

APPENDIX V

COMMENT LETTERS

All the letters received commenting on the Draft RMP/EIS are reproduced here except for the following:

Several letters were typed due to technical problems in reproduction of the ink used to write the letters.

Comments submitted on Land Adjustment Maps were not reproduced.

APPENDIXES

1a Advisory Council On Historic Preservation

1322 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Reply to: 730 Simms Street, Room 450
Golden, Colorado 80401

May 20, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechefecky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefecky:

On May 16, the Council received the Bureau of Land Management's "Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement" for the Butte District, Montana. In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, we have reviewed the environmental statement regarding the adequacy of its consideration of historic properties (historic, archeological, architectural, and cultural properties).

We note that historic properties do exist in Butte District, but the environmental statement does not demonstrate that the Bureau is aware of its responsibilities for the protection of such properties pursuant to Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980, nor does it identify a commitment to comply with Section 106 of that Act for those historic properties that would be affected by the actions taken to implement the management program. In-point-of-fact, the descriptions of Bureau historic properties management on pages 23 and 67 imply an independent management program which does not conform to the congressionally mandated program detailed in the National Historic Preservation Act and the Council's regulations. For these reasons we consider the treatment of historic properties in the environmental statement to be inadequate, and we suggest substantial revision of the final environmental statement to ensure that the management program established for the Headwaters Resource Area is in conformance with applicable Federal laws and regulations. In particular, we would like to point out that management decisions regarding historic properties should only be made after consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer and the Council (as appropriate) in accordance with the steps detailed in 36 CFR 800.

1b

If you have any questions please contact Eric Storey of my staff at (303) 234-6946, an FTS number.

Sincerely,

Louis S. Hall
Louis S. Hall
Chief, Western Division
of Project Review

2a

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Federal Building
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

JUL 6 1983

May - 2700
JUL 28 '83

Jack McIntosh, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Box 3388
Butte, MT 59702

Dear Mr. McIntosh:

We have reviewed the Headwaters Resource Areas Resource Management Plan and have the following comments:

Several parcels of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land are adjacent to our Elkhorn Wildlife Management Unit which is being established in accordance with the recommendations contained in the congressionally mandated Elkhorn Wilderness Study Report. Several BLM management areas influence wildlife in that area on the Helena National Forest.

Management Unit 2. The deer-elk winter range values are very high in the portions of this unit that are adjacent to our Elkhorn Wildlife Management Unit and endorse the preferred alternative that allows for restrictions on motorized access. These BLM lands are important to the total wildlife habitat in the Elkhorn area and hope that more specific road management guidelines can be developed. We will supply all resource information we have and work with BLM land managers in developing these guidelines. We support the effort to improve conditions in the Devils Fence Allotment.

Management Unit 23. The portion of this management unit in the Golconda Creek Area adjacent to our Elkhorn Wildlife Management Unit currently provides excellent elk spring-summer habitat. Although our monitoring activities are not complete, early indications are that this area is key to elk in the Elkhorns. Because of the importance of this area to elk, and to be compatible with our management of the Elkhorns, any timber harvest should be restricted to that which maintains or improves elk summer habitat. This would most likely change the high priority for forest management that the area currently has to something else. Specific road management guidelines for this area would be helpful. We support the efforts to improve range conditions in the Muskrat Allotment.

Management Unit 31. The habitat is very important to the elkhorn wildlife populations, especially deer and elk during the winter. We will continue to provide information from monitoring to BLM land managers and work with them in preparing specific road management and other guidelines to assure compatibility with our adjacent wildlife management unit.



FD-800-118-82

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Mr. Jack McIntosh

2

The following comments are relative to areas adjacent to or in close proximity of the Gallatin NF:

T. 5 N., R. 9 E., Section 14: BLM lands occupies most of the NW of this section, and the National Forest owns the entire E3. This area is in the Three Peaks grazing allotment and both Agencies have the same permittee (Mr. George Hirscheberger). Our proposed management prescription for this area is for wildlife and livestock. BLM has identified this tract as Category II for disposal through sale, exchange or transfer. We believe that this tract should be eventually included in a transfer program to the National Forest and included within our management area 17.

Canyon Mountain Further Study Area - T. 3 S., R. 8 and 9 E.: Realizing that this area will require further study by BLM, our comment at this time is that these lands should be included in a transfer program since they are important in providing future access and would also be valuable as trading stock in consolidating public ownership in this area.

Study Area Adjacent to National Forest in East Side of Yellowstone Valley: The majority of these lands is adjacent to National Forest ownership and have high wildlife and recreational values. We strongly support that these BLM lands be retained in public ownership and eventually be included in a transfer program.


The remaining BLM lands in the immediate vicinity of National Forest System lands in both the disposal and further study categories are generally scattered parcels not adjacent to Forest boundaries. Our comment is that in many cases these tracts could be utilized as key trading stock to block up within the Forests.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this plan.

Sincerely,

Tom Costum
Tom Costum
Regional Forester

3a



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE REGIONAL CIVIL ENGINEER CENTRAL REGION (AFESC)
1114 COMMENCE STREET
DALLAS, TEXAS 75242

15 Aug 83

Mr. Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office, BLM
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, MT 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:


We have reviewed the draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the Headwaters Resource Area.

Review of the RMP/EIS indicates several Minuteman launch control and launch facilities within the Headwaters Resource Area. The hardened intersite communications cable system also passes through areas identified as private surface ownership and public land declared acceptable for further consideration for coal development.

The Malmstrom AFB Cable Affairs Officer has discussed the hardened intersite communications cable routing with your Great Falls field office. It is the Air Force understanding that the Great Falls Field Office plans to annotate the location of the cable on their working drawings and coordinate with the Cable Affairs Officer whenever an oil/gas lease application is received which could impact on the hardened intersite communications system or a launch control/launch facility.

For specific location of the launch control/launch facilities, the Cable Affairs Officer at Malmstrom AFB can be contacted through your Great Falls field office.


Sincerely,



PAUL D. GARCIA Major, USAF
Deputy Chief, Environmental Planning Division

Cy to: SAC/DEP/Q
15 AF/OE
47 AD/LG
2153 CS/LM/M
341 CS6/DEL
341 CS6/DEE

4a



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OMAHA DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
6014 U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

REPLY TO:
ATTENTION OF:
June 27, 1983


Planning Division

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

We have reviewed the draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Headwaters Resource Area. We find the document to be informative, but we have no comments to offer at this time on the Plan. Thank you for this review opportunity.


Sincerely,



Richard D. Gorton
Chief, Environmental Analysis Branch
Planning Division

RECEIVED
JUN 30 1983
Bureau Of Land Management
Butte District Office

5a



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF MINES
WESTERN FIELD OPERATIONS CENTER
EAST 360 180 AVENUE
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99201

August 4, 1983

Memorandum

To: Jack A. McIntosh, District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Butte, Montana


From: Supervisor, Minerals Involvement Section

Subject: Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP)

A search of our Mineral Industry Location System (MILS) indicates about 10% of the total number of mineral properties in the state of Montana lie within government land tentatively categorized for disposal in the Headwaters Resource Area. The entire resource area contains nearly 50% of the total number of mineral properties in the state that are entered in the MILS system.

We are enclosing a MILS printout for your information. We have been informed by your staff that lands categorized for possible disposal which are mineral-in-character will be reclassified to the retention category. We hope this will aid you in your analysis.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us.




D'Arcy P. Banister

Enclosure

RECEIVED
AUG 12 1983

6a



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services
Federal Building, Room 2035
316 North 26th Street
Billings, Montana 59101-1396

BY REPLY REFER TO:
ES
July 15, 1983

Memorandum

To: Headwaters RMP Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Butte District Office, P. O. Box 3388, Butte, MT 59702

From: ACTS Field Supervisor, USFWS, Billings, MT (ES)

Subject: Review of Headwaters Resource Area RMP Draft Environmental Impact Statement

We have reviewed the subject statement and the following constitute the comments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

Endangered Species

Our Endangered Species Team personnel have discussed the need for and benefits of preparing a biological assessment on the RMP/EIS with your staff and will provide assistance to them throughout the Section 7 compliance process described in the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Generally, we view the plan as a document which projects certain improvements or safeguarding mechanisms for endangered and threatened species habitats within the planning area. Overall, the information about listed species is noteworthy and direct in indicating where either adverse or beneficial effects may result from proposed resource allocations or projected use and development of resources.

Our concern is that a major fault of the planning process and the document arose because endangered species were not identified as an issue during the "issue driven" planning process, and hence, no goals for these species or their habitats over the planning period are presented in the plan. Lacking these goals, the plan is unable to describe these habitats in any detail. Therefore, resources cannot be allocated directly for management and improvement of those seasonal or year-long habitats of importance to endangered and threatened species in the planning area over the life of the plan.

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Because of these concerns, we recommend that an effort be made during the Section 7 consultation process at establishing long-term goals for endangered and threatened species, their recovery, and identification or documentation of known important and manageable habitats. With this base, the biological assessment can be structured to examine alternatives and their impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative). The final step needed is the identification and use of various criteria which will be followed in resource use prescriptions to evaluate both case-by-case and area-wide development actions in the future. By establishing these procedures and criteria now, we can then assess whether the action proposed in the RMP/DEIS is or is not likely to affect endangered or threatened species over the long-term. Moreover, funding and manpower resources can be identified in advance of development so that EAR's and other site review processes can be adequately accomplished.

Since the purposes of ESA (Section 2(b)) requires Federal agencies to "provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved," we believe that comprehensive plans for resource allocation must take a comprehensive look at how, where, and when allocations can be made to meet the purpose of the Act. We will help you to the best of our ability to meet our shared responsibilities as directed by ESA and hopefully, to meet the timetables established for the Headwaters RMP Record of Decision.

We hope that the biological assessment serves as a mechanism for evaluating and documenting the endangered and threatened species goals, objectives, and management direction for this resource area. We recommend that BLM incorporate this information into the RMP/FEIS. Our concern for species listed in this area is great, especially in those habitats along the Rocky Mountain Front and riparian/wetland areas. We realize that several public agencies and private entities are involved in managing these habitats and recognize the need for total cooperation if habitats are to be maintained for these species in this area. We recommend continued use of recovery plans now available for the wolf and grizzly bear in an effort to achieve a cooperative recovery of these species and to help direct your thinking in long-term resource planning.

Range Resources

Under the preferred alternative (Alternative A), seeding and interseeding is proposed for 2,560 acres. On page 118 of the draft, we note that the BLM is proposing to utilize native and introduced plants. We are very concerned if the introduced species to be utilized is crested wheatgrass. This type of conversion results in monotypic vegetation, essentially useless to wildlife. Even if other species such as alfalfa or sweetclover are included in the mixture, they are generally eliminated over time due to the competitive nature of crested wheatgrass and the high livestock utilization rates typically used to maintain the "pasture" in palatable condition. We feel that these conversions (to crested wheatgrass) should not be undertaken on public lands that are managed for multiple use, if undertaken at all, they should be developed on private lands included in an AMP in order to defer use on the native public range until mid-June or early July. Thus, the livestock operator would still

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have the necessary spring grazing and the native public range would be maintained. We feel this is critically important because of the negative wildlife implications resulting from the loss of native range in Montana due to "plow-out" in recent years.

Regarding range reseeding, on page 237 (item #11) the draft states that all areas where vegetative manipulations are to occur will be rested at least two years after treatment. It has been our experience (and we recommend) that these areas should be rested for three growing seasons, to obtain good ground cover, plant vigor and wildlife habitat.

Riparian Habitat

We were pleased to see the special emphasis given to riparian habitat in the draft. However, we feel that more needs to be done, in a timely manner, to preserve this extremely valuable habitat. As you know, the BLM, at the national level, has recognized the importance of riparian-wetland habitat, and special emphasis has been given to the protection and enhancement of these areas, in terms of general policy. On February 5, 1980, the BLM published in the Federal Register (Volume 45, No. 25, pages 7089-7095), Final Guidelines: Wetlands-Riparian Area Protection and Management; Policy and Protection Procedures. Therein it is stated that, "Riparian areas which presently or potentially support broad-leaf vegetation in arid and semi-arid ecosystems are of special management concern" (emphasis added). One of the stated objectives is to, "implement a management system to protect, maintain, and enhance all wetland-riparian areas administered by BLM" (emphasis added). The guidelines further state that BLM policy will be to, "avoid the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the distribution, loss, or degradation of wetland-riparian areas"... and, "Preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetland-riparian areas which may include constraining or excluding those uses that cause significant, long-term ecological damage." Having reviewed the Headwaters DEIS, we do not believe that these guidelines have yet been adequately observed. We recommend that during preparation of the Final EIS, more adequate attention be given to wetland-riparian habitat protection needs, especially regarding the time over which protective measures are to be implemented. According to the draft, the proposal is to improve 58.5% (22.6 miles) of the unsatisfactory riparian habitat on priority 1 allotments over a period of 20 years; another 20 years would presumably be required to improve the 29.5% (11.3 miles) of unsatisfactory riparian habitat on priority 2 allotments. Thus, forty years would be required to reach the desired goals. The issue of moose habitat (page 126) emphasizes our concern that not enough is being done soon enough to protect riparian habitat. Under Alternative A, moose habitat would only improve from 40% unsatisfactory to 34% unsatisfactory; only four of twelve allotments containing moose habitat would improve, the remaining eight would experience a little change. Therefore, we recommend that the scheduling required to implement the AMP goals for riparian habitat be shortened significantly because of its importance to both wildlife and water quality.

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Livestock Grazing

On the issue of grazing, we found almost no details in the draft of how grazing will be managed for the benefit of wildlife. The inference made is that bettering the range condition will increase wildlife benefits. Although we too believe that wildlife can benefit from bettering the range condition, we feel that other issues must also be considered to determine whether wildlife resources will receive any net benefits. Often times the range improvements (water, fencing, grazing systems) associated with intensive management have substantial negative impacts. For example, one ramification of intensive management is the intrusion of livestock into areas that previously were not utilized because of lack of water. After water developments are installed, livestock/wildlife competition will be spread over a broader area than was previously possible. Another impact is the often intensive utilization of forage in one or more of the pastures in a grazing system which leaves little or no residual cover for wildlife in these pastures. We feel these, as well as other pertinent issues, must be discussed in the final EIS before the assertion can be made that the proposed grazing management will benefit wildlife. As written, the draft does not discuss the negative implications of intensive management. Inasmuch as the draft indicates that grazing income to the U.S. Treasury from public lands in the Headwaters is about \$58,000 and that wildlife related resources, through hunter-day use, result in \$255,000 of economic stimulation, it appears that more attention should be given to addressing the impacts of grazing upon wildlife.

Land Tenure

On the issue of land tenure adjustments, we wish to commend you on your goal of utilizing exchanges (see page 112) as the primary means of disposal rather than sales. The outright sales of public lands could have severe consequences upon the wildlife values of the lands and the public's use thereof. Furthermore, we encourage you to pursue, on a priority basis, providing access to those public lands where such access does not now exist, except in those areas important to the recovery of endangered or threatened species.

Wildlife Unsuitability Criteria

We have reviewed the application of the unsuitability criteria on the Federal mineral estate within the Great Falls Coal Field. We believe that the rationale used in the draft document for application of several of the unsuitability criteria are not consistent with regulations pertaining to the management of Federally-owned coal (43 CFR 3400) and may result in unnecessary conflict or delays if leasing of these coal reserves is initiated in the future.

In general, we have found, during past leasing efforts in the Powder River and Fort Union Coal Regions, that completion of four-six season wildlife inventories and application of unsuitability criteria well in advance of coal activities minimizes the conflict between wildlife and coal development initiatives. Section 3461.3-1(a)(1) of the Federal

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Coal Management Regulations states that, "Each of the unsuitability criteria shall be applied to all coal lands with development potential identified in the comprehensive land use plan or land use analysis. For areas where one or more unsuitability conditions are found and for which the authorized officer of the surface management agency could otherwise regard coal mining as a likely use, the exceptions and exemptions for each criterion may be applied."

Section 3461.3-1(b)(1) requires that, "The comprehensive land use plan or land use analysis shall include an indication of the adequacy and reliability of the data involved. Where either a criterion or exception (when under subsection (a) of this section the authorized officer decides that application of an exception is appropriate) cannot be applied during the land use planning process because of inadequate or unreliable data, the plan or analysis shall discuss the reasons therefor and disclose when actively planning, or, in the case of criterion 19, prior to approval of a permit, the data needed to make an assessment with reasonable certainty would be generated."

Section 3461.3-1(2) states that, "No lease tract shall be analyzed in a final regional lease sale environmental impact statement prepared under Section 3420.4-5 of this title without significant data material to the application to the tract of each criterion described in Section 3461.1 of this title, except, where necessary, criterion 19."

Section 3461.4-1(b) further emphasizes that, "The unsuitability criteria shall be initially applied either:

- (1) During land use planning or the environmental assessment conducted for a specific lease application; or
- (2) During land use planning under the provisions of Section 3420.1-4 of this title."

In summary, the regulations require that the unsuitability applications be based on adequate data and that they be completed prior to leasing of the federal coal.

Analysis for Criterion No. 11 in Appendix H documents the limited data available on golden and bald eagle nest sites in the planning area. A lease stipulation requiring additional raptor survey is recommended. In our opinion, issuing a lease with a stipulation requiring additional inventory does not meet the cited regulations. Adequate inventory and application of Unsuitability Criteria No. 11 prior to issuance of the lease is required.

Rationale expressed in the draft planning document for Unsuitability Criteria No. 13 and No. 14 suggesting inventories of cliff sites at the time of leasing for criteria No. 13 and leases with stipulations requiring inventories of high priority habitat for migratory birds of high Federal interest for criteria No. 14 also do not appear to be consistent with the coal planning regulations. These inventories and subsequent application of unsuitability criteria are necessary and are required prior to issuance of Federal coal leases.

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The Fish and Wildlife Service is ready to assist in the identification of migratory birds of high Federal interest for coal resources contained in the Headwaters Resource Area. We are also willing to assist in identifying inventory needs and, depending upon financial resources available, may be able to assist in the completion of required inventories.

Wilderness

Because of the importance of the three areas known as Deep Creek/ Battle Creek, Blind Horse Creek, and Chute Mountain to wildlife, including endangered species, we suggest that you very seriously consider recommending these areas to Congress as suitable for wilderness. Some of the impacts to wildlife are eliminated or dampened when the provisions for wilderness management are in place, and due to the potential for resource extraction in these areas, wilderness designation may well be the best option available to insure long-term protection of these areas and their associated wildlife, particularly the grizzly. If you decide that you are unable to recommend these areas for wilderness, then we request that they be managed as roadless areas.

Specific Comment

We note that there is a discrepancy between figures presented in the body of the RMP/DEIS and reference to data contained in Figure 3-3.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the DEIS.

Dennis M. Christopherson
Dennis M. Christopherson

cc: State Director, BLM, Billings, MT
Robert Stewart, Department of Interior, Denver, CO
Environment Coordination, Washington, D.C.

7a



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Billings Office
316 North 26th Street
Billings, Montana 59101-1396

IN REPLY REFER TO: (SE)

July 19, 1983

Memorandum

To: District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Butte, MT
From: Field Supervisor, Endangered Species, Billings, MT
Subject: Headwaters Resource Management Plan EIS

This responds to your July 13, 1983, memorandum regarding the proposed Headwaters Resource Management Plan EIS covering BLM lands in Jefferson, Broadwater, Gallatin, Park, Meagher, Cascade, Lewis and Clark, Teton, and Pondera Counties, Montana.

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act as amended, we have determined that the following listed and proposed threatened and endangered species may be present in the project area.

Listed Species	Expected Occurrence
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	Resident, migration
Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	Migration, possible resident
Grizzly Bear (<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>)	Resident
Gray Wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	Resident
Black-footed Ferret (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>)	Possible resident of prairie dog towns

Proposed Species

None

We do not believe that we have data on the listed species in your area which is unknown to you. However, we encourage you to contact us, while developing the biological assessment, if you believe we can provide assistance in assessing impacts, clarifying formalities, or identifying data unknown to you.

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Upon completion of your assessment, if you determine that the project will affect any of the above listed species, formal consultation with the FWS through my office should be initiated. Section 7(d) of the Act requires that during the consultation process, the Federal agency and the permit or license applicant shall not make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources which would preclude the formulation of reasonable and prudent alternatives.

Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Robert Stewart

cc: Regional Director, FWS, Region 6 (FA/SE)

8a



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE
600 Park Street
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7619 (RMR-PC)

JUL 19 1983

Memorandum

To: Project Manager, Butte District Office, Bureau of Land Management, Butte, Montana
From: Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation, Rocky Mountain Region
Subject: Review of Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Butte District, Broadwater, Cascade, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Meagher, Park, Pondera, and Teton Counties, Montana (DES 83/18)

The National Park Service has reviewed the subject document and has the following comments.

The Headwaters Resource Area contains one designated and 12 potential National Natural Landmarks. They are:

Designated	Potential
Gallatin County	Middle Fork Canyon
Cascade County	Crown Butte
	Sluice Boxes State Monument
Jefferson County	Dry Hollow
	Lewis and Clark Caverns
Lewis and Clark County	Gates of the Rocky Mountains
	Green Timber Basin-Beaver Creek
	Red Mountain
	Sun River Game Range
Park County	Crazy Peak-Big Timber Creek
	Granite Peak Glaciers
Teton County	Fossil Lake Game Management Area
	Pine Butte Swamp

Further planning for the Headwaters Resource Area should consider these official and potential designations and avoid impacts that could adversely affect the ecological and geological features of these areas. Further information can be obtained from Ms. Carole Madison, National Park Service.

APPENDIXES

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Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Division of Recreation Grants and Review,
P.O. Box 25287, Denver, Colorado 80225 (Phone: 234-6463).

The Headwaters Resource Area also contains a portion of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River, a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. Impacts which would adversely affect this resource should also be avoided. Further information can be obtained from Mr. Duane Rolano at the same address and phone as Ms. Madison.

The plan identifies significant resource issues on land lying within 2 to 3 miles of the north boundary of Yellowstone National Park. Oil and gas leasing and lease application activity is ongoing on National Forest lands immediately adjacent to those lands on and near the park boundary. However, oil and gas leasing, a significant issue to Yellowstone, has not been identified in the plan. If oil and gas leasing occurs near Yellowstone National Park, we request that the final environmental impact statement discuss and analyze impacts on air quality, groundwater, and wildlife habitat (including that of the threatened grizzly) in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

Richard A. Strait
Richard A. Strait

10a

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
REGION 8/MT
555 SANDY STREET, BOX 33744
DENVER, COLORADO 80233

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Mr. Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

June 3, 1983

Dear Mr. Lechefsky,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Headwaters Resource Area, Montana.

Our review indicates that the document satisfactorily addresses our concerns. We are pleased to note that the Montana State Highway Department has received a copy of this document for review.

Sincerely,
Robert L. Jacobsen
Robert L. Jacobsen
Office of Environmental Progress

JUN 07 1983
U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
Butte District Office

11a

Butte DO

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII
1400 LINCOLN STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80225-0699

AUG 8 1983
Ref: 8PM-EA
Mr. Michael J. Penfold
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of Interior
222 North 32nd Street
P.O. Box 30157
Billings, Montana 59107

NO.	DATE	INITIALS	DATE
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Dear Mr. Penfold:
We have completed our review of your agency's draft environmental impact statement on the "Resource Management Plan - Headwaters Resource Area".

The major issue with this EIS appears to be management of lands along the Rocky Mountain front. Your proposed alternative for management of this area offers protection to water quality but would not offer the degree of long-term protection to wildlife, especially the grizzly bear, as would official wilderness designation of these important habitat areas.

Although we agree with the EIS that air quality impacts from your proposed alternative would generally be minimal, we would point out that production of "sour" gas found in this area might well require a sweetening plant. Such facilities would have to be carefully scrutinized, especially in light of the designation of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area as a Class I airshed. We believe this should be mentioned in the final EIS.

We support all efforts to improve watersheds, protect riparian areas, and to control indiscriminate use of off-road vehicles. All these aspects should help protect water quality in the study area.

According to EPA's rating system for draft impact statements, this EIS is rated LO-2 (lack of objections - insufficient information). The "O" rating is in reference to our comments on air quality. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Gene Taylor in our Helena Montana Office at (406) 449-5486 or FTS 585-5486.

Sincerely yours,
John G. Welles
John G. Welles
Regional Administrator

AUG 11 1983

12a



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

225 NORTH ROBERTS STREET • (406) 446-4584 • HELENA, MONTANA 59601

May 18, 1983

Den Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office, B.L.M.
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, MT 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

RE: Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan/
Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above-named document. The document seems to be well written and cultural resources are presented clearly. I recommend that the final document specify your personnel needs under each of the alternatives and present your proposed program for the survey of those portions of the study area which have not yet been surveyed for historic properties as well as your program for the timely evaluation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places of identified historic properties.

Sincerely,
Marcella Sherfy
Marcella Sherfy
Deputy SHPO
TAF:md

MAY 23 1983
U.S. DEPT. OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Butte District Office

13a

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
 STATE OF MONTANA
 100 SOUTH BRIDGEMAN
 BILLINGS, MONTANA 59102-32

State of Montana
 Office of the Governor
 Helena, Montana 59620

August 5, 1983

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100	AS		

Mr. Michael Penfold, State Director
 U.S. Bureau of Land Management
 P.O. Box 30157
 Billings, MT 59107

Dear Mr. Penfold:

On behalf of the Governor's Planning Task Force I want to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the BLM Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP). I have attached specific comments about range management, soil and water management, land tenure adjustment, weed control, grazing, fire management and wildlife.

Although the Headwaters Plan is well organized and easy to read, it is very general. Future allotment or project management plans should be specifically described. The effects of each proposed action and the monitoring methods to be used should be identified in the Plan.

I look forward to receiving the final Headwaters RMP and continuing our good working relationship.

Sincerely,

TED SCHWIDEN
 Governor

Enc.

13b

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

A. RANGE MANAGEMENT

1. Monitoring of range conditions and trends will be very important in the Headwaters Resource Area, because 20,173 acres of grazing lands have not been inventoried and only 10 allotment Management Plans are now in existence. The BLM should conduct range surveys on the 20,173 unsurveyed acres whenever possible.

2. The State supports targeting range improvements for allotments with the greatest potential for improved range, watershed and wildlife value and the reduction of stocking rates to proper use. The guidelines for livestock grazing in important grizzly bear habitat should help to ease livestock/bear conflicts. However, the operators affected by such action should be given ample time to adjust to the new management guidelines.

3. The State supports the Outstanding Natural Areas designation for the four Rocky Mountain Front areas as being protective of resource and wildlife values without excluding all resource activity. The management flexibility afforded by this designation should not be an impediment to continued livestock use of these areas.

4. The BLM did not provide projected percentages of expected improvements in range conditions over the entire resource area. By not providing this information the question of the cost-benefits of their objectives arises. A time frame for implementation should be provided to give credence to their objectives. Without these answers the cost benefits of their objective can be unrealistic.

5. Changes in lessee management is not discussed. If management is retained with the operator, will objectives be accomplished on a wide scale? This should be addressed in the Final RMP.

B. SOIL/WATER MANAGEMENT

1. Appendix C states that the Best Management Practices were selected to avoid rather than mitigate impacts to water quality and soils. The prevention of adverse impacts is clearly desirable, but, mitigative measures should also be developed in case adverse impacts do occur.

-1-

13c

2. On pages 48-50, Table 2-16, the impacts to soil and water resources range from minor deterioration to moderate-high improvement. However, riparian, waterfowl and fisheries habitat range from a major decrease to minor increase. How can soil and water resources experience improvements and habitats deteriorate?

3. Grazing management, oil and gas development and coal mining are concerns for water quality impacts. Streambank protection should be considered when evaluating grazing allotments. Oil and gas development should consider stipulations for wastewater and sludge disposal in areas where surface and ground water will not be polluted (reference Montana Surface Water Quality Standards - 16.20.601 and Montana Groundwater Standards - 16.20.1003).

C. LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT

1. The State supports the land ownership adjustment categories shown on the Management Unit Map and the Land Ownership Adjustments map. All tracts within the disposal category should be carefully screened for resource values before being slated for exchange or sale. We support the emphasis on exchange as the primary method for disposal. Land exchange can be used to improve public access to rivers and other recreational-sportsman conflicts.

2. It is unclear how the boundary between Management Units 9 and 10 was drawn, particularly in the Horseshoe Hills and the Smith and Musselshell River drainages. Several large blocks of public lands with high wildlife values occur within Management Unit 10 in these areas but have been placed in the disposal category. Several of these areas are contiguous with Management Area 9, a retention area. These tracts should be carefully evaluated before disposal is considered. These lands should have a high priority for exchange, as opposed to sale, because they could be valuable for increasing public access in Management Unit 9 and along the Smith and Missouri Rivers.

3. The "sodbusting" in Montana could jeopardize BLM's asset management program. We support the exchange of lands for isolated tracts where there is potential irrigable lands and in areas that make good land management sense. These lands are principally rangeland and should not be broken up unless they are classified as tillable land by the Soil Conservation Service. We suggest that a "statement of intent" and a soil conservation plan accompany any person's or company's offer to buy or exchange BLM land.

D. WEED CONTROL

1. The BLM should commit to cooperative efforts with county weed boards, private landowners and state and federal agencies.

-2-

13d

2. Weeds and their control cost Montana producers \$25-27 million annually. The loss to producers from weed competition, water and nutrient loss and shading is estimated at \$2 million. This is after Montana producers have spent \$23-25 million on control. Due to these facts, more attention should be given to the identification, mapping and control of noxious weeds in the BLM management plan.

E. GRAZING

1. The State is concerned about possible substantive negative impacts to certain grazing permittees under the preferred alternative. The DEIS cites a 5-year horizon for phasing in livestock reductions. The State believes that where proposed actions threaten the viability of the livestock operator that every effort should be made to ameliorate this situation. The BLM might consider extending time frames, scaling down the proposed decrease in AUMs, helping locate alternate public rangelands or implementing more intensive management plans on these allotments.

2. The Range Program set forth in the RMP provides relative objectives and how the differing alternatives will cut or add AUM's to grazing. However, no time frames were provided of when they expect to meet those objectives. No time frames were presented of when new allotment management plans would be planned, initiated or completed. No time frames were presented on how range improvements would be established to meet planned objectives. Such time frames should be provided in the Final RMP.

3. The State has read with great interest the new Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) program for selected livestock operations on the public lands. The sketchy details received to date indicate that only those permittees whose allotment is in the "M" (maintain) category will be eligible.

Appendices D and E of the DEIS show that many allotments are in good repair in terms of vegetation and riparian areas, yet are categorized as "I" (improve) allotments solely for wildlife reasons. How does the BLM reconcile the seeming penalty of ineligibility for the CMA program for the livestock operators in these instances?

4. In grazing allotments targeted for a short term decrease in AUMs, the grazing permittee should receive consideration in the allocation of any long term increased forage production.

F. FIRE MANAGEMENT

1. The fire program is defined under "management guidance common to all alternatives," but little detail is provided concerning implementation. Given the scattered nature of BLM lands, the policy regarding cooperation with the Department of State Lands,

-3-

13e

and the USDA Forest Service should be explained. Also, the existence of the County Cooperative Fire Program should be acknowledged, and coordination with the participating counties explained.

2. No mention is made of the impacts associated with the prescribed burning of logging debris and sagebrush. The preferred alternative indicates that prescribed burning is planned on both forest and range lands, but no measures are given for mitigating smoke impacts. Reference should be made to the Montana Cooperative Smoke Management Agreement and Plan.

G. WILDLIFE

1. In reviewing the selected issues we noted that wildlife and wildlife related recreation was not identified as an issue. The basis for identification of the various issues was judgement of the planning team members, inter-agency consultation, public input, and review by BLM managers. We understand that wildlife was discussed under several of the eleven issue headings, but we strongly feel that if issues are to be a major part of the planning format, wildlife and wildlife related recreation warrants comparable status with grazing, timber, minerals, etc.

2. We endorse the utilization of the guidelines from the Montana Cooperative Elk Logging Study in the formulation of forest activity. Page 24, Paragraph 1 of the RMP, Silvicultural Guidelines and Harvesting Techniques--emphasis should be placed on minimizing public access into areas that have significant security values for elk and other wildlife species.

3. We support the seasonal wildlife restrictions as indicated in Table 2-2. But, we do object to the exclusion of timber harvest, regarding consultation opportunities provided the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Timber harvest activities have the same potential for adverse impacts to wildlife as other cultural practices involving vegetative manipulation.

4. The Elkhorn Mountains have been designated by the U.S. Forest Service as a prototype wildlife management area. Because of this, they have been withdrawn from the regulated timber base. To be consistent with Forest Service planning the BLM should withdraw all areas adjacent to Forest Service lands in the Elkhorns from proposed regulated timber harvest, which is indicated in all alternatives. This does not mean that some timber harvest will not be allowed, but that it should be coordinated with the Forest Service so as not to conflict with the planning direction taken in their wildlife management area.

-4-

14a



City-County Building
316 North Park
Helena, Montana 59602
Telephone 406/443-1010

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
Board of County Commissioners

June 15, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechevsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
Box 3388
Butte MT 59702

Dear Mr. Lechevsky:

We would like to offer the following comments on your draft Headwaters Resource Area Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement:

1. We are supportive of Management Alternative C: the Protection Alternative. We believe that emphasis on the protection of environmental values is in the best interests of the citizens of Lewis and Clark County. We expect some resource use and development on public lands but feel that preservation of these lands' unique natural characteristics should be preserved in the process.
2. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this RMP/EIS. We are very concerned that BLM's communication and public involvement efforts be of the highest priority in any of its land management decisions.
3. We are also quite sensitive to the potential land use and socio-economic impacts that may accrue to BLM's land management policies.
4. Management issues numbered 6, 7, and 8 as they relate to the Scratchgravel Hills are addressed in the county's recently completed Scratchgravel Hills Comprehensive Management Plan. (A copy of this draft document has been sent to Mr. Lyle Fox in your office.)
5. As indicated in our April 19, 1983, letter to your state director, Mr. Mike Benford, we are very interested in management issue No. 5. We recently supported the successful grant application of a local consultant to conduct an extensive study of possible public and private land trades to preserve agriculture and to help protect land determined to be of significant public value. We are very

15a

TETON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CHOTEAU, MONTANA 59422

May 27, 1983

Dan Lechevsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
BLM
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Sir:

At the recent Board of Supervisors meeting your proposed RMP/EIS draft was reviewed. The Board will like to inform you that they are in agreement with Alternative A, regarding wilderness areas in our county.

If you have further questions, or more information is needed please call our office at 466-5651.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Pratt
Charles A. Pratt
Chairman

JUN 10 1983

14b

Mr. Dan Lechevsky, Project Manager
Page 2
June 15, 1983

appreciative of BLM's efforts to utilize land trades to acquire additional lands for public benefit. The lengthy process by which BLM recently acquired former Oxbow Ranch land on the Missouri River is a good example of the policies which we support.

In summary, we believe that BLM should play a stewardship role for lands which have been entrusted to its management. The public should always have sufficient time to comment on any proposed changes in BLM's land management policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your RMP/EIS. We look forward to continued cooperation and coordination with your office.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

not available for signature
John H. Wilkinson, Chairman
Bob Decker
Bob Decker
Linda Scott Anderson
Linda Scott Anderson

c Lyle Fox
Jack McIntosh
APD
ch/ck

16a

Company 565 Seventeenth Street
Denver, Colorado 80202
Telephone 303 573 7577
J. R. Mitchell
Public Lands Coordinator



July 25, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
Project Manager
Butte District
Bureau of Land Management
P. O. Box 3389
Butte, Montana 59702

RE: Draft Headwaters Resource Management Plan &
Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

Atlantic Richfield Company appreciates having the opportunity to provide comments to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding the draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Headwaters Resource Area, Montana. Our comments also pertain to the proposed designation of the Sleeping Giant tract as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which appeared in both the draft RMP and the June 23, 1983, Federal Register.

We are very concerned that several recommendations set forth under the Preferred Alternative would effectively preclude exploration and development of oil and gas resources in locations along the Rocky Mountain Front which have the highest potential for such development. While none of the five areas under consideration are recommended as suitable for wilderness designation, it appears that the BLM contemplates adopting highly protective management stipulations that amount to de facto wilderness. Specifically, we are alarmed by statements made concerning four areas along the Rocky Mountain Front - Blind Horse Creek, Bar Mountain, Chute Mountain, Deep Creek/Battle Creek - which are recommended for Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) designation. The Preferred Alternative asserts that this "special designation will permit essentially the same level of protection for scenic, recreational, and other values that wilderness designation would provide." Similar intentions appear to exist with respect to the proposed Sleeping Giant ACEC. Clearly, such stringent protection, especially the increase in no surface occupancy restrictions, would impede if not prohibit development of the area's oil and gas resources. The contemplated increase in regulation is particularly disconcerting because of the very high potential of the area, and Atlantic Richfield's

16b

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
July 25, 1983
Page 2

very active exploration program throughout the entire region.

To quantify the implications which the four alternatives and current management practices have for energy and minerals, we employed the RMOGA evaluation matrix to assess the development opportunities which would be foregone under each course of action (see attachment). This analysis highlights the impact of contemplated restrictions on the potential for resource development, with the Preferred Alternative yielding a figure which is 72% of the exploration opportunity in the Resource Area if only standard stipulations were applied. This compares with a percentage of 80% for the production alternative and, somewhat surprisingly, a figure of 86% for current management practices. This analysis demonstrates that the so-called resource production option is actually more restrictive than present management. This impact is felt principally because of the restrictive stipulations recommended for areas of highest oil and gas potential.

On this basis, we argue that the public interest would be better served by permitting surface occupancy to facilitate exploration within the area in question. Experience has demonstrated that intelligently conducted exploration and development activities can be compatible with sensitive natural environments. Such exploration would provide the resource information base needed for well-informed, rational land use planning decisions.

We are also concerned over what appears to be an implicit assumption in the Headwaters RMP, that oil and gas exploration cannot be undertaken without having severe negative impacts on an area's wildlife habitat and populations. At its Sheep Mountain facility in Colorado, Atlantic Richfield has demonstrated that it can operate a gas field in an area that has been designated as critical elk winter and calving range without having adverse impacts. In fact, studies by ANCO and the Bureau of Land Management have shown that the elk herd in this area is increasing annually. Clearly, an implicit assumption that wildlife and oil/gas exploration are incompatible, which ignores the environmental sensitivity of modern industry practices, should not influence the allocation of resources on our public lands.

16c

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
July 25, 1983
Page 3

We encourage the BLM to reconsider the proposed imposition of additional regulatory controls on the areas of high oil and gas potential. While the Preferred Alternative claims that ONA designation is intended to preserve future management options while providing full protection for surface values, the proposed access restrictions could effectively deny us the opportunity to explore and develop the oil and gas resources along the Rocky Mountain Front.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact this office if we can be of further assistance in your planning effort.

