



BLM’S LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES STEP-BY-STEP

Planning Step	What BLM is doing	Information for BLM to Consider	What you, the public, can do	Information for the Public to Submit
Pre-Planning				
<p>During this step, the BLM is working on developing a general description of the plan that will be conducted.</p>	<p>The BLM has 4 main objectives in this step:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect information and document the area 2. Determine the objectives of the planning effort 3. Develop a timeline and budget for the plan 4. Identify stakeholders 	<p>It is essential that the BLM consider the purpose and need for doing the plan. This consideration should include any changes to the conditions and/or uses of the land in the planning area</p>	<p>Although there is no formal public participation in this step, it provides a great opportunity for you to get involved early on in the process and to provide important information for the BLM to consider.</p> <p>You should identify the BLM staff that will be working on the project, get their contact information and set up meetings with them. Also, at this time you should be presenting data and proposals to the BLM, as well as, compiling information about what the BLM should be looking at during the planning process. Examples of information to provide to the BLM are in the next column.</p>	<p>During this step it is ok to be general with the information you submit. Below are examples of information that are appropriate for you to submit to the BLM during the pre-planning step.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptions of key areas and the places that you care about, special species found in the area, and cultural resources – you can include maps or photos if you have them. • Specific studies or risks to be studied and submit similar studies from other areas • Let the BLM know that it is necessary to complete a <u>travel management plan</u> for the area that would address <u>motorized access</u> and <u>off-road vehicle</u> uses. • Propose management approaches for the area (general or more specific with maps). These descriptions can include types of <u>management units</u> or <u>management prescriptions</u>, areas off-limits to energy development, <u>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)</u>, <u>Research Natural Areas (RNA)</u>, and <u>Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)</u>

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Scoping				
<p>During this part of the planning process the BLM solicits public input to identify major resource issues to be addressed in the plan.</p>	<p>The BLM will officially announce the scoping phase of the plan, by publishing a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register. At this point the public will have at least 30 days to provide comments pertaining to the area to be addressed in the plan. The BLM has the option to hold public meetings to seek public input.</p>	<p>At this stage of the plan, the BLM should identify major resource issues for the planning area. This analysis should include <u>cumulative impacts</u> with other known or expected land uses. In addition, the BLM should be consulting with other agencies regarding species or cultural resources.</p>	<p>The scoping step is the first formal opportunity for the public to participate in the planning process. At this time you should confirm public meeting dates and scoping period dates, beginning and ending. You should attend and participate in scoping meetings to gather information and provide specific input. You should provide written comments that identify key issues, specify and justify places and resources for protection, and identify current or expected uses that can contribute to <u>cumulative impacts</u> on the environment</p>	<p>It is very important for you to participate in the scoping stage of the planning process. Below are suggestions for what you can do and the types of information to submit at this stage of the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and propose conservation alternatives for how you would like the area managed. • Propose management units and/or decisions such as: <u>ACECs</u>, <u>RNAs</u>, <u>WSAs</u>, & areas off limits to oil and gas development. • Consider the scope of the travel management plan and the BLM’s commitment to completing it prior to permitting motorized access. It is important to include any data on existing or incorrectly identified routes. • Propose any Wild and Scenic River designations at this time. • Reinforce the need for specific <u>enforcement</u> and <u>monitoring</u> plans of the area. • Push the BLM to consider any other current or foreseeable land uses that will affect the environment.

