

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-040-1610-00]

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Idaho.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the Challis Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

SUMMARY: The Idaho State Director, Bureau of Land Management, has documented her approval of the Challis Resource Management Plan through a Record of Decision signed July 29, 1999.

Pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR part 1600), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Upper Columbia—Salmon Clearwater District prepared and analyzed a Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (BLM, May 1996) and Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (Proposed RMP) (BLM, October 1998) for the Challis Resource Area. Following a 30-day public protest period and 60-day Governor's consistency review of the Proposed RMP, the BLM prepared, published, and distributed the Challis Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP) (BLM, July 1999). Changes to the Proposed RMP which are incorporated in the approved RMP are listed in the Record of Decision portion of the ROD/RMP document. When compared with the Proposed RMP, the approved RMP clarifies the wording of several decisions, maintains the existing off-highway vehicle use for the Dry Creek Road (rather than closing the road to OHV use), updates beneficial use information for surface waters within the planning area, and adds information about current authorized grazing use in the Challis Resource Area.

DATES: Implementation of the Challis RMP will begin as of September 9, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Challis ROD/RMP document may be obtained upon request by contacting the Bureau of Land Management at Route 2, Box 610, Salmon, Idaho 83467; phone (208) 756-5400.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Further information about the Challis RMP and Record of Decision for the Plan may be obtained by contacting Kathe Rhodes, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management, Route 2, Box 610, Salmon, Idaho 83467; phone (208) 756-5440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Challis RMP describes the BLM's plan for managing the approximately 792,657 acres of BLM public lands in the Challis Resource Area, located in Custer and Lemhi counties of east-central Idaho. More specifically, the Challis RMP presents the resource condition objectives, land use allocations, and management actions and direction to guide resource management of the Challis Resource Area on a long-term sustainable basis during the next 15 to 20 years. The Challis RMP replaces the three Management Framework Plans previously used by the Challis Resource Area. It also amends the Little Lost-Birch Creek Management Framework Plan (MFP) (BLM 1981), administered by the Upper Snake River District—BLM, by designating 4,714 acres of lands described in the MFP as part of the Donkey Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

The Challis RMP describes the BLM's Wild and Scenic River suitability findings for rivers within the Challis Resource Area and designates 88,206 acres of public lands as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). The RMP continues to designate seven existing ACEC's (12,236 acres) and also designates seven new ACECs (75,970 acres). These 14 ACECs are designated in order to highlight the following resources for management and protection: unique plant communities, paleontological resources; fragile soils; a geologic area of interest; unique riparian habitats; fisheries habitats; roadless, primitive, and scenic values; crucial bighorn sheep and elk habitats; and unique cultural resources. The ACECs include a total of approximately 9,846 acres of Research Natural Areas (RNAs) which are designated to maintain native plant communities, special status species, and rare/endemic species in a natural condition for study purposes.

Dated: September 1, 1999.

Ted Graf,

Acting District Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-020-1310-00]

Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment, "Management for Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawn Lands Restored to Bureau of Land Management Jurisdiction in the Cody Field Office Planning Area," and Finding of No Significant Impact, for Public Review and Comment; and Notification of Open House

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The environmental assessment (EA) addresses four alternatives for managing about 150,000 acres of Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawn Lands that have been restored to Bureau of Land Management jurisdiction in the BLM's Cody Field Office Administrative Area in north central Wyoming. The restored lands are primarily in the YU Bench and Chapman Bench areas of Wyoming's Bighorn Basin. The Preferred Alternative in the EA describes planning decisions for the future multiple-use management of the restored lands and represents a proposed amendment to the Cody Resource Management Plan (RMP) (BLM 1990). Based on the analysis summarized in the EA, it has been determined that the impacts are not expected to be significant and that an environmental impact statement is not needed. An open house is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14 at the Cody Field Office for discussion of the EA and Preferred Alternative.

DATES: Reviewers will have 30 (thirty) days after this notice of availability (NOA) of the EA is published in the **Federal Register** to submit protests on the proposed decision (Preferred Alternative) as provided by 43 CFR 1610.5-2. All parts of the proposed decision may be protested. Protests shall be filed with the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, Attention: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator, WO-210/LS-1075, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

The same 30-day time period will be allowed for commenting on the proposed decision, other elements of the EA, and the Finding of No Significant Impact; and a 60-day time period, beginning on the same date, will be allowed for review and comment on potential area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) designations (see 43