Sincerely,

J. R. Mitchell

J. R. Mitchell

JRM:JFO:drw
Attachments

16d

HEADWATERS RESOURCE AREA, MONTANA

RMOGA EVALUATION MATRIX

SUMMARY TABLE

Oil and Gas Opportunity

ALTERNATIVE	RMP*	RBST	OVERALL
A (Preferred)	62.44	80.48	72.04
B (No Action)	66.13	80.31	73.67
C (Protection)	42.46	81.39	63.17
D (Production)	70.78	80.10	79.96
Current Status	83.75	87.99	85.99

The figures in this summary table reflect the percentage of exploration opportunity by alternative as a function of exploration opportunity if only standard stipulations were applied throughout the Resource Area.

*Rocky Mountain Front

APPENDIXES

16e

ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED)

Potential		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
High 1	18550	x (4-4) = 0
2	14040	x (8-4) = 56160
3	49500	x (12-4) = 396000
Low 4	36160 118250	x (16-4) = 433920 886080

REST		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	2348	x (1-1) = 0
2	8910	x (2-1) = 8910
3	289708	x (3-1) = 579416
4	236289 537255	x (4-1) = 708867 1297193

RMP (High Potential)
 Range = 118250 x (Act - Min) = 118250 x 12 = 1419000
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{886080}{1419000} = 62.44\%$

REST (Low Potential)
 Range = 537255 x (Act - Min) = 537255 x 3 = 1611765
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{1297193}{1611765} = 80.48\%$

OVERALL
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual (High + Low)}}{\text{Range (High + Low)}} = \frac{886080 + 1297193}{1419000 + 1611765} = \frac{2183273}{3030765} = 72.04\%$

16f

ALTERNATIVE B (NO ACTION)

RMP		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	15430	x 0 = 0
2	7200	x 4 = 28800
3	59460	x 8 = 475680
4	36160 118250	x 12 = 433920 938400

REST		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	2995	x 0 = 0
2	10325	x 1 = 10325
3	287643	x 2 = 575286
4	236289 537225	x 3 = 708867 1294478

RMP (High Potential)
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{938400}{1419000} = 66.13\%$

REST (Low Potential)
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{1294478}{1611765} = 80.13\%$

OVERALL
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual (High + Low)}}{\text{Range (High + Low)}} = \frac{938400 + 1294478}{3030765} = 73.67\%$

*computed in Alternative A

16g

ALTERNATIVE C (PROTECTION)

RMP		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	40790	x 0 = 0
2	39020	x 4 = 156080
3	3700	x 8 = 29600
4	34740 602560	x 12 = 416880 602560

REST		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	0	x 0 = 0
2	3731	x 1 = 3731
3	299203	x 2 = 598406
4	236584 1311889	x 3 = 709752 1311889

RMP (High Potential)
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{602560}{1419000} = 42.46\%$

REST (Low Potential)
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{1311889}{1611765} = 81.39\%$

OVERALL
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual (High + Low)}}{\text{Range (High + Low)}} = \frac{602560 + 1311889}{3030765} = 63.17\%$

16h

ALTERNATIVE D (PRODUCTION)

RMP		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	10950	x 0 = 0
2	0	x 4 = 0
3	70820	x 8 = 566560
4	36480 118250	x 12 = 437760 1004320

REST		
Restrictions	Acres	Act- x Min
1	3924	x 0 = 0
2	11821	x 1 = 11821
3	285287	x 2 = 570574
4	236223 537255	x 3 = 708669 1291064

RMP (High Potential)
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{1004320}{1419000} = 70.78\%$

REST (Low Potential)
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Range}} = \frac{1291064}{1611765} = 80.10\%$

OVERALL
 Opportunity = $\frac{\text{Actual (High + Low)}}{\text{Range (High + Low)}} = \frac{1004320 + 1419000}{3030765} = 79.96\%$

16i

CURRENT STATUS

Total Area = 649955 acres

Restrictions	RMP		Act- Min
	Acres	x	
1	10950	x 0	= 0
2	3550	x 4	= 14200
3	17700	x 8	= 141600
4	86050	x 12	= 1032600
	118250		1188400

	RBSST		Act- Min
	Acres	x	
1	1960	x 0	= 0
2	20000	x 1	= 20000
3	145633	x 2	= 291266
4	364104	x 3	= 1092312
	531705		1403578

RMP (High Potential)

MAX RANGE = Acres x (Act - Min) = 118250 x 12 = 1419000
 ACTUAL (CURRENT) = Actual = 1188400 = 83.75%
 Range 1419000

RBSST (Low Potential)

MAX RANGE = Acres x (Act - Min) = 531705 x 3 = 1595115
 ACTUAL = 1403578 = 87.99%
 1595115

OVERALL

Actual (RMP + RBSST) = 1188400 + 1403578 = 2591978 = 85.99%
 Range (RMP + RBSST) 1419000 + 1595115 3014115

17a



Chevron U.S.A. Inc.
 700 South Colorado Blvd., P.O. Box 559, Denver, CO 80201

Richard T. Hughes
 Staff Analyst
 Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

June 20, 1983

Draft RMP/EIS
 Headwaters RA

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
 Project Manager
 P.O. Box 3388
 Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

Much of the Headwaters RA, particularly the Rocky Mountain Front Area, bears significant potential for discovery and development of oil and gas resources. While your Draft RMP/EIS attempts to recognize this significant potential, we fear that some of the management prescribing for protection of other resources will prevent full realization of the energy and mineral potential in the Headwaters RA. In areas of moderate to high energy and mineral potential, we believe those activities should be encouraged and restrictions for protection of other resources should be limited to those absolutely necessary.

Sincerely,

RTH/cgf

Central Region - Exploration, Land and Production

18a



Conoco Inc.
 Suite 900
 1751 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, DC 20006
 (202) 726-3660

July 13, 1983

Dan Lechefsky
 Butte District B. L. M.
 P.O. Box 3388
 Butte, MT 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

We are generally encouraged by the Headwaters R. A. planning and in particular that oil and gas leasing and development are considered as major planning issues.

We note that the Rocky Mountain Front study areas are recommended for ONA designation. Because of the unarguable high petroleum potential along the front we agree with this approach inasmuch as ONA designation does not carry the penalty of absolute withdrawal that Wilderness designation does. We note, however, your statement that ONA designation will, in your words, provide "essentially the same level of protection that Wilderness designation would provide." ONA protective stipulations being a discretionary matter we hope that, in the event this alternative is taken, you will recognize that oil and gas exploration and production are provably both brief and repairable. We believe we can work with you, IF GIVEN THE CHANCE, to illustrate that exploration would not irreparably damage environmental values. To the extent that we could work with you to prove this, and we do not take that challenge lightly, we support your preferred alternative.

E. F. Birdneall

19a



Continental Divide Trail Society

P.O. BOX 30002

BETHESDA, MD. 20814

June 29, 1983

Project Manager
 Headwaters RMP
 Butte District Office
 Bureau of Land Management
 P.O. Box 3388
 Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Sir:

This is in response to your invitation for comments on the draft RMP/EIS for the Headwaters Resource Area.

Our interest relates to those aspects of the plan that may have an impact upon the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Specifically, we are concerned with the public lands near Rogers Pass (Management Unit 5) and near Greenhorn Mountain (Management Unit 26).

First, we agree that these lands should be classified for retention, since they are along or close to the CDNST.

Second, care should be taken to avoid conflict between Trail users and motorcycle users in the Marysville area.

Third, surface occupancy should not be allowed in T 16 N, R 6 W, Sec. 32, even though the power line there already represents a substantial intrusion. Section 32 is also sensitive, though not directly on the Continental Divide or the likely Trail Route. (See Guide to the Continental Divide Trail, vol. 1, Northern Montana at 135.)

Finally, visual resource management in Units 5 and 26 should be sensitive to the location of the Continental Divide Trail and the recreational use thereof.

We look forward to receiving a copy of the final Plan.

Sincerely,

 Charles R. Holy
 Director

20a
Defenders
OF WILDLIFE

DEPT. OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1983 JUL 15 PM 3:48 12, 1983

RECEIVED
MONTANA STATE OFFICE
BILLINGS, MONTANA

Mike Penfold, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Box 30157
Billings, MT 59107

Dear Mike,

Please note the following comments on behalf of Defenders of Wildlife concerning the Headwaters Resource Area Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

Of all the lands managed by the Bureau in Montana, perhaps none are more important to wildlife--and particularly to threatened and endangered species--than those in the Headwaters Resource Area, and especially the lands along the Rocky Mountain Front. While this plan does a great deal to protect those resource values, it does have some critical flaws, particularly in regard to oil and gas leasing and the designation of roadless areas.

I'd like to start, however, by making it clear that the Headwaters document is the most intelligible BLM grazing document I've read to date. The charts and maps are extremely helpful, and the structure of the EIS is such that it's easy to follow specific issues and concerns throughout each chapter. One thing that wasn't so clear, however, was how specific concerns would be addressed on an allotment-by-allotment basis. For instance, in appendix E (Opportunities For Allotments) you might state "EIS Allotments: riparian vegetation in unsatisfactory condition, excessive soil erosion, elk and deer winter range in unsatisfactory condition." You would then state in the Resource Management Objectives column something like "improve riparian habitat, decrease erosion, improve elk and deer winter range." What seems to be lacking is the specific management action that needs to be taken to achieve some of these objectives, because in comparing Appendix N (Stocking Rate Adjustments) to Appendix E, it's not always clear how the improvements will be accomplished. Further, I'd like to have a better sense of what the priorities are for making these improvements. Given the reduced federal funds in recent years, it would appear many of the improvements that involve intensive management may not get funded; it would have been helpful if the EIS would have looked at ways to meet resource objectives given possible budget constraints, which appear to be a reality.

The following are my comments on specific issue areas:

Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

The oil and gas issue has the potential to impact wildlife to a far greater degree than livestock grazing unless the Bureau adopts a conservative stance from the start and then loosens restrictions as found permissible or as necessity demands. Oil and gas leasing and development is particularly crucial to the welfare of both the threatened grizzly bear and endangered northern gray wolf. Conservative management at this time--and that means the adoption of sufficient no leasing and no surface occupancy areas--will greatly reduce the number of future conflicts. Rather than delaying decisions and allow grizzly and wolf habitat to be eroded a little at a time, the Bureau should protect those areas important for endangered species now.

1244 NINETEENTH STREET, NW • WASHINGTON, DC 20036 • (202) 659-9510

20b
Defenders
OF WILDLIFE

Headwaters Resource Area comments--page two

The amount of acreage suggested for no leasing and no surface occupancy in the preferred alternative is simply not enough to adequately protect the grizzly or wolf. As the Fish and Wildlife Service noted in its biological opinion on the Rocky Mountain Front plan several years ago, simultaneous development in adjacent drainages could jeopardize both the grizzly and the wolf. The Bureau needs to adopt a plan that takes into account such a possibility.

Under the preferred alternative, the main areas protected from oil and gas leasing and development would be the three roadless areas along the Rocky Mountain Front (Blind Horse, Chase Mountain, Deep Cr./Saddle Cr.). This would seem to suggest that the Bureau is picking those lands that are convenient to protect, because they lack roads and development isn't imminent. Rather, the Bureau should identify those lands that are critical to these species and place them in a no leasing or no surface occupancy category. It would appear that alternative C comes much closer to fulfilling the BLM's obligation to protect and enhance the habitat of endangered species. The preferred alternative seems like a minimal effort, geared toward keeping the grizzly from becoming endangered, rather than what's mandated by the Endangered Species Act--recovery.

Grazing Allotment and Riparian Habitat Management

The EIS makes it clear there are some problem areas regarding grazing, particularly regarding erosion, riparian areas and the loss of wildlife habitat. Appendix E points out these problems clearly, and the BLM deserves commendation for putting forth the problem in a way that's understandable. Appendix E makes it plain to see that good vegetative condition doesn't necessarily mean good condition for wildlife. It's not reassuring to a ground nesting bird to know the range is in excellent condition if it's only two inches high. Similarly, an allotment may be in good condition yet the riparian areas--the key spots for wildlife--may be badly overutilized. Appendix E provides a good narrative on what's happening in the category I allotments, and it also makes the case for the need for improved management. My main criticism, again, is the failure of the plan to say how these improvements will be made.

Given that more than a fourth of the riparian habitat in the Resource Area is in unsatisfactory condition (and particularly since much of this is critical grizzly habitat), Defenders of Wildlife supports the proposal to improve this situation. It's not clear from the plan that correcting this situation has been given a high enough priority in the plan. It would seem those areas with large percentage of riparian in unsatisfactory condition (particularly if they're in grizzly areas) should be the highest priority I areas. I also find it unacceptable that the unsatisfactory riparian areas in the K and C categories won't be improved.

While it's possible to gain AIM's via the kind of intensive management the EIS recommends, if those funds aren't available, it may be necessary to make the kinds of stocking reductions proposed in alternative C in order to meet wildlife objectives for various allotments. This is a tradeoff that often takes place, but is seldom mentioned in planning documents.

Wilderness Study Recommendations

The BLM recommendations to Congress regarding possible wilderness designation of study areas was one of the more disappointing aspects of the Headwaters plan. The EIS makes the case very well for why these areas qualify for wilderness, and in fact, would be exceptional additions to the wilderness system--particularly the areas along the Rocky Mountain Front. All three of these areas are not only exceptionally scenic, but they also have wildlife values that make them exceptional. While the

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Defenders
OF WILDLIFE

Headwaters Resource Area comments--page three

EIS points all this out, as well as the exceptional nature of the Forest Service roadless areas adjacent to the BLM study areas, it falls short of making a wilderness recommendation to Congress, suggesting instead that an "Outstanding Natural Area" administrative designation would provide similar protection as wilderness while maintaining "management flexibility."

I found the discussion of the ONA concept one of the most disappointing aspects of the Headwaters plan; the concept was discussed as if it were readily understood by all, an administrative management tool commonly used. To the best of my knowledge it's not, and as a person who commonly follows these issues, I must confess to not fully understanding what can and can't be done in an ONA, nor how quickly one can be changed or undone. Certainly all of these questions should have been answered in full in the EIS; if they were, I couldn't find them.

While an ONA classification at least recognizes that the three Rocky Mountain Front roadless areas have special values, it doesn't provide the stable, long-term management direction a wilderness recommendation would. The Bob Marshall Alliance, of which Defenders of Wildlife is a member, has submitted a proposal to Montana's Congressional delegation recommending both the Deep Creek and Teton River High Peaks areas for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. These are the Forest Service roadless areas that border the BLM study areas. The Alliance feels these BLM areas are a key part of the Bob Marshall ecosystem, tying together important transitional habitat between the prairie and the mountains.

An ONA classification based on speculative energy values seems like flimsy protection for areas with such proven wilderness and wildlife values.

On the other hand, the Black Sage and Yellowstone River Island areas don't have nearly the wilderness potential as the Front areas. Nevertheless, as important roadless areas their wild nature should be preserved. Clearly, the roadless attributes of the Black Sage area aren't very highly valued in the EIS.

Forest Management

The EIS doesn't really present enough information to analyze whether or not the proposed timber harvest level is reasonable. I couldn't find any economic data on the relative value and accessibility of timber on BLM lands, nor were there such of a discussion of how BLM forest management might impact wildlife. While the document made the generalization that timber harvest could improve wildlife habitat, it should be noted that on many BLM lands in the Headwaters area security and thermal cover are more of a limiting factor than forage. The number of miles of roads proposed to facilitate timber harvest is another concern that I didn't feel was adequately addressed; I didn't get a feeling of the BLM road management policy.

I'm also quite concerned about potential intensive timber activity on BLM land in the Roger's Pass area, which is quite critical for grizzlies and potentially important for wolves. I never did find a discussion of the management tradeoffs involved in logging this area. It should be noted that most logging along the Rocky Mountain Front is marginal at best, and the market for the timber is small. When these limited timber values are weighed against the wildlife values, they fare rather poorly.

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Defenders
OF WILDLIFE

Headwaters Resource Area comments--page four

Land Ownership Adjustments

We firmly oppose any accelerated program to dispose of public lands. There are opportunities for the BLM to trade public lands in the Headwaters Area to public advantage, but we oppose the outright sale of lands. The EIS suggests as many as 25,000 acres might be considered for disposal in the Headwaters Area. For the Bureau to even suggest such a massive land sale program demonstrates someone is badly out of touch with how people in Montana feel about public lands.

Rather, the BLM should be considering purchasing or trading for tracts of land known to be critical to threatened and endangered species. The Endangered Species Act directs federal agencies to take all actions necessary to recover species, and acquiring land seems like a logical action to take.

Coal Leasing

It seems illogical to lease the Great Falls coal field at a time when the demand is so low. It seems wise to take more time to study the impacts of leasing this coal before moving forward. Leasing this coal, along with possible development, has the potential to seriously affect the Smith River.

Special Designations

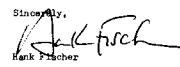
Designation of the Sleeping Giant Area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern demonstrates the BLM recognizes the unique values of the area, but a wilderness designation would protect the area far better; such a designation would complement the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness.

General Comments

While this EIS does a good job of analyzing impacts, it does so primarily from a livestock viewpoint; the plan is heavily weighted toward maintaining and developing proper levels of AIM's. While cattle grazing is an important use of the public lands, there are other uses that are equally important. Defenders of Wildlife feels that specific targets for these values should also be established; the plan should try and provide habitat for x number of grizzly bears, for example, and x number of bighorn sheep.

It's simply not enough to say that once the range is in good or excellent condition, everything will be fine for wildlife, because it isn't true. This plan fails to quantify in any way the quality and relative abundance of various kinds of wildlife habitat in the Headwaters Area.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

HANK FISCHER, Montana Rep.
Defenders of Wildlife
1534 Helena Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

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Don Lechelsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
B.I.M.

Dear Dan:

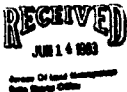
Enclosed are the prepared comments of the Montana Audubon Council concerning the draft Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement for the Headwaters Resource Area. As you will note in those comments, we feel that extra time should be granted for the receipt by your Office of comments on the plan.

We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have concerning our statement and we will be willing to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely;

Gary B. Lund
Council Member June 13, 1983

cc: Harriet Marble, Council President
Jim Phelps, Past Council President
Audubon Chapter Presidents
Rocky Mountain Regional Office, B.I.M.S.
Jim Richards, President Montana Wildlife Federation



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COMMENTS OF THE MONTANA AUDUBON COUNCIL ON THE HEADWATERS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

COMMENT PERIOD

The period of time available for comments on the plan and environmental impact statement was insufficient for the Montana Audubon Council and individual members of Audubon to review the document and gather general and specific information in relation to it. As a consequence, we feel that our comments will not be as detailed and as incisive as is necessary. We request that the period for comments be extended at least 30 days so that further public input could be received.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The appropriateness of determining the disposal of numerous and diverse tracts of public lands should not be considered in the context of a general document such as this. Our experience has taught us that the identification of values and uses for specific tracts must occur on an individual basis. For this reason we oppose the utilization of this process for determining the appropriateness of disposing of specific tracts of land.

We consider the public domain to be an important and vital national resource for conservation purposes. We oppose the sale of any public lands generally. This document is predicated upon the assumption that portions of the public domain should be sold.

We are aware that some tracts of public lands may not be appropriate for retention. Instead of sale of such lands we would advocate that such tracts as identified through careful study be utilized in trades for private lands which have been determined to be appropriate for addition to the public domain.

Any process initiated for the disposal or trade of specific tracts of public land should be predicated upon careful on site studies of land values and uses and should include a hearing process.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PLAN AND STATEMENT

The protection Alternative, "C", appears in many respects to closely resemble the Efferred Alternative "A". The significant differences appear to be those relating to wilderness designation for certain tracts. These differences arise out of land use allocation. Differences in

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management practices generally do not appear to be significant. The document contains little in the way of analysis of management practices or criteria. As a consequence, it would seem that a large percentage of the area's public lands would see no significant change in management practices under any of the proposed alternatives. In our view, the document should be revised so that the proposed alternatives would address in more detail differences in general management practices under the various alternatives.

