

riparian areas and upland habitats, including sagebrush habitat.

- Sagebrush—treatments in sagebrush habitats would focus on restoring the sagebrush community by removing encroaching pinyon-juniper, promoting the reestablishment of native forbs and grasses in sagebrush communities, and promoting the development of sagebrush in areas where it occurred historically.

The proposed 3 Bars Project has been identified by the BLM as a major Federal action and is appropriately analyzed by an EIS. The 3 Bars Project Draft EIS identifies and evaluates treatment alternatives to implement the proposed project to meet resource management goals. In addition to the All Available Methods Alternative, three other alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS. The No Fire Use Alternative would target the same treatment areas, but the methods of treatment would not include prescribed fire or wildland fire for resource benefit. The Minimal Land Disturbance Alternative also targets the same areas for treatment, but further limits the methods of treatment to exclude fire use, mechanical treatments, and non-classical biological controls. The BLM anticipates that more acres would be treated under the preferred alternative due to the lower cost of some of the treatment methods that would not be available under the other alternatives. A No Action alternative has also been included for comparison purposes with existing management conditions. Three additional alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis.

The BLM has prepared the Draft EIS in conjunction with its three cooperating agencies: The Nevada Department of Wildlife, Eureka County Board of Commissioners, and the National Park Service—National Trails Intermountain Region.

On January 25, 2010, the BLM published a Notice of Intent (75 FR 3916) to initiate scoping for the preparation of the EIS. The scoping period ended March 10, 2010. Public scoping meetings were held in Battle Mountain, Nevada, on February 22 and Eureka, Nevada on February 23, 2010. The BLM received 24 scoping comment letters on the proposed 3 Bars Project. In addition, comments were recorded during informal discussions with the public at the public scoping meetings. Based on written and oral comments given during the scoping period, 637 catalogued individual comments were recorded during scoping for the 3 Bars Project EIS.

Vegetation treatment planning and management and vegetation treatment methods were the primary topics of concern to the public. Respondents were also concerned with the impacts that treatment actions would have on the spread of invasive species, the viability of wild horses and livestock, preservation of old growth woodlands, and protection of habitat for wildlife and special status species. All relevant issues identified through public scoping have been analyzed in this EIS to the extent practicable. The Draft EIS describes and analyzes the proposed project's site-specific impacts (including cumulative) on all affected resources. Three action alternatives (including the preferred alternative) were analyzed in addition to the No-Action Alternative and three alternatives were considered but eliminated from further analysis.

Please note that public comments and information submitted including names, street addresses, and email addresses of persons who submit comments will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10.

**Christopher J. Cook,**  
*Field Manager, Mount Lewis Field Office.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

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#### Notice of Availability of the North Dakota Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of

1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a North Dakota Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the North Dakota Field Office and by this notice is announcing the opening of the comment period.

**DATES:** To ensure that comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS within 90 days after the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its notice of the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The BLM will announce future meetings or hearings and any other public participation activities at least 15 days in advance through public notices, media releases, and/or mailings.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments related to the North Dakota GRSG Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS by any of the following methods:

- **Web site:** [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/north\\_dakota\\_field.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/north_dakota_field.html).

- **Email:** [blm\\_mt\\_nd\\_sage\\_grouse@blm.gov](mailto:blm_mt_nd_sage_grouse@blm.gov).

- **Fax:** 406-896-5293.

- **Mail:** BLM—North Dakota Greater Sage-Grouse EIS, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings MT 59101.

Copies of the North Dakota GRSG Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS are available at the North Dakota Field Office at: 99 23rd Ave. W., Dickinson, ND, or on the Web site at: [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/north\\_dakota\\_field.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/north_dakota_field.html).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ruth Miller, Team Lead, telephone 406-896-5023; see address and email above. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-253-4093 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The BLM prepared the North Dakota GRSG Draft RMP Amendment and Draft EIS to address a range of alternatives focused on specific conservation measures across the North Dakota range of the GRSG. This Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS is one of 15 separate planning efforts that are being undertaken as part of the BLM's and U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) National GRSG Planning Strategy. The Draft RMP Amendment/

Draft EIS proposes to amend the North Dakota RMP. The current management decisions for resources are described in the North Dakota RMP (1988).

The planning area includes approximately 963,017 acres of BLM, USFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State, and private lands located in southwestern North Dakota, in three counties (Bowman, Slope, and Golden Valley). Within the decision area, the BLM administers approximately 33,030 surface acres and 396,053 acres of Federal mineral (subsurface) estate. Surface management decisions made as a result of this Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS will apply only to the BLM-administered lands in the decision area. The decision area is defined as those BLM-administered lands and Federal mineral estate within the Planning Area, which includes two categories of habitat identified by the BLM and North Dakota Game and Fish (NDG&F):

- Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH)—Areas identified as having the highest conservation value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations; includes all leks in North Dakota.
- Preliminary General Habitat (PGH)—Areas of historic sage-grouse habitat, which still has some use by sage-grouse.

The formal public scoping process for the RMP Amendment/EIS began on December 9, 2011, with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 77008), and ended on March 23, 2012. The BLM held one scoping open house in North Dakota in January 2011. The BLM used public scoping comments to help identify planning issues that directed the formulation of alternatives and framed the scope of analysis in the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS. The scoping process was also used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria, which set limits on the scope of the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS.

Major issues considered in the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS include special status species management (GRSG specifically), energy development, lands and realty (including transmission), and livestock grazing.

The Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS evaluates four alternatives in detail, including the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and three action alternatives (Alternatives B, C and D). The BLM identified Alternative D as the preferred alternative. Identification of this alternative, however, does not represent final agency direction, and the Proposed RMP Amendment may reflect changes or adjustments based on

information received during public comment, from new information, or from changes in BLM policies or priorities. The Proposed RMP may include objectives and actions described in the other analyzed alternatives or otherwise within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed.

Alternative A would retain the current management goals, objectives, and direction specified in the current RMP. Alternative B includes conservation measures from the Sage-Grouse National Technical Team Report. Alternative C includes conservation measures various conservation groups submitted to the BLM. Alternative D includes conservation measures the BLM developed with the cooperating agencies.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 1610.7–2(b), this notice announces a concurrent public comment period on proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). One ACEC is proposed in Alternative C. The Sage-Grouse Habitat ACEC (approximately 32,900 acres) would include the following resource use limitations if it were formally designated:

- Close to fluid mineral leasing;
- Designate as a Right-of-Way exclusion area;
- Reduce livestock grazing;
- No roads constructed within 4 miles of a lek;
- Allow vegetation treatments only for the benefit of GRSG; and
- Recommend for withdrawal from mineral entry.

Please note that public comments and information submitted including names, street addresses and email addresses of persons who submit comments will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10, 43 CFR 1610.2.

**Theresa M. Hanley,**

*Acting BLM Montana/Dakotas State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

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### Notice of Public Meeting, North Slope Science Initiative—Science Technical Advisory Panel

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, North Slope Science Initiative, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI)—Science Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) will meet as indicated below.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held October 28–31, 2013 in Fairbanks, Alaska. The meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. in the Akasofu Building, International Arctic Research Center (IARC), Room 401, North Koyukuk Drive, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Public comment will be received between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 30, 2013.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** John F. Payne, Executive Director, North Slope Science Initiative, AK–910, c/o Bureau of Land Management, 222 W. Seventh Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513, (907) 271–3431 or email [jpayne@blm.gov](mailto:jpayne@blm.gov). Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The NSSI STAP provides advice and recommendations to the NSSI Oversight Group regarding priority information needs for management decisions across the North Slope of Alaska. These priority information needs may include recommendations on inventory, monitoring, and research activities that contribute to informed resource management decisions. This meeting will include continued dialog for developing scenario models for the North Slope and adjacent marine environments. Additionally, the STAP will review the progress on a long-term monitoring strategy for the North Slope. An interactive session on remote