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Develop Planning Criteria				
<p>During this stage of the planning process the BLM, in conjunction with public input, will identify proposed planning criteria to be used in the plan.</p>	<p>The BLM should be accepting public comments and the timeline should coincide with the scoping comment period. Often this stage of the plan is combined with scoping.</p>	<p>At this point the BLM must establish a framework for the plan and is considering the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the area of analysis 2. which decisions need to be carried forward from existing plans 3. which new decisions need to be made concerning the following: <u>Reasonably Foreseeable Development</u> Scenario; travel designations; conservation measures, WSA status, and the future health of the land. 	<p>Now that you are engaged in the process, it is important that you continue on. During this stage you can do the following to help your efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to attend and participate in meetings to gather information and provide specific input. • Submit written comments that identify analysis or decisions from prior plans to keep or update and to be included in the new plan. • Continue to propose new areas for analysis, travel designations, conservation measures, wilderness, and naturalness protections. • Propose leasing restrictions and provide options for management. 	<p>Here are some examples of the information that you should be submitting to the BLM during this stage of the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit conservation alternatives for managing the area and propose them to the BLM. • Propose <u>management units</u>, <u>management prescriptions</u>, and decisions including, ACECs, RNAs, WSAs, closing areas to oil and gas development, and Wild and Scenic River designations. • Identify areas that have been or may be impacted by current or proposed uses and suggest that the BLM analyze these impacts. • Identify conclusions or decisions from previous plans that need to be updated or should be expanded upon, these may include the <u>RFD</u> and leasing decisions or stipulations. • Submit data on existing or incorrectly identified routes and propose travel designations for the area, in order for the BLM to develop a sound transportation plan. • Encourage the BLM to consider new information that may affect a new <u>RFD</u>. • Identify areas off-limits to oil and gas leasing or limitations to oil and gas leasing. Make sure to stress the need for specific enforcement and monitoring plans. • Urge the BLM consider other current or foreseeable land uses that will affect the planning area.

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Inventory and Data Collection				
<p>At this point the BLM is conducting inventories of the area and collecting data relevant to the plan.</p>	<p>BLM should be reviewing existing data and collecting new data on the area from the public and other agencies.</p>	<p>The data that the BLM is collecting includes resource, environmental, social, economic, and institutional data.</p> <p>It is also important that the BLM coordinate on specific issues with other agencies having expertise in different areas of data.</p>	<p>The BLM may make the data they have collected available to the public for review and may allow comments, formal or informal, on what additional data needs to be collected.</p> <p>You should request an opportunity to review the current data that has been collected and ask for the planned analysis.</p>	<p>If the opportunity arises, it is recommended that you closely analyze the data that has been collected by the BLM and identify specific inadequacies or errors in existing data and submit those to the BLM. The data that the BLM uses and the way the BLM analyzes it should meet the standards of the <u>Data Quality Act</u>. Also, if there are inadequacies, you should propose further data collection and/or further analysis. Should you have any additional data or analyses available, submit them to the BLM.</p>

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Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)				
<p>During this stage of the process the BLM analyzes the inventory of data it has collected and the issues that have been identified.</p>	<p>The BLM must now determine how the resource area can respond to the identified issues and opportunities based on the information collected to this point.</p>	<p>In order to determine how the resource area will respond to issues, the BLM considers four elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Status of- landscape, including ecological and socioeconomic conditions 2. Trends in- changes on the land from its current condition 3. Risks– probability that actions or failure to act will have a negative effect on the area. This will include risks to ecological and socioeconomic conditions 4. Opportunities – What is the potential for the land to respond to possible actions to improve resource conditions or to reduce the risk of damage to the area 	<p>At this step, the BLM may allow formal or informal comments pertaining to the data that has been collected. You should request an opportunity to review the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) and if possible, submit any additional information on the four elements</p>	<p>In order to be most effective at this stage of the plan, you should submit any supplemental data you may have and provide comments on the analyses underway.</p> <p>It would be ideal to provide any supplemental data pertaining to the risks and comment on the BLM analysis of risks.</p> <p>Additionally, if possible, provide any supplemental data and comment on the analysis of opportunities and propose additional actions that could improve conditions or reduce risks. Specifically, suggestions for route designations, and closures to or limitations on energy development</p>

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Formulate Alternatives				
<p>At this step in the process, the BLM is formulating different management approaches for the planning area based on the data collected.</p>	<p>In order to formulate different management approaches, the BLM will identify desired outcomes for the planning area and determine allowable uses and planned measures.</p> <p>The BLM will also identify a reasonable range of alternatives based on different combinations of desired outcomes and allowable uses.</p>	<p>During this phase, the BLM needs to consider a “no action” alternative for the area.</p> <p>The BLM must also develop reasonable alternatives based on the different levels of protection and use in the area.</p>	<p>At this point of the process, the preliminary range of alternatives may be presented to the public for comment. If not, you may still be able to participate informally. It is important that you emphasize the need for a range of alternatives for how the area should be managed, including increased resource protection.</p>	<p>There are several key items of information that you can and should submit during this particular step of the process to ensure a broad range of alternatives is considered by the agency, including a range of conservation approaches. Below are suggestions for the types of data to submit at this point in the planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize and submit a proposed conservation alternative to the plan, making sure the BLM recognizes that is an option. • Critique the range of alternatives identified by the BLM and determine if they adequately provide a diverse range of alternatives and provide a real option for protection of sensitive species, cultural resources, recreation values, wilderness, or naturalness of the area.

