DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management


AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a combined Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument within the Billings Field Office of the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Office and by this notice is announcing the opening of the comment period.

DATES: To ensure that comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the draft RMP/EIS within 90 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes this notice of the draft RMP/EIS in the Federal Register. The BLM will announce future meetings or hearings and any other public participation activities at least 15 days in advance through public notices, media releases, and/or mailings.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument draft RMP/EIS by any of the following methods:
- Email: BLM_Mt_Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov
- Fax: 406–896–5281
- Mail: Bureau of Land Management, Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101

Copies of the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument draft RMP/EIS are available in the Billings Field Office at the above address or may be viewed at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/billings_field_office/rmp.html

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carolyn Sherve-Bybee, RMP Team Lead, 406–896–5234 or Jim Sparks, Billings Field Manager, 406–896–5241; at the above mailing address or via email at: BLM_MT_Billings_PompeysPillar_RMP@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The planning area is located in Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, and Yellowstone Counties in Montana, and a portion of Big Horn County in Wyoming. This planning area encompasses approximately 434,154 acres of BLM-managed public lands. The RMP will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by NEPA, FLPMA, and BLM management policies. The planning effort of the Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument RMP/EIS will revise the existing Billings RMP of 1984, as amended, and provide the Billings Field Office with an updated framework in which to administer BLM public lands. This draft RMP/EIS addresses new issues, changes in resource conditions, and changes in resource management practices since adoption of the Billings RMP in 1984 and was developed through a collaborative planning process. Formal public scoping began with the publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on May 15, 2008 (73 FR 28150), a legal document notifying the public and any affected agencies of the intent to revise the 1984 RMP and prepare an EIS, including draft planning criteria for review. The formal public scoping period ended on August 22, 2008; however, scoping comments were received through September 19, 2008. Public scoping opportunities included seven open houses in communities within the planning area, a mailing of 1,200 scoping packages describing the area and process as well as soliciting written comments, a Web site, and outreach with various Federal and State government agencies. Outreach efforts were also made to tribes and consultation with the tribal governments is ongoing.

The information obtained from the scoping process was used to define the relevant issues that are addressed in a range of alternative management actions, the environmental impacts of which are analyzed in the draft EIS. Based on the scoping comments received and their subsequent analysis and evaluation, the following major planning issues were identified as being within the scope of the BLM Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument draft RMP/EIS:

Issue: Vegetation Communities—How can the public lands be managed to provide desirable plant communities?

Issue: Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat and Invasive Species—How can public lands be managed to maintain or improve wildlife and fisheries habitats and control invasive species?

Issue: Special Status Species, including Threatened and Endangered Species—How can public lands be managed to conserve and recover threatened, endangered, proposed, and BLM-sensitive species, including Greater Sage-Grouse?

Issue: Commercial Activities—What public lands will be available for commercial activities and how will
management are proposed in the draft RMP/EIS.

In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.7–2(b) and BLM Manual 1613.32 regarding ACECs, this Notice of Availability announces a concurrent public comment period on proposed ACECs. Alternative B proposes to retain nine ACECs and designate three new ACECs and under this alternative the proposed management is the most restrictive. Alternative B would manage all ACECs as closed to all mineral activity including solid and fluid mineral leasing and would recommend withdrawal of all ACECs from locatable mineral entry. Alternative C proposes to retain nine ACECs and designate two new ACECs and the proposed management is less restrictive than Alternative B. All proposed management in the ACECs is subject to valid existing rights. The proposed ACECs and the most restrictive management (Alternative B) are:

- Bridger Fossil Area ACEC (577 acres), designated in the 1998 RMP amendment.
- Values of concern include paleontological values and Bridger Fossil Area National Natural Landmark. Proposed use limitation(s): Right-of-way exclusion area (except valid existing rights), no land disposals, travel limited to designated routes, closed to renewable energy development, closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas, use of explosives for geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, fuel wood cutting/wood product sales, closed to livestock grazing, closed to authorized use only, no snowmobiles or off-road use, closed to oil and gas leasing and development, recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry (subject to valid existing rights), closed to solid leasable minerals (subject to valid existing rights), mineral material sales not allowed, closed to snowmobiles, and closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas.
- Four Dances Natural Area ACEC (784 acres), designated in the 2001 RMP amendment. Values of concern—significant cultural and scenic values, peregrine falcon nesting habitat, and managed for the natural hazards of the cliffs. Proposed use limitation(s): Right-of-way avoidance area; no land disposals; off-highway vehicle use (including bicycles) limited to administrative or authorized use only, no snowmobiles or off-road use, closed to oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development, closed and continued withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, closed and continued withdrawal from solid leasable mineral entry, mineral material sales not allowed, closed to renewable energy development, geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, use of explosives for geophysical exploration for oil and gas, and closed to livestock grazing, closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, fuel wood cutting/wood product sales, closed to livestock grazing, closed to authorized use only, and closed to snowmobiles. Additional areas were nominated for designation as ACECs and those that met relevance and importance criteria and required special management are proposed in the draft RMP/EIS.

