

Dated: February 18, 2004.

Terry Lewis,

Acting Milwaukee Field Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[UT 110-1610-DO-]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan for Public Lands and Resources Managed by the Kanab Field Office and Call for Coal Information

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) and EIS for lands managed by the Kanab Field Office. These planning activities encompass approximately 600,000 acres of public land in Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah. The plan will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM management policies. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, tribal, and national needs and concerns. The public scoping process will identify planning issues and develop planning criteria, including an evaluation of the existing land use plans in the context of the needs and interests of the public.

ADDRESSES: For the Kanab Field Office RMP, written comments should be sent to RMP Comments, Bureau of Land Management, Kanab Field Office, 318 N. 100 E., Kanab, UT 84741; or Fax 435-644-4620. Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM's Kanab Field Office.

All comments and/or data received, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Field Office during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the

extent allowed by law. Anonymous comments will not be accepted. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information regarding the Kanab RMP and/or to have your name added to this mailing list, contact Lorraine Christian, RMP Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Kanab Field Office, 318 N. 100 E., Kanab, UT 84741, phone: 435-644-4600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We will hold public meetings throughout the region in order to promote public involvement in this process. In order to ensure local community participation and input, public meetings will be held at a variety of locations, which will likely include Kanab, Escalante, Panguitch, St. George, and Salt Lake City, Utah. These and other locations, if necessary, will be announced in local and regional news media, and planning bulletins. The minutes and list of attendees for each meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days to any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed. Comments on issues and planning criteria will be most useful if received during the ongoing scoping period at the address listed above. Written comments will be accepted throughout the planning process at the address shown below. In addition to the ongoing public scoping process, formal opportunities for public participation will be provided during a comment period for the draft alternatives and upon publication of the draft RMP/draft EIS. Early participation by all interested parties is encouraged and will help shape the future management of the public lands in the Kanab Field Office.

Preliminary issues and management concerns have been identified by BLM personnel during planning evaluations and pre-planning analysis for the RMP. They represent the BLM's knowledge to date of the existing issues and concerns with current management. The major issues that will be addressed in the plan revisions are: management and protection of public land resources; management of conflicting and competing uses; access to and transportation on the public-lands; and balancing multiple uses. Other specific issues may include cultural resource management, fire management, woodland harvest and management, lands and realty management, rangeland

health and management potential, establishment of special designation areas, and special-status species management.

43 CFR 3420.1-2(a) requires that the BLM publish a call for coal and other resource information in the **Federal Register** if there are areas with coal occurrence in the planning area. Parties interested in coal leasing and development should provide coal resource data for their area(s) of interest. Identification of interests in future coal leasing, substantiated with adequate coal resources data, allows the BLM to address development potential during the RMP process and helps avoid unnecessary work, delays, or RMP amendments.

Proprietary data marked as confidential may be submitted in response to this call for coal resource information and other resource information. Please submit all proprietary information submissions to the individual at the address listed above. The BLM will treat submissions marked as "Confidential" in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the confidentiality of such information.

In addition to coal resource data, the BLM seeks resource information and data for other public land values and uses (e.g., air quality, cultural resources, fire/fuels, fisheries, forestry, geologic hazards, lands and realty, oil and gas (including coalbed methane), paleontology, rangeland management, recreation, visual resources, water quality, soils, sociology, economics, and wildlife, among others).

After gathering public comments on what issues the plan should address, the suggested issues will be placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan;
2. Issues resolved through policy or administrative action; or
3. Issues beyond the scope of this plan.

Rationale will be provided in the plan for each issue placed in category two or three. In addition to the major issues, a number of management questions and concerns will be addressed in the plan. The public is encouraged to help identify these questions and concerns during the scoping phase of plan development. An interdisciplinary approach will be used to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. The Field Office is seeking public involvement at the earliest possible stages of this planning process in order to enhance collaboration. If you have information or concerns you would like to share, including ideas or opportunities that could enhance data

collection, resource inventories, formulation of issues or alternatives, or development of planning criteria that would be applicable to the Kanab planning effort, please submit them to the above address.

A reasonable range of alternatives that resolve those issues and management concerns identified during the scoping process will be developed and analyzed in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, which will be published and made available for public review.

Sally Wisely,

State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

[AZ 020-2004-1150-JP-123A]

Bureau of Land Management

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix Field Office, Phoenix, AZ.

