

resources. Preliminary planning criteria include:

1. Lands addressed in the RMP will be public lands (including split estate lands) managed by the BLM. There will be no decisions in the RMP for lands not managed by the BLM.

2. The BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where possible, to determine the desired future condition of public lands.

3. The BLM will ensure compliance with all applicable local, state, tribal, and Federal air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans and include an analysis of climate change.

4. Areas potentially suitable for ACECs and other special management designations will be identified and brought forward for analysis in the RMP. Public nominations will be requested.

5. All river segments will be considered, and determinations of eligibility, suitability, tentative classification, and protective management will be made in accordance with Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and BLM Manual Section 8351. Public nominations will be requested.

6. Herd Areas will be identified and boundaries for Wild Horse Herd Management Areas will be addressed in the plan.

7. Decisions of the RMP will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the legislation designating the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.

Parties interested in leasing and development of Federal coal in the planning area should provide coal resource data for their area(s) of interest. Specifically, information is requested on the location, quality, and quantity of Federal coal with development potential, and on surface resource values related to the 20 coal unsuitability criteria described in 43 CFR part 3461. This information will be used for any necessary updating of coal screening determinations (43 CFR 3420.1–4) in the Decision Area and in the environmental analysis. You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria in writing to the BLM at any public scoping meeting, or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above. To be most helpful, you should submit comments before the close of the comment period or within 15 days after the last public meeting. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your

personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. The minutes and list of attendees for each scoping meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days after the meeting to any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed. The BLM will evaluate identified issues to be addressed in the plan, and will place them into one of three categories:

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

The BLM will provide an explanation in the Draft RMP/EIS as to why an issue was placed in category two or three. The public is also encouraged to help identify any management questions and concerns that should be addressed in the plan. 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 BLM will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning process: rangeland management, air quality, minerals and geology, forestry, outdoor recreation, archaeology, paleontology, wildlife and fisheries, lands and realty, hydrology, soils, sociology and economics, wildland fire, and public affairs.

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1501.7 and 43 CFR 1610.2. Approved:

**Jeff Rawson,**

*Associate State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[LLNMA02000 L16100000.XH0000]

#### Notice of Availability of Record of Decision for the Socorro Field Office Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement, New Mexico

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD)/Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Socorro Field Office located in Socorro and Catron Counties, New Mexico. The State Director signed the ROD on August 20, 2010, which constitutes the final decision of the BLM and makes the Approved RMP effective immediately.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the ROD/ Approved RMP are available upon request from the Field Manager, Socorro Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 901 S. Highway 85, Socorro, New Mexico 87801 or via the Internet at <http://www.blm.gov/nm>. Copies of the ROD/Approved RMP are also available for public inspection at the Socorro Public Library located at 401 Park Street, Socorro, New Mexico.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information, contact Kevin Carson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, telephone 575–838–1280; address Socorro Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 901 S. Highway 85, Socorro, New Mexico 87801; e-mail [Kevin\\_I\\_Carson@nm.blm.gov](mailto:Kevin_I_Carson@nm.blm.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Approved RMP provides direction for the long-term management of 1.5 million surface acres of public land and 6 million acres of Federal mineral estate public land within Socorro and Catron Counties and revises the 1989 Socorro RMP. Collaborative planning was used throughout the development of the RMP, which included public meetings, mailings, and other outreach activities. Catron County and the Pueblo of Zuni were cooperating agencies.

Six issues are addressed in the Approved RMP. The issues include:

- (1) Special designations, such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern;
- (2) Improving soil and vegetation conditions at the watershed level;
- (3) Fluid and solid mineral development;
- (4) Travel and transportation (*e.g.*, off-highway vehicle use, mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding);
- (5) Land-use allocations and initiatives (*e.g.*, land tenure, right-of-way corridors, and areas where public and private lands abut one another); and
- (6) Regional heritage/tourism opportunities on the BLM-managed public land. Management actions in the Approved RMP consequently address those issues by program and resource area, including special designations, soil and water resources; vegetation and land health; wildlife, riparian and special status species; recreation,

cultural, visual, paleontological, and recreation resources; lands and realty; nonrenewable and renewable energy development; wilderness; and transportation and travel management.