In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.7–2(b) and BLM Manual 1613.32 regarding ACECs, this Notice of Availability announces a concurrent public comment period on proposed ACECs. Alternative B proposes to retain nine ACECs and designate three new ACECs and under this alternative the proposed management is the most restrictive. Alternative B would manage all ACECs as closed to all mineral activity including solid and fluid mineral leasing and would recommend withdrawal of all ACECs from locatable mineral entry. Alternative C proposes to retain nine ACECs and designate two new ACECs and the proposed management is less restrictive than Alternative B. All proposed management in the ACECs is subject to valid existing rights. The proposed ACECs and the most restrictive management (Alternative B) are:

- Bridger Fossil Area ACEC (577 acres), designated in the 1998 RMP amendment.
- Values of concern include paleontological values and Bridger Fossil Area National Natural Landmark. Proposed use limitation(s): Right-of-way exclusion area (except valid existing rights), no land disposals, travel limited to designated routes, closed to renewable energy development, closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas, use of explosives for geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, fuel wood cutting/wood product sales, closed to livestock grazing, closed to authorized use only, no snowmobiles or off-road use, closed to oil and gas leasing and development, recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry (subject to valid existing rights), closed to solid leasable minerals (subject to valid existing rights), mineral material sales not allowed, closed to snowmobiles, and closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas. Additional areas were nominated for designation as ACECs and those that met relevance and importance criteria and required special management are proposed in the draft RMP/EIS.

In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.7–2(b) and BLM Manual 1613.32 regarding ACECs, this Notice of Availability announces a concurrent public comment period on proposed ACECs. Alternative B proposes to retain nine ACECs and designate three new ACECs and under this alternative the proposed management is the most restrictive. Alternative B would manage all ACECs as closed to all mineral activity including solid and fluid mineral leasing and would recommend withdrawal of all ACECs from locatable mineral entry. Alternative C proposes to retain nine ACECs and designate two new ACECs and the proposed management is less restrictive than Alternative B. All proposed management in the ACECs is subject to valid existing rights. The proposed ACECs and the most restrictive management (Alternative B) are:

- Bridger Fossil Area ACEC (577 acres), designated in the 1998 RMP amendment.
- Values of concern include paleontological values and Bridger Fossil Area National Natural Landmark. Proposed use limitation(s): Right-of-way exclusion area (except valid existing rights), no land disposals, travel limited to designated routes, closed to renewable energy development, closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas, use of explosives for geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, fuel wood cutting/wood product sales, closed to livestock grazing, closed to authorized use only, no snowmobiles or off-road use, closed to oil and gas leasing and development, recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry (subject to valid existing rights), closed to solid leasable minerals (subject to valid existing rights), mineral material sales not allowed, closed to snowmobiles, and closed to geophysical exploration for oil and gas.
for oil and gas not allowed, fuel wood cutting/wood product sales not allowed, buffalo grazing not permitted, range improvements not allowed, animal trapping/traplines not allowed, no discharging of firearms, archery hunting may be allowed if deemed necessary by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (authorization from BLM required), cremaims scattering not allowed, special recreation use permits not allowed, other activities normally requiring a BLM permit not allowed, closed area, no land sales, travel limited to designated routes, no surface occupancy for fluid mineral leasing, recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, mineral material sales not allowed, closed to renewable energy development, geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, use of explosives for geophysical exploration for oil and gas not allowed, no equipment/no retardant/no foam use during fire suppression, fuelwood cutting/wood product sales not allowed, range improvements not allowed, animal trapping/traplines not allowed, closed to recreational target shooting, cremaims scattering not allowed, special recreation use permits not allowed, and other activities normally requiring a BLM permit not allowed.

- Stark Site ACEC (799 acres), designated in the 1998 RMP amendment. Values of concern—protect unique cultural values. Proposed use limitation(s): Right-of-way exclusion area, no land disposals, travel limited to designated routes, no surface occupancy for fluid mineral leasing, recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, mineral material sales not allowed, closed to recreational target shooting, cremaims scattering not allowed, special recreation use permits not allowed, and other activities normally requiring a BLM permit not allowed.
Alternative B proposes to retain nine ACECs and establish three additional ACECs for a total of 37,896 acres. Under Alternative B, 1,675 acres are recommended withdrawn from mineral entry and 32,158 acres are not available for fluid mineral leasing. The preferred alternative (Alternative D) proposes two additional ACECs: 

- Goose Creek ACEC (8,251 acres) and Prowy Foothills RNA ACEC (2,606 acres). 

The BLM Billings Field Office conducted an inventory of certain waterways to determine eligibility and suitability for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System for designation by Congress and drafted interim management prescriptions for those waterway segments determined “suitable” in the planning process. Following the close of the public review and comment period on this draft RMP/EIS, public comments will be used to revise the BLM Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument draft RMP/EIS in preparation for its release to the public as the BLM Billings and Pompeys Pillar Proposed RMP and Final EIS. While one combined RMP/EIS has been prepared, two separate Records of Decision (RODS) will be issued for the Billings Field Office and for Pompeys Pillar National Monument. The BLM will respond to each substantive comment by making appropriate revisions to the document or by explaining why a comment did not warrant a change. Notice of the availability of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS will be posted in the Federal Register. 

Please note that public comments and information submitted including names, street addresses, and email addresses of persons who submit comments will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.). 

Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Before including your address, phone number, email 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.

Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10, 43 CFR 1610.2.

Theresa M. Hanley,

Acting State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[16100000.P00000/LLCAC09000]

Notice of Availability of the Clear Creek Management Area Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) and by this notice is announcing its availability.

DATES: BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) state that any person who meets the conditions as described in the regulations may protest the BLM’s Proposed RMP and Final EIS. A person who meets the conditions and files a protest, must file the protest within 30 days of the date that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes its notice in the Federal Register.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the CCMA Proposed RMP and Final EIS have been sent to affected Federal, State, and local government agencies and to other stakeholders. Copies of the CCMA Proposed RMP and Final EIS are available for public inspection at the Billings Field Office, 20 Hamilton Court, Hollister, California 95023. Interested persons may also review the