ACTION: Notice of intent to amend the Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan (RMP).

SUMMARY: This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Phoenix Field Office, intends to prepare an Amendment to the Lower Gila South RMP that will include an environmental assessment level analysis. The plan amendment will consider changing the land use allocation on the Cameron Allotment by closing approximately 58,275 acres of public land to domestic livestock grazing in order to implement measures to conserve the endangered Sonoran pronghorn.

DATES: For a period of 30 days from the date of this notice, interested parties may submit comments to the Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix Field Office, attn: Field Manager, 21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 86027.

Public Participation: Public comments received during the 30-day comment period will be considered during the preparation of the proposed plan amendment and environmental assessment level analysis.

ADDRESSES: Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix Field Office, 21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027; Fax 623-580-5580. For further information, contact Tim Hughes, Phoenix Field Office, 623-580-5572.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Cameron Allotment is classified as a Perennial-Ephemeral Allotment. The grazing permit for the allotment prior to June of 2003 authorized 2,532 animal

unit months (AUMs) or 211 cows yearlong and provided for ephemeral use during wet years. The BLM completed a rangeland health evaluation, biological evaluation, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for the grazing allotment in 2003. Based on the results of these evaluations, the grazing permit was modified and reissued with new terms and conditions in 2003. The current permit authorizes 684 AUMs or 57 cows, under the following terms and conditions: (1) The allotment will be operated as a rest-rotation grazing system; (2) seasonal restrictions will be imposed on grazing in pronghorn fawning pastures; (3) ephemeral use can only be authorized when the Sonoran pronghorn population is over 100 animals and increasing and there is an abundance of ephemeral forage available throughout the pronghorn range; (4) lay-down fences will be installed and maintained between the BLM lands and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, and (5) maintenance of range improvements that involves surface disturbance can only be carried out between July 1 and December 31 annually.

The U.S. population of Sonoran pronghorn has experienced an 87 percent decline since 2001. This population is currently vulnerable to extirpation due to low numbers and continued drought. Limited management options on adjacent lands make the public lands that comprise the Cameron Allotment extremely valuable for implementation of recovery actions for the pronghorn. Continued livestock grazing on the Cameron Allotment would require the continued use of fencing for livestock management, which hinders movement of pronghorn. Water impoundments needed by livestock would continue to provide breeding grounds for biting midges that may transmit disease from domestic livestock to pronghorn. Additionally, continued livestock grazing would hinder or preclude implementation of recovery actions, such as the development of food plots.

The BLM is required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, in section 7. (a) (1) to “* * * utilize [its] authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species * * *” Due to the precarious status of the U.S. population of Sonoran pronghorn, it is prudent that the BLM consider actions within their authority to stabilize and recover this endangered species. To that end, it

would be consistent with the BLM’s authorities and responsibilities to consider closing the Cameron Allotment to domestic livestock grazing and allocate the resources toward the recovery of endangered Sonoran pronghorn.

If a decision is made through the amendment process to use the land for pronghorn recovery, the BLM is required to compensate the permittee for their financial interest in authorized range improvements.

Planning Criteria: This notice also provides the public notice of planning criteria availability. The Federal Land Management Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934, as amended, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 constitute the planning criteria applicable to the proposed amendment to the Lower Gila South RMP.

Teresa Raml,

Field Manager, Phoenix Field Office.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT-926-04-9820-BJ-MT01]

Montana: Filing of Plat of Survey

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Filing of Plat of Survey.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will file the plat of survey of the lands described below in the BLM Montana State Office, Billings, Montana, (30) days from the date of publication in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Randy W. Thomas, Cadastral Surveyor, Branch of Cadastral Survey, Bureau of Land Management, 5001 Southgate Drive, P.O. Box 36800, Billings, Montana 59107-6800, telephone (406) 896-5134 or (406) 896-5009.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This survey was executed at the request of the U.S. Forest Service and was necessary to determine unsurveyed Forest Service land. The lands we surveyed are:

Principal Meridian, Montana

Tps. 7 S., Rs. 26 and 27 E.

The plat, in two sheets, representing the dependent resurvey of a portion of the south boundary of the Crow Indian Reservation, through Townships 7 South, Ranges 26 and 27 East, a portion of certain Homestead Entry