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Time Sensitive Plans News

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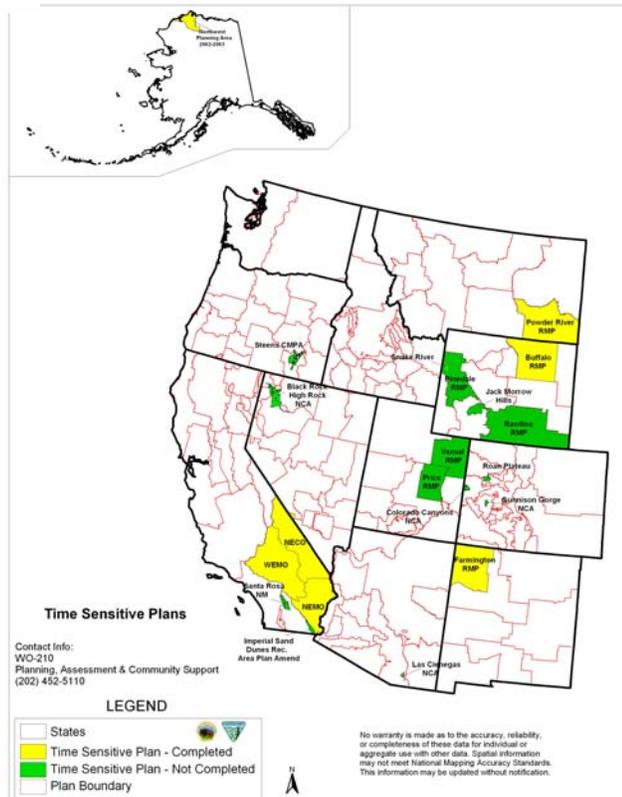
Progress Update

BLM continues to make steady progress towards completing Time Sensitive Plans (TSP). As of this edition of the TSP Newsletter, 8 of the 21 TSPs have been completed. Those plans are the Northeast Colorado, Northeast Mohave and Western Mohave Route Amendment Resource Management Plans (RMP) in the California Desert; the Las Cienegas NCA RMP in Arizona; the Powder River/Billings RMP in southeastern Montana; the Buffalo/Powder River RMP in northeast Wyoming; the Farmington RMP in northwest New Mexico; and the NW NPR-A Activity Plan in Alaska.

Of the remaining 12 TSPs, two (Black Rock Desert/High Rock Canyon NCA, Snake River RMP) will be completed within the next two months; three (Imperial Sand Dunes, Gunnison Gorge NCA, Santa Rosa NCA) have been issued as Final RMP/EISs; three (Colorado Canyons NCA, Steens, Jack Morrow Hills) are available as Draft RMP/EISs; and five (Roan Plateau, Vernal, Price, Rawlins and Pinedale RMPs) will be issued as Draft RMP/EISs prior to May, 2004. Refer to the insert in this Newsletter for more details.

BLM completes NW NPR-A Plan

The Bureau of Land Management's Alaska State Director Henri Bisson announced on January 22, 2004 the availability of a plan for oil and gas leasing in 8.8 million acres of federal lands and federal subsurface lands in the northwest corner of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) *(cont. on next page)*.



Time Sensitive Plans. Plans shaded in yellow have been completed.

What are "Time Sensitive Plans?"

Starting in FY 2001, BLM began its largest and most concentrated effort in land use planning in more than 15 years, with National, regional, and local expectations. Over the next 10 years, BLM plans to update its entire planning base, consisting of more than 160 land use plans. Establishing clear priorities is key to managing increasing workload demands and vital to the overall success of the planning initiative. Accordingly, the BLM has identified 21 high priority land use plans as TSPs. These plans are the most critical of the more than 80 land use planning efforts on-going in FY 2003. The TSPs were selected because they are related to development of energy resources, respond to nationally significant lawsuits or have legislatively mandated time frames.

BLM completes NW NPR-A Plan (cont.)

“This plan will help us implement Congressional direction to maximize production of the oil and gas resources in an environmentally-sound manner while protecting the important biological, subsistence, and cultural values also found in this area,” Bisson said.

The Final Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement includes a variety of restrictions and designations to protect water quality, vegetation, wetlands, fish, and wildlife habitat, subsistence uses and scenic/recreational values.

The plan incorporates analysis of public comments received on the draft plan released in January 2003, as well as descriptions of five possible management alternatives. The preferred alternative was developed by BLM specialists after evaluating comments received from the public, residents of the North Slope Borough, Native corporations, state and local government, industry, and various interest groups.

Key provisions under the leasing plan include:

- Defer leasing on about 15 million acres (17 percent of the planning area) near Wainwright for the next 10 years
- Recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of 102,000 acres as the Kasegaluk Lagoon Special Areas
- Provide no surface occupancy stipulations along coastal areas, in deep-water lakes, along



Drill Rig, NW National Petroleum Reserve, AK



Northern National Petroleum Reserve Lakes, AK



King Eider, NW National Petroleum Reserve, AK

key rivers (16 percent of planning area), and in the Kasegaluk Lagoon Special Area

- Designate special study areas for Pacific black brandt and caribou
- Conduct area wide studies on habitat for Spectacled and Steller’s eiders (both listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act) and yellow-billed loons
- Implement stipulations to minimize loss of raptor foraging habitat within the existing Colville River Special Area
- Other stipulations and required operating procedures to establish restrictions and guidance that apply to waste prevention and spills, water use, winter overland moves and seismic activity, exploratory drilling, aircraft use and subsistence consultation.

An executive summary of the plan and the Record of Decision are posted on the internet, and can be reached through the BLM home page, www.ak.blm.gov. Bisson anticipates the BLM will hold a lease sale for selected tracts next June.

BLM Issues Proposed Plan/Final EIS for the Gunnison Gorge NCA

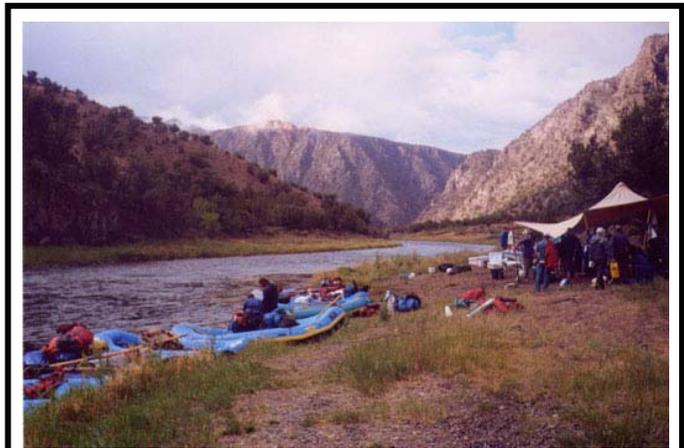
The Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA), which contains the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area, was published on January 23, 2004 and is now available for a 30-day public review and protest period. The plan provides direction and guidance for the management of public lands and resources of the NCA, as well as monitoring and evaluation requirements. The RMP will also amend the Uncompahgre RMP (1989) for the affected lands in the planning area, which includes 55,745 acres of public surface estate within the NCA and Wilderness, 39,888 acres of other BLM managed lands, 666 acres at Sweitzer Lake State Park, and 99,890 acres of private lands. The Gunnison Gorge Wilderness within the NCA contains 17,700 acres.

Over six hundred public comment submissions were received on the Draft RMP/EIS. Topics that were the most common among these submissions include, among others, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) designations; Flat Top OHV National Recreation Area designation; Wild and Scenic River eligibility, suitability and recommendations for designation; and the values of NCA public lands to quality of life. The comments in the submissions have been evaluated, verified, and incorporated into the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The most substantial changes made to the Draft RMP's preferred alternative were moving the National Recreation Area title from the Flat Top-Peach Valley OHV Area, expanding the open OHV designation by almost 500 acres, adding a utility corridor designation, and including new maps showing utility corridors and oil and gas leasing stipulations. In addition, on November 4, 2003, the President signed the Black Canyon of the Gunnison Boundary Revision Act – legislation that added about 7,100 acres

of public land and 190 acres of private lands to the NCA.

The Proposed Plan/EIS includes the retention of an existing Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the recommendation of the Gunnison Sage Grouse Important Bird Area/ACEC for designation.

The public collaboration program implemented for this effort included the distribution of a newsletter, three public open houses, and a public collaboration focus group. During this process, sixteen Planning Criteria were developed and reviewed by the public.



As part of a focus group, BLM led participants on an overnight rafting trip of the Gunnison Gorge NCA. Here, the trip participants gather at Ute Camp on the Gunnison River.



Grazing in the Gunnison Gorge NCA

Status Report for the TSPs – February 2004

(1) ALASKA: National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPRA)

Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton signed the Final RMP/Record of Decision (ROD) on January 22, 2004.