On April 16, 2007, the BLM New Mexico released the Draft RMP/EIS for a 90-day public comment period concurrent with a Notice of Availability, which was published in the **Federal Register**. The BLM New Mexico conducted public hearings on the Draft RMP/EIS and analyzed public comments received. Minor modifications and technical changes were made to the Preferred Alternative, which was carried forward as the Proposed Alternative (Alternative B) in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

The BLM New Mexico released the Proposed RMP/Final EIS for a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review and 30-day protest period on December 5, 2008. The BLM New Mexico modified one decision in the Approved RMP as a result of the Governor's Consistency Review. The Governor's letter stated that the BLM's land tenure and fluid mineral decisions regarding a state-designated conservation easement at Horse Springs Ranch were inconsistent with the purposes of the Conservation Easement (CE), which is to protect wildlife habitat. In light of the Governor's letter, the State Director modified Alternative B by selecting the lands and realty decision in the No Action Alternative, which will retain the BLM scattered parcels (3,856 acres) within the CE boundary. This decision meets the objectives of the State's CE. With regard to the Governor's concerns about the potential impacts that fluid mineral leasing decisions may have within the area of the State's Horse Springs Conservation Easement ("CE"), the State Director maintains the discretion to decline to issue leases on a case-by-case basis. In recognition of the particular resource concerns of this CE, the State Director will carefully exercise this discretion for any lease proposal in the surface area covered by the CE. After the issuance of this ROD, the BLM will undertake a plan amendment process to consider closing the area covered by the CE to fluid mineral leasing.

The BLM received three protests on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The protests raised issues regarding rangeland resources, lands with wilderness characteristics, and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (Trail). As a result of the protests, minor editorial modifications and technical clarifications were made in the ROD and in the Approved RMP.

The first modification concerns lands with wilderness characteristics. After review of the wilderness protest, an error in the original wilderness inventory was identified in one small area within a unit the protestor had proposed as having wilderness characteristics. Approximately 600 acres of BLM public land was found to contain wilderness characteristics because they adjoin the Chupadera Wilderness, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages. Therefore, the BLM will select Alternative C for this area, which has a higher level of protection through a Lands and Realty decision. The BLM will issue this ROD and subsequently initiate a Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and supporting NEPA analysis to further address this area's wilderness characteristics. The RMPA process will include opportunities for public participation. The second modification concerns the Trail and future opportunities for trail routing. The decision reflects a map revision in the final RMP by adopting portions of Alternative C and the No Action Alternative, lands suitable for disposal in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. This modified decision will provide more options for the future protection of the Trail.

Following modification of the aforementioned decisions and review of the protests, it was determined that the Socorro Field Manager followed all applicable procedures, laws, regulations, and policies, and considered all relevant resource factors, as well as public input in developing the Socorro RMP. Therefore, the protests were dismissed.

Decisions identifying routes of travel within designated areas for motorized vehicles are implementation decisions, and are appealable under 43 CFR part 4. These decisions are contained in Appendix J of the Approved RMP. Any party adversely affected by the proposed route identifications may appeal within 30 days of publication of this Notice of Availability pursuant to 43 CFR, part 4, subpart E. The appeal should state the specific route(s), as identified in Appendix J of the Approved RMP, on which the decision is being appealed. The appeal must be filed with the Socorro Field Office Manager at the above listed address. Please consult the appropriate regulations (43 CFR, part 4, subpart E) for further appeal requirements.

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1506.6(b)(2).

**Jesse Juen,**

*Associate State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[SDM 99842]

#### Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting; South Dakota

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service has filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requesting that the Secretary of the Interior withdraw 50 acres of National Forest System land from mining to protect the recreational uses and improvements within this portion of the Steamboat Rock Picnic Grounds. This notice also gives an opportunity to comment on the proposed action and to request a public meeting.

**DATES:** Comments and requests for a public meeting must be received by December 9, 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments and meeting requests should be sent to the Forest Supervisor, Black Hills National Forest, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, South Dakota 57730 or the BLM Montana State Director, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, Montana 59101.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Valerie Hunt, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 303-275-5071 or Sandra Ward, BLM Montana State Office, 406-896-5052.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The USDA Forest Service has filed an application with the BLM pursuant to Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1714, to withdraw the following-described National Forest System land within the Black Hills National Forest from location or entry under the United States mining laws (30 U.S.C. Ch. 2) for a period of 20 years, subject to valid existing rights:

#### Black Hills National Forest

*Black Hills Meridian*

Steamboat Picnic Grounds

T. 2 N., R. 5 E.,

Sec. 1, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ .