



CASPER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN: STATUS AND RELATIONSHIP TO THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

By Linda Slone

(The following are outline notes from Ms. Slone's presentation.)

Introduction

- The Federal Land Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires updating or revising Resource Management Plans (RMPs) when appropriate.
- The existing Casper RMP was completed in 1985 and has undergone over 50 maintenance actions updating or revising it.
- This, along with the identification of several planning issues, resulted in the need to revise the existing RMP.

Planning Issues

- Energy and mineral resource exploration and development.
- Access to and transportation on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.
- Recreation and off-highway vehicle management.
- Wildlife habitat and management of crucial habitat and migration corridors.
- Management and cumulative effect of land uses and human activities on threatened, endangered, candidate, and sensitive species and their habitats.
- Vegetation, including impacts of invasive, non-native species.
- Management of cultural and paleontological resources, including National Historic Trails.
- Land ownership adjustments.
- Fire management.
- Livestock grazing.
- Visual Resource Management.
- Air and water quality.

Where Did We Begin?

- The Casper RMP revision started in October 2002, with the preparation of the Management Situation Analysis.
- A Notice of Intent was issued in June 2003 asking for public input.
- A Summary of the Management Situation Analysis was completed in November 2003.
- Public scoping meetings were held in Casper, Douglas, Torrington, and Wheatland in November 2003.
- A Scoping Report summarizing issues was prepared in January 2004.

Linda Slone is a Project Manager for the Casper Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management
2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604

- Alternative Formulation Workshops were held in February and March 2004. BLM continues to work on the Alternatives.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Estimate the Effects of the Alternatives.
- Select the BLM Preferred Alternative.
- Issue a Draft RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Issue a Proposed RMP/Final EIS.
- Conduct a 30-Day Protest Period/60-Day Governor's Consistency Review.
- Issue a Record of Decision with Final RMP – Tentatively: end of 2005.

What is the Purpose of the RMP?

- The RMP provides future direction for managing.
 - 1.4 million acres of public land.
 - 4.7 million acres of federal mineral estate.
 - Located in Converse, Goshen, Natrona, and Platte counties.
- The RMP provides a set of comprehensive, long-range decisions on the use and management of resources.
- In general, the RMP provides the following:
 - Overview of goals, objectives, and needs
 - Resolves multiple use conflicts or issues

Why Conduct Collaborative Planning?

- A successful RMP revision depends on collaboration with the following:
 - Interested parties
 - Stakeholders
 - Tribal representatives
 - Other agencies
- The process must be balanced with the need to meet an aggressive schedule.

Who are BLM's Cooperators?

- Local Government
 - Converse County Commissioners and Conservation District
 - Goshen County Conservation Districts
 - Natrona County Commissioners and Conservation District
 - Platte County Commissioners
- State Government
 - Wyoming State Planning Office
 - Department of Agriculture
 - State Historic Preservation Office
 - Game and Fish Department
 - Office of State Lands and Investments
- Other Federal Agencies
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Air Quality
 - National Park Service - Fort Laramie National Historic Site

What is the Relationship Between the RMP Revision and the Thunder Basin Study Area?

- Within the study area, approximately, 10,050 acres of BLM-managed surface are located in the Casper Planning Area.
- The revised RMP will provide future management direction for these lands by setting goals and objectives for management of the public lands.

The ultimate responsibility for RMP decisions rests with BLM. Managers have discovered working together toward commonly understood objectives yields a significant improvement in the stewardship of public lands.

- The BLM has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association to facilitate the following:
 - Exchanging information
 - Inventorying resources
 - Monitoring resources on BLM managed surface

Conclusion

Through building this collaborative partnership and working together, we can:

- Develop a greater understanding of different perspectives.
- Find solutions to issues and problems in managing the intermingled private, state, and public lands in the Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem.



Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem. *Photo: J. Haulfer 2005*