams, site-specific impacts to water quality and fish travel management, and native fish habitat protections and restoration, with particular efforts provided to restore native westslope cutthroat trout populations, and protect the few pure populations of WCT that currently survive on the Butte Field Area.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Generally, Butte Field Office lands contain a few islands of healthy aquatic ecosystems in a sea of degradation. Consequently, areas where aquatic ecosystems are considered healthy should be recognized and treated as irreplaceable ecological treasures. Aquatic strongholds are watersheds that exhibit high biological integrity, including a high representation of native species, contain intact or rare aquatic habitats, and have a high likelihood of sustaining ecological through time. They also can include discrete areas within a larger, fragmented watershed that because of exemplary management, difficult access, or simple chance continue to support vulnerable aquatic taxa despite their small size and isolation from functional watersheds. Although these disjunct areas generally do not have a high likelihood on their own of sustaining ecological function through time, they typically harbor an important population of an imperiled taxa or an important community complex that may be crucial to ultimate recovery.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>A November 2001 study by the Western Native Trout Campaign found that of the 14 subspecies of native cutthroat remaining in the Western US, virtually all of them now occupy less than 5 percent of their historic range (Kessler et al., 2001). The study concluded that poorly maintained roads, along with non-native species introductions, were the primary culprits responsible for these precipitous and widespread declines. In addition to finding that roads were a major threat to native fish, the study also found that most of the best remaining strongholds for native fish were located in roadless areas. Protection of the BLM's Wilderness Study Areas is key to aquatic recovery and protections. The RMP should allow no motorized use in the Field Offices WSAs.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>The BLM Field Office contains waterbodies with native fish species. Several of these species are sensitive, threatened or endangered. The RMP revision analysis must identify, protect and restore all native fish streams.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>In the RMP revision analysis please include a detailed analysis of how the proposed analysis area would impact migration corridors for wildlife species. In order to maintain wildlife habitat connectivity on public lands it is critical to consider improvements in habitat security by motorized access control and maintenance of visual cover, especially along riparian zones. Maintain secure habitat up to private land boundaries and up to highways. The following are some suggestions on how to manage public lands to ensure habitat connectivity:</p> <p><b>1) Use the least-cost-path corridor model (see attached AWL maps) as the basis for managing and preserving connecting habitat:</b></p>	American Wildlands

<u>Letter ID</u>	<u>Comment Category</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
		<p>a) high quality habitat (HQ) as depicted on the included maps should be left undisturbed, b) medium quality (MQ) habitat should be managed to minimize human disturbance and habitat alteration.</p> <p><b>2) Manage corridor areas as critical habitat for Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TE&amp;S) species.</b> These areas should be managed conservatively as habitat for these species whether they are currently residents or not; most of the larger wildlife species are highly mobile and lack of recent observational data does not mean that an area will not be used in the future.</p> <p><b>3) Maintain the integrity and un-motorized character of all roadless areas within the region.</b> These areas have been found to be key areas of habitat for important species and are functional links between the three large core reserves.</p> <p><b>4) Maintain at least two (separate as much as possible) alternative routes between each of the large core reserves.</b> At least this level of redundancy is necessary in case unforeseen circumstances create barriers to movement across one of the alternate routes.</p> <p><b>5) Maintain a corridor core of HQ habitat approximately 5 km in width, with a 5 km buffer zone of MQ and/or low quality (LQ) habitat on either side of the core.</b> Both the core and the buffer zone constitute the corridor. Within the core and buffer zone, human activities with known adverse effects on important wildlife species should be minimized. Such activities include ORVs, road building, commercial timber harvesting, mining, and oil and gas field development.</p> <p>a) no single square mile section in this corridor should exceed the 1 mi./square mi. standard for grizzly bear security.</p> <p>b) the core habitat should approach the 0.75 mi./square mi. standard for elk security habitat. New roadbuilding should be excluded and existing roads should be removed to conform to these standards.</p> <p>c) minimize motorized use of any remaining roads within the corridor.</p> <p>d) off-road motorized vehicle use should be prohibited within the corridor.</p> <p>e) closures of existing roads and trails to all uses should be a management option seasonally or in localized areas if there is known use of an area by TE&amp;S species.</p> <p><b>6) No segment of the corridor core should be less than 1 km wide (500 m to either side of the centerline);</b> a minimum distance for adverse effects upon grizzly bears. Since wildlife corridors are narrow and vulnerable, they must be managed with extreme caution. High road densities, high levels of human activity and motorized recreation are all activities/management situations of concern for connectivity. Special management prescriptions may need to be established to ensure that connectivity continues to exist.</p>	