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Estimate the Effects of Each Alternative				
<p>During this stage of the process the BLM must estimate the effects of each management alternative on the area</p>	<p>The BLM must estimate and report, in detail, the effects of Implementing each management alternative on the area.</p>	<p>In order for the BLM to accurately estimate and report the effects of implementing the plan, the agency must assess physical, biological, economic, and social effects of the alternatives on the area. The BLM can state the effects in ranges if the effects cannot be precisely determined</p>	<p>This stage of the process provides an informal opportunity to participate. You should seek information on the estimation of the effects of each alternative and inquire about the processes being used to reach that decision. If possible, provide further input on the effects of each alternative.</p>	<p>Although this part of the process allows for informal participation, there are still valuable items that you can submit to the BLM. The following suggestions are specific actions that you can take at this point of the planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on the methodology used for analysis on the effects of each alternative and comment on the detail of assessment. • Provide more details on the effects that may not be discussed or analyzed in sufficient detail.

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Issue Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement				
<p>At this point in the planning process the BLM will issue a Draft Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement to the public. In this document the agency will select a preferred management alternative for the area.</p>	<p>The BLM will publish a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register and can usually be found on the BLM web site.</p> <p>The BLM must allow public comments on this document for a period of at least 90 days. The agency will explain the proposed management approach for the area and the environmental impacts of those approaches</p>	<p>During this stage of the plan, the BLM will summarize each alternative and the environmental consequences of each alternative. The agency will explain the selection of the preferred alternative, as well as the alternatives that were removed from consideration. Lastly, the BLM will check for consistency with the Purpose and Need of the plan, the desired outcomes and the future conditions</p>	<p>At this stage of the planning process you should formally submit written comments on both the selection of alternatives and the environmental impacts of those alternatives. Additionally, it is important that you attend and participate in public meetings regarding the plan.</p>	<p>This part of the planning process will require some time to formulate your comments, revise them, and submit them to BLM. Below are specific recommendations for what you should do once you receive the Draft <u>RMP/EIS</u>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the deficiencies in the range of alternatives and the decisions to eliminate alternatives from consideration in the plan. 2. Identify the inadequacies in the analysis and the data pertaining to the alternatives and submit specific comments and questions regarding those inadequacies. 3. Submit reports on the inadequacies of the analysis, including the inadequate protection for important resources, and the need for further analysis and protection of the area. The BLM Action Center can help assist you with this component if needed. 4. Submit detailed alternatives to the management decisions including conservation alternatives and more conservation-oriented approaches to the management of different areas or resources. 5. Submit comments on the preferred alternative and others based on the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the legal justification based on BLM mandates - adequacy of the planning scale to assess impacts of proposed actions on the area -physical and biological feasibility based on the landscape and native resources - cost/benefit analysis - environmental justice impacts to a variety of socioeconomic groups - social and cultural acceptability to public - feasibility of the BLM to administer, monitor, and enforce management decisions

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Issue Proposed RMP/Final EIS				
<p>At this point in the process the BLM will issue the Proposed Resource Management Plan.</p>	<p>The BLM will publish a Notice of Availability for the document in the Federal Register, and most likely at the appropriate field office. In this document, the BLM will describe the selected management approach and the responses to submitted comments on the plan.</p>	<p>During this part of the process the BLM will respond to substantive comments provided to them and make changes to the plan, as needed, based on comments and further analysis.</p>	<p>At this point, you will have 30 days to review the planning document and submit any administrative protest to the director. Again, this may take some time and we recommend you allow yourself the full 30-day period to review the document and submit any administrative protest. Be sure to contact the BLM Action Center if you need any assistance.</p> <p>At this point, the Governor will have 60 days to perform a <u>consistency review</u></p>	<p>As you approach the final stages of the planning process, there are a number of opportunities that are important for you to participate in. This is the time to submit protests identifying specific issues identified in the planning process and the reasons why they have not been adequately addressed.</p> <p>There is also an informal opportunity for you to provide information to the Governor on the inconsistencies of the plan with current state policies, programs, and/or local plans. You should provide the Governor with recommendations for changes to resolve inconsistencies</p>

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Record of Decision				
This is one of the last steps in the planning process. A signed <u>Record of Decision (ROD)</u> formally approves the final <u>RMP</u> and <u>EIS</u>	The BLM will Publish a Notice of Availability in the <u>Federal Register</u> and should be available at the field office	The BLM will approve the Final <u>RMP/EIS</u> and will include and incorporate any changes based on the Governor's <u>Consistency Review</u>	At this point, the decisions have been made and finalized, hopefully you are satisfied with the decision that has been reached.	N/A

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Implement, Monitor, and Evaluate				
<p>Now that the plan has been finalized the BLM will implement, monitor, and evaluate the Resource Management Plan</p>	<p>The BLM will need to evaluate proposed actions for conformance with the <u>RMP</u>. The agency will also need to monitor for effects of the planning decisions and evaluate whether there is a need for changes in management of the area.</p>	<p>The BLM will assess whether it is necessary to perform any further environmental analysis and impose conditions on proposed actions. The agency may also have to adopt or change site-specific management to reflect new information that has been collected. Additionally, the BLM will need to assess the need to amend or revise the <u>RMP</u>.</p>	<p>Now that you have participated in the development of the plan, it is your job to make sure the plan is doing what it was intended to do and that BLM is following the decisions in the plan. You should participate in the planning process (<u>EIS</u> or <u>Environmental Assessment</u>) for implementation actions using the above steps to help guide you through that process. Additionally, you should identify the effects of current management practices and any need for changes to the management of the area.</p>	<p>Below are recommendations to help you make sure that the plan is doing what it was intended to do and that the BLM is following the management decisions of the plan. You should submit informal or formal comments and data on the implementation actions as shown in previous steps. It is also appropriate to propose, request information on, and comment on the BLM monitoring programs for the area. Additionally, you should submit any data showing the effects of management on the resources including sensitive species, cultural resources, and wilderness characteristics. If necessary, this is the right time to propose changes to the management plan to protect resources. These changes may include additional conditions on permits to drill, no surface occupancy stipulations, and road closures. Lastly, if the need arises, you should identify the need for an amendment or revision to the <u>RMP</u>.</p>

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Maintain, Amend, and Revise				
<p>Often, conditions in the area change due to a number of reasons. Sometimes these changes may require the Resource Management Plan to be amended and/or revised. Amendments require the same basic process as an <u>RMP</u> with the exception that an amendment may require only an <u>Environmental Assessment (EA)</u></p>	<p>Upon final approval of the <u>RMP</u>, the BLM must ensure that the <u>RMP</u> is current, valid, and consistent with new information, new or revised policies, actual circumstances on the ground, and the condition of the land</p>	<p>In order keep the plan current, BLM needs to review monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, changes in policy, and any changes in the condition of the land in the planning area. There are 3 types of changes that may occur to the plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minor changes, such as updating references, are unlikely to be formally announced. 2. Amending the <u>RMP</u> to address changes applicable to a particular resource, place, or issue and may authorize inconsistent uses or actions. 3. Revising the <u>RMP</u> if all or major portions of the RMP are affected 	<p>At this point you have an informal opportunity to identify the need for changes to the plan based on new changes to conditions on the ground or prior to the agency taking inconsistent actions with the plan</p>	<p>To make your case stronger for an amendment or revision to the plan you should identify proposed actions that are inconsistent with the current <u>RMP</u> and require an amendment or revision prior to the agency approving that action.</p> <p>You should also identify and document changes to the land or effects from current management practices that require additional protection prior to the BLM approving further actions</p>