Plan Contact: Mike Kleven, 907-474-2317

(2) ARIZONA: Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA)

The Las Cienegas NCA Final RMP/ROD was issued in July 2003.

Plan Contact: Karen Simms, 520-258-7210

(3,4,5) CALIFORNIA: NECO, NEMO, and WEMO Amendments

The California Desert District Field Office / Barstow Field Office published and distributed the RODs for the Northeast Colorado (NECO) and Northeast Mojave (NEMO) EIS-level amendments in December 2002. The Barstow Field Office published the Decision Record for the Western Mojave (WEMO) route amendment in June 2003.

Plan contacts: Dick Crowe (NECO; California Desert), 909-697-5216; Edyth Seehafer (NEMO; Barstow), 760-252-6021; Bill Haigh (WEMO; Barstow), 760-252-6080

(6) CALIFORNIA: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Plan

The El Centro Field Office released the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in June 2003. A ROD is currently scheduled to be released by June 2004.

Plan contact: Lynette Elser, 760-337-4420



ATV riders at sunset, Imperial Sand Dunes, CA

(7) CALIFORNIA: Santa Rosa / San Jacinto National Monument (NM)

The Palm Springs Field Office issued the Proposed Plan/Final EIS in October 2003. The protest period ended in November 2003, and the field office expects to issue the Record of Decision within 45 days.

Plan contact: Melissa Bristow, 760-251-4800

(8) COLORADO: Colorado Canyons NCA

The Grand Junction Field Office published the Draft RMP/EIS in October 2003 and plans to issue the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in April 2004.

Plan contact: Jane Ross, 970-244-3000

(9) COLORADO: Roan Plateau

The Glenwood Springs Field Office expects to release a Draft RMP/EIS for public comment within 30 days. The ROD is scheduled for completion in September 2004.

Plan contact: Greg Goodenow, 970-947-2900

(10) COLORADO: Gunnison Gorge

The Uncompahgre Field Office published the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in January 2004, and plans to issue a ROD in May 2004.

Plan contact: Bill Bottomly, 970-240-5337

(11) MONTANA: Billings / Powder River

The Miles City Field Office issued the ROD for the Final RMP/EIS in April 2003.

Plan contact: Mary Bloom, 406-233-3649

(12) NEW MEXICO: Farmington RMP Revision

The Farmington Field Office issued the ROD for the Final RMP/EIS in September 2003.

Plan contact: Jim Ramakka, 505-599-6307

(13) NEVADA: Black Rock/High Rock NCA

The Winnemucca Field Office issued the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in September 2003. The ROD is scheduled to be published later this month.

Plan contact: Ester Hutchison, 775-623-1500

(14) OREGON: Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA)

The Burns District Office issued the Draft RMP/EIS in October 2003, and is expected to publish the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in June 2004.

Plan contact: Gary Foulkes, 541-573-4541

(15) UTAH: Price RMP Revision

The Price Field Office is currently working on the Draft RMP/EIS. Publication of the Draft plan is expected prior to May 2004.

Plan contact: Floyd Johnson, 435-636-3600



View of the Snake River, Wyoming

(16) UTAH: Vernal RMP Revision

The Vernal Field Office is currently working on the Draft RMP/EIS. Publication of the Draft plan is expected prior to May 2004.

Plan contact: Dave W. Moore, 435-781-4467

(17) WYOMING: Buffalo/Powder River Amendment

The Buffalo Field Office issued the ROD for the Final RMP/EIS in April 2003.

Plan contact: Paul Beels, 307-684-1168

(18) WYOMING : Jack Morrow Hills CAP/RMP Amendment

The Draft Supplemental EIS (SEIS) for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (CAP)/RMP Amendment was published in February 2003. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is scheduled to be released late winter or spring, 2004.

Plan contact: Renee Dana, 307-352-0227

(19) WYOMING: Snake River RMP

The Pinedale Field Office published the Proposed RMP/EIS in October 2003. The ROD is expected to be approved within 30 days.

Plan contact: Kellie Roadifer, 307-367-5309

(20) WYOMING: Pinedale RMP Revision

The Pinedale Field Office is currently developing the Draft RMP/EIS, which will be published in April 2004.

Plan contact: Kellie Roadifer, 307-367-5309

(21) WYOMING: Great Divide/Rawlins RMP Revision

The Pinedale Field Office is currently developing the Draft RMP/EIS, which will be published in March 2004.

Plan contact: John Spehar, 307-328-4264