



NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Issues Report on Tri-County Planning Effort

LAS CRUCES, NM – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has issued a public ‘scoping’ report that summarizes input from the public on issues to be considered in upcoming planning efforts for public lands in Dona Ana, Otero and Sierra Counties, New Mexico.

The BLM is preparing to revise its 1986 White Sands Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Otero and Sierra Counties, and amend its 1993 Mimbres RMP, which covers Dona Ana County. The BLM will also prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on this effort to analyze and update its management of public land, collectively referred to as the TriCounty RMPs/EIS.

As part of the planning process, BLM conducted public scoping from January through March to gather input from the public regarding the management of public lands. Since then, BLM completed a scoping report which summarizes the scoping process, criteria for guiding BLM’s planning process, and issues associated with BLM-administered lands in the three counties.

“We were pleased and encouraged by the turnout and the comments provided by the public,” said Ed Roberson, Las Cruces Field Manager. A total of 187 people attended the scoping meetings that the BLM conducted in March 2005 in the communities of Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, and Anthony. BLM received 320 letters or comment forms during the scoping period, as well as oral comments captured at the meetings.

“The issues identified in this process will help BLM develop Resource Management Plans that will provide the framework for managing public land in these counties,” added Roberson. The BLM anticipates issuing a Draft RMPs/EIS in about a year (mid-2006), with the final RMPs/EIS completed in 2007.

All comments were reviewed and analyzed to identify the issues that BLM will be addressing in the RMPs/EIS. The predominant issues included urban expansion and open space, general recreation, off-highway vehicle use, trails, access to public lands, biological resources, vegetation and noxious weeds, special status species, wildlife and wildlife habitat, visual resources, water resources, cultural resources and tribal concerns, and livestock grazing.

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The results of the public scoping process are summarized in the ‘TriCounty RMPs/EIS Scoping Report,’ which can be downloaded from the BLM’s national web site, at www.blm.gov (follow the “Planning” link). A printed copy is available for review at the Las Cruces Field Office, located at 1800 Marquess, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

For more information or updates on the planning effort, or to be added to the project mailing list, call the BLM’s toll-free information line at 1-877-877-0918.

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