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Important areas for connectivity on the Butte Field District include 1) the Sleeping Giant/Holter Lake area around Interstate 15; 2) the scattered parcels of land around McDonald Pass on Hwy. 12; 3) the Sugarloaf Creek area on both sides of I-15 north of Boulder; 4) the Dry Creek area south of Boulder; 5) lands south of Bull Mountain; 6) the Pipestone area north and south of I-90; and 7) the Humbug Spires area around I-15. These site-specific wildlife corridors should receive standards and guidelines to protect habitat connectivity and security. Additionally, depending on which wide-ranging wildlife species are likely to use each corridor or linkage zone, their habitat needs should be considered. American Wildlands would like the BLM to look at road densities, cover, travel management, land exchanges, etc. to evaluate if any changes are needed to improve wildlife movement habitat.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>On a regional scale, wildlife may move along corridors of whole mountain ranges. For example, regional connectivity between Yellowstone and the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem includes the Gallatin, Bridger, Big Belt, Boulder, and Bull mountain ranges. At this scale, it will be important for the RMP to include District-wide goals and objectives that require analysis for landscape planning or site-specific projects to ensure that both fine-scale and regional scale corridors are not impacted by proposed activities. The RMP analysis process should also identify problem areas and assess whether there are any current blockages for linkage on the Forest.</p>	American Wildlands
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>The Centennial Valley and Mountains supports a wide variety of animal life. Assemblages of amphibians and reptiles, birds, mammals, and fish can all be found in the project area. Wide-ranging species such as mule deer, elk, pronghorn, coyotes, bears, wolverine, and lynx are believed to occupy lands in or near Alaska Basin. Sightings of gray wolf occur periodically and a pack of Yellowstone wolves visited the valley in 1998. Grizzly bears, a federally listed threatened species, regularly visit the mountains surrounding the valley. Canada lynx, a threatened species, also inhabit mountains surrounding the valley. Wolverine, a species of special concern, were recently photographed on Mt. Jefferson, adjacent to the proposed ACEC. Three major populations of elk (Wall Creek, Blacktail, and Basin-Sage Creek populations) winter to the north and move through Alaska Basin to utilize the Centennial Mountains during the spring, summer or autumn season.</p>	American Wildlands
		<p>Lemhi Pass, and the lands that surround it, contain diverse wildlife habitat, including large blocks of critical elk winter range, moose habitat, critical deer and antelope winter range as well as important seasonal migration habitat. The subject area provides some habitat for lynx and wolverine. There have been reports of wolf sightings on BLM lands across the Divide in Idaho.</p>	

<b><u>Letter ID</u></b>	<b><u>Comment Category</u></b>	<b><u>Comment Summary</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>
SC15	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Manage corridor areas as critical habitat for Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TE&amp;S) species. These areas should be managed conservatively as habitat for these species whether they are currently residents or not; most of the larger wildlife species are highly mobile and lack of recent observational data does not mean that an area will not be used in the future.</p> <p>Wildlife connectivity should be considered as a dominant use of the area during the next travel management decision-making process.</p> <p>Human activities with known adverse effects on important wildlife species should be minimized. Such activities include road building, commercial timber harvesting, mining and oil and gas field development.</p> <p>a) no single square mile section should exceed the 1 mi./square mi. standard for grizzly bear security.  b) habitat should approach the 0.75 mi./square mi. standard for elk security habitat. New roadbuilding should be excluded and existing roads should be removed to conform to these standards.  c) minimize motorized use on any remaining roads and trails.  d) off-road motorized vehicle use should be prohibited.  e) closures of existing roads and trails to all uses should be a management option seasonally or in localized areas if there is known use of an area by TE&amp;S species.</p>	American Wildlands
SC18	Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>Please feel free to have your specialists contact me if they would like to discuss wildlife distribution, seasonal use, movement corridors in the area north of Butte to Wolf Creek and between the Continental Divide and Interstate 15 (as well as the Sleeping Giant area).</p>	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks