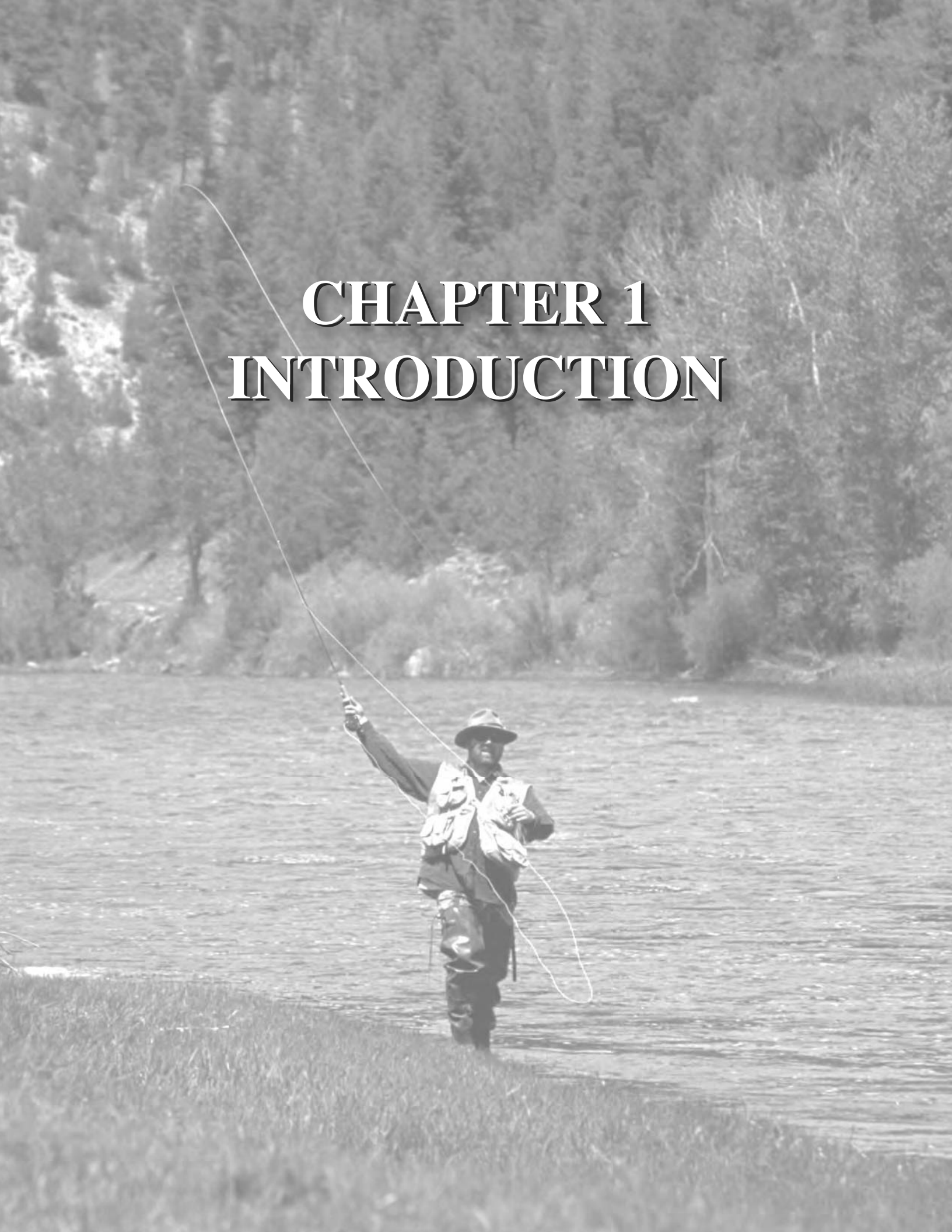


CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION



CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED

OVERVIEW

The United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this draft revision of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) to provide direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Butte Field Office in mid-western Montana and an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze the environmental effects that could result. The affected lands are currently being managed under two plans: the Headwaters Resource Management Plan (USDI-BLM 1984a) and the Dillon Management Framework Plan (MFP) (USDI-BLM 1979). The Headwaters RMP has been formally amended on eight occasions and the Dillon MFP has been formally amended on three occasions. In addition, several new laws, regulations, and policies have affected management of public land since approval of both plans.

Land use planning is used to manage resources and to designate uses on public lands in coordination with tribal, state, and local governments, land users, and interested public. This RMP: 1) incorporates new information and regulatory guidance, and 2) provides management direction where it may be lacking or requires clarification. Current management direction that has proven effective and requires no change will be carried forward into the revised RMP.

The RMP is being revised according to guidance in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 US Code [USC] 1701 et seq.) and BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1. An EIS is incorporated into this document as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) (CEQ 1978), and requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1 (USDI-BLM 1988).

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR REVISING THE PLAN

Since the original plans were approved, several conditions have changed. These include:

- Changed ecological, socioeconomic, institutional, and regulatory conditions;
- Many new laws, regulations, and policies that invalidate or superseded previous decisions;
- Changing user demands and activities;
- Changing acceptance of impacts; and
- Changes in the Butte Field Office boundaries.

These conditions drive the need for an inclusive, comprehensive plan that provides updated, clear direction to both BLM and the public.

The purpose of the RMP is to provide a single, comprehensive land use plan to guide management of public lands administered by the Butte Field Office. The plan provides goals, objectives, land use allocations, and management direction to maintain, improve, or restore resource conditions and to provide for the long-term economic needs of local communities. In the context of site-specific travel planning, there is a need to develop travel plans that meet the needs of public and administrative access, are financially affordable to maintain, and minimize user conflicts and natural resource impacts associated with roads and trails.

Planning for the management of BLM-administered lands is a tiered process. Documents produced during each successive tier are progressively more focused in scope and more detailed in terms of their identification of specific measures to be undertaken and impacts that may occur. The four tiers are described briefly below:

The RMP provides an overall vision of the future (goals and objectives) and includes measurable steps, management actions, and allowable uses to achieve the vision.

Subsequent implementation decisions are carried out by developing activity-level or project-specific plans. Activity-level plans usually describe multiple projects for a single or multiple resource programs. Project-specific plans usually describe a single project or several related projects.

The RMP provides basic program direction with the establishment of goals, objectives, allowable uses, and management actions or prescriptions. The RMP focuses on what resource conditions, uses, and visitor experiences should be achieved and maintained over time. To do this, the RMP must take a long-term view.

Defining planning issues and planning criteria represent the first steps in establishing the scope of the RMP revision. These, combined with public input, provide the framework in which RMP decisions are made. RMP decisions refer to what is established or determined by the final RMP. The RMP provides guidance for land use planning decisions in accordance with the following categories:

- Natural, biological, and heritage resources

Planning Area is all the land within the Butte Field Office administrative boundary regardless of jurisdiction.

Decision Area is comprised of only those lands administered by the BLM (surface and mineral estate).

- Resource uses
- Special designations such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

In the context of these categories, the planning team develops management strategies aimed at providing viable options to address planning issues. These management strategies provide the basis for future activity-level plans or specific projects.

In addition to the RMP type decisions described above, several implementation decisions associated with activity plans for several site-specific travel plans will be made based on this document. Travel route-specific management decisions will be made for the following five Travel Planning Areas: Helena, East Helena, Lewis and Clark County Northwest, Upper Big Hole, and Boulder/Jefferson City.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The Butte Field Office administrative area is located in mid-western Montana (**Map 1**). The Planning Area is all the land within the Butte Field Office administrative boundary. Within the Planning Area, BLM administers about 302,000 acres of public land surface and 678,000 acres of federal mineral estate in Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark (southern portion), Silver Bow, Park, and the northern portion of Beaverhead County. **Table 1-1** identifies BLM-administered acres and total acres within the Planning Area by county. Collectively, the lands that BLM administers (surface and mineral estate) are considered the “Decision Area”. Surface lands within the Planning Area administered by other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Department of the Army are not subject to decisions made in association with this RMP. Approximately 1,800 acres of land administered by the Bureau of Reclamation surrounding Canyon Ferry Lake near Townsend are subject to fluid mineral leasing decisions in this document. Approximately 65,500 acres of land administered by the State of Montana, including several wildlife management areas, are also subject to fluid

management areas, are also subject to fluid mineral leasing decisions in this document.

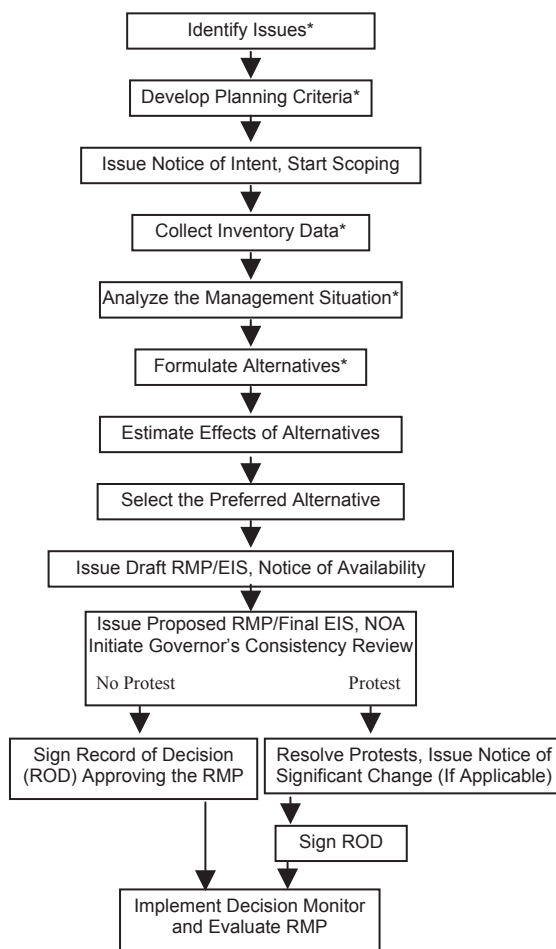
The Decision Area consists of many tracts ranging in size from less than one acre to over 20,000 acres. BLM-administered lands are mixed among private, State of Montana, Bureau of Reclamation, and USFS-administered lands, each of which may be influenced or directly affected by BLM decisions.

The BLM will coordinate with other federal and state agencies, especially for those resources and issues that share boundaries.

PLANNING PROCESS

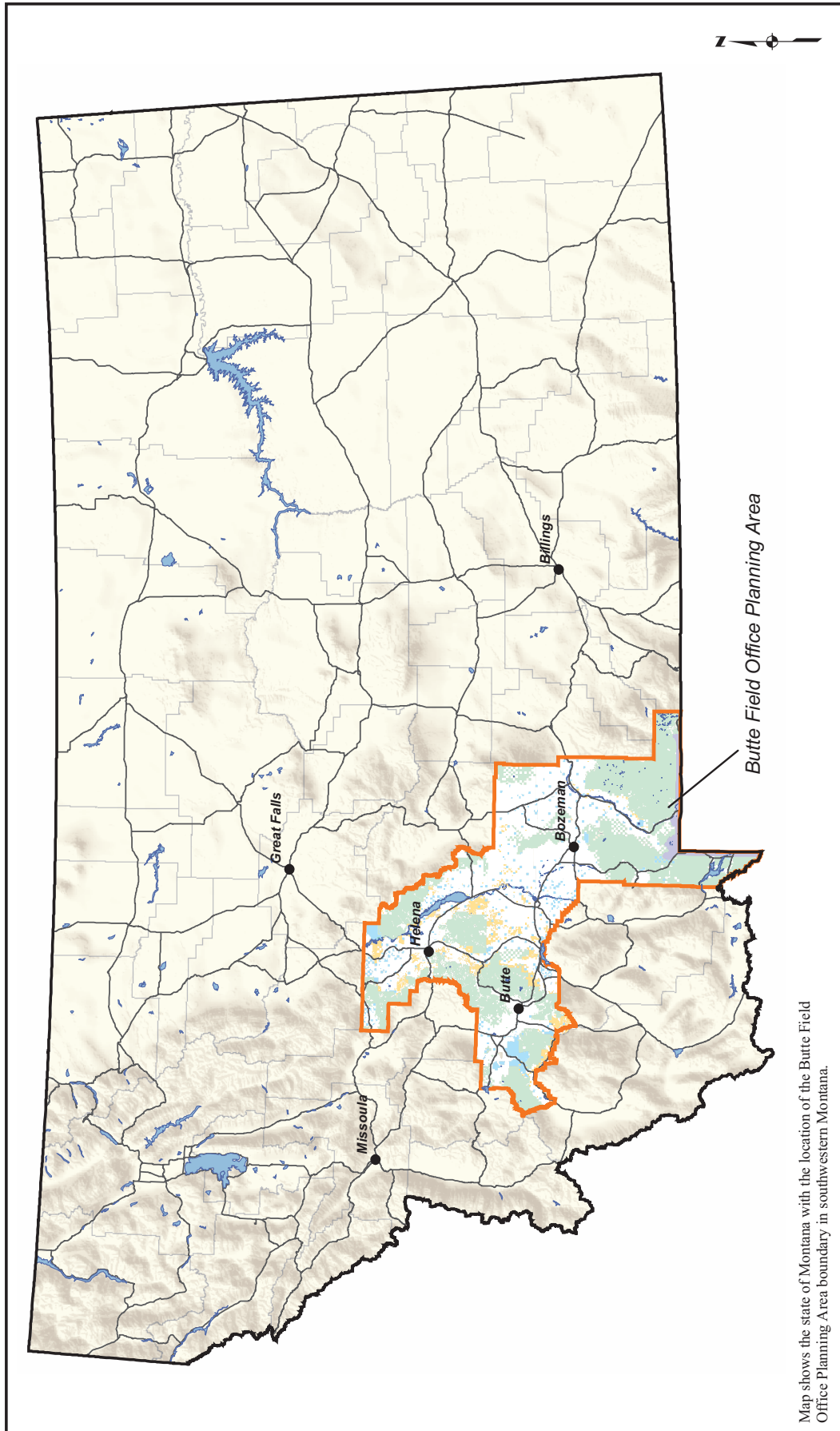
The planning process involves public participation, assessment, decision-making, implementation, plan monitoring, and evaluation, as well as adjustment through maintenance, amendment, and revision. This process ensures that land use plans and implementation decision remain consistent with applicable laws, regulations, orders, and policies. The steps of RMP preparation are interrelated as illustrated in **Figure 1-1** and **Table 1-2**.

Figure 1-1. Planning Process



* These steps may be revisited throughout the process.

County	BLM Surface Acres	BLM Mineral Estate	County Acres in Planning Area
Beaverhead	12,660	22,404	31,429
Broadwater	65,404	111,947	792,866
Deer Lodge	5,227	152,618	473,932
Gallatin	7,250	34,900	1,683,558
Jefferson	94,397	117,423	1,061,462
Lewis & Clark	63,510	117,621	895,925
Park	8,365	53,875	1,793,054
Silver Bow	45,221	67,401	460,124
TOTALS	302,034	678,189	7,192,349



Map shows the state of Montana with the location of the Butte Field Office Planning Area boundary in southwestern Montana.

This map is intended for display purposes. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. This map may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and information may be updated without notification.

Map Scale 1:4,000,000
0 100 Miles
Albers Equal Area, NAD83 Projection

Map generated by the Butte Field Office in February 2007

Map 1: Project Location Map

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management



Butte Field Office
Draft RMP/EIS

Table 1-2
Steps in the BLM Land Use Planning Process

Step	Process
Step 1 – Identification of Issues	This planning step is designed to identify major problems, concerns, or opportunities associated with the management of public land in the Planning Area. Issues are identified by the public, the BLM, and other governmental entities. The planning process is then focused on resolving the planning issues.
Step 2 – Development of Planning Criteria	Planning criteria are identified to guide development of the RMP and prevent the collection of unnecessary information and data.
Step 3 – Collect and Compile Inventory Data	This planning step involves the collation and collection of various kinds of environmental, social, economic, resource, and institutional data. In most cases, this process is limited to information needed to address the issues. The data required for land use planning decisions is usually at a broader scale than data required in implementation level planning and analyses.
Step 4 – Analysis of the Management Situation	This step calls for the deliberate assessment of the current situation. It identifies the way lands and activities are currently managed in the Planning Area, describes conditions and trends across the Planning Area, identifies problems and concerns resulting from the current management, and identifies opportunities to manage these lands differently. It also forms the basis for the “No Action” alternative.
Step 5 – Formulate Alternatives	During this step, BLM formulates a reasonable range of alternatives for managing resources in the planning area. Alternatives include a continuation of current management (no action) alternative and other alternatives that strive to resolve the major planning issues while emphasizing different management scenarios. Alternatives usually vary by the amounts of resource production or protection that would be allowed, or in the emphasis of one program area over another.
Step 6 – Estimation of Effects	This step involves estimating the physical, biological, economic, and social effects of implementing each alternative in order to provide a comparative evaluation of impacts in compliance with CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500).
Step 7 – Selection of Preferred Alternative	Based on the information resulting from the estimation of effects, the BLM identifies a Preferred Alternative. The Draft RMP/EIS is then prepared for printing and distributed for a 90 day public review.
Step 8 – Selection of RMP	Following review and analysis of public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS, BLM makes adjustments as warranted and selects a proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP and a Final EIS is then published. A final decision is made after a 60-day Governor’s Consistency Review and a 30-day public protest period are completed. BLM then publishes the Record of Decision (ROD) and prepares the Approved Resource Management Plan.
Step 9 – Monitoring and Evaluation	This step involves the collection and analysis of resource condition and trend data to determine the effectiveness of the plan in resolving the identified issues and achieving desired results. Implementation of decisions requiring subsequent action is also monitored. Monitoring continues from the time the RMP is adopted until changing conditions require revision of the whole plan or any portion of it.

SCOPING AND PLANNING ISSUES

SCOPING PROCESS

Early in the planning process, the public was invited to identify planning issues and concerns relating to the management of BLM-administered public lands and resources/uses in the Planning Area. The formal scoping period began with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on December 19, 2003. The scoping period ended February 17, 2004, which provided 60 days for comment submittal.

The Butte RMP website housed current information including background documents, maps, meeting announcements, published bulletins, and other documents (<http://www.mt.blm.gov/bdo/rmp>). After April 2005 the BLM was required to take the website down and it was unavailable until approximately January 2006. Scoping information and newsletters were sent to a list of individuals, agencies, and organizations compiled including those who participated in past BLM events, those who requested to be on the mailing list, or individuals who

participated in the scoping meetings or submitted a comment.

Advertisements were published in Montana newspapers and a press release was sent to newspapers, radio stations, and television stations to: notify the public of the project, announce six public open houses, request public comments, and provide contact information for the BLM.

Six public meetings were held in January 2004. **Table 1-3** illustrates the attendance at each scoping meeting. At the six scoping meetings, 37 people registered their attendance. Comment forms were available at the six scoping meetings to collect comments. No written comments were received during the public meetings; however, verbal comments were offered and recorded.

Meeting Location	Meeting Date	Attendance
Helena, MT	January 6, 2004	7
Boulder, MT	January 8, 2004	2
Wise River/Divide, MT	January 13, 2004	6
Butte, MT	January 13, 2004	14
Bozeman, MT	January 14, 2004	4
Townsend, MT	January 15, 2004	4

Representatives from the Butte Field Office also met with several groups during the scoping period, including County Commissioners (Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, and Jefferson counties); the Big Hole Watershed Committee, the Western Montana Resource Advisory Council; American Wildlands; and the East Pioneers Stewardship Group.

During initial scoping, the public submitted a total of 17 responses containing 554 comments.

Proposed Planning Scenario

Using comments received during the initial scoping period, the BLM interdisciplinary team developed the "Proposed Planning Scenario", which describes possible management prescriptions and goals for individual programs. The Proposed Planning Scenario (PPS) was distributed on June 6, 2005 to gather public and agency comment on issues and concerns regarding the plan. The comment period closed July 6, 2005. Comments on the PPS were contained in 34 written responses, which included 691 comments.

On August 10, 2005, the PPS was sent to tribal governments, local, state, and federal agencies asking them to comment. The deadline for these comments was September 6, 2005. No comments were received.

Public meetings were held on the PPS, June 9, 2005 in Helena and June 13 and 29, 2005 in Butte. These meet-

ings were attended by a total of about 30 people. Public comment forms were provided at the meetings. Few comments were received at the public meetings. Most comments were subsequently received in writing during the comment period.

In an effort to solicit more public feedback on the RMP, 29 organizations or groups were contacted and offered BLM briefings on the PPS. Of those, 10 requested briefings. The briefings were held during June and July 2005. Of the ten organizations that received briefings, six were county commissions, the remainders were advocacy groups.

Travel Management Planning

Travel management and access is addressed at two levels in this document. Proposed management is described at the Field Office level as part of the RMP decision to be made. In addition, there are five Travel Planning Areas for which site-specific management by individual travel routes is proposed by alternative. Site-specific travel plan decisions for each of these five areas will be made separately from the RMP level decisions as implementation type decisions.

Five public meetings were held over a two-week period in November and December 2004. Separate meetings were held specific to each of the five following travel management Planning Areas: Upper Big Hole, Boulder/Jefferson City, East Helena (North Hills), Lewis and Clark County Northwest (Marysville) and Helena (Scratchgravel Hills). To advertise the meetings, BLM sent a mailer to all people on its mailing list and advertised the meetings on its public website. In addition, BLM sent a press release to the appropriate newspapers, radio stations, and television stations announcing the meetings. Table 1-4 presents a summary of attendance at the five meetings.

A formal presentation was given by the Butte Field Office management. After the presentation the participants were asked to state issues and concerns and proposed solutions before the group. Participants were also encouraged to submit written comments which were used to formulate the alternatives for travel management in these areas. **Appendix A** presents the issues, concerns, and solutions for the five Travel Planning Areas (TPAs).

TPA	Meeting Date	Attendance
Upper Big Hole	November 15, 2004	4
	November 3, 2005	11
Boulder/Jefferson City	November 16, 2004	7
East Helena	November 30, 2004	24
Helena	December 1, 2004	101
Lewis and Clark County NW	December 2, 2004	16

Two additional public meetings (one in Divide, the other in Butte) were held on November 3, 2005, to scope public feedback on the Upper Big Hole travel Planning Area. A total of 11 people attended these meetings.

Working Group Proposal Development

BLM initiated *community based collaborative working groups* in an effort to help BLM develop site-specific travel management alternatives agreeable to the public as well as the agency. Refer to **Appendix A – Travel Planning** for further details on the working group process. Additional information on this topic can be found in Chapter 5.

PLANNING ISSUES

Planning issues were identified through an extensive review of the Dillon MFP (1979), Headwaters RMP (1984), and associated amendments and decision documents. This resulted in the Butte RMP Preparation Plan, which identified land management direction that could be carried forward, and management direction that needed to be changed (see the Purpose and Need section above).

Public comments were reviewed, categorized, and analyzed to identify specific planning issues and concerns to be addressed in the Butte RMP.

Planning issues and management concerns identified and the land management direction to be developed in the Butte RMP are described in (page 9).

Issue Identification

Issue identification is the first step of the nine-step BLM planning process (see Planning Process below). A planning issue is a major controversy or dispute regarding management of resources or uses. These issues drive the formulation of the range of alternatives considered in this EIS.

The criteria used to identify issues included identifying if the effects:

- Would approach or exceed standards or a threshold.
- Would substantially change a resource.
- Would be controversial.
- Would offer a wide range of opportunities.
- Would cause disagreement regarding their environmental impact.

Analysis of the public comments was completed and a Scoping Summary Report finalized in September 2005 (USDI-BLM 2005a). After consideration of public responses, five major planning issues and 12 management concerns were identified. These issues and management concerns were used to develop alternatives.

Issue 1: Vegetation Communities

How will vegetation on BLM lands be managed to achieve healthy ecosystems while providing for a broad range of multiple uses?

This issue highlights concerns over management of vegetation resources and communities. There is considerable interest in insuring that vegetation management provides a range of commodity uses such as timber and other forest products, and livestock grazing, while maintaining or restoring vegetative communities to provide other resource values such as high quality wildlife and aquatic habitats.

Ecosystems within the Planning Area have evolved over time in response to periodic fire disturbance, and sustainable ecosystems are those that are in balance with the inherent frequency, size, and severity of the natural disturbance cycle. Many acres in the Decision Area have missed one or two fire disturbance cycles due to long-term fire suppression efforts. The vegetative response to this lack of fire disturbance is a change in species presence or prominence, and fuel quantity and continuity.

Management of noxious weeds and other non-native, invasive species is a critical part of public land management. Noxious weeds are one of the largest threats to maintaining and restoring ecosystem health because they usually spread aggressively and have a history of substantial negative impacts on soils, water, habitat, wildlife, and fire cycles. They can also affect local economies with regard to recreation, grazing, forestry, and mining activities.

Issue 2: Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat, Special Status and Priority Plant and Animal Species

How will BLM lands be managed to provide wildlife and fish habitat, and to conserve and recover special status and priority species?

The RMP will focus on a multi-species, ecosystem approach to managing habitat for wildlife, fish, and special status plants and animals. There is a need to protect habitat for viable populations of all native species, manage habitat at scales large enough to accommodate natural disturbances such as fire, wind, and insect outbreaks, provide diversity of vegetative communities, and manage human uses in a manner that conserves and enhances ecological processes. Areas where restoration activities could restore or enhance terrestrial and aquatic habitat will also be identified.

Special status species include species that are listed, proposed for listing, or are candidate species under the Endangered Species Act; and sensitive species identified by BLM. BFO lands provide habitat for species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including the Ute ladies' tresses, bald eagle, Canada lynx, gray wolf, grizzly bear, bull trout, and one species that has been de-listed under the ESA, the peregrine falcon. In addition, the area provides habitat for 45

“sensitive species” identified by the BLM. Sensitive species are those for which BLM must manage in a manner to minimize the risk of a future federal listing under the ESA. The RMP will identify strategies that contribute to conservation and recovery of special status species in the PA in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as required under the ESA for listed species.

Issue 3: Travel Management and Access

How should the BLM manage motorized public travel to meet the needs for public access and resource uses while minimizing user conflicts and impacts to air, soil, watershed, vegetation, wildlife, and other resource values?

Travel and access considerations are of major importance to hunters, off-highway recreationists, livestock grazers, miners, wildlife advocates, non-motorized recreationists, and others.

Travel and access issues are driven by the need to manage for the use and enjoyment of the public lands while protecting resource values and providing user safety. Travel management also involves the need to adequately address increased conflict between motorized and non-motorized users, particularly at urban/rural interfaces.

RMP alternatives for five Travel Planning Areas (TPAs) were developed in consideration of the public’s interest and demand for motorized as well as non-motorized travel opportunities while minimizing and/or mitigating resource impacts and user conflicts.

Issue 4: Recreation

How should recreation be managed to accommodate the full range of recreational uses enjoyed by the public on BLM lands?

This issue focuses on the need to set direction for recreation management in light of: increased demands on developed recreations sites and the need for new strategies to improve management efficiency, appropriate services and facilities, and public experiences; the need for management of Special Use Permits to better protect natural resources, minimize user conflicts, provide for needed opportunities and ensure fair value returns for both the permittee and BLM; and the need to classify recreation settings using the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) system and modify existing Special Recreation Management Areas to provide a wide range of appropriate activities that foster beneficial experiences for the public.

Issue 5: Special Designations including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), National Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

Which areas, if any, should be managed as special designations? How should they be managed to protect values that warrant their special designation status?

In the Butte RMP process, nine nominated areas were reviewed for ACEC designation. In order to qualify as potential ACECs, nominated areas must meet relevance and importance criteria that are established in regulation and in BLM guidance. Five areas met the relevance and importance criteria and are being considered in the RMP. Inclusion of particular potential ACECs within specific alternatives was based in part on the focus of the alternatives.

Concerns with ACEC designation revolve around limitations that special management might place on current and future uses. Proponents of ACEC designation see it as a way of preventing loss of or impact to values of particular interest.

FLPMA states that priority should be given to the designation and protection of these areas when developing land use plans. A potential ACEC is designated in the approved RMP if it requires special management to protect its relevant and important values. Management is considered special if it is outside of the ordinary or routine requirements of the BLM or if it is not covered by provisions already stipulated in the RMP; special management is unique to the area and includes terms and conditions specifically designed to protect the values in the ACEC.

Each of the five potential ACECs have been proposed for designation in at least one alternative in accordance with ACEC guidance found in BLM Manual 1613.

The RMP also provides protective strategies and appropriate uses for the management of National Trails to protect their resource values and characteristics.

The approved RMP will determine whether any rivers in the Planning Area are recommended as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River system. Four river segments were assessed as to whether they would be suitable for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Recommendations were incorporated into the plan alternatives.

Six Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are located within the Butte Field Office. RMP alternatives consider management options for WSAs that would take effect if Congress releases them from wilderness consideration.

Management Concerns

Management concerns are topics that involve a resource, resource management activity, or land use that generally do not have enough controversy surrounding them to

generate different RMP alternatives to address them. While these concerns are addressed in the plan, management related to them may or may not vary by alternative. Concerns were raised outside of the issues described above. These are described below.

Air Quality

This management concern is driven by the need to identify area-wide standards that apply to activities authorized by the Butte Field Office that might affect air quality. Yellowstone National Park is a Federal Class I airshed, and a portion of Silver Bow County is a non-attainment area. These could be affected by activities authorized under the plan.

Air quality concerns include public health impacts from wildland and prescribed fires. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends following the Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires (May 15, 1998) to assure that an air quality analysis is completed for prescribed burns.

Soil

This management concern focuses on the need to reduce accelerated soil erosion and compaction from occurring within the Decision Area and the potential impacts on soil productivity and other resources.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use has created new roads and trails in areas with steep terrain, causing accelerated soil erosion. Other roads and trails have been constructed to a new standard and these disturbances create areas with some short-term and potential long-term soil erosion. In some places, historic cattle grazing has impacted soil and caused localized soil erosion and compaction. The spread of noxious weeds and conifer encroachment may have also had a detrimental effect on soils.

Water Resources

Management concerns associated with water resources involve preventing water quality degradation and improving watershed function to support beneficial uses. Additional concerns stem from water rights issues including management of existing water rights and acquiring water rights when feasible and with willing holders where acquisition of the water right meets a management objective or need.

Over the next decade, several total maximum daily load (TMDL) plans (restoration plans for water quality impaired streams) will be developed by the State of Montana. This will result in new water quality goals intended to improve water quality where beneficial uses are impaired.

Cultural Resources, Traditional Cultural Properties and Paleontological Resources

Management concerns include compliance with new laws, guidelines, and directives to ensure that significant

cultural, traditional, and paleontological resources are identified and evaluated prior to surface disturbing activities to ensure protection of resources through appropriate mitigation. The alternatives present options for inventory of archeological and historical sites, coordination with tribal governments to identify religious or traditional lifeway values, education and public outreach programs, mitigation of cultural sites, maintenance of historic buildings, and mapping of fossil localities.

Visual Resources

Management concerns focus on the need to establish Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classifications to guide the management of public land based on scenic quality, sensitivity levels and distance zones.

Lands and Realty

Management concerns for lands and realty focus on establishing conditions for disposal, retention, or acquisition of land or interests in land. Utility corridors would be designated where placement of future utility facilities would be encouraged. Another concern is the need to develop criteria to assess the impacts of land disposal and acquisition when considering land tenure adjustments.

Minerals and Energy

Management concerns associated with minerals and energy include development of a consistent approach to recognition of mineral rights under the General Mining Law and mineral leasing acts to identify the need for environmentally acceptable exploration, development, and production. The BLM Energy and Non-Energy Mineral Policy, which references several existing acts, recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, and other resources and the responsibilities concerning the discovery, development, production and acquisition of minerals and metals. The RMP alternatives provide management options for leasable, saleable, and locatable minerals. These management policies will ensure that federal minerals are available for national economic and energy needs.

Abandoned Mine Lands

Management concerns associated with Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) sites include: the threats posed to human health and the environment from contaminated water, acid rock drainage, or airborne contamination from mine or smelter sites; and public safety issues related to hazardous mine openings such as adits, shafts, open pits, and subsidence over buried mine openings.

RMP alternatives incorporate information in accordance with bureau policy to guide the elimination or reduction of physical hazards and safety issues on public lands.

Hazardous Material Management

Management concerns associated with hazardous material management consist of the need to protect employ-

ees, the public, and the environment from exposure to hazardous materials in public facilities or on public land. The RMP alternatives comply with all appropriate laws and regulations regarding hazardous material management.

Social and Economic Environment

The Planning Area includes land within eight counties, and near many communities ranging from small cities like Butte and Helena to towns such as Townsend, Whitehall, and Boulder. The concerns among residents and the impacts to communities from public land management decisions vary.

Management concerns associated with the social and economic environment focus on changes to recreation,

forestry, mining, livestock grazing, and other land-uses as a result of increased population, economic growth and continuing development in the Planning Area.

Environmental Justice

Management concerns associated with environmental justice focus on the requirement that BLM evaluate and disclose whether actions would place a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequence on populations covered by Executive Order 12898.

Tribal Treaty Rights including Native American Religious Concerns

Management concerns focus on the requirement to notify and consult with appropriate Native American tribes on BLM authorized actions.

**Table 1-5
Description of Planning Issues/Management Concerns,
their Desired Future Conditions/Visions, and Management Goals**

Issue or Management Concern	Description of Desired Future Conditions/Visions and Management Goals
Issue 1: Vegetation Communities	<p>The desired future condition is for vegetation to fall within the historic range of variability, with diverse, site-appropriate plant communities that contain healthy populations for native species.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) maintain and/or improve ecological health of woodland communities for sustainability and diversity; 2) manage dry forest types to contain healthy stands of site-appropriate species; 3) manage moist forest types to contain healthy stands that combine into a diversity of age classes and structure; 4) manage old forest structures in a sustainable manner; 5) minimize infestations of invasive plants and noxious weeds; 6) manage upland vegetation communities by including a full range of herbaceous and shrub species; 7) maintain or enhance communities in priority habitats to provide desired ecological functions and values; 8) manage riparian and wetland communities for the appropriate composition, density and age structure; and, 9) manage wetland and riparian habitats to support healthy, diverse and abundant populations of fish and associated aquatic and riparian dependent species.</p> <p>Management direction for forests and woodlands is needed to: 1) restore and/or maintain the health and productivity of public forests to provide a balance of forest and woodland resource benefits to present and future generations; and, 2) manage forestry resources to provide a sustained flow of local economic benefits and protect non-market economic values.</p> <p>Management direction for livestock grazing is needed to: 1) maintain, restore, or enhance BLM rangelands to meet the Land Health Standards; and, 2) manage livestock grazing to provide a sustained level of local economic benefits and protect non-market economic values.</p> <p>Direction for wildland fire management is needed to: 1) provide an appropriate management response to all wildland fires, emphasizing firefighter and public safety; 2) move toward restoring and maintaining desired ecological conditions consistent with appropriate fire regimes; 3) minimize the adverse effects of fire on resources, resource uses and Wildland Urban Interface areas; 4) promote seamless fire management planning across jurisdictions within the boundaries of the Butte Field Office; and, 5) protect life and property by treating hazardous fuels on BLM lands near Wildland Urban Interface areas.</p>

**Table 1-5
Description of Planning Issues/Management Concerns,
their Desired Future Conditions/Visions, and Management Goals**

Issue or Management Concern	Description of Desired Future Conditions/Visions and Management Goals
Issue 2:	The desired future condition is for BLM lands to provide a diverse landscape with native vegetation communities that provide suitable habitat to maintain viable and well distributed populations of native wildlife species on public land.
Issue 3: Travel Management and Access	The vision is to provide a range of quality motorized and non-motorized opportunities, and reasonable access for management while protecting natural resources, now and in the future. Management direction is needed to: 1) provide a balanced approach to travel management that provides a sustained flow of local economic benefits, minimizes or mitigates user conflicts, safety concerns, and resource impacts while taking into consideration the unique attributes of the various travel management Planning Areas; and, 2) maintain facilities, roads and trails to provide for public and/or administrative use and safety while mitigating impacts to resources.
Issue 4: Recreation	The vision is to provide a range of quality recreation opportunities, services and appropriate facilities for public use and enjoyment. Management direction is needed to: 1) provide a diverse array of recreational opportunities while maintaining healthy public land resources; 2) establish, manage and maintain quality recreation sites and facilities to meet a broad range of public needs subject to resource constraints; 3) manage commercial, competitive or special events with special recreation permits that eliminate or mitigate impacts to resources and conflicts with other users; and, 4) manage recreation opportunities to provide a sustained flow of local economic benefits and protect non-market economic values.
Issue 5: Special Designations including ACEC, National Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers and WSAs	The vision is to protect relevant and important ACEC values and manage for appropriate uses; protect established National Trail values and manage for appropriate uses; protect Outstandingly Remarkable Values in Wild and Scenic River-eligible river segments and manage for appropriate uses; protect wilderness characteristics in Wilderness Study Areas. Management direction is needed to: 1) designate ACECs where special management attention is required to protect relevant and important values; 2) manage National Trails to promote public enjoyment and protect their designated values; 3) manage preliminarily eligible river segments so that their suitability for potential National Wild and Scenic Rivers System designation is not impaired; and 4) manage WSAs so that their suitability for potential wilderness designation is not impaired.
Air Quality	The desired future condition is for air quality to be maintained in a condition that protects human health and the environment. Management direction is needed to ensure BLM authorizations and management activities protect the local quality of life and sustain economic benefits by complying with tribal, local, state and federal air quality regulations, requirements and implementation plans.

Table 1-5 Description of Planning Issues/Management Concerns, their Desired Future Conditions/Visions, and Management Goals	
Issue or Management Concern	Description of Desired Future Conditions/Visions and Management Goals
Soils	<p>The desired future condition is for stable soils to contribute to properly functioning watersheds and support productive plant communities consistent with site potential.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) manage uses to minimize accelerated soil erosion and compaction and maintain surface soil water infiltration based on site-specific conditions; and, 2) maintain or improve soil health and fertility, prevent or minimize erosion and compaction while supporting multiple use management.</p>
Water Resources	<p>The desired future condition is for water bodies to have sufficient water quality to meet state and federal standards, and support designated beneficial uses.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) maintain or improve the chemical, physical and biological integrity of water resources to protect designated beneficial uses and achieve water quality standards; 2) maintain existing or acquire new water rights on BLM land to ensure water availability for multiple-use management; 3) minimize erosion and accelerated runoff to streams to improve watershed function; and, 4) protect water quality for municipal, industrial, agricultural, recreation, and residential purposes by adopting protective measures to meet tribal, state, and local water quality requirements.</p>
Cultural Resources/ Traditional Cultural Properties/ Paleontological Resources	<p>The desired future condition is for there to be a minimal loss or degradation of cultural resources and traditional cultural properties within the Butte Field Office.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) preserve and protect eligible cultural resources, and traditional cultural properties within the Butte Field Office; 2) identify cultural resource sites and traditional cultural properties and mitigate impacts when necessary, from natural or human-caused deterioration; and, 3) preserve and protect eligible cultural resources to ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.</p>
Visual Resources	<p>The vision is that a spectrum of visual qualities are provided and protected for the public.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to manage visual resources in accordance with VRM classifications described in Appendix B – Visual Resource Management Classes.</p>
Lands and Realty	<p>The vision is for the needs of the public to be met and support for all BLM resource programs is provided.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) look for opportunities to acquire non-federal land or interest in non-federal land with important resources and resource uses; and, 2) provide for land-use opportunities to provide a sustained flow of economic benefits and meet local infrastructure needs while protecting or minimizing adverse impacts to resources and resource uses.</p>
Minerals and Energy	<p>The vision is for the use of geologic resources to recognize the need for domestic sources of energy and minerals.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) ensure that federal minerals are available for energy and mineral exploration and development; 2) manage exploration and development of mineral resources and ensure they are conducted in an environmentally sound manner; and, 3) where possible, conserve significant or unique geological features.</p>
Abandoned Mine Lands	<p>The vision is for threats to human health and the environment from historic mining activities on public land to be reduced.</p> <p>Management direction is needed to: 1) reclaim AML sites on public land to improve water quality, plant communities, and diverse fish and wildlife habitat; 2) reduce and/or eliminate risks to human health from hazardous mine openings; and, 3) protect historic resources and wildlife habitat commonly associated with AML sites.</p>

Table 1-5
Description of Planning Issues/Management Concerns,
their Desired Future Conditions/Visions, and Management Goals

Issue or Management Concern	Description of Desired Future Conditions/Visions and Management Goals
Hazardous Materials Management	The vision is for employees, the public, and the environment to be protected from exposure to hazardous materials in public facilities or on public land. Management direction is needed to mitigate threats and reduce risks to the public and environment from hazardous materials.
Social and Economic Environment	The vision is for conservation, stewardship, and partnerships on public land are cultivated for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Management direction is needed to: 1) provide opportunities for economic benefits while minimizing adverse impacts to resources and resource uses; 2) provide for a diverse array of activities that result in social benefits for local residents, businesses, visitors, interested citizens, and future generations, while minimizing negative social effects; 3) sustain, and where appropriate, restore the health of forest, rangeland, aquatic, and riparian ecosystems administered by the BLM to provide a sustained flow of economic benefits within the capability of the ecosystem; 4) protect visual quality, wildlife habitats, and recreation opportunities on BLM lands to sustain non-market economic values; and, 5) make resource commodities available to provide a sustainable flow of economic benefits within the capability of the ecosystem.
Environmental Justice	Management direction is needed to identify and remediate to the extent possible disproportionate negative effects to minority or low income populations per Executive Order 12898.
Tribal Treaty Rights	Management direction is needed to accommodate treaty and legal rights of appropriate Native American groups in management of public lands.

Note: Unnumbered items are management concerns.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BUT NOT FURTHER ANALYZED

During scoping, several concerns were raised that are beyond the scope of this planning effort or that represented questions on how the BLM would go about the planning process and implementation. There are several issues raised in scoping that are clearly of concern to the public but which are governed by existing laws and regulations (for example, water quality). Where certain management is already dictated by law or regulation, alternatives have not been developed; rather, management will instead be applied as “Management Common to All Alternatives.”

The Scoping Report (USDI-BLM 2005a) and the BLM Final Surface Management Regulations EIS (USDI-BLM 2000a) provides a comprehensive list of issues outside the scope of the RMP or issues addressed through administrative or policy action. Some major issues were considered but not analyzed further because they are inconsistent with existing laws or higher level management direction, or because they are beyond the scope of the RMP purpose and goals. These issues are listed below.

- It would be useful if the EIS discussed the Hard Rock Mining Act of 1872, its benefits and impacts, and potential conflicts with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act.
- Minerals management should be greatly restricted.
- OHV recreationists in Montana generate total State and Federal annual gas tax revenue on the order of \$8 million. A Federal excise tax refund program for gasoline used for off-road purposes does not exist at this time. Excise tax on gasoline used for off-road fuel use should either be refunded to off-highway recreationists or used to fund programs that benefit off-highway recreationists.
- OHV recreation and tourism has not been promoted or supported by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) as aggressively as other recreation and tourism associated with fish and wildlife programs. OHV users request that MFWP actively promote OHV recreation and tourism.
- OHV use should be eliminated from BLM lands.
- Commercial use of public lands should be encouraged and promoted over all other considerations.

PLANNING CRITERIA AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

FLPMA is the primary authority for BLM's management of public lands. This law provides the overarching policy by which public lands will be managed and establishes provisions for land use planning, land acquisition and disposition, administration, range management, rights-of-way, designated management areas, and the repeal of certain laws and statutes.

NEPA requires the consideration and public availability of information regarding the environmental impacts of major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

BLM planning regulations (43CFR1600, Subpart 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all resource management plans. Planning criteria guide the development of the plan and determine the approach to developing alternatives, and ultimately, the selection of a Preferred Alternative. The criteria serve to help ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and avoid unnecessary data collection and analyses.

Preliminary planning criteria were developed prior to public scoping meetings to set the side boards for focused planning and to guide decision making by topic. These criteria were introduced to the public for review in January 2004 at all scoping meetings. The public was encouraged to comment on, and suggest additions to, these criteria at the meetings, and through written correspondence. Final planning criteria included:

- The plan will comply with FLPMA and all other applicable laws.
- The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with NEPA standards.
- The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the Decision Area.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management; the Montana/Dakotas Statewide Fire Management Plan; Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota; the Final Statewide Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans; and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior Wilderness Study Area findings, suitability studies, and reports that affect public lands.

- The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
- The plan will recognize the state's responsibility to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the Planning Area.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
- The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with Bureau-wide standards and program guidance.
- Geospatial data will be automated within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, effects analysis, and displaying the results.
- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.
- The RMP will consider conservation and management strategies developed for protection, conservation, and restoration of Yellowstone and westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout, fluvial Arctic grayling and sage grouse.
- The RMP will incorporate existing recovery plans and management strategies and guidelines for federally listed threatened and endangered species, including Ute Ladies'-tresses, bald eagle, grizzly bear, wolf, and lynx (the Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy). State management plans will be considered for delisted species including the peregrine falcon.
- The RMP will recognize the State of Montana's authority on Montana water law and water rights.
- The RMP will recognize federal land management agency obligations under tribal treaties and laws or executive orders on Native American reserved rights, religious freedoms, and traditional use areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO BLM POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

A number of plans have been developed by the BLM that relate to or otherwise govern management in the Planning Area. Some of these plans amended the Dillon MFP and Headwaters RMP while others, though they have not been formally adopted through the land use planning process, are considered by BLM when implementation level planning is conducted or other specific

actions are analyzed. These major plans and other major management guidance are listed below and provide a perspective of the many management considerations pertinent to the Planning Area.

LAND USE PLANS AND AMENDMENTS

- Dillon Management Framework Plan (USDI-BLM 1979).
- Mountain Foothills Rangeland Management Program Document (USDI-BLM 1981a).
- Headwaters Resource Management Plan (USDI-BLM 1984a).
- Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota ROD (USDI-BLM 1997).
- Elkhorns Travel Management Plan/Amendment (USDI-BLM *et al.* 1995).
- Off-Highway Vehicle ROD and Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and Portions of South Dakota (USDI-BLM 2003c).
- Clancy-Unionville Travel Management Plan/Amendment (USDI-BLM 2000b).
- Whitetail-Pipestone Travel Management Plan/Amendment (USDI-BLM 2003b).
- Suitability Report and EIS for Wilderness Designation of Humbug Spires Instant Study Area (USDI-BLM 1980).
- Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek Wilderness Study Areas EIS (USDI-BLM 1991a).
- Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas (USDI-BLM 2003a).

OTHER NATIONAL, STATEWIDE, AND FIELD OFFICE PLANS

- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (USDI-BLM 1991c).
- Bull Mountains Exchange Final EIS/ROD (USDI-BLM 1991b).
- The Montana Weed Management Plan (Duncan 2005).
- Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDI-BLM 1985).
- Montana Statewide Wilderness Study Report (USDI-BLM 1991d).
- National Fire Plan and 2001 Federal Fire Policy.
- Oil and Gas Environmental Assessment of BLM Leasing Program, Butte District (USDI-BLM 1981b).

- Draft National BLM Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (USDI-BLM 2003e).
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act.
- Interim Bull Trout Habitat Conservation Strategy and Implementation (USDI-BLM 1996a).

RELATED PLANS

BLM planning regulations require that BLM plans be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments to the extent those plans are consistent with federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands. Plans formulated by federal, state, local, and tribal governments that relate to the RMP have been reviewed and considered including:

- Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (Ruediger *et al.* 2000).
- Forest Plan – Helena National Forest (USDA-FS 1986a).
- Forest Plan – Beaverhead National Forest (USDA-FS 1986b).
- Forest Plan – Deerlodge National Forest (USDA-FS 1987).
- Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993).
- Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan (USFWS 1987).
- Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan (USBOR 1994).
- Pacific Bald Eagle Recovery Plan (USFWS 1986).
- Final PEIS on Wind Energy Development on BLM Administered Lands in the Western US, June 2005.

POLICY

No proclamations or legislative designations that would influence decisions or constrain the alternatives have been issued within the Planning Area.

Implementing the RMP begins when the Montana BLM State Director signs the ROD for the RMP. Decisions in the RMP would be implemented tied to the BLM budgeting process. An implementation schedule would be developed, providing for the systematic accomplishment of decisions in the approved RMP.

COLLABORATION

There are no formally designated cooperating agencies for the Butte RMP planning process. Collaboration and consultation with federal, state, and local agencies, and tribal governments is discussed further in Chapter 5.