The document does not appear to explicitly address the processes and considerations for the designation and protection of unique or exemplary habitats or populations of plants or animals. This should be an important aspect of any planning process. Audubon members due to their interests in these matters are often aware of such habitats and populations and as a consequence are concerned with their recognition and protection. We feel that the plan should clearly identify processes and considerations, inclusive of public involvement, by which such recognition and protection may be achieved.

The document in presenting the alternatives and in stating the management practices intended to be common to all the alternatives, while recognizing the importance of populations of endangered and threatened species, appears to generally relegate their maintenance to that of being but another use of the public lands. Legally, their maintenance should clearly take precedence over other uses. Other uses would in areas of concern be allowable if determined after careful study to be compatible. The plan, we feel, should be revised so as to clearly state the precedence of management of endangered and threatened species. Such revision should also be reflected in the alternatives. Currently, the summary of the consequences of the alternatives indicates that there would be negative impacts on the identified populations of endangered and threatened species. The legal precedence of management of these populations is such that none of the alternatives should result in negative impacts to the populations.

The plan, generally, in identifying zones for disposal of public lands, has overlooked significant habitat and aesthetic values frequently associated with lands in those zones. Many of these lands are characterized by native grasslands. Such habitat, particularly in the valleys or western and central Montana, is becoming scarce due to land development for farming and housing. Many species of plants and animals are becoming rarer as a result. Public land tracts in such areas are an important resource in maintaining those species. Because of the changes brought on by development,

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the aesthetic value of these tracts becomes significant. We feel that the plan should be revised to recognize the habitat and aesthetic values of valley and prairie tracts of public land.

SUMMARY

In the context of the proposed plan, the Montana Audubon Council supports the land use proposals as presented in Alternative "C", the "Protection Alternative". As previously noted this support is qualified in that we find this alternative and general aspects of the plan to be deficient. Thus we would support Alternative "C" with the considerations above stated incorporated into it and the general aspects of the plan.

Gary B. Lund
Council Member June 13, 1983

Prepared at the request of Montana Audubon Council.

Any questions or responses to this statement should be sent to Gary B. Lund at 425 Clarke St., Helena, Montana 59601.

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June 9, 1983

Michael

MONTANA 4X4 ASSOCIATION, INC.

In reply to reference 2700

Bureau of Land Management
Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Alan Frelle
Montana 4X4 Association
Four By Four Center
P.O. Box 1181
Billings, Montana 59725

To Whom It May Concern:

Chapter 1 Issue 1;
Must public land should be made available for oil and gas leasing?
As far as I am concerned--NONE!!
No matter how close it is to road, it will still upset the balance of nature, and the habitat for those animals which live in the area.
It also takes away the beauty of that area, when trees are cut to make room for travel. We have had enough trouble keeping the lands clean as it is.
As far as any Wilderness areas, I feel that we shouldn't over do this area, Wilderness is fine, but like anything one can over-land. If Congress sets aside to much of our land for Wilderness it will cut back on the normal usage of the land which is what most of the people like. I think the WILDERNESS AREAS should be left AS THEY ARE FOR THE TIME BEING.
Chapter 1 Issue 7;
Should public land be used for motorcycle racing? I feel that they should do as we (MONTANA) do, rent some PRIVATE land for such types of activity. It gives the people who want to see it a chance to do so, and those who don't care a chance not to.
Chapter 1 Issue 8;
As a member of an organized Wheel Drive Club I feel no land should be close to MODIFIED WILDERNESS AREAS. I also do see reasons behind closing it to seasonal demands for the area. I am not familiar with

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MONTANA 4X4 ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Donahoe road, 2110, 2120, 2130, 2140, 2150, 2160, 2170, 2180, 2190, 2200, 2210, 2220, 2230, 2240, 2250, 2260, 2270, 2280, 2290, 2300, 2310, 2320, 2330, 2340, 2350, 2360, 2370, 2380, 2390, 2400, 2410, 2420, 2430, 2440, 2450, 2460, 2470, 2480, 2490, 2500, 2510, 2520, 2530, 2540, 2550, 2560, 2570, 2580, 2590, 2600, 2610, 2620, 2630, 2640, 2650, 2660, 2670, 2680, 2690, 2700, 2710, 2720, 2730, 2740, 2750, 2760, 2770, 2780, 2790, 2800, 2810, 2820, 2830, 2840, 2850, 2860, 2870, 2880, 2890, 2900, 2910, 2920, 2930, 2940, 2950, 2960, 2970, 2980, 2990, 3000, 3010, 3020, 3030, 3040, 3050, 3060, 3070, 3080, 3090, 3100, 3110, 3120, 3130, 3140, 3150, 3160, 3170, 3180, 3190, 3200, 3210, 3220, 3230, 3240, 3250, 3260, 3270, 3280, 3290, 3300, 3310, 3320, 3330, 3340, 3350, 3360, 3370, 3380, 3390, 3400, 3410, 3420, 3430, 3440, 3450, 3460, 3470, 3480, 3490, 3500, 3510, 3520, 3530, 3540, 3550, 3560, 3570, 3580, 3590, 3600, 3610, 3620, 3630, 3640, 3650, 3660, 3670, 3680, 3690, 3700, 3710, 3720, 3730, 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NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

NORTHERN ROCKIES NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
240 N. Higgins, Missoula, Montana 59801
(406) 721-6025

Mr. Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office, BLM
P.O. Box 3386
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

The following comments regarding the plans for resource management activities in the Headwaters Resource Area are based on BLM's Draft Environmental Impact Statement Preferred Alternative A. The comments are being submitted with the understanding they will become part of the official public record on BLM's plans for the Headwaters Resource Area lands. These comments should be viewed as supplemental to those filed by Charles Griffith, the National Wildlife Federation's regional executive for the Northern Rockies.

Generally we found the DEIS preferred alternative to provide a balanced approach to management in the Headwaters Resource Area. Several items are troubling however.

The rationale presented on page 115 and in Appendix L for designation of the Blind Horse, Deep Creek/Battle Creek, Black Sage, Chute Mountain, and Yellowstone River Island as Outstanding Natural areas rather than Wilderness Areas is invalid. Short-term protection of these areas is simply not equivalent to the long-term protection which wilderness designation would provide. It is inconsistent to protect an area with high wilderness values only until a commercially viable product is discovered thereon. The justification that some of these areas may have high oil and gas potential fails to recognize that in some cases higher values exist than those associated with production of oil and gas.

In the Blind Horse, Deep Creek/Battle Creek and Black Sage areas public comment favored either wilderness designation or further study. Public comments relating to the Chute Mountain and Yellowstone River Island areas were inconclusive. See Appendix L. In view of these results BLM seems to be ignoring public opinion in favor of oil and

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gas and mineral production. This approach benefits mainly privately owned oil companies at the expense of irreplaceable public resources. In light of the preceding discussion, the decision on wilderness designation for these areas should be left to Congress, not made internally by the agency. As the DEIS makes clear, if Congress were to include these lands in the wilderness system, BLM would still manage them as natural areas. Thus, Congress not the agency should make the choice of short-term versus long-term protection.

The proposed leasing plan ends to maximize oil and gas production at the expense of important wildlife habitat including that of threatened and endangered species. The leasing proposal should be rewritten to prohibit leasing on key ranges of threatened and endangered species. Further, the lease stipulations presented on pages 208 and 209 should be rewritten to protect key habitat even in the event of oil and gas discovery. As they now stand, protections are afforded only so long as oil and gas are not found. In any event, grizzly bear and grey wolf habitat should receive high priority and be improved with all due haste in accordance with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

The potential for viable production and the effects of coal production in the Great Falls Coal Field are spread throughout the DEIS. These factors should be consolidated and coal leasing reconsidered in that light. The factors are:

1. Removal of the coal may prove to be costly and difficult - page 60.
2. Due to high sulphur and ash content the quality of the coal is poor - page 90.
3. The production potential of the area is questionable - page 60.
4. Production will adversely affect air quality and bring with it the potential of acid rain in the Great Falls area - page 109.
5. Production may cause cyanide leaks in Helena Valley resources which are used by some homeowners for domestic water - page 110.

Consideration of these factors makes justification of coal leasing in the Great Falls Coal Field difficult.

Further, it is impossible to determine from the DEIS whether the no surface occupancy stipulations proposed for the Great Falls Coal Field and mentioned in Criteria No. 15 of Appendix E create unusable islands of land. To provide viable habitat for the sharp-tailed grouse, elk, antelope, and mule deer proper buffers and corridors must also be

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provided for.

The DEIS offers no economic justification for the timber harvest leases proposed. Past experience on Eastern Montana National Forest lands has shown even moderate silvicultural management to be economically inefficient. NEPA requires costs and benefits to be displayed, yet nowhere in the DEIS are the economics of timber analyzed. Especially in the Rodgers Pass area which contains summer and fall grizzly bear habitat the scale tips in favor of wildlife and against timber harvesting.

Likewise, the DEIS offers inadequate justification for sagebrush control/burning projects mentioned on page 125 and again on page 127. There are high wildlife values associated with sagebrush including the elk-calving habitat mentioned on page 125. With the increasing potential of private landowners intensifying management of their land it seems that BLM has an increasing responsibility to manage for the benefit of wildlife.

Allowing motorcycle events in the Black Sage area is inconsistent with the wilderness values present there. See p. 115. Prohibition should be considered to mitigate the noise, erosion and concentration of people which these events cause.

The visual resource classification presented on page 67 of the DEIS is arbitrary and represents an unjustified value judgment. Plains areas cannot be said to be inherently lacking in scenic value. Where management decisions are based on arbitrary classifications such as this serious errors are likely to be made.

Finally, and in regard to the proposed sales and exchanges of some tracts of BLM land discussed on page 112, we believe that BLM has the authority and the obligation to transfer jurisdiction of some of its lands to other appropriate state and federal agencies rather than to put these lands up for sale. We believe that a need does exist to exchange land under BLM's stewardship which have low public values for lands which have higher public values. However, we do not believe that isolation, small size or difficult management in and of themselves render a parcel of low public value. In fact, these may be the very factors which make the property important for wildlife. In almost every case, exchange is preferable to sale of public lands.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments and their inclusion in the public record.

Sincerely,

Wendy Holter

Legal Intern

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NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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12 Gardner Park Dr.
Bozeman, MT. 59715
July 9, 1985

Michael Penfold, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 50157
Billings, MT. 59107

Lyle Fox, Area Manager
Headwaters Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 508
Butte, MT. 59701

Dear Messrs. Penfold and Fox:

As you know from previous correspondence on the BLM Assets Management Program, the National Wildlife Federation is a private citizens' non-profit conservation education association with approximately 4.2 million members, more than 10,000 of whom are Montanans who hold membership directly with NWF or belong to the NWF's state affiliate, the Montana Wildlife Federation. The Federation is deeply interested in the management and use of all federal lands, particularly in the implications of the BLM's current Assets Management Program and its effect on our public lands base.

Also, as you know, Secretary of the Interior James Watt recently announced at the Western Governors' Conference in Kalispell that he opposed the Assets Management Program, despite the earlier claims by Secretary Watt and BLM Director James Burford that the program was designed to reduce or eliminate the national debt. Recent disclosures have shown that the federal law requires only 20 per cent of the proceeds of sales of BLM and USFS lands to go to the U.S. Treasury, with 4 per cent to the state and 76 per cent to the Bureau of Reclamation. On this basis alone, the American public should reject and repudiate this program for the obvious subterfuge associated with its promotion to the public. Political chicanery aside, the National Wildlife Federation wishes to submit its comments on the Headwaters Resource Area land disposal plan's draft environmental impact statement, assuming that the land disposal program will proceed despite this obvious misrepresentation to the public. We ask that these comments be included in the public record and that full consideration be given to these suggestions in the development of final program plans by your agency. The Montana Wildlife Federation and individual members of both the national and state organizations will submit individual comments which should receive the same consideration.

In previous comments submitted to your agency regarding the Dillon and Billings Resource Area plans, the Federation asked that BLM recognize its authority to adopt alternatives to sale of public lands under its jurisdiction. These alternatives include reassignment of jurisdiction to appropriate state and federal land management agencies such as the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Forest Service. We are opposed to any release of BLM lands to the Department of

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State lands because of that agency's sorry record of managing the natural resources on lands under its jurisdiction. We also ask that a substantial portion of the lands listed for possible disposal be retained by BLM and better managed by your agency. We are not opposed to exchange of BLM lands with low public values for lands with higher public values, particularly when such lands exchanged by BLM can be maintained for agricultural purposes. The Federation is completely opposed to release, trade, sale or exchange of any lands with moderate to high public values for the purpose of promoting subdivision of these lands.

We also reiterate our position that BLM allegations that some smaller and more isolated tracts should be disposed of because of their "management difficulties" are, in most instances, insufficient reason for loss of public lands, part of the legacy of every American citizen. Difficulty of management is, at best, a subjective consideration and poses the question of how well BLM is managing its own fiscal and manpower resources in carrying out its mandated functions. Many of these smaller and more isolated tracts are "islands" of excellent wildlife habitat and contain other valuable public features. The question ultimately resolves itself into whether BLM exists to serve the public needs or to serve its own bureaucratic comforts.

Because of the location of the Headwaters Resource Area in Montana and the importance of the Rocky Mountain Front Range to wildlife species, public use and other valuable natural amenities found within that area, the Federation is extremely concerned over possible oil and gas development and mineral extraction possibilities on the aforementioned public values. The Federation strongly supports BLM's efforts to establish and enforce stipulations on such extractive and environmentally-damaging activities.

We must commend the Bureau, its personnel and the resource area advisory committee for the orientation program it conducted on the DEIS on this area in Helena in June. This is by far the best example displayed to date of BLM attempting to educate the public to the implications of its proposed actions and to encourage public participation and involvement in the decision-making process. In general, we find the DEIS to be a professionally-prepared document. Wildlife coordination requirements appear throughout the document, demonstrating not only that a superior inter-disciplinary approach was used in drafting the DEIS but that fully professional wildlife biologists were permitted to exercise their prescribed role in this planning effort. The Resource Area planning team and supervisors should be commended for this.

In particular, the Federation congratulates the BLM personnel for their recommendations to classify outstanding natural areas on the Front Range and the classification of the Sleeping Giant tract as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

We are also greatly encouraged to see strong direction toward coordination of wildlife needs with commodity production objectives in this report. This is exemplified in the commitment that the cooperative elk-logging study will be continued and that evaluation of fish and wildlife habitat

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will continue on a case by case basis as part of all project level planning.

The commitment is further strengthened by the statement that roads will be constructed to minimum standards necessary to remove the timber and that all range management projects will be given inter-disciplinary review prior to final planning and action.

The Federation believes, based on years of experience with federal agency programs, that BLM must insist that this type of plan be formally adopted to assure continuity when the usual transfer of line managers occurs. This will require in-depth orientation of new employees and frequent monitoring to assure that such objectives continue to be observed and heeded. This also implies that close management direction is needed without qualifications.

If a resource involved in the planning rates special consideration and handling in a resource management plan, then it follows that extra effort must be made by BLM to assure that adequate and continuous direction is given this special resource.

The proposed direction under Water on Page 19 of the DEIS is an illustration of this. The direction proposed is good until you reach the point where the phrase "to the extent possible" appears. This phrase effectively deletes the entire purpose and direction previously stated and allows the line manager to determine riparian utility location to proceed at his own whim, rather than under prescribed direction. This is a weakness that needs further attention in the DEIS.

The Federation also reminds BLM that nothing is forever, that a Resource Management Plan sanctioned by an accepted EIS is not cast in bronze. On occasion, unusual or unpredictable events occur or circumstances arise that require management flexibility. At that time and under those circumstances, an environmental assessment or an abbreviated environmental impact statement can be prepared by BLM to alter the original EIS, provided the required public review and input processes are followed. Following this procedure will assure needed protection of a particular resource as well as assure the required public involvement in the planning and management processes.

While the Federation believes this DEIS to be the best of the three thus far released by the agency in Montana, we believe a few additional recommendations are relevant and appropriate.

As we mentioned in our comments on the Billings Resource Area plan, the Federation is uneasy with the use of Soil Conservation Service Utilization Standards. SCS grazing rates and standards are aimed at maximum livestock production and usually are not compatible with a coordinated livestock-wildlife multiple use management program. We urge that these standards not be used.

The Muskrat Allotment plan must be closely coordinated with the Elk Horns wildlife management plans now being prepared by the Helena National Forest. The proposed grazing rates for this allotment, a sensitive wildlife area, seem excessive and no mention is made of any proposed or current coordination.

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Again, the Federation strongly protests many of the criteria imposed for BLM's land disposal program. As we stated, difficulty of management used as one criteria for disposal should be considered only when the actual cost of management exceeds the public benefits derived from retention of this land. In some instances, transfer to other state and federal agencies can solve this problem for your agency.

We cannot envision any circumstance wherein sale of BLM lands from the Headwaters Resource Area can possibly meet the third criteria listed from FLMFA on Page 21 of your DEIS.

The Federation also strongly protests two statements made prefaced by the phrase "Sale will be the preferred method of disposal when:"

"It is required by national policy" - the current administration's policy obviously is predicated on an exploitation ethic and the public's ownership of the land and its rights to retain this land for its use be damned. Despite the Secretary's disavowal of the Assets Management Program at Kallepell in June, this has been the theme of the Assets Management Program and there is no indication that that theme has been changed.

"Where disposal through exchange will cause unacceptable delays" -- exchange of BLM lands historically has been a slow process, but deliberation before action better insures protection of the public legacy. We urge BLM to seek innovative approaches to land exchange such as land pooling, a method which should greatly speed up the entire procedure.

Lastly, the Federation adjures BLM to explore every possible means of land exchange or transfer of jurisdiction as alternatives to any land sales. Response to the Dillon Resource Area plan, public sentiment and the attitude of state governments and Congress are unanimous in their rejection of this administration's efforts to pander our citizens' blightright. We hope that recognition of this fact by the Secretary will trickle down to the local decision-making levels in the Bureau of Land Management.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Headwaters Resource Area DEIS and compliment the staff on the bulk of their recommendations. We do, however, find BLM's disposal area-retention area concept too nebulous in some areas to allow adequate public understanding and decision.

Also, we again ask that the Federation, both national and state, be kept fully informed of BLM's intentions and plans with respect to any land disposal being considered by your agency. Please place the following on your mailing list for all information regarding these programs:

Charles J. Griffith, Reg. Exec.
National Wildlife Federation
16 Gardner Park Dr.
Boseman, MT. 59715

Billy Stonington, Exec. Dir.
Montana Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 2536
Boseman, MT. 59715

Sincerely,
Charles J. Griffith
Charles J. Griffith
Regional Executive

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Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.

Public Lands Institute
1122 RACE STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80202
303 377-9740

August 3, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
P. O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan for the Headwaters Resource Area, Montana

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

Enclosed are the comments of the Denver office of the Public Lands Institute of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan for the Headwaters Resource Area. Comments on the range management sections of the RMP/EIS will be sent under separate cover by our San Francisco office, and should be considered part of these comments.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this proposal. If I can be of assistance to the project team, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address and telephone.

Sincerely yours,

Carolyn R. Johnson
Carolyn R. Johnson
Senior Public Lands Specialist

CRJ:amm

Enclosure

APPENDIXES

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Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.

Public Lands Institute
1720 RACE STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80202
303 377-9742

COMMENTS OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, INC.
AND ITS PUBLIC LANDS INSTITUTE

ON THE

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
THE HEADWATERS RESOURCE AREA

Prepared by:

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Senior Public Lands Specialist

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Introduction

Although the draft Headwaters RMP/EIS is an improvement over the piecemeal approach to land-use planning based on Management Framework Plans which has been used in the past, the RMP/EIS falls short of meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements for comprehensive planning and analysis. The major deficiencies of the draft RMP/EIS are detailed in the following comments. The range management portion of these comments has been sent by our San Francisco office under separate cover.

Alternatives

In formulating the different alternatives analyzed and compared in the RMP/EIS, different goals and objectives were not developed for each resource in each alternative. (See Table 2-15, p. 47). In many areas, there is little or no difference in the proposed management actions for each alternative, making the comparative evaluation of impacts in the document extremely limited. Some examples of management goals and proposed actions that could be modified to achieve a greater range of alternatives are given below:

1. The RMP/EIS has recognized the general effects of the timber industry on wildlife habitat (especially aquatic habitat) and on recreational resources (pp. 114, 118-120), yet the acres to be harvested are the same for the preferred, no action, and protection alternatives. Why not consider different levels and locations of timbering, and analyze the impacts on specific habitat and recreational resources? This would allow for trade-offs between these resources to be analyzed, and the incremental "costs" of timbering in terms of wildlife and recreation to be identified.

2. The general pro's and con's of land disposal and exchange in the resource area are carefully analyzed on pp. 112-113. Although the analysis is

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very general, it accurately recognizes that trade-offs exist between a rapid program of land disposal and a more gradual program emphasizing land exchange. However, the amount of land for potential disposal is the same for the preferred, protection, and production alternatives.

3. All four alternatives include the economic costs-benefits associated with range use and oil and gas development as well as the approximate number of jobs created with the timber industry. We believe detailed cost-benefit analyses are required for other non-market resource uses as well as the ones named above. Detailed or quantitative economic analyses of recreational use (motorized as well as non-motorized, hunting/fishing use), wildlife forage allocation (as this relates to hunting activity, for instance) and wilderness preservation would provide a more complete, detailed basis for comparative analysis. Such analysis would provide a better range of alternatives and could change parts of the preferred alternative BLM selects. For example, the inclusion of such data and analysis did lead to a significant change in the Bureau's final proposed plan for the Glenwood Springs Resource Area in Colorado. There, it was discovered through the economic analysis of the wildlife and livestock forage allocation for the Economic Development and Resource Protection alternatives that increasing wildlife forage allocations would result in greater economic benefits, primarily through the impact increased hunting opportunities would have on the area's economy. This was unexpected to the BLM staff who prepared the draft RMP/EIS, and the final plan was adjusted to increase wildlife forage.

There are other modifications to the alternatives section which are required or which deserve attention. These major areas are discussed individually. A change in approach in many of the areas discussed would substantially alter the range of alternatives.

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Resource Inventory and Data

More inventory and data -- especially on many "non-market" resources -- is necessary in the RMP/EIS to allow comparison and integration of information concerning all the various land uses BLM is required to consider under FLEMA (see Sec. 103(c)). Eroded and erosion hazard areas, areas of heavy ORV use, localized sources of water pollution, unsatisfactory riparian habitat and different types of recreational use which are briefly mentioned in the Chapters on Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences should be identified on map overlays and quantified to the greatest extent possible. By slighting some resources at the outset of the planning process -- during inventory -- final RMPs tend to end up emphasizing commercial land users over balanced land management. We would like to note the excellent knowledge on fish and wildlife shown in the document; however, to make the information presented in the document more meaningful to the reader (and presumably, to the rest of the BLM planning team) the RMP/EIS should include information on crucial winter habitat, wildlife populations, and the relationship of public lands (administered by BLM) to the surrounding areas (administered by state, other federal agencies or private owners) with respect to wildlife habitat and populations.

In some places, the RMP/EIS states that information, such as soil surveys, are still being collected (pp. 56-57) or that additional information on water resources and timbering, for example, is available at the area office (pp. 57, 86). However, the information in the RMP/EIS and the manner in which it is presented do not indicate that BLM has made an appropriate effort to assemble all available information; to collect additional information emphasizing "significant issues and decisions with the greatest potential impact"; and to integrate and present this information "in a manner that aids application in the planning process" (43 CFR 1610.4-3(a)). Since public participation is a major

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element of the planning process outlined by FLPMA and BLM planning regulations, all information relevant to planning decisions should be presented or summarized in an easily usable form in the RMP/EIS. Because multiple-use management involves the integration of many different land uses and inventory data, map overlays and quantitative tables are particularly useful to the reader (and, presumably, to the BLM planning team). Where important information is unavailable because of present budget and time constraints it would also be helpful to the public and future BLM management to specifically identify these data gaps in the document. Indeed, BLM planning regulations require that RMPs generally state where there is a "need for an area to be covered by more detailed and specific plans." (43 CFR 1601.0-5(k)(8)).

Soil and Water Resources

All the alternatives in the RMP/EIS lack comprehensive and specific analysis and proposals to improve or maintain the area's soil and water resources upon which grazing, wildlife and many human activities ultimately depend. The general discussion of soil and water resources in the chapters on Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences (pp. 56-57 and 109-111) indicate that erosion problems and localized sources of water pollution exist in the area -- often from past mining practices and overgrazing -- which could have long-lasting or irreparable consequences if allowed to continue. As the EIS itself notes "soils that now show symptoms of erosion will be seriously impacted by any soil-disturbing activities (and) rehabilitation of these soils will be more difficult because of past losses of topsoil and nutrients" (p. 109). Similarly, coal and gold mining could result in serious impacts on ground-water resources, including the water source of many homeowners near Helena (p. 110).

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The EIS states that under the preferred plan, "BLM would try to prevent, rather than mitigate the degradation of water quality . . . by reviewing activities before they happen, and following applicable laws and regulations . . ." (p. 110). However, a closer analysis reveals that the preferred plan in fact contains no such concrete preventive measures for identified and potential sources of water degradation. A proposal to withdraw portions of the Scratch Grave Hills from mineral entry to protect ground-water from cyanide contamination, for instance, is rejected in the Preferred Alternative because numerous mining claims in the recharge area would be unaffected by the withdrawal. Instead, reliance is placed on federal and state regulations which, by BLM's own admission, are considered adequate if the enforcing agencies are funded adequately (and it should be added, if these agencies effectively carry out regulations) (p. 52). Similarly, although underground coal mining could seriously disrupt ground-water (p. 110), all federal coal within the Great Falls Coal Field is available for further consideration for coal leasing in the preferred plan, which relies on future, unspecified lease stipulations and mine plan review to prevent ground-water resource problems (p. 53). Regulations themselves are not a mitigating measure, and no analysis supports the conclusion that BLM need do nothing but rely on existing regulations.

Throughout the plan, in-depth analysis of how soil resources could be protected through specific management actions and restrictions are also missing. The proposed plan calls for 219,000 acres (where erosion and land use conflicts presumably exist) to be "prioritized for restrictions" (p. 40). However, no specific restrictions are proposed, no clear explanation of why these areas have been chosen or where they are located is given, and there is inadequate analysis of the environmental impacts on the different acreages proposed for restrictions

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under each alternative (see Environmental Impacts section). In Appendix E, allotments with erosion, water, and vegetation problems are identified -- and improving these conditions is stated as a management objective -- but specific management actions to achieve these objectives are generally not proposed. Similarly, although road construction and use represents the most significant impact on soils from most types of land use and development (p. 109), the RMP/EIS lacks any form of comprehensive transportation planning and analysis. The total miles of roads necessary for access, the ecological and visual impacts of these roads and the cost of building the transportation system can often be greatly reduced by long-term, comprehensive transportation planning. Major factors in transportation planning should include projected use, the visual and ecological sensitivity of various alternative transportation corridors, and the various land-use restrictions which can be used by land managers.

Rather than analyzing soil and water resources and proposing land use designations or management programs to protect these resources, the RMP/EIS merely assumes that "in general, impacts to soil and water resources can be mitigated on a site-specific basis through the application of standard operating procedures and the general best management practices listed in Appendix C" (p. 110). No analysis is presented showing these practices do accomplish the necessary mitigation. FLPMA clearly requires that "the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of the water resource" (Sec. 102 (a)(8)) and the "harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without impairment of the productivity of the land" (Sec. 103 (c)). (Emphasis added). As it stands, however, the RMP/EIS offers no preventive analysis and management proposals for soil and water resources. Future activities affecting these sensitive resources would have to be continually analyzed on a case-by-case basis to determine impacts and mitigating measures to comply with the

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requirements of FLPMA. Protection of soil and water resources -- which often deteriorate in bits and pieces which accumulate over time, or are irreparably impacted after mining or other activities have occurred -- requires an approach based largely on preventing significant individual impacts and unacceptable cumulative impacts, rather than attempting to mitigate adverse impacts on a case-by-case basis.

As BLM's master land-use plan for the Headwaters area, the RMP/EIS should also contain thorough analysis and management actions for all resources -- including water potentially impacted by hardrock mining in the Scratch Grave Hills and coal mining in the Great Falls Coal Field -- even though other state and federal agencies may share the responsibility for protecting these resources. The fact that other agencies share responsibility for protecting these resources does not lessen BLM's statutory and regulatory obligation to protect these resources and to propose concrete ways of doing so.

Forestry

All the alternatives propose a dramatic increase in timbering activities -- from 1 million board feet per decade to over 26 million board feet -- without explaining why such heavy emphasis is being placed on timbering. Why was this increase selected? As the RMP/EIS notes, timbering is currently very limited in the area and conditions are not particularly favorable for timbering, as "much of the timber is in small stands, some of which are quite isolated" (p. 105). The brief analysis of the economic importance of timbering indicates increased timbering would result in very small economic benefits (p. 105). There is no comparison of the costs of the timbering program in relation to the benefits, and the environmental impacts analysis of timbering is so superficial and non-specific that it is essentially meaningless. For instance, impacts of road

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construction associated with timbering "may be positive or negative," according to the EIS, while impacts on wildlife and grazing "would be in the form of increased or decreased forage and cover" (p. 166).

At the same time, the very limited information concerning timbering which is given in the EIS suggests the costs of logging in terms of public funds and other resource uses would be considerable. In contrast with the conventional forest practice of not logging on slopes over 40 percent, the RMP would allow tractor logging on slopes with average gradients of up to 50 percent (p. 24). Much of the timber in the area is found in small, isolated stands and, consequently, these timber areas have unusually high value as wildlife habitat, watershed, and visual resources. The economic and environmental costs of road construction, visual impacts, disturbance of habitat and watersheds, and decreased recreation opportunities would be extremely high in relation to the timber produced.

Establishing a permanent timber industry in areas marginally suited for timbering requires dedicating large tracts of public land and scarce public funding to this single purpose. If BLM drastically increases timbering in the Headwaters area, the agency is likely to end up subsidizing uneconomic timbering operations at the expense of taxpayers and truly economic timbering operations in other parts of the country, such as the Pacific Northwest. Timbering is but one of many ways in which local economics can be stimulated, and because of the large capital investment needed in this type of industry -- road building, logging and milling -- the number of jobs created per tax dollar expended is often quite low compared to that of some alternatives, such as management programs which enhance recreation and tourism.

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Wilderness

One of the most objectionable aspects of the RMP/EIS is that it fails to recommend any of the WSAs for wilderness designation in the Proposed Alternative. In particular, the three areas along the Rocky Mountain Front have high wilderness values yet BLM rejects wilderness designation because, according to the rationale in the RMP/EIS, these areas 1) "pose significant manageability problems," and 2) "may be underlain by oil and gas" (p. 52). The first point concerning manageability of these areas is unsupported throughout the RMP/EIS and is, in fact, contradicted by several statements in the descriptions of each individual area. Although the Blind Horse Creek is the only WSA with a small private inholding, the RMP states that "the area stands as an independent study area due to strong public support and its ability to be managed in an unimpaired condition" (p. 75). [Emphasis added]. Meanwhile, there is no mention or explanation in the RMP/EIS of why the Clute Mountain and Deep Creek/Battle Creek WSAs could be considered difficult to manage. On the contrary, since both areas have no non-BLM inholdings and would be tack-ons to the Deep Creek Further Study Area, management should present no insurmountable difficulties for the managing agency.

The only other reason given for not recommending the three WSAs along the Rocky Mountain Front is the potential for oil and gas development in those areas. By itself, this potential by no means outweighs the multiple-uses wilderness designation would enhance or preserve: habitat for wildlife, including threatened and endangered species; wilderness recreation; high scenic values; watershed protection; and added ecological and scenic diversity to the adjacent Forest Service Further Study Areas. The RMP/EIS presents no support that the energy potential does outweigh the wilderness values. Consequently, it would be

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appropriate for BLM to recommend all three WSAs on the Rocky Mountain Front as suitable for wilderness pending completion of Forest Service studies of adjacent study areas.

Special Designations

Although the areas proposed for designation as Outstanding Natural Areas should be recommended for wilderness designation, several statements in the RMP/EIS concerning ONAs and ACECs need to be clarified. Nowhere does the RMP/EIS adequately explain why the WSAs were only considered for ONA designation, and not for ACEC status. When we posed this question in a telephone conversation with a BLM staff member, the only explanation we received was that it was "pick and choose" between the two designations. The explanation on p. 18 of the document seems to imply that a resource of national significance should be designated as an ONA rather than an ACEC. However, the planning regulations and final guidelines entitled "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: Policy and Procedures Guidelines," issued August 27, 1980 clearly state that the criteria for ACEC designation include "importance" (qualities generally beyond local significance and special worth) and "relevance" (significant historic, cultural, scenic values; natural process; fish or wildlife resource).

Our concern is that the public, as well as BLM itself, should be clearly aware of the distinction between these two designations and that each is used whenever appropriate.

Land Tenure

The inventory of lands within the disposal category and the analysis of impacts of proposed land disposal are clearly inadequate to fulfill the requirements of FLPMA and NEPA. The RMP/EIS does not identify or describe the

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specific resource values of the land within the disposal category, nor does the document explain how selling any of these tracts meets the criteria for land disposal contained in FLPMA Sec. 203 (a)(1)(2)(3). Although land exchanges are likely to enhance both public and private resource values and land uses in many cases, while the potential benefits of land sales are much more limited, the RMP/EIS combines both forms of land tenure adjustment into one general category of "land disposal". Furthermore, the conditions under which sale will be the preferred method of disposal are so general and ambiguous that it appears nearly all the 25,637 acres in the disposal category could be sold, rather than exchanged.

We are aware that a major change in guidance from the national administration concerning land disposal has occurred since the RMP/EIS was prepared. We heartily endorse the approach outlined in State Director Michael J. Penfold's recent statement that the Montana BLM intends "to focus on exchange where we can trade isolated parcels that are difficult to manage and acquire lands that will enhance the public estate, particularly areas with scenic, recreation and wildlife values."¹ If, as Mr. Penfold's statement suggests, BLM is returning to the "routine program that the public has supported" in the past, the quantity of land designated for land disposal should be greatly reduced in the final RMP/EIS. In order to achieve Mr. Penfold's goal of ensuring that "decisions on what to sell or trade are made locally," after the Western public has "had a chance to have some 'say' in the decision," future site-specific decisions regarding land ownership adjustments should continue to be accompanied by tract-specific land use plan amendments, with opportunities for public comment and protest pursuant to 43 CFR 1610.2, 1610.5-5 and 1610.5-6.

1. Statement from Michael J. Penfold, Montana State BLM Director, regarding BLM News Release, July 25, 1983.

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Coal

The preferred alternative includes coal leasing in the Great Falls Coal Field despite the economic and environmental unattractiveness of developing the coal. Development is admitted to be unlikely given the high ash and sulphur content of the coal, in addition to the expense of underground mining of thin coal beds (pp. 60, 105, and 131). The soft coal market and abundance of coal available through existing leases and mines further emphasizes the unlikelihood of the need to lease this coal. No justification is presented for the staff's preference of further study of coal leasing in this area. Why was this choice made? We recommend that leasing of the 125 million tons of federal coal in this area not be included in the preferred alternative.

In addition it would appear the RMP/EIS does not adequately present nor answer the coal leasing issue presented on p. 12: that is, what portion of the Great Falls Coal Field should be made available for further leasing? No alternatives of leasing any portion of the coal field were analyzed -- only to lease all the field or none.

The RMP/EIS presents a commendably detailed discussion of how the lands unsuitability criteria were applied and what results were obtained (Appendix H). Many other RMP/EISs lack such a thorough treatment which makes it difficult for the public to review the document, weigh the choices, and make suggestions. Two changes are needed to the Headwaters plan: to obtain basic inventory data that is lacking on resources such as historic, archeologic and cultural sites, and bald and golden eagles; and to correctly apply Criteria Nos. 3 and 16. The analysis of No. 3 states subsidence and tension cracks in roads can be repaired so that road conditions are equal to or better than those existing. We know of no evidence supporting this in the underground coal fields of Colorado and Utah; in fact, experience indicates the opposite is true. Criterion No. 16 states

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100-year flood plains "shall be considered unsuitable unless" it is determined substantial damage is not threatened by mining; however, the analysis improperly reverses the criterion, leaving three floodplains as suitable for mining until proven unsuitable.

Environmental Consequences

The impact analysis contained in Chapter Four is clearly inadequate to fulfill the requirements of NEPA and BLM planning regulations, which require BLM to "estimate and display physical, biological, economic and social effects of implementing each alternative in detail" (43 CFR 1610.4-6). (Emphasis added). In many cases, impacts may be difficult to assess "in detail" because management goals and proposed actions are missing, ambiguous or so general that they are impossible to meaningfully assess or quantify. (See Comments by topics). As described below, the RMP/EIS fails to go beyond merely generic, "text-book" descriptions of impacts on many major resources. Although we recognize that many impacts are difficult to quantify and assess on a site-specific level, cumulative impacts can be estimated and impacts may be stated in terms of "probable ranges" where "effects cannot be precisely determined" (43 CFR 1610.4-6).

Soils and Watershed: Although the EIS recognizes that the main impact from many types of development is the construction and use of roads (p. 109), no attempt is made to quantify or estimate the total amount of roads needed under each alternative. An estimate for timbering roads needed is given under the section on forestry, but this is the same under all alternatives and is presumably not the result of comprehensive transportation planning and analysis. The RMP/EIS contains no support or explanation for the conclusion that "(t)here will be approximately a 2,000 acre decrease in unsatisfactory watershed conditions . . . based on changes in grazing allotment management" (p. 111), and no attempt is

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made at reaching a similar estimate of the total cumulative effect of all other activities under each alternative.

Recreation Resources: Again, the RMP/EIS contains an accurate general discussion of potential general impacts, but there is no attempt to apply the general knowledge to the "on-the-ground" situation in the Headwaters Resource Area in order to estimate the impact of each alternative on recreation "in detail."

Visual Resources: The RMP/EIS contains no detailed analysis of visual resource impacts. The document merely states that if Class A is managed to retain visual quality "there should be minimal adverse impact" and that "some significant adverse impacts could occur" if suitable visual quality objectives are not applied on scenic quality Class B and C land (p. 115). Nowhere in the RMP/EIS are these objectives described. Adequate analysis of visual impacts, of course, is inhibited by the fact that none of the alternatives actually contains a visual resource management program; each merely proposed to continue evaluating visual resources "as a part of activity and project planning" (p. 23). Although the levels and types of development that would occur under each alternative would presumably vary, the EIS inexplicably concludes that visual impacts would be the same under each alternative (pp. 135, 133, 141 and 149).

Wildlife: The most detailed analysis in the EIS concerns wildlife, yet the analysis is limited to acreages of general habitat that would be positively or negatively affected. The analysis should also consider impacts in terms of wildlife populations and crucial habitat, which is often the limiting factor for wildlife populations.

Social and Economic Conditions: The only detailed or quantitative economic analysis is presented for grazing, timbering and energy development. Similar analysis is necessary for Recreation, Wilderness, Land Disposal, Visual

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Quality (as it might affect land values, uses and tourism) and Watersheds (e.g., what would be the economic impact if water resources in the Scratch Gravel Hills or the Great Falls Coal Fields were contaminated or disrupted?)

Because of the difficulty of assessing the "true" costs and benefits of many "non-market" land-uses in economic terms, we do not propose that multiple-use decisions be reduced to a series of economic analyses. However, by devoting more planning resources towards identifying and estimating the economic value of "non-market" resources, better comparisons and decisions can be made between market and non-market land uses. (Also see Alternatives Section).

Summary

We do not believe the draft RMP/EIS fulfills the regulatory and statutory intent and requirements in several significant respects. The alternatives do not present an adequate range of choices, and fail to include sufficient inventory data, specific management proposals and impact analysis for many fundamental management concerns such as soils/watershed, forestry, coal leasing, wildlife, recreation and land-tenure. As described in our comments, there is no indication that BLM has made a concerted effort to properly inventory the resource area, use all available data, and collect, use and present this in an integrated, usable form. These deficiencies not only preclude meaningful public input and review, but also indicate BLM has not utilized the thorough, interdisciplinary planning process prescribed by FLPMA and NEPA.

The identified deficiencies justify a comprehensive supplement to this draft RMP/EIS. The additional information, planning, and analysis that is required to make this RMP/DEIS a comprehensive planning and analytical document would substantially change the scope and content of the existing document. For these reasons, the public, and local, state and federal agencies should be given the opportunity to comment on the content of another draft RMP/EIS.

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Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

Enclosed are NRDC's comments on the Headwaters Draft RMP/EIS. I apologize for submitting them on August 5, the final day of the comment period. However, the comments were prepared in response to a specific, recent request from your Washington office. Given our other obligations, we were unable to prepare the comments any sooner than today.

I assume that you will give full consideration to these comments in the subsequent land use planning process. I hope you find them helpful. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David B. Edelson
David B. Edelson

cc: Ed Fisk

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Re: Headwaters Draft Resource Management Plan
Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

We have reviewed the grazing allotment and riparian habitat management provisions of the Headwaters draft RMP/EIS and submit these comments on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., (NRDC) and its Public Lands Institute. We incorporate by reference the comments on the other provisions of the plan submitted by the Public Lands Institute.

The range management provisions of the Headwaters RMP/EIS suffer from most of the same basic deficiencies that we have repeatedly pointed out, both in our comments on other recent grazing EISs and in our several EISs filed to satisfy the minimum requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As detailed below, the Headwaters EIS is inadequate because it lacks: (1) adequate site-specific proposals; (2) a reasonable range of alternatives; (3) detailed and substantiated environmental impact analysis; (4) sufficient information on range condition and resources; (5) comprehensive, cumulative analysis of the impacts of all proposed resource activities, as required by the Federal Land Policy Management Act; and (6) a proposed action that resolves resource problems as quickly as feasible. Although the EIS contains certain commendable features with respect to format and descriptions of resource problems, the document's range management section is fundamentally inadequate and should be rewritten in order to comply with legal requirements.

1. Site-Specific Proposals

The EIS is required by the judgment in NRDC v. Morton to analyze in EISs specific proposals to issue and renew grazing permits. These proposals must include, for each allotment, numbers of livestock, seasons of use, utilization levels, and all other necessary terms and conditions of grazing, including grazing systems. See 43 C.F.R.

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§§ 4120.2, 4120.2-1(a), 4120.2-3(a) (1982). The proposals contained in the Headwaters EIS lack some of these basic elements.

Although the EIS proposals include livestock numbers and incorporate, for the most part, existing seasons of use, they lack any specific grazing systems and contain utilization levels only for a fraction of the allotments. Existing grazing systems are not described for each allotment, and no specific grazing systems are proposed; instead, the EIS merely describes general types of grazing systems that might conceivably be implemented in unspecified allotments in the future. (EIS, p. 25 & App. G.) The EIS fails to include existing utilization levels, even though such levels presumably will continue under the "no action" alternative. Moreover, specific utilization levels are proposed only for a few Category I allotments (e.g., App. E, p. 228) and no such levels are proposed for any Category M or C allotments.

The EIS does contain, at least for Category I allotments, the objectives that a specific grazing management program should meet in each allotment. See App. E. However, for the most part it fails to identify or analyze any specific actions that must be taken to achieve these objectives. The Bureau's "objectives" are stated in general terms like "improve the riparian habitat," "improve vegetative cover and livestock distribution patterns," and "limit livestock utilization" (e.g., pp. 222-23), but few specific actions that will attain these ends are identified. Such proposals are particularly important since, as the Bureau admits, "implementation of grazing systems" and other specific actions are necessary to attain these objectives, and the EIS's impact analysis depends upon the development of such unidentified actions. (E.g., pp. 117-18, 143.) With respect to Category M and C allotments, the EIS even lacks specific management objectives, much less specific proposals. See App. E.

The EIS also lacks any specific forage allocations for wildlife or non-consumptive uses. It states that "sufficient" forage will be provided for wildlife (p. 29) but never identifies how many AUMs will be reserved for wildlife, either in the entire area or in particular allotments. Given the specific forage allocation proposals for livestock, it appears that the Bureau will first allocate forage to livestock and the remainder, if any, will be available for wildlife and non-consumptive uses. This approach is unacceptable. The EIS should make specific forage allocation proposals for uses other than livestock grazing in order to ensure that "sufficient" forage is available for such uses.

2. Range of Alternatives

The court in NRDC v. Morton required EISs to "discuss in detail ... all reasonable alternatives" to proposed livestock grazing

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activities. To satisfy this mandate, the alternatives must encompass significantly different levels of livestock grazing, including "no grazing," and a full range of management practices. The grazing alternatives in the Headwaters EIS fall far short of these requirements.

The alternative livestock forage allocations in the EIS do not vary significantly. There is little difference even between the resource protection (27,036 AUMs) and resource production (33,954 AUMs) alternatives. The resource production alternative is not "meaningfully lower" than the proposed action, as the Bureau has previously acknowledged is necessary. "Draft Guidelines for Preparing Grazing EISs," p. 23 (April 1979). Moreover, the EIS lacks a "no grazing" alternative, which is necessary in order to provide a baseline for comparison of all other alternatives and to protect riparian and other degraded resources. See Draft Guidelines, at 23; "Final Grazing Management Policy," p. 1-18 (I.M. No. 82-292, March 5, 1982). Thus, it is clear that the Bureau has already decided to maintain stocking levels at approximately the existing numbers and that the consideration of alternatives in the EIS has been a mere formal exercise.

The EIS obviously lacks a "full range of management practices," as required by the Final Grazing Management Policy, *supra*, at 1-18. In fact, the EIS fails to consider any alternative management practices. For example, the alternatives do not include any different grazing systems, utilization levels, or seasons of use. The Bureau has demonstrated in other grazing EISs that it can consider a range of alternative grazing systems, seasons of use and utilization levels for each allotment. See, e.g., SouthernMauheur Draft Grazing EIS, Vale District, Oregon [1983]; Willow Creek Final Grazing EIS, Susanville District, California (1982). The absence of such alternatives in the Headwaters EIS is a critical flaw.

The discussion of alternatives in the EIS is inadequate for other reasons. First, the "no action" alternative contains proposed range improvements and long term forage allocation adjustments (Table 2-5, p. 32; Table 4-9, p. 134), and this does not really constitute a "no action" alternative, as required by NEPA. See 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(d) (1982). Second, the "protection" alternative is self-contradictory because it seeks to advance conflicting goals: if, as the EIS acknowledges, a single alternative cannot realistically "achieve wildlife, watershed, and vegetative" objectives simultaneously (p. 143), then the EIS should include alternative or sub-alternatives that would advance these individual resource goals. Without such an analysis, the Bureau will never analyze what management actions are necessary to provide full protection for these resources, thereby precluding such actions before they have even been considered.

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3. Environmental Consequences

The EIS's discussion of environmental impacts to range resources is extremely generalized and unsubstantiated, and thus fails to satisfy NEPA's requirements. The judgment in NRDC v. Morton requires EISs to analyze "the actual environmental effects of particular [grazing] permits or groups of permits in specific areas." Although the Headwaters EIS sets forth aggregate figures that summarize anticipated impacts of proposed grazing to range resources (e.g., pp. 116-18), it completely lacks the "individualized assessment of the impact of such grazing on local environments" required by NRDC v. Morton. The EIS must analyze and describe environmental consequences to particular allotments, not just aggregate impacts to the entire area.

The EIS also fails to substantiate the environmental impacts predicted, as required by NEPA. It lacks any analysis of the predicted impacts of implementing particular proposals, such as grazing reductions or modifications, in particular allotments. It also lacks any general discussion of why certain kinds of actions might have certain types of effects under various resource conditions. Thus, the EIS totally fails to comply with NEPA's requirement that EISs must demonstrate that the agency has conducted the environmental analyses necessary to substantiate predicted conclusions. See, e.g., 40 C.F.R. § 1502.11, 1502.24 (1982); Department of the Interior, Departmental Manual on NEPA, § 4.14 (45 Fed. Reg. 27546 (April 23, 1980)).

Finally, the environmental impact analysis is also unsatisfactory because it is based on hypothetical proposals that have yet to be identified. For example, predicted improvements are "dependent upon implementation of grazing systems, installation of range improvements, and performance of land treatments" (p. 117), even though no such specific proposals are identified or analyzed in the EIS. Similarly, "improvement in riparian condition" is premised upon unidentified "livestock grazing systems ... [and] season-of-use changes." (p. 120). The BLM cannot simply expect the public to trust that appropriate actions will be identified in the future and that as a result resource problems will be resolved.

4. Range Condition and Resource Information

The EIS contains estimates of current grazing capacity in most allotments, but lacks other important range condition and resource information needed for the reader to assess the impacts of the proposed actions. The statistical data on range condition (App. D) is useful, but it must be supplemented by descriptive information in order to ascertain and analyze specific resource problems. Such descriptions are clearly presented for Category I allotments (App. E), and we

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commend the agency for providing such specific information. However, no such descriptions are offered for Category M or C allotments, suggesting that the agency has impermissibly written these areas off.

The Bureau's failure to analyze resource problems in many allotments reflects a broader deficiency of the EIS's land categorization proposals. The EIS announces categorization decisions but lacks any discussion of how particular decisions were made. Without descriptive information on resource problems and opportunities in all allotments it is impossible for the reader to assess the proposed categorization decisions. The EIS should provide such descriptions for all allotments and should analyze how the categorization criteria were applied to reach these proposed decisions. The public would then have a meaningful opportunity to comment on the categorization decisions, as contemplated by the "Final Grazing Management Policy," pp. 1-11 to 1-15. As written, the Headwaters EIS effectively bars the public (other than ranchers) from taking part in these important decisions.

The EIS also fails to present available range monitoring data, describe the data necessary to make management decisions, or specify when and how such data will be obtained. The EIS states that livestock use adjustments will be based in part on "monitoring" (p. 25) and also acknowledges that some monitoring data are available (App. N, p. 296). However, these monitoring data are not described, and the EIS never specifies what kind and amount of monitoring data are necessary to make grazing decisions. In particular, the EIS fails to explain if and why available data are inadequate, and why such data cannot be extrapolated to make necessary grazing decisions as soon as possible in similar allotments lacking such data. Without such explanations, the public will never know which data are "acceptable" to support actual grazing decisions, and such decisions may be deferred indefinitely. See 43 C.F.R. § 4110.3-2(c) (1982). Finally, the EIS lacks specific information about all wildlife other than grizzly bears. For the most part, it fails to describe specific conflicts between wildlife and livestock in particular areas, and instead presents aggregate estimated numbers of wildlife and acres of wildlife habitat. Nor does it describe specific critical habitat areas. Without such detailed information, the reader cannot assess whether the proposed action or the alternatives would adequately resolve existing resource problems.

The EIS also announces two possible prioritization schemes for category I allotments, as well as "final" management priorities (App. E). It is unacceptable for "final" decisions to be made prior to public comment and selection of the preferred alternative. To establish "final" decisions at this stage of the process makes a mockery of NEPA's requirement of full disclosure and public participation prior to agency decisions.

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5. Comprehensive Impact Analysis

As a land use planning document, the Headwaters RMP/EIS begins well by recognizing that its purpose is to provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating public land and resources by resolving particular resource problems. (EIS, p. 1.) Unfortunately, the document does not follow through with this approach in its analysis of range management. The EIS lacks any cumulative analysis of the consequences on range, wildlife, and other resources of implementing the diverse aspects of the proposed plan, such as oil and gas leasing, land disposal, and livestock grazing. The EIS only analyzes the impacts of particular types of activities on various resources, without considering cumulative and synergistic effects. Nor does it analyze the extent to which certain activities, such as leasing and land disposal, may preclude the agency from implementing other activities, such as wildlife or livestock use. In short, the environmental analysis is too fragmented to be very useful in formulating a coherent, comprehensive land use plan.

6. Proposed Action

In addition to the above-mentioned deficiencies of the Headwaters RMP/EIS as an analytical and planning document, its proposed action for range management is also inadequate in several ways. The EIS acknowledges that the "initial proposed action" is "no action." (p. 15.) Such an approach is unacceptable given the resource problems that admittedly exist in the area. Moreover, additional monitoring is not needed to make adjustments in existing grazing use where, as here, available range information clearly demonstrates the need for such changes. Nor is livestock monitoring required before making planning decisions that are needed to protect important resource values, like endangered grizzly bears (pp. 91-93), that should take precedence over livestock grazing. In such cases, livestock reductions or modifications should be implemented as soon as possible. To delay needed modifications in existing management under the circumstances contravenes the Bureau's obligation under FLEMA to "take any action necessary to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation" of the public lands.

Finally, the proposed action will produce a relatively small number of additional ANMs at a very high cost. The EIS fails to justify this large expenditure, which in large part consists of a subsidy to the livestock industry. Given recent budget reductions, it is very questionable whether many of the "range improvements" that inure primarily to the ranchers should be implemented.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely yours,

David B. Edelson
David B. Edelson

Johanna H. Wald
Johanna H. Wald

34a

Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc.

Box, Mountain View

August 16, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
P. O. Box 3388
Butte, MT 59702

RE: Headwaters Resource Management Plan Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

In reference to the above document, we support the BLM's alternative to use land exchange as the primary method of land adjustment. We are, however, disappointed that the Plan did not identify the lands Burlington Northern has offered to dispose of in the Headwaters area. (The list was presented to you in October of 1982.) By identifying these parcels, the public has an opportunity to comment on the proposal.

We also request that the Plan emphasize the benefits of consolidating land ownership by showing how public and private costs can be reduced if lands are blocked up.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

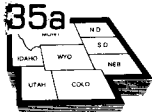
Andy A. Barber
Andy A. Barber
District Supervisor
Land Planning

JAB/mc

cc: W. J. Pearson
D. D. Whitsett

100 South Avenue West - Missoula, Montana 59801 - 406-737-6500

APPENDIXES



Rocky Mountain Oil & Gas Association, Inc.

345 PETROLEUM BUILDING • DENVER, COLORADO 80202
303/554-4891

June 22, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, MT 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

I am writing on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association (RMOGA), a trade association of approximately 800 companies, large and small, involved in all aspects of oil and gas exploration, production, and transportation activities throughout the Rocky Mountain West. We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Headwaters Resource Area. Following are issues we would like to have taken into consideration during development of the Plan and EIS.

It is encouraging that both oil and gas leasing and development, and mineral exploration and development are listed as major planning issues in the document, indicating that the BLM has considered these values in the planning process. However, it appears that some plan recommendations would effectively preclude oil and gas development in areas of the Rocky Mountain Front that have very high potential.

While none of the five areas under consideration would be recommended for wilderness designation, we are concerned that four areas along the Rocky Mountain Front -- Blind Horse Creek, Bat Mountain, Chute Mountain, Deep Creek/Battle Creek -- are recommended for Outstanding Natural Area designation. Statements in the plan such as the following illustrate the reason for this concern: "Special designation will permit essentially the same level of protection for scenic, recreational, and other values that wilderness designation would provide." Such stringent protection would obviously constrain energy development. The areas recommended for OMA status are believed to have very high oil and gas potential, and should not be effectively closed to development.

35b

Mr. Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office
Bureau of Land Management
June 22, 1983
Page Two

Regulation of oil and gas operations would apparently increase under the Preferred Alternative. While all the alternatives considered assume a continuation of oil and gas leasing as recommended in the Butte District Oil and Gas Environmental Assessment, the level of leasing and stipulations would likely differ due to more protective management practices. Under the Preferred Alternative, Federal minerals located along the Rocky Mountain Front would be administered with more specific lease stipulation guidance. In fact, the Preferred Alternative represents a change from current management direction because additional no surface occupancy restrictions within the boundaries of proposed Outstanding Natural Areas would be established. The recommended course of action would result in a decrease of 9,960 acres in land available for occupancy leasing. This decrease in availability is proposed for a region -- the Rocky Mountain Front -- which has high oil and gas potential. While the BLM argues that OMA designation is intended to preserve future management options while providing full protection for surface values, this restricted access makes exploration and development potentially more costly and time-consuming.

The BLM asserts that the Preferred Alternative would result in no change from current management direction with respect to mineral exploration and development, as all public land would remain available for entry, unless previously withdrawn. In addition, some existing withdrawals may be revoked in the future as the current withdrawal review continues. However, site-specific stipulations applied to activities within specially designated areas may make exploration impractical if not impossible.

The Preferred Alternative would make all Federal coal within the Great Falls Coal Field available for further consideration for coal leasing. However, only underground coal mining methods would be permitted, and 1,757 acres would be recommended for no surface occupancy to protect public roads, right-of-way, and wildlife habitat.

Thank you for consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Alice I. Frell
Alice I. Frell
Lands Director

ATP/dar

36a

Shell Oil Company



P.O. Box 831
Houston, Texas 77001

July 7, 1983

Bureau of Land Management
Butte District Office
ATTN: Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
P. O. Box 3388
Butte, MT 59702

Gentlemen:

PUBLIC COMMENT
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP)
HEADWATERS RESOURCE AREA
BUTTE DISTRICT, MONTANA

Reference is made to your recent request for public comment on the subject matter. As we understand it, the RMP will be an all encompassing plan which directs a course of management for use and protection for all resource values which cover the entire Resource Area.

In any alternative selected in this plan, two critical points should be addressed: (1) In what way will the agency gather information in order to adequately evaluate the energy and mineral resource potential within the planning areas, and (2) In areas where there is moderate to high potential for deposits of energy or minerals, how is the agency going to develop land use allocations which will be compatible with possible exploration for the development of these resources.

Areas which contain these resource values should be allocated to lands uses which would minimize the restrictions placed on exploration and development of these resources. Shell Oil has the following areas of specific concern, although we do not presently have any active operations therein:

Blind Horse Creek	MT-075-012
Chute Mountain	MT-075-105
Deep Creek/Battle Creek	MT-075-106
Black Sage	MR-075-115

All of the above listed areas have considerable potential for oil and gas being located within the Montana Folded Belt. We would support any alternative which would not preclude these areas from hydrocarbon exploration and production.

Shell Oil appreciates this opportunity to express our concerns and views in this matter. Also, we wish to be updated on your progress in this area.

36b

Bureau of Land Management

2

Please place Shell Oil Company, at the above address, on your mailing list for all communications and notices pertinent to this subject.

Yours very truly,

Larry G. Stob
Larry G. Stob
Land Department
Rocky Mountain Division

LGS:lbh

37a

June 14, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechefsky
Project Manager
District Office, Butte
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

SUBJECT: Draft EIS of the Headwaters Resource Area

Dear Mr. Lechefsky,

As you may remember, I have corresponded regarding this subject with you before, also as the president of the Sunny Vista Homeowners Association. Having reviewed the Draft EIS I feel compelled to repeat and expand upon some of our views that were apparently not, in my opinion, considered important enough as factors for your EIS.

The primary, overwhelming concern of our members is the mineral leaching processes utilized by some individuals/corporations in the Scratchgravels. All of our homes are supplied with water deriving from the underground streams/water table in the Hills, and many of our homes sit directly beneath mineral leaching operations which occur on our hill-sides. It is a very sobering and frightening situation to be a homeowner, who bought or built a home near the hills prior to the leach pads installation, to look up and see a leaching operation immediately above your home and immediately above your only water supply for you and your family.

As you have been advised, the leaching operations utilize a process involving hydrous cyanide, a poison. While the users state that everything is under control with their operations, the operations are contained only by a "pad", what I can only describe (for lack of better words) as a rubberized blanket between the cyanide and the ground surface. But despite the nature or extent of the protections provided by these operations, they are still operating directly above our only source of water -- and a primary source of water for the entire Helena area, since these springs invariably feed into Three Mile and Ten Mile Creeks. Contamination for whatever reason -- rupture due to the pad's age or a defect, rupture due to earthquake, human error, etc. -- will have the same results.

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Aside from the obvious financial result if the Sunny Vista groundwater source is contaminated, which would reduce the area from a viable residential area to a "ghost town" area due to lack of potable water, consider the other results. As studies have concluded, the Scratchgravel Hills area is honeycombed with ground/rock fractures, and contaminant leakage into the ground will certainly spread. The Scratchgravels alone will not be affected, the leakage will extend into Helena and the remainder of the Valley. How long the effect would exist is unknown. But consider the extent of the problem were this area to be struck again by an earthquake of the magnitude of that which struck Helena in the 30s. What would occur to the populace if, on top of the destruction of the quake, they also had to contend with groundwater contamination from these leaching operations? The prospect is sufficient grounds for concern, even if it is only a possibility.

What should then be done? An obvious alternative would be removal of mining operations from the Scratchgravels, but I have no illusions that you have not been bombarded with the viewpoints of the mining concerns on that issue (as looking at the list of contributing businesses and organizations on pages 160-161 in the EIS will show). I therefore see little prospect of success in urging such a Quixotic notion as that embodied in that portion of your Alternative C. However, we do believe that you should implement a revision of your Alternative A to provide for off-site processing of extracted mineral ores, and thereby placing the Scratchgravels off-limits to leaching operations and the like in order to protect and preserve the water resources in the area. Merely require the mining concerns to process their ores elsewhere rather than directly over the water supply. Certainly it will cost a little more, since they will be transporting the ores rather than merely the actual minerals removed from the ores, but the alternative is a form of gambling that has not yet been approved by either the people of Montana nor the Legislature. And the stakes at present are the lives of our families vs. higher profits for the mining concerns.

We ask that you consider our families as the more urgent.

Our previous letters to you adequately express our views on the remaining issues addressed by the Draft EIS. We wish you luck in your decision, and only ask that you make such a decision as will provide a level of safety to us where we will not feel that we have been sacrificed to a few gold-seekers. Thank you for your attention and consideration.


KENNETH A. LARSSON
Sunny Vista Homeowners Association

38a

SUPERIOR OIL

July 11, 1983

Dan Lechefsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office, BLM
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Mr. Lechefsky:

Following up to our phone conversation of late June, I'm writing to comment on a few of the items we discussed concerning the DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT.

1. Seasonal Exploration Restrictions: Table 2-2 indicates that an area that is both a Grizzly Bear spring and summer range and a Elk and Mule deer winter range would have seasonal restrictions during the period 12/1-3/1. This would allow unrestricted work only during the period 9/1-12/1. This would, in many cases, be a stipulation that would make work on a lease impossible. If the seasonal restrictions were such that certain types of activities were allowed during the period 12/1-9/1, then the impact of this potential problem would be lessened.
2. Seasonal Production Restrictions: Producing wells generally require daily attention in almost all cases and need periodic major work to keep them producing safely and efficiently. The seasonal restrictions placed on a lease must allow for work of this type. Acceptable restrictions might be to limit visits to daytime hours only and limit the number of vehicles and/or people allowed at a producing well at any one time. If occupancy of this nature is not allowed, then leases would probably not be attractive for exploration or development.
3. Oil and Gas Leasing and Development: Overall, the guidelines stated in Alternative A appear to be much too restrictive to allow for development of the oil and gas which may exist in certain areas. I think, however, that it, and Alternative B, could be blended into one that would allow development. The restrictive nature of disallowing surface occupancy (and leases) over such wide area is the problem. A compromise might involve restricting well locations to one per section, restricting distances between surface locations to a fixed distance (e.g. 2000'), and formalizing road location guidelines.

The Superior Oil Company Denver Production District

1886 Sherman St., Suite 600
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 636-2600

38b

PAGE 2

4. Existing leases: I think the Impact Statement should make a strong statement that existing leases within the area described are not subject to the surface occupancy and lease stipulation, nor any other statements described in the Draft Statement.

We at Superior Oil are working hard to establish a good working relationship with all of the regulatory agencies involved with our Blackleaf Canyon Unit. We are very willing to conduct the development work within the unit as best we can to minimize the impact on the area wildlife. The Environmental Impact Statement and the Grizzly Bear Study, which we are helping to sponsor, is providing us with valuable insight into how we can operate in such a sensitive area. If I can be of additional assistance, please feel free to call me at (303) 863-2620.

Sincerely yours,


WILLIAM E. PRITCHARD
Engineering Manager

MEP/jme

39a

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
183 JUL 19 AM 9 08
July 15, 1983

The BOB MARSHALL Alliance
Box 4286 Missoula, MT 59801
JUL 20 '83

Mr. Mike Penfold, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Box 30157
Billings, MT 59107

Dear Mr. Penfold,

Please consider the following comments of the Bob Marshall Alliance concerning the draft Headwaters Resource Area Management Plan. The Bob Marshall Alliance is a coalition of 32 organizations, representing sportsmen, outfitters, backcountry horse users and conservationists.

Our interest with the Headwaters plan lies exclusively with the Wilderness recommendations for the BLM study areas that are contiguous to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. As you may know, the Bob Marshall Alliance has submitted a proposal for additions to the Bob Marshall Wilderness in response to the Congressional attempt to resolve the HARE II issue, and several of these areas lie along the Rocky Mountain Front. Since the HARE II issue involves National Forest lands, no BLM lands are part of the current proposal, but the BLM areas have been discussed by our organization on several occasions and we support their designation as wilderness.

The Bob Marshall Alliance's criteria for what areas should be part of the larger Bob Marshall Wilderness include contiguity, relationship to the ecosystem, and traditional use of the area by recreationists. The three BLM wilderness study areas along the Rocky Mountain Front--Blind Horse Creek, Chute Mountain and Deep Creek-Settle Creek--are all adjacent to National Forest lands the Bob Marshall Alliance has proposed for wilderness, thus they are all contiguous. Further, in terms of ecosystem relationship, these BLM wilderness study areas are particularly critical, as they contain transitional habitat between the mountains and prairie, and are especially critical for the wildlife populations that use the Bob Marshall. Finally, these three BLM areas have traditionally been used by recreationists for hiking, hunting, etc.

We are pleased that the BLM recognizes the special values of these three areas, as signified by the proposed Outstanding Natural Area designation. But at the same time we recognize this is only administrative protection, and it lacks the permanence and force of law a Congressional designation would have. We are particularly concerned about the potential impacts of oil and gas exploration and development, and the OIA designation gives us little security from that threat. Even with these areas as wilderness, and portions of the front recommended for no leasing or no surface occupancy, the majority of lands along this portion of the Overthrust Belt, which is still unproven as to oil and gas reserves, will still be available for oil and gas development.

We would urge the BLM to take a more conservative route and protect the important resources which are already known to be present. The Bob Marshall Alliance recommends the final BLM recommendation for these three wilderness study areas be changed

Save the Bob.

39b

Bob Marshall Alliance comments--page two

to a positive recommendation. The Headwaters Resource Area plan presents all the reasons for why these areas should be wilderness; I would urge the BLM to re-examine the issue.

Sincerely,
James A. Curtis, President

cc: Sen. John Melcher
Sen. Max Baucus
Rep. Pat Williams
Rep. Ron Marlene

40a

July 15, 1983

Michael Penfold, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Post Office Box 30157
Billings MT 59107

Lyle Fox, Area Manager
Headwaters Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
Post Office Box 308
Butte MT 59701

Dear Messrs. Penfold and Fox:

Thank you for the opportunity to present views on behalf of Wildlands and Resources Association concerning the Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan. WRA represents a group of conservation-minded people from Great Falls and the surrounding area. The major areas we wish to address are: (1) Management areas along the Rocky Mountain Front, (2) estimated potential timber yield, (3) motorcycle and other off road vehicle use, (4) oil and gas leasing and drilling, (5) Headwaters Resource Area land disposal plan's draft environmental impact statement. We recognize that in some instances these areas are interrelated.

The Rocky Mountain Front is a unique ecosystem in many regards. It is an ecological, economical and aesthetically important region. Since wildlife do not understand man-made boundaries, it is important for man to recognize that wildlife along the front migrates from winter to summer grounds without regard for boundaries between wilderness areas, Forest Service lands, BLM and public lands. The Rocky Mountain Front is a rich habitat for Grizzly Bear, Big Horn Sheep, Elk and many other species of animals.

WRA has opposed and continues to oppose incompatible uses such as commercial timber harvest and oil and gas activity. Not only is there irreparable damage done by woodacking on unstable soils, but also there is endangerment to the natural inhabitants of the area.

Basically WRA questions how the areas designated along the RMP as Outstanding Natural Areas would be managed. Will these areas be managed similar to wilderness? Would oil and gas leasing be permitted? We are opposed to oil and gas leasing in these areas and other areas on the front when it would interfere with the wildlife habitat, recreational and economical values of the area.

We question why oil and gas has been given the "right of way" over other possible management plans and we question why oil and gas exploration has been accepted by the agency as the highest use of these lands. The potential yield of oil and gas along the front would be very small compared to the "natural need". Why destroy these important lands forever for a few years use of oil and gas? We support alternative energy uses, such as conservation and exploration into possible new renewable energy sources instead of perpetrating the use of this non-renewable resource.

The RMP area also has a current and long standing stable economy based on recreational and tourist use of these lands. If oil and gas exploration and

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drilling were more freely allowed in these areas the characteristic of the land that draws this type of business would be nothing left for the wildlife or the residents of these areas.

In regard to the Preferred Alternative estimated potential timber harvest, it is noted that the potential timber yield for the area will remain at 26.45 million board feet per decade. This is 26 times the actual current harvest rate of 1 million board feet per decade. We question this spread of potential yield and current harvest and believe it would be devastating to this resource area if the potential timber yield were met within a single decade.

Some of the forested areas south of Rogers Pass (Head of the South Fork of the Dearborn) is occupied by Grizzly Bear habitat. The increased timber harvest potential expressed in the Plan contemplates a such increased potential harvest over the historical harvest. Does this harvest goal take into account possible impact on Grizzly Bear habitat? Would increased harvest endanger the Grizzly which is protected under the Rare and Endangered Species Act?

WRA is opposed to increased designation of areas for motorcycle and other off road vehicle use. Is allowing motorcycle events good utilization of our energy resources? We do not think so. We do not believe this practice demonstrates good land husbandry, we believe there are already enough areas open for motorcycle use and other off road vehicle use. We urge you to recommend no new areas be opened to motorcycle use. We believe that current management plans for motorcycle use and off road vehicle use need to be strengthened and more specific within the management plan.

Wildlands and Resources Association is opposed to the sale of public lands. We ask that BLM recognize its authority to adopt alternatives to sale of public lands under its jurisdiction. These alternatives include reassignment of jurisdiction to appropriate state and federal land management agencies such as the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Forest Service. We are opposed to any release of BLM lands to the Department of State Lands because of that agency's history of poor management of the natural resources on lands under its jurisdiction. We also ask that a substantial portion of the lands listed for possible disposal be retained by BLM and better managed by your agency. We are not opposed to exchange of BLM lands with low public values for lands with higher public values. Wildlands and Resources Association is strongly opposed to release, trade, sale or exchange of any lands with moderate to high public values for the purpose of promoting subdivision of these lands.

We thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Headwaters Resource Area, DEIS and compliment the staff on the time, energy and work they have put into this plan.

Sincerely,
Patty Busko
Patty Busko, President
Wildlands and Resources Association
5414 Fourth Avenue South
Great Falls MT 59405

42a

Milton L. Allen
89 Lishaskill Road
Albany, New York
12205
May 21, 1983

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
District Office, Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Following are my comments germane to planning for Headwaters Resource Area, Butte District lands and asset management.

As present and impending litigation demonstrates, United States policy requires that public lands be held in perpetuity and managed exclusively under the stewardship of classified Civil Service employees.

All public lands must be retained; no such lands may therefore be considered for sale or subject to any other method of disposal.

As I have previously commented in rejecting proposed "disposal categories" my rationale is based on federal law expressing Congressional intent.

Sincerely,

Milton L. Allen

(Typed for reproduction in the final RMP/EIS)

45a

August 4, 1983
Virgalle Route
Loma, Montana 59460

Don Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office, BLM
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

I have studied the RMP/EIS for Headwaters Resource Area and offer my comments for the record. I am a farmer-rancher from farther down the intercourse at Virgalle.

I believe your Rocky Mountain Front wilderness study units should receive a wilderness recommendation and should continue to be managed as wilderness. We will use what FS areas are designated, but regardless, you cannot justify oil and gas as the highest use of this land. On public lands along the Front, in Outstanding Natural Areas and ACECs their should be 'no surface occupancy' for oil and gas.

There should be no timber harvest in occupied grizzly habitat. Management unit #9 north of Rogers Pass on the upper Oxbow is occupied grizzly habitat. Some forest areas south of Rogers Pass is occupied grizzly habitat and forest management units 25 and 26 near Marysville should not get high priority for timber harvest. And they definitely should not be made available for off-road motorcycle use.

I oppose the public running around the hills in off-road vehicles. In the issues discussion you identify an ORV problem, then go on to promote it. You should not feel like you need to give "special attention...to identify motorcycle use areas...". Why do you feel this way? ORV use does not contribute anything to good land stewardship and for BLM to promote it is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Management units #9 should not be available for motorcycle use. This includes Devils Kitchen which should also be spared from utility corridors.

Sounds like the land disposal program is dead for now. I oppose it mostly because of proposed criteria for disposal. I can support some exchanges. The EIS really didn't address inter-agency land transfers. Would you please keep me informed when sales or exchanges of public land are planned in the resource area?

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry Burner
Jerry Burner

46a

BRUCE BOWLER
Lawyer
2000 N. 10th St.
Bozeman, Idaho 83702
Phone: 208-338-4400
May 24, 1983

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Re: Resource Management Plan
Headwaters Area

Dear Manager McIntosh:

I appreciate your letter of May 16, 1983, and copy of your map for land ownership adjustments together with your draft land use plan.

First, I must say that yours is the most intelligent methodology I have seen in connection with asset management administration. You really appear to be following the basic law for sale of isolated tracts as enacted by the Congress in the late 60's while I was on the BLM National Advisory Board. The philosophy of this law is as good today as it was then. If all agencies would follow your intelligent example, the extreme rhetoric attending as set management should be avoidable. Of course, massive public land sales are not authorized under the isolated tract laws. The stupid mentality that goes with the concept of paying national debt with public land sales is main source of the problems. Your office is commended for not indulging this monkey business.

Many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Bruce Bowler
Bruce Bowler

BB/kmk

49a

4366 Head Dr.
Helena, Montana 59601
June 14, 1983

Don Lechefsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
BLM
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechefsky:

I am writing to inform you that after carefully reading the Draft Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement for the Headwaters Resource Area, Butte District, Montana I strongly support Alternative "C". This alternative provides the most satisfactory overall environmental protection while still allowing adequate resource production.

I am a resident of the scratchgravel hills area in Helena. Although I prefer alternative "C" I would recommend several changes to the other options if they are adopted.

- a. No organized motorcycle events should be allowed in the Scratchgravel Hills area. The land, vegetation and wildlife in the area are too fragile for a motorcycle event and the increased year round use of the area by motorcyclists that would result. Motorcycle races are also incompatible with many of the other recreational uses of the area such as horse-back riding and are incompatible with the general rural residential atmosphere of the surrounding areas. Alternatives "B" and "D" should be amended to exclude organized events.
- b. Mining and removal of sand, gravel or other materials should be restricted in the scratch gravel hills area because of the fragile environment, the incompatibility of mining with surrounding residential use and the possibility of ground water contamination. At a minimum, a buffer zone of land should be withdrawn from mining activity as proposed in alternative "C" (Map on page 44 of draft). Also, onsite processing of the ore and in particular, the use of Cyanide should not be allowed. Page 57 of the draft states that "Groundwater originating in the Scratchgravel Hills is used for domestic purposes in nearby rural subdivisions. There is some potential for groundwater contamination from mining activities in the recharge area. Of particular concern is the use of cyanide for onsite processing of ore." Due to the large amount of fractured rock and the large number of faults running through the Scratchgravel Hills area, the chance of groundwater contamination is very high if an accident or mishandling of the

APPENDIXES

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(2)

cyanide was to occur. Therefore, I would recommend that Alternatives "A", "B" and "D" be amended to withdraw the Scratchgravel Hills from mining or at least create a buffer zone between the residential areas and the mining. Also, that no onsite processing of the ores be allowed anywhere in the scratchgravel hills.

c. Motorized vehicle use in the Scratchgravel Hills area should be restricted to designated existing roads in the area. The environment in the area is too fragile for off-road vehicle use. There are numerous examples in the hills where off-road vehicles have traversed an area only once and several years later the tracks are still evident. These tracks tend to channel rainwater which results in even greater erosion and destruction of the natural vegetation. Therefore plans "B" and "D" should be amended to restrict motorized vehicle use in the Scratchgravel Hills Area.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely

Barbara A. Charlton

Barbara A. Charlton

50a

Dan Leschafsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office

Subject: Headwaters Resource Area Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Sir

The preferred alternative does not fairly consider the wilderness values out of Wilderness Study Areas. On page 52 of the EIS, the rationale for not recommending wilderness protection is that the areas small size poses management problems and the area may be underlain by gas and oil. The EIS also states that oil and gas leasing will be permitted on 97% of the Federal lands in the Resource Area.

The total area being considered for wilderness protection is only 17,197 acres, only 5% of the study area. We recommend that Alt. C be the preferred alternative so that all interests can be more fairly satisfied. The possibility of oil deposits is weighed to heavily against known wilderness values. Size is a poor criteria for assessing wilderness recommendations as very little maintenance would be required anyway. The small size is irrelevant when the area is adjacent to an existing wilderness.

Sincerely yours,

David W. Cough & Linnie P. Cough
1263 Bighorn Rd
Helena, Montana 59601

(Typed for reproduction in the final RMP/EIS)

55a

2235 Skyway
Butte, MT 59701

June 15, 1983

Jack A. McIntosh
BLM District Manager
Butte, MT

Dear Mr. McIntosh;

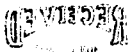
In reference to the Headwaters Resource Area plan, as a general statement, I am totally opposed to any further sale of Federal lands. Even the smaller plots might provide refuge for birds and various other wildlife. These values would quite soon be lost to the public if they fall into private hands.

In looking over the Headwaters map you enclosed I can see that some consolidation might be in order with National Forest lands. Also I would probably not be opposed to some exchange of lands generally lacking public values for other better suited lands.

Again, I am absolutely opposed to any outright sales of said public lands.

Sincerely,

Mortimer L. Hart
Mortimer L. Hart



56a

Dan Heinz
919 W. Silver
Butte, MT
July 5, 1983

Dan Leschafsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office, BLM
Box 3388
Butte, Mt. 59702

Following is my opinion on how wording in "Management guidance common to all alternatives" should be handled:

Strong direction is needed in this type of plan to assure continuity between transferring line managers.

We strongly support strong clear management direction without qualification.

The direction under water on page 19 is a good example. The direction is good up to the qualifier which says "to the extent practicable". This essentially negates the whole direction and leaves riparian utility location to the discretion of the line officer. If a resource rates special comment and direction in a resource management plan, then it rates strong direction.

An EIS sanctified RMP is not etched in stone. If an unusual or unpredictable circumstance arises that needs exception, then an EA or abbreviated EIS can be prepared to modify the parent RMP. This is a hurdle that assures extra protection for a particular resource. It also assures adequate public involvement.

Sincerely,

Dan C. Heinz

(Typed for reproduction in the final RMP/EIS)

62a

67 Garfield Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138Dan Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office
BHM P.O. Box 3288
Butte, Montana 59702

Gentlemen:

I select Alternative C - Emphasizes Environmental Protection Oil and Gas Leasing: In this alternative, approximately 22,000 acres less are available to leasing and development along the Rocky Mountain Front as compared to Alternative A (Preferred). In this alternative, approximately 24,000 more of Federal mineral estate within specific portions of the Rocky Mountain Front would not be available for leasing because of no surface occupancy stipulations that would prohibit leasing and development. This ruling is desirable because it gives a larger area of protection to wildlife habitat.

Livestock - This alternative in long term livestock use would decrease 10% below current levels as compared to Alternative A -- 5% above current levels; this is only approximately 5,000 acre AUMs but groundwater is taken from riparian areas which has an adverse effect on wildlife habitat.

Wilderness Study Recommendations - In this alternative, all five of the areas currently under wilderness study would be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation. In the long term, 17,197 acres in the resource area would be maintained under wilderness values. None of the five areas would be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation; three areas would be recommended as Outstanding Natural Areas and managed as wilderness. * Alt. A. It's my view, among the most important NW wilderness Study Areas in the Headwaters Resource Area are the units scattered along the magnificent Rocky Mountain Front especially those adjacent to the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Forest - Alternatives A and C are more or less the same insofar as forest resources would be managed essentially as they are at present. Timber interests are given a good priority and resource values, watersheds and wildlife habitat are not overlooked.

Land Ownership Adjustment - Alternative A and Alternative C are the same. I have no comments.

62b

PAGE 2

Mineral Exploration & Development - Alternative A and Alternative C are more or less the same with one exception. In Alternative C approximately 2,960 acres of public land in the Scratchgravel Hills would be withdrawn from mineral entry in an effort to limit future impacts of mining on groundwater resources.

The 11,587 acres of public land withdrawn from mineral entry seems very small to me when compared to Alternative A (613,486 acres) and Alternative C (610,526 acres) which would be available for mineral entry and development; there must be some units in these areas which would qualify for wilderness designation or Outstanding Natural Areas. (See enclosed clipping which was published in the Boston Globe--a local paper--taken from the Washington Post. I think the views expressed are very pertinent on the issue of oil and gas exploration leasing.)

Motorcycle Events - In Alternative C approximately 29,000 acres more of public land (102,513 acres) including five other areas would be closed to motorcycle events as compared to Alternative A (77,203 acres) including Scratchgravel and Limestone Hills. Motorcycles over a period of time would cause soil erosion and destroy any wilderness values. I like BHM's plan that applications for these events will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis on public lands for further consideration.

Motorcycle Vehicle Access - My preference for Alternative C in this Management Plan is that approximately 6,000 acres more public land (35,031 acres) as compared to Alternative A (32,058 acres) would be closed yearlong to motorized vehicle access, otherwise the alternatives are more or less the same--minor differences in acreage size.

Utility and Transportation Corridor - My preference for Alternative C is that it identifies 17,197 acres of public land as exclusive areas. I note in both Alternative A and Alternative C, avoidance areas would be established in Scratchgravel and Limestone Hills and other key areas having wilderness quality. In the Preferred Alternative, Management Direction is certainly not overlooking utility interests wherein approximately 236,838 acres or 77% of the public land would be available for development of utility and transportation corridors.

Coal - Alternative C would make none of the federal coal in the Great Falls Coal Field available for further consideration of coal leasing whereas in Alternative A all federal coal in the GMPF would be available for further consideration for coal leasing. In view of the large scale leasing and planned coal sales in states in the West and Southwest, I feel coal will end up being a glut in the market--rather short-sighted planning, under existing economic conditions.

62c

PAGE 3

Alternatives Considered in Detail - Alt. A

Special Designations - The Blind Horse Creek, Bear Mountain, Chute Mountain and Deep Creek/Battle Creek areas would be designated as Outstanding Natural Areas... The Sleeping Giant Area would be designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Selection of Preferred Alternative - Alt. A

Rationale (In Part) - The use of Outstanding Natural Area designation is preferred in this case because of the management flexibility such designations would allow if significant oil and gas reserves are proven to exist beneath these areas in the future. During the interim, special designation will permit essentially the same level of protection for scenic, recreational and other values that wilderness designation would provide.

In the Summary, Alternative C emphasizes environmental protection. This includes the five areas currently under wilderness study and which would be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation. As a result, wilderness values would be maintained over the long term on 17,197 acres in the resource area. This designation would eliminate any problems in management and would prohibit oil and gas explorations in the future.

Why save wilderness? It provides recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, wilderness protects watersheds and prevents floods. It helps maintain air quality and water quality. Lastly, future generations will have a stake in these lands if left in their natural settings - a wonderful heritage.

Mildred Leonard

62d

Wildlife areas to be leased

Washington Post
WASHINGTON - The Interior Department is preparing to open 1 million acres in national wildlife refuges to oil and gas exploration, reversing a 25-year-old federal policy and probably starting another confrontation with conservation groups and Interior Secretary James G. Watt's congressional foe.
The new policy is reflected in rules drawn up by the Bureau of Land Management that are designed to streamline leasing procedures under Watt's five-year program for opening more federal lands to oil and gas production.
The regulations have not been issued, but regional directors of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service were told last month that the rules will allow leasing on "acquired lands" refuges in the lower 48 states as long as the proposed development is compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established.

APPENDIXES

63a

Tom Literski
4366 Road Dr.
Helena, Montana 59601

Dan Lachefsky
Project Manager
Butte District Office
B.L.M.
P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lachefsky:

I am writing to inform you that after carefully reading the Draft Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement for the Headwaters Resource Area, Butte District, Montana I strongly support Alternative "C". This alternative provides the most satisfactory overall environmental protection while still allowing adequate resource production.

I am a resident of the scratchgravel hills area in Helena. Although I prefer alternative "C" I would recommend several changes to the other options if they are adopted.

- a. No organized motorcycle events should be allowed in the Scratchgravel Hills area. The land, vegetation and wildlife in the area are too fragile for a motorcycle event and the increased year round use of the area by motorcyclists that would result. Motorcycle races are also incompatible with many of the other recreational uses of the area such as horse-back riding and are incompatible with the general rural residential atmosphere of the surrounding areas. Alternatives "B" and "D" should be amended to exclude organized events.
- b. Mining and removal of sand, gravel or other materials should be restricted in the scratch gravel hills area because of the fragile environment, the incompatibility of mining with surrounding residential use and the possibility of ground water contamination. At a minimum, a buffer zone of land should be withdrawn from mining activity as proposed in alternative "C" (Map on page 44 of draft). Also, onsite processing of the ore and in particular, the use of Cyanide should not be allowed. Page 57 of the draft states that "Groundwater originating in the Scratchgravel Hills is used for domestic purposes in nearby rural subdivisions. There is some potential for groundwater contamination from mining activities in the recharge area. Of particular concern is the use of cyanide for onsite processing of ore." Due to the large amount of fractured rock and the large number of faults running through the Scratchgravel Hills area, the chance of groundwater contamination is very high if an accident or mishandling of the

63b

(2)

cyanide was to occur. Therefore, I would recommend that Alternatives "A", "B" and "D" be amended to withdraw the Scratchgravel Hills from mining or at least create a buffer zone between the residential areas and the mining. Also, that no onsite processing of the ores be allowed anywhere in the scratchgravel hills.

c. Motorized vehicle use in the Scratchgravel Hills area should be restricted to designated existing roads in the area. The environment in the area is too fragile for off-road vehicle use. There are numerous examples in the hills where off-road vehicles have traversed an area only once and several years later the tracks are still evident. These tracks tend to channel rainwater which results in even greater erosion and destruction of the natural vegetation. Therefore plans "B" and "D" should be amended to restrict motorized vehicle use in the Scratchgravel Hills Area.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely

Tom Literski
Tom Literski

72a

Susan L. Marsh
P.O. Box 973
Bozeman, Montana 59711
31 July 1983

Lyle Fox, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Butte, MT

Dear Mr. Fox:

I am writing to comment on the draft management plan for the Headwaters Resource Area. First, let me commend the BLM for its apparent recognition of the importance of land in this area for wildlife habitat. I hope that maintenance and enhancement of wildlife habitat remains a high priority in this Resource Area.

Second, I wish to express my opposition to any sale of public land. I support a program of trading parcels that have little value to the public or to wildlife, which are difficult to manage and could be put to agricultural uses. Such parcels should be traded for more valuable wildlife habitat. Although the publicized "asset management" program has for the moment been abandoned, I urge the BLM to carefully consider each parcel that has been identified for disposal in its ongoing program of sales and exchanges, and be certain that all exchanges benefit natural resource management, wildlife habitat, and the public interest.

I do not believe that inability to gain access to an isolated parcel of land is cause for disposal. That 40-acre parcel may be a significant refuge for upland birds and mammals in an area that has been cultivated or otherwise made unavailable to wildlife. If it can be shown beyond reasonable doubt that such a parcel is not of value to wildlife then it should be traded for one that is, not sold.

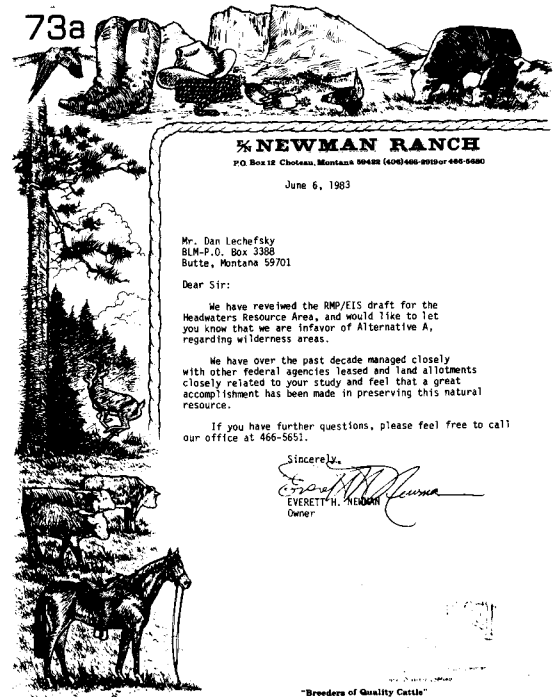
I appreciate the chance to comment on the plan; as I tried to express at the beginning of this letter, I think you have done a good job in preparing this draft plan, especially in relation to wildlife. My major concern is sales of public lands.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Marsh

(Typed for reproduction in the final RMP/EIS)

73a



NEWMAN RANCH

P.O. Box 12 Choteau, Montana 59512 (406) 455-2700-455-6651

June 6, 1983

Mr. Dan Lachefsky
BLM-P.O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59701

Dear Sir:

We have reviewed the RMP/EIS draft for the Headwaters Resource Area, and would like to let you know that we are in favor of Alternative A, regarding wilderness areas.

We have over the past decade managed closely with other federal agencies leased and land allotments closely related to your study and feel that a great accomplishment has been made in preserving this natural resource.

If you have further questions, please feel free to call our office at 466-5651.

Sincerely,

Everett H. Neeson
EVERETT H. NEESON
Owner

"Breeder of Quality Cattle"

74a

612 Monroe Ave.
Helena, Mont. 59601
August 4, 1983

Bureau of Land Management
Headwaters Resource Area
Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Re: Headwater Resource Management Plan.

I have spent considerable time reading and trying to understand this plan, and I have also made phone calls to Butte to clarify some details. As per your request, here are some of my comments on your draft copy of RMP:

- (1) Appendix E: Priority has assigned numbers 1 and 2, but no explanation of meanings of 1 and 2 given in text.
- (2) Do not know what is really meant by "alternative".
What are the alternatives being considered for specific allotments?
- (3) No mention is made of present Range User - S.L.M. cooperation in current management; i.e., deferred grazing (as defined in appendix G).
Appendix E seems to suggest that deferred grazing is the wrong alternative plan.

The phone calls did help to clarify points in the manual.

Sincerely,
Gloria O'Connell
Round Grove Ranch

76a

William V. Peterson
213 Malcolm Ave. N.
Litchfield, Minnesota 55355

May 15, 1983

Don Lechefsky, Project Manager
Butte District Office, B.L.M.
Butte, Montana

Dear Sir:-

I am commenting on the R.M.P./EIS for the Headwaters Resource Area.

I strongly support the position taken by the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, etc. in this matter.

Let us preserve & protect as much habitat & wilderness & the environment as we possibly can on this earth!!

Sincerely,
William V. Peterson

RECEIVED
MAY 15 1983
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BUTTE DISTRICT OFFICE

77a

2110 Hrodbrook Court
Billings, MT 59102
July 5, 1983

Mr. Don Lechefsky, Project Manager
Headquarters Resource Area "draft EIS"
Butte District Office, BLM
P. O. Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Sirs:

Herewith one of your maps of the Headquarters Resource Area with circles showing the areas and the comment on the reverse of the map. I didn't try to show the exact locations -- just marked the approximate township locations -- hope this is satisfactory.

As a general rule, I do not favor "sale," but trade or exchange to block up holdings. BLM land adjacent or near holdings of other state or federal agencies might be considered to be disposed of only if those agencies are managing for wildlife. I do not favor disposal when such disposal blocks up land for "scrubsters" we've had too long history of breaking land that otherwise should have been left in "grass."

Very truly yours,
James Phelps

Attachment

80a

Dear Sir:

In reading through Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement, I thought that you should know that the Teton County SCS, the Forest Service, and Mr. Newman have the first and only working joint agreement. This is on the Blind Horse Creek or we call it Chicken Coulee Allotment.

The trip we took into this area last year was very impressive on development of their water sources for better utilization of the range grass. The range was not over grazed. Mr. Newman was rotating the pastures. He is trying to improve the vegetation from the time he took the allotment over.

As a board of supervisors of Teton SCS we are opposed to any more wilderness in the area. The people in the county cannot afford to protect people from the grizzly bears. Also no state nor federal agency has the man power to do this. So why promote the increase in the grizzly bear population?

We are hoping to have another joint tour of this area in August of this year. After seeing it last year it will be interesting to see if there are any changes. Also to see how the draws come back from the large hail storms they had prior to our trip last year. I would be opposed to eliminating cattle from this allotment down the road.

I have not seen the other allotments in Teton County, but would be opposed to have them in wilderness.

Yours Truly
Charles W. Proff
Chairman, Teton SCS

Will you let us know how the final study comes out. Thank you.

(Typed for reproduction in the final RMP/EIS)

82a

1071 NE 95th Street
 Littlehouse Point, Florida 33064
 May 17, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechafsky
 Project Manager
 Butte District Office
 BLM
 P.O. Box 3306
 Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechafsky:
 Regarding the Headwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan R23, I support
 the adoption of Alternative C including the establishment of five
 wilderness areas totaling 17,197 acres. It is important that certain areas
 remain in primitive condition to protect wildlife, scenic, and other values.

Sincerely,
Paul Seard
 Paul Seard

RECEIVED
 MAY 20 1983
 Bureau of Land Management
 Butte District Office

83a

John R. Swanson
 P.O. Box 922
 Berkeley, Calif. 94701
 July 7, 1983

Mr. Dan Lechafsky
 Project Manager
 Butte District Office, BLM
 Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. Lechafsky:

Please accept my comments, as follows, concerning:

Headwaters Resource Area, Resource Management Plan/Environmental
 Impact Statement

I have lived and worked in this area of Montana and first became ac-
 quainted with such region of this state nearly fifty years ago.
 And remain of the firm opinion that this area of the State of Montana
 contains outstanding wilderness, scenic, wildlife, fish, botanic and
 cultural resources of certain national importance; significant segments
 of our nations natural heritage; and areas that provide a vital refuge
 for man and for all life on this endangered planet.

I urge that our public lands be managed as a preserve.
 To protect ecosystems, preserve watersheds, save and enhance wildlife
 and fish and their respective habitats, expand and strengthen wilder-
 ness, promote biological diversity and to recover and restore used-
 damaged lands to their natural environmental condition.

The basic-fundamental-purpose of the public lands is to preserve per-
 manently the wilderness, scenic, wildlife, fish, botanic and cultural
 resources found on such land and water areas.

The following areas, with acreage, as managed by the Bureau of Land
 Management, Headwaters Resource Area, to receive full wilderness clas-
 sification and to be added to any national wilderness preservation
 system:

- Blind Horse Creek 6,000
- Chute Mountain 3,500
- Deep Creek-Battle Creek 4,000
- North Fork, Sun River Complex 650
- Beaver Meadows Complex 1,700
- Sleeping Giant 7,000
- Rixhorn 4,500
- Black Sage Complex 7,000
- Yellowstone River Island 56

Plus, additional area-acreage to be included in our wilderness system
 and to total some 50,000 acres.

For a grand total of some 85,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management
 units in this Headwaters Resource Area added to our National Wilderness
 Preservation System.

Gas, oil and coal development will surely decimate this resource area;
 both Bureau lands and all other lands.

83b

And remain very much opposed to the sale of any public lands. As it ap-
 pears to be a felony!
 Also we must accept that when we save wilderness, we save America.

Sincerely,
 J. R. Swanson

(Typed for reproduction in the final RMP/EIS)

84a

Mr. Dan Lechafsky, Project, Project Manager
 Butte District Office, BLM
 P.O. Box 3306
 Butte, MT 59702

Dear Mr. Lechafsky:

We think that Alternative C is the best--or at least the least harmful of the alternatives.

Coal and gas are finite resources and if we damage the environment the harm which we do will
 probably remain long after the coal, gas and minerals has been used up and can no longer be
 exploited. But we cannot expect the present administration in Washington to consider that
 as all that they can see is today's monetary profits which are directly before them.

There are many alternative energy sources which are not finite but because no one source would
 solve the whole problem get too little attention has been paid to them.

Yours truly,
Charles W. Hendry

Mr. & Mrs. R Poland, Mr. & Mrs. L Harwood, Mrs. G Mann, Mr. & Mrs. G Panson, Mr. & Mrs. C Pyle,
 Mr. & Mrs. F Colette, Mrs. R Varon, Mr. & Mrs. N Colette, Mr. & Mrs. J. Orames, Mr. & Mrs. T Saabo.

Ms. Edna W. Thornley
 1803 S. 2nd Street
 Denver, CO 80202

85a



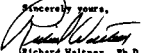
May 24, 1983

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
(406) 837-2311/2313

Jack A. McIntosh, Dist. Manager
U. S. Dept. of the Interior
B.L.W., Dist. Office
Box 3388
Butte, Montana 59702

Dear Mr. McIntosh:

I do not approve of the sale of any public lands, however, I do appreciate the materials you recently sent me. I have received the soft environmental impact statement on the Roadwaters Resource Area Resource Management Plan and the Land Ownership Adjustments map. I am working through the environmental impact statement and once I have a grasp of what is being said, I will offer my comments.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Walzner, Ph.D.
Professor, Sociology

RECEIVED
MAY 25 1983
U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR
B.L.W. DIST. OFFICE
BUTTE